



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

Forward thinking. World ready.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

**Fort Hays State University
Testimony before the House Vision 2020 Committee
January 27, 2016**

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Fort Hays State University**

Chairman Campbell and Co-Chair Sloan.....thank you for affording me the privilege to present to you and to the distinguished members of the Vision 2020 Committee how Fort Hays State University is moving Kansas Forward.

I'm Mirta Martin, and I have the privilege to serve as the 9th president of Fort Hays State University. Eighteen months ago, I made a choice; for me, the right choice. I traveled across the country to make Fort Hays State University my destination of choice. I came here because of our programs of distinction and our people of excellence. You see, the family of Fort Hays State, they are kind, hardworking giving and caring. They will do whatever needs to be done to ensure our students' success. That's who they are. That's why they made Fort Hays State *their* destination of choice... and it's because of their dedication that Fort Hays State has become one of the fastest growing public universities in our nation in the past decade.

As you know, Fort Hays State is a regional, forward-thinking, entrepreneurial university located in western Kansas. We have an enrollment of 14,210 students and offer over 70 majors at the associate's, bachelor's, master's and doctoral level through 28 academic departments. Education is offered in three modalities: on-campus, virtually and internationally in China.

Earlier this year, I challenged the faculty and staff at Fort Hays State to shift our paradigm from a culture of access to a culture of completion. While it is true that more Americans than ever are attending college, the percentage of young adults earning four-year degrees is not keeping up. America is still the second most educated nation in the world, but our young adults are falling rapidly behind in the race to produce the next generation of entrepreneurs, researchers and world leaders.

Young people need to know about the world they will be facing, and a big part of our job at Fort Hays State University is to prepare our students to be forward thinking and world ready.

A college degree is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity for young Americans to fulfill their dreams and their aspirations. It is our mission, in higher education, to instill wisdom and to groom students for meaningful careers that improve the human condition.

In October 2014, we embarked on an ambitious “re-engineering” project. Together, faculty, staff, students and alumni, envisioned a new beginning for Fort Hays State; one that builds on our strengths: our people of excellence and our programs of distinction. Special importance was placed on developing a strong business model that tests our programs and operations by a return-on-investment standard in order to produce cost savings while building capacity for growth. In the current economic environment, it is absolutely essential that we operate efficiently.

Every year, Fort Hays State University takes faculty, staff, and administrators on the road to visit in our communities and share with them the programs that make us distinctive. And so, I’d like to share with you what I highlighted just two days ago with students, parents and friends in Beloit:

Do any of your constituents wish to enter professional schools? If they do, then they should make Fort Hays State University’s **College of Science, Technology and Mathematics** their destination of choice. Why?

Because the majority of our current seniors in Biology, Chemistry and Physics have been accepted into professional schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Physical Therapy and Physician's Assistant.

- In the college’s first six month, it received \$1.1 million in Grants. The largest grant (\$700,000) is a joint project between Biology and Agriculture – a great example of the cross disciplinary scholarship that the new College of Science, Technology and Mathematics is meant to foster.

- Department of Applied Technology received 2 National Runner-up finishes at the Technology and Engineering Education annual meeting

Do some of your constituents wish to go into Business? Then, they should make Fort Hays State University their destination of choice... Why? Because **the College of Business &**

Entrepreneurship...

- Produced three top Kansas CPA Exam Scorers and two Sells Award winners in the past five years.
- Earned a 2nd Place Finish in the Microsoft Hackathon National Mobile Application Development Competition
- Earned six 1st place and two 2nd place awards at the Kansas Association of Broadcasters 2015 Competition (Kansas' Best)
- 2nd Place Finish in the Kansas Venture Challenge
- Was awarded a \$350,000 from NSF Infrastructure Grant

How about education? Well, whoever is interested, should make Fort Hays State University their destination of choice! You see... **The College of Education**

- Provides the state of Kansas with the largest number of principals and superintendents.
- Enjoys a 99% placement rate after graduation.
- Elementary and Secondary Teacher Education Programs are ranked #6 nationally and #1 in Kansas as the Best Value in Education by the National Council on Teacher Quality
- Received the Distance Education Innovation 2015 award from the National University Technology Network

Are any of your constituents interested in the health careers? If they are, then, please, send them our way so they can make Fort Hays State University's **College of Health and Behavioral Sciences** their destination of choice. Here's why:

- Speech-Language Pathology - 100% pass rate on SLP Praxis certification examination
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography - 100% pass rate on multiple ARDMS registry examinations

- Athletic Training - 100% pass rate on AT Board of Certification examination
- Nursing – NCLEX-RN 100% pass rate exceeds the state and national averages

Do any of your constituents wish to obtain a strong, liberal arts education? Then, it should not surprise you that I'm going to encourage them to make Fort Hays State University **College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences** their destination of choice. You see,

- Our counseling degree was ranked 4th in the nation by Best Counseling Degree Programs
- The sociology program was recognized by TheBestSchools.org among the best online programs in the country, with a ranking at No. 23
- We enjoy a top graphic design, art and music program... as a matter of fact, our Graphic design students' poster competition this past fall received 5.6 million hits on Facebook.
- The Political Science program is ranked #11th in the nation
- The Criminal Justice Club donated over 500 hours of community service

Our newest program of distinction is the **Fort Hays State University Honors College**. It was created in early 2015 with the goal of making Fort Hays State the destination of choice for Kansas' and the nation's brightest minds. The Honors College offers a challenging curriculum across the range of academic programs and gathers students into a dedicated living and study space. Even though it was late in the recruiting cycle when the Honors College was launched, an ambitious goal of eight freshmen was surpassed by enrolling 16 in the first class, with an average grade point average from high school of 3.90 and an average ACT score of 30.4.

The Honors College celebrated its first official semester in operation at the end of December 2015. The average cumulative college GPA for Honors College students was 3.8 at the end of that first semester, and seven Honors College students earned a perfect 4.0 GPA. There was no attrition; all members of the Honors College enrolled in the spring 2016 semester.

Our Virtual College is the fastest growing modality at Fort Hays State. Since its inception in 1998, our on-line education has grown by 732%

This growth is not only impressive because of its numbers, but more importantly, because of the accolades it has earned. Our full time faculty teach in the Virtual College. They have responsibility for the rigor and excellence of these courses. Their efforts are recognized consistently by numerous ratings bodies placing the Virtual College among the best in the nation for quality and affordability. These assessments come from such industry evaluators as U.S. News and World Report, GetEducated.com, OnlineU.org, TheBestSchools.org and others. For example, the online Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in psychology degrees were ranked No. 1 by Edudemic.com. Also, in the online rankings released just this January by U.S. News and World Report for thousands of U.S. universities, the Fort Hays State University bachelor degree program was tied for 24th.

The Virtual College offers 26 undergraduate degrees online. An additional undergraduate degree in computer science will be offered beginning in fall 2016. The Virtual College also offers 13 master's programs, and a doctorate of nursing practice will start in fall 2016.

In addition, I wish to share with you that our undergraduate students are involved in research and scholarly projects throughout their Fort Hays State University careers. This provides them valuable experiences that turn their research into patents. For example, one of our undergraduate students is researching a drought resistant strain of wheat to feed Kansans and the world.

Established in 2006, the Kansas Academy of Mathematics and Science (KAMS) afford gifted students the opportunity to earn 68 hours of college credit and conduct individual research under the expert guidance of our talented faculty. 80% of KAMS graduates continue their education in Kansas institutions including Fort Hays State University.

Fort Hays State University is among the fastest-growing post-secondary institutions in the nation. This fall, Fort Hays State University led the Regents institutions in enrollment growth. As a result, we celebrated another enrollment milestone by reaching 14,210 students. Fort Hays State is clearly the Destination of Choice.

So, what is the return on the investment of an education? Well, at Fort Hays State University, the investment yields a meaningful career. We continue to average a 95% placement rate after graduation.

With a 2016 operating budget of \$155.5 million, Fort Hays State's economic impact in our region and in the state is worth noting.

Fort Hays State has over a \$242.4 million dollar impact on Ellis County; we account for approximately \$126 million dollars in wages and salaries and close to 3000 jobs. Our records indicate 53% of Fort Hays State University graduates live and work in Kansas; thus contributing to the overall economy.

But we're not stopping there - we are planning for the future.

One of the most important roles of a university is to recognize changes in society and provide for changing educational needs. Fort Hays State University is committed to providing an educated workforce to Kansas. The creation of the state's first Hispanic College Institute (HCI) is a prime example of how Fort Hays State will meet a specific need by providing education to an underserved, but growing segment of the Kansas population.

The inaugural Hispanic College Institute (HCI), set for the summer of 2016 is designed to attract the fastest growing minority in Kansas to Fort Hays State. This four-day, three-night residential program will introduce first-generation Hispanics to a university environment. It will teach them how to navigate the American educational system and how to enroll in and graduate from college. Participants will live on Fort Hays State's beautiful campus; learn about the importance of going to college; learn about the college admission process; improve public speaking, presentation and interviewing skills; learn how to navigate financial aid and the FAFSA application process; engage with Hispanic leaders, mentors and role models; meet with Fort Hays State admissions and financial aid representatives; and compete for a variety of scholarships.

Education is a business, and we will go forward, using business models to ensure our success. Fort Hays State University will expand its operations to capture marketshare. We will treat our University like a business, because it is a business. A big business. We will use one time monies to fund program expansion through faculty positions. This expansion will create external sources of revenue which will create a sustainable cashflow from operations for our University. We will then turn these temporary positions into permanent positions and use the earnings to fund yet new positions, new programs and new initiatives.

We have implemented a cost containment strategy and an evidence-based strategy. What does this mean? It means that we must have the data from which to make an informed decision. It means that we look to create economies of scale to maximize our resources. It means that what we do, and what we invest in – must yield an ROI.

We are looking at our distinctiveness to ascertain how to capitalize on Fort Hays State University's entrepreneurial spirit so we can create external sources of income to expand our offerings.

For example, one of the distinctive features of Fort Hays State University is its 5585 acre farm. We are looking at initiatives where we may use our land to generate revenue.

Our wind turbines save the University almost \$1,000,000/year in energy savings from not needing to purchase power. We are looking to see how we may be able to use storage cells to increase operational usage and further reduce our operating costs.

We are also looking to increase the use of open educational resources (OERs) in all our programs to reduce the cost of textbooks for our students. The Department of Health and Human Performance at Fort Hays State University piloted the initiative. It saved our students in excess of \$96,000/year in textbook costs.

Our Virtual College provides Fort Hays State with a competitive advantage in the market place. We will continue to expand its reach and its programs to capture new market share.

And certainly, we are looking to expand our footprint in the world beyond China to create other revenue streams to support our state; to support Kansans. In these times of political uncertainties worldwide it becomes more important to diversify our international partnerships and not rely solely on one country.

This fall we will open our Dane Hansen Entrepreneurship Scholarship Hall. This immersive living/ learning community will be open to students of all disciplines on campus who have an interest in entrepreneurship and innovation. They will live there. They will be surrounded with mentors and with entrepreneurs who will teach them how to open their own business... a business, we hope they will keep right here at home; in Kansas.

Ladies and gentlemen, although a relative new comer to Kansas, I am thankful to be able to call this state home. All of us at Fort Hays State University are committed to ensuring that the next generation of Kansans has access to an superb education that will yield meaningful careers; an education that will keep our next generation of leaders right here, at home, in Kansas.

I appreciate the support you have offered Fort Hays State University throughout the years. I look forward to working with you, hand-in-hand to ensure this state's success.

Mr. Chair and committee members I would be happy to stand for questions. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your support.