



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY



Strategic Affiliation plan seeks approval by national accrediting body

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an independent corporation that was founded in 1895 as one of six regional accreditors in the United States. HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the United States, including Fort Hays State University, Northwest Kansas Technical College, and North Central Kansas Technical College. The next step in the process to turn the vision of a strategic affiliation among the three institutions is to earn HLC approval of a “Change of Control” application. The purpose of the Change of Control application is to assure HLC that the institutions will remain in compliance with accreditation criteria.

HLC holds three standard board meetings each year, and our application must be jointly submitted by the three institutions approximately seven months prior to the respective meeting.

The application will then go to a team of peer reviewers, who may decide to visit one or more of the institutions to validate the evidence provided with the application. The peer review team will provide a report to advise the board about any potential concerns regarding the Change of Control. If the board approves the change, the institutions will have 14 calendar days to respond. An approved Change of Control application kicks off a

new review cycle for the institutions, beginning with a focused site visit within six months after the initial approval to verify that the institutions remain in accreditation compliance. This will be followed by a comprehensive evaluation within five years. HLC may also opt to shift one or more of the institutions from its Open Pathway to Standard Pathway for the next accreditation cycle, the latter of which would necessitate more frequent reporting and/or site visits.

We appreciate the enthusiastic support of U.S. Senators Jerry Moran and Roger Marshall as we launch this program. Additionally, we are especially grateful for the work of local legislators, Senator Rick Billinger and Representatives Barb Wasinger, Ken Rahjes, Troy Waymaster and Tory Marie Blew, who collectively shepherded the affiliation legislation as it worked its way through the legislative process.

Master of Social Work Program earns initial accreditation

On March 13, 2023, the Council on Social Work Education granted initial accreditation to the FHSU Master of Social Work (MSW) program. This decision is retroactively effective to the date that Candidacy status was granted when the program launched in 2020.

The program was created in response to a critical need for clinical social workers in the western half of Kansas,

where only 5% of the state’s clinical social workers practice today.

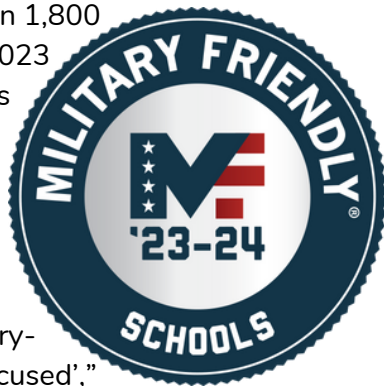
FHSU’s clinical MSW program is distinctive in the way it takes advantage of the flexibility and outreach aspects of the university’s world-class online education enterprise while maintaining a strong hands-on clinical training emphasis.

Since the program coursework is completed entirely online, it is accessible from wherever students might live. Thus, the program makes it easier for students in rural areas to stay with their families, keep their current jobs, and remain in their home communities as they progress through the program.

FHSU again recognized as Military Friendly School

For the 16th consecutive year, FHSU has been recognized for its investment in programs that improve the lives of veterans and military personnel, earning the 2023-2024 Military Friendly School designation from militaryfriendly.com.

Institutions that received the designation were evaluated using public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. More than 1,800 schools participated in the 2023-24 survey, with 530 schools earning award. FHSU attained the rank of Silver again this year.



“We strive to achieve the goal of being not only ‘military-friendly’ but also ‘military-focused’,” said Kelsi Broadway, assistant director of FHSU Online Recruitment & Military-Connected Student Services. “Using this survey as an annual tool to build from, we move new initiatives forward with the intentional purpose of improving our military-connected student experience at FHSU.”

The Military Friendly® program creates civilian opportunities for veterans and is the standard that

measures an organization’s commitment, effort, and success in creating sustainable and meaningful opportunities for the military community. The 2023-24 Military Friendly® Schools list can be found at www.militaryfriendly.com.

Benefits at FHSU for military students include tuition assistance, Veteran Affairs benefits, Yellow Ribbon, and in-state tuition and scholarships. More information on military benefits can be found at <https://fhsu.edu/transfer-military-center/military-benefits/index>.

Dane G. Hansen internships making a difference at FHSU

The FHSU/Dane G. Hansen Internship program offers 25 paid internships annually for FHSU students. These opportunities are made possible through the generosity of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation. Currently, there are nine interns working for employers in Hays, WaKeeney, or Salina. This summer, 16 students will embark on internships with businesses in 10 northwest Kansas communities. The program allows students in various academic disciplines to gain professional experience, make connections, and build confidence. It also creates a talent pipeline for small businesses and other employers in rural western Kansas.

This year’s internships represent the fields of marketing, tourism and hospitality, banking, accounting, communication, art, IT, grant writing, agriculture, health and fitness, engineering, human resources, entrepreneurship, and law. Since the inception of the program, numerous students have received offers for full-time positions, part-time jobs, or additional internships.



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