

Dr. Jill Arensdorf is in her first year (2019-20) as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Fort Hays State University. As chief academic officer, she provides leadership for faculty, staff and students while promoting the culture, spirit and value of the university.

She is a familiar face on campus and has impacted students' lives for nearly two decades, having taught in the Department of Leadership Studies since 2002. She served the past eight years as chair of that department and now a full professor.

As provost, Arensdorf is working directly once again with Dr. Tisa Mason, president of FHSU. When Mason was vice president for student affairs at FHSU from 2008-2014, she worked together with Arensdorf in developing the first learning community for students. The program grew to 18 learning communities spanning a variety of disciplines and is credited with improving retention rates and first-year student success.

Arensdorf began learning about leadership at a young age while growing up in rural western Kansas, where she participated in 4-H and FFA. From serving as president of a 4-H Club in Graham County to administrative responsibilities in the university's global modality, Arensdorf is living out her dream career of focusing on leadership and helping people.

In addition to her duties as a faculty member and department chair in Leadership Studies, Arensdorf also oversaw FHSU's international partnership and dual degree programs in organizational leadership in China for several years.

Arensdorf's philosophy has been shaped not only by leadership theories and concepts but also by her own learning experiences. The development of collaborative professional relationships with colleagues is at the core of her leadership philosophy.

Her main goals as provost are to continue to move the institution forward in teaching, scholarship and service, as well as encouraging new program ideas.

Arensdorf is well respected on campus by peers and students alike. In 2012, she received the Pilot Award, for outstanding faculty member of the year and in 2005, the Navigator Award, for outstanding student advisor. Both awards are nominated – and voted on – by graduating seniors, and she has been a nominee for both several times.

She has chaired several committees and served on numerous boards – both for the university and community-wide. She also has written for a variety of scholarly publications.

Arensdorf received her bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics and her doctor of philosophy in curriculum and instruction from Kansas State University. She earned a master of science in agricultural education with an emphasis in leadership from Texas A&M University.

In her spare time, Arensdorf enjoys reading, cooking, music and any kind of outdoor activity. She and her husband, Mike, can be found golfing or watching athletic events. They also spend time volunteering together in the community. Service has always been an important facet of Arensdorf's life and career.