



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY



The timely rise of FHSU’s Transition to Teaching program

In a November report, the Horace Mann Educators Corporation shared the results of a national survey of K-12 teachers. Roughly 27 percent of the survey respondents state they are considering leaving their job, retiring early or taking a leave of absence because of the pandemic.

One solution to a looming shortage of K-12 teachers in Kansas is the Transition to Teaching (T2T) program at Fort Hays State University. Over the past decade, program enrollment has grown from 22 students to 165 – a growth rate of 650 percent. Today, more than 325 FHSU licensed teachers serve in more than 140 Kansas school districts.

The program works to fill middle- and high-school teaching vacancies in districts through an alternate route to teacher licensure. Teachers and administrators serve as mentors and work with FHSU College of Education staff to help new teachers successfully complete their transition to service as teachers.

Successful program graduates include the 2016 Kansas Teacher of the Year Justin Coffey, a high school math teacher in Dodge City and 2017 National Milken Educator Award winner Heidi Albin, a high school science teacher in Maize.

FHSU foursome wins 2020 Kansas Startup

The concept for a new phone app developed by Fort Hays State University students Mark Faber, Faith Little, Ryan Stanley and Anthony Ventura took first place and a \$1,000 prize in the 2020 Kansas Startup competition. The “MeHe,” app concept is designed to provide information that can positively impact the user’s mental health. “We wanted to capitalize on overcoming the stigma surrounding mental health issues. It’s really important now with the virus,” Ventura said.

The Kansas Startup competition was created in 2013 by Henry Schwaller IV, an instructor in the Robbins College of Business and Entrepreneurship. Event sponsors include Schwaller, Commerce Bank of Hays, Midwest Energy, NetWork Kansas and Peter Werth, for whom FHSU’s Werth College of Science, Technology and Mathematics is named.

The annual event is typically held over a weekend, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s event took place in two stages over two weeks. The first part was a workshop titled – Concept to Customer: A Creative Path to Success! –. The workshop focused on how to create successful entrepreneurial ideas. During the second stage, held a week later, the teams presented their startup ideas to judges via Zoom.

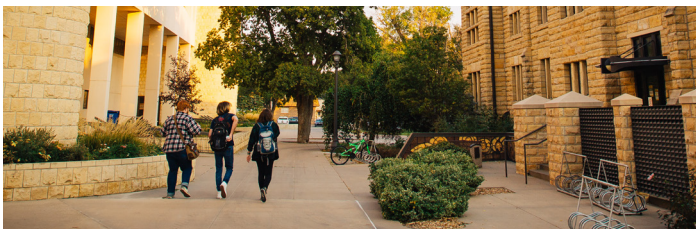
FHSU to reinstate successful student Care Team program next spring

In an effort to assist students through the challenging transition to remote operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic last spring, the Division of Student Affairs launched a comprehensive effort to ensure students stayed connected to vital advising and student services resources.

The division recruited more than 100 faculty, staff and students and organized them into 15 distinctive Care Teams that reached out to more than 10,300 students to check on their status and help them deal with the challenges they faced adjusting to remote and online operations.

“The Care Team initiative was a way to provide wrap-around support and ensure we extended our hand to every one of our students,” said Dr. Taylor Kriley, assistant vice president for Student Affairs. “This initiative was a true testament to how Tigers care for one another.”

The tremendous success of the initiative led to FHSU’s decision to turn a Care Team program that was created in response to a looming crisis into a permanent element in the university’s student success programming.



Recent Campus Facilities Condition and Utilization Reports in Context

Two recent reports commissioned by the Kansas Board of Regents provide consistent and in-depth reviews of FHSU’s management of its facilities. The first, the Accruent Facilities Condition Assessment Report, serves as an excellent resource that will guide our efforts to identify and address areas of the greatest potential need for rehabilitation and repair.

One shortfall in the analysis provided in the Accruent study relates to the overall impact a singular, large and aging building has in the report findings. While the surveyors were generally impressed by the overall condition of campus buildings, the final grade was based on square footage. Unfortunately, the largest building on campus, our 320,00 square foot Gross Auditorium received the lowest grade, and pulled the overall average down for our entire inventory of campus structures.



Meshach McKnight

Current Transition to Teaching Student

A native of Jamaica and a math teacher at Eisenhower Middle School in Topeka, Meshach chose Eisenhower Middle School because he was drawn to serving students with low math skills and documented behavioral issues. In the words of one of his students, “I think Mr. McKnight cares more about us than we care about ourselves.”



**FORT HAYS STATE
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