

# INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

## 01. Distinctive Features.

Fort Hays State University ([www.fhsu.edu](http://www.fhsu.edu)) is a public regional comprehensive university that primarily serves rural western Kansas. The university is located between Kansas City and Denver, in the City of Hays. Hays has a population of approximately 20,000 and is accessible directly via Interstate 70, as well as through regional airlines. The FHSU service area spans 66 counties, houses 630,000 people, and covers 52,000 square miles. The university's mission statement, assigned by the Kansas Board of Regents in 1992, was modified in 2000 to reflect the increasing diversity of Kansas and the nation:

*“Fort Hays State University, a regional university principally serving western Kansas, is dedicated to providing instruction within a computerized environment in the arts and sciences, business, education, the health and life sciences, and agriculture. The university's primary emphasis is undergraduate liberal education, which includes the humanities, the fine arts, the social/behavioral sciences, and the natural/physical sciences. These disciplines serve as the foundation of all programs. Graduates are provided a foundation for entry into graduate school, for employment requiring well-developed analytical and communication skills, and for lives of ethical and civic responsibility to better understand global complexities and an American society of increasing diversity.*

*Natural outgrowths of the university's primary emphasis include pre-professional, professional, master's, and education specialist programs. A statewide strategic focus of the university is the integration of computer and telecommunications technology with the educational environment and the workplace.*

*Scholarship at FHSU is supported because it stimulates faculty and students, provides new knowledge, connects the disciplines, and builds bridges between teaching and learning while linking theory with practice to address the needs of a diverse society.*

*The university is responsible for providing public service to the community, the region, and the state of Kansas. Programs consistent with the university's academic and research activities emphasize the importance of FHSU as the cultural center of western Kansas.”*

FHSU was established in 1902 on the grounds of the abandoned Fort Hays military post southwest of Hays. The university served the early settlers' needs for educational facilities and the first building was completed in 1904.

Today, the main campus occupies about 200 of over 4,000 acres owned by the state. The current physical plant includes more than 40 limestone-faced buildings that serve as the setting for an evolving learning infrastructure for students and the surrounding community. Big Creek, a winding stream traversing the campus, provides a tranquil learning atmosphere and serves as a natural laboratory for students. Most of the campus buildings are built around a large park area referred to as the “Quad”, and is often called the most attractive in campus Kansas.

Perhaps the least tangible, but most important feature, is our promise that a college education equals opportunity. Many FHSU students are first generation learners who seek an accessible, affordable strategy for pursuing the American Dream. We make this explicit in our Brand Essence Statement:

*“Fort Hays State University takes pride in providing an exceptional university education and experience comparable to that found at outstanding private-sector institutions but at an affordable public-sector price”.*

This promise of opportunity through education cannot be realized without the application of technology allowing anyone to learn - including the unserved and the underserved. FHSU reaches all kinds of learners throughout its service area and the world beyond by employing technology to support a powerful new learning infrastructure. This sentiment is articulated in our vision:

*“When Edward H. Hammond became the institutions' eighth president in 1987, he brought with him a vision of a world shaped by the Information Age and the promise of new educational technologies. He believed that technology could play a crucial role in the delicate relationship between students and their learning environment. In effect, the appropriate application of technology could energize the learning process for FHSU students.*

*At the same time, President Hammond recognized that the often impersonal nature of technology has to be balanced with a sense of humanity and personal attention unequaled in higher education. Otherwise, the potential of information technology to accelerate and enable a learning revolution could be lost in the instinctiveness of student, faculty, and staff to remain skeptical of this intrusive element. Out of this concern for balancing the relationship between technology-enhanced learning and the human response to it emerged the vision of a “High-Tech/High-Touch” university. Enhanced learning through technology cannot be achieved at the expense of a loss in the institution's capacity for personal service. This vision of a university inspired by the balance between technological change and human sensitivity to individual student needs has positioned for future growth and high-quality, personalized learning.”*

## 02. Educational Offerings.

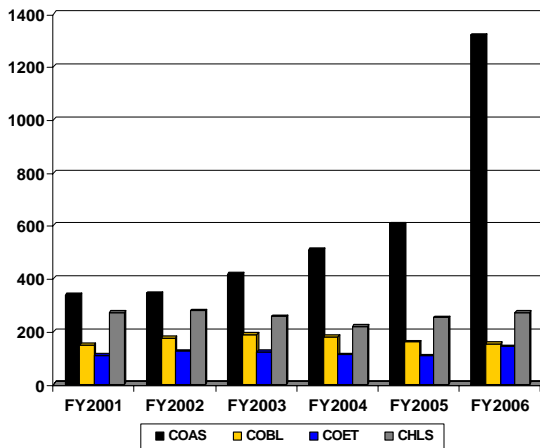
The Division of Academic Affairs consists of four academic colleges, listed in Table IO-1. FHSU has several academic support units including a distance education vehicle (the Virtual College), a Graduate School, Forsyth Library, and the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technologies (see Appendix 1). FHSU is classified as Carnegie Master's Level II and is approved by the Board of Regents to offer Associate, Bachelor, Master, and Specialist degrees.

**Table IO-1. Degrees and Programs Offered.**

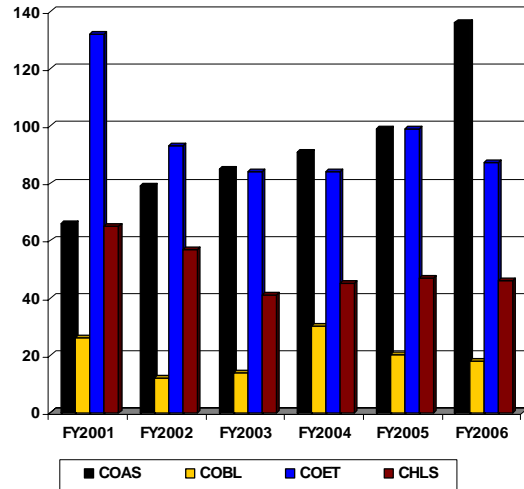
College	Associate Degrees	Bachelor Degrees	Graduate Degrees
Arts and Sciences	1	30	8
Business and Leadership	1	10	2
Education and Technology	0	4	6
Health and Life Sciences	1	9	4
	3	53	20

All baccalaureate graduates must complete an extensive 55-credit hour general education program containing classes in foundation studies (composition and communication, mathematics, personal wellness), international studies, the liberal arts distribution (humanities, mathematics and natural sciences, and social and behavioral sciences), and an integrative course.

**Figure IO-1. Number of Undergraduate Degrees Conferred by Academic College.**



**Figure IO-2. Number of Graduate Degrees Conferred by Academic College.**



Several FHSU degree programs have been identified as outstanding in their fields. The departments of Teacher Education, Educational Administration & Counseling, and Justice Studies, as well as Forsyth Library have been cited by the Kansas Award for Excellence as having a commitment to excellence. The university has also proudly accepted this citation twice. The Department of Leadership Studies has been recognized by its national organization as being an outstanding program. Many programs (Nursing, Speech-Language-Hearing, Music, Social Work, Teacher Education, Radiologic Technology, and Athletic Training) maintain special national accreditations. The College of Business and Leadership is also completing candidacy to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

## 03. Student Base.

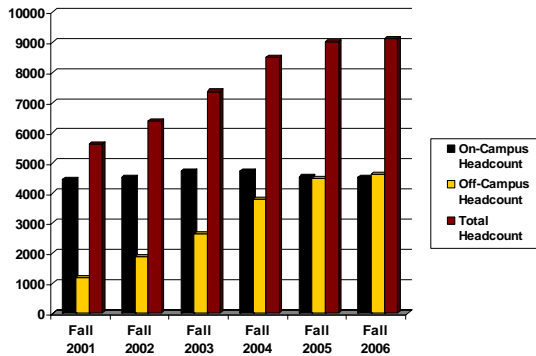
As a learning organization, the university has adopted the strategy known as "mission centered, market smart" to reflect our commitment to our service area while pursuing the opportunity to explore market opportunities through distance learning and unique academic partnerships. Over the past six years this strategy has allowed the university to continue to service its traditional student base as well as expand education to students globally. Students come to the university from every county in the state, 48 different states, and 30 foreign countries. About 60% of our students are Kansans.

Our traditional market of western Kansas has provided the largest number of students. However, over the last 20 years there has been a significant population decline in this area, leaving fewer students to recruit. About 2,000 students graduate from high schools in

western Kansas, and FHSU annually enrolls about 500 of those as new freshmen.

Scholars refer to the shifting dynamic of a “shrinking core market and an expanding periphery.” This phenomenon explains a significant part of the current growth of the university. Enrollment growth has resulted from the commitment FHSU made to students six years ago when adopting the “Affordable Success” trademark and expanding distance education opportunities. While most of our peer institutions have raised tuition anywhere from 60% to 100% in the last four years, FHSU has kept our tuition increases to less than 10% annually. The large tuition differential has created a competitive advantage in the Kansas higher education market. Enrollment increases at other Regents schools have been a modest 2%, but at FHSU enrollment gains have been in double digits for many of the past several years.

**Figure IO-3. Fall Headcount.**



In Fall 2006 FHSU announced another record enrollment of 4,502 students on-campus and 4,620 students off-campus, for a total of 9,122 students served. There were 4,604 students who were considered full-time, and 4,518 who were considered part-time. Total enrollment growth for Fall 2005 from Fall 2004 was 6% and 1% from Fall 2005 to Fall 2006. In Fall 2006 7,675 undergraduate and 1,447 graduate students enrolled.

Analysis of student demographic trends revealed that 4,012 were male students and 5,110 were female students. FHSU largely serves a domestic student population (6,668), but has a strong enrollment of international students (2,454). By ethnicity, 64.8% of our students were white, 26.0% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 5.0% were Hispanic, Native American or Black, and 4.2% did not indicate.

Since the late 1980s, FHSU has focused on educating students in a technologically rich environment. Students are educated in state-of-the-art media-rich classrooms and have access to computers in the residence halls, library, computing center, and a wide variety of specialty labs (e.g. geographic information systems, finance trading room) throughout campus.

Freshmen entering FHSU score an average of 21.3 on their ACT composite, comparable with other regional Regents institutions. Most of our students (66%) demonstrate financial need and receive financial aid of \$27 million in grants, loans, scholarships and other awards.

A cursory examination of the most popular programs shows that incoming freshmen and transfer students favor traditional programs and those designed to meet an evolving workforce (Table IO-2). Several of these high growth areas are contained within the College of Health and Life Sciences. At the graduate level the focus shifts to programs housed in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Education and Technology (Table IO-3).

**Table IO-2. Most Popular Undergraduate Programs for Freshmen and Transfer Students – Fall 2006.**

Degree Program	College	Students
General Studies	COAS	1,110
Nursing	CHLS	143
Management	COBL	112
Pre-Education, Elementary	COET	90
Sociology	COAS	75
Radiologic Technology	CHLS	72
Art	COAS	71
Health and Human Performance	CHLS	69
Information Networking & Telecommunications	COAS	67
Justice Studies	COAS	64

**Table IO-3. Most Popular Graduate Programs – Fall 2006.**

Degree Program	College	Students
Liberal Studies	COAS	290
Education	COET	90
Nursing	CHLS	81
Special Education	COET	68
Communication	COAS	59
Counseling	COET	51

FHSU has implemented a variety of programs designed to help students in the transition to the university environment. Our Academic Advising and Career Exploration Center, Admissions Office, Kelly Center, Athletic Academic Resource Center, Writing Center (support services), Tiger Tots (student daycare facility), Student Health Center, and Financial Aid Office provide a wide variety of services.

Faculty form long-term relationships with students by serving as their advisors and often assist them with locating internships while still in school. If a student shows signs of poor academic performance, the Academic Advising Center and the Kelly Center assist the student in targeted services. Academic advisors also make referrals for students in need of assistance. The Registrar's Office serves a pivotal role in the

academic programming for students. Each of these functional areas, like academic departments, utilizes a variety of metrics measuring both processes and outcomes. Every department has a “front line” individual who is assigned to help answer immediate questions without excessive telephone transfers. Every staff member has been trained in customer service in an attempt to get the quickest answer to a student’s question.

#### 04. Collaborative Relationships.

Most of the key collaborative agreements that exist to support the university can be separated into four categories. First, FHSU has a set of local partners that serve to promote the university. One of the closest relationships is with our Endowment Association who coordinates fundraising for the Capital Campaign and scholarship funds. Other local partners include Commerce Bank, the Volga German Society, and many local supporters of athletic and cultural events.

Second, FHSU has a variety of regional and national collaborations that facilitate student recruitment. Our large service area affords us little advantage for student recruitment. FHSU has been proactive in looking to higher growth regions in the state and the surrounding four-state region to insure long-term success. In 2003 FHSU and other Regents schools implemented a policy that allowed a third tier of tuition – contiguous tuition for students coming from our four neighboring states. In its first year FHSU saw an increase of about 40 first-time freshmen (about 5% of our total). FHSU also collaborates with many of the community colleges in this part of the state to offer 2+2 arrangements and special articulation agreements with technical schools. FHSU and two other Regents schools have continued to offer on-site programs to students in southwest Kansas under the AccessUs program. Finally, the university’s relationship with the United States Navy has produced an educational opportunity for enlisted sailors and officers. FHSU is one of 16 colleges selected as a Navy College Partner.

Third, an important portion of the growth of the university is represented by our relationships with a variety of international academic partners. Our partnership with the Chinese Ministry of Education system produced a unique opportunity when they approved our Bachelor of General Studies degree. Chinese students desiring an American undergraduate degree complete the last 30+ hours through the Virtual College and receive both Chinese and American degrees. Almost 2,500 Chinese students are participating in this program via distance education. This arrangement has been officially approved for Bakheshir University in Turkey.

Finally, FHSU maintains a variety of relationships with external peers and accrediting agencies. FHSU holds accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools through 2007. The university has been active

in presenting the results of its quality management initiative and holds membership in the American Society for Quality, National Consortium for Continuous Improvement, and actively supports the Kansas Award for Excellence program. FHSU also encourages specialized accreditation to assure departmental quality.

#### 05. Faculty and Staff.

FHSU employs both classified (staff designation) and unclassified (faculty/administrative appointment) personnel. Salary and benefit expenditures represent the single largest monetary commitment of Fort Hays State University. FHSU, like every other institution, has faced serious challenges in staffing due to decreased state funding. However, staffing and compensation have remained stable due to Virtual College revenues and position attrition. FHSU has lost approximately 5% of its state base budget over the past six years.

During FY2006, FHSU employed a total of 745.85 FTE classified and unclassified staff members.

**Table IO-4. FTE Positions by KBOR Category and Classification for FY2006.**

Category	Classification	FTE
Instruction	Unclassified	311.5
Public Service	Unclassified	15.4
Academic Support	Unclassified	49.2
Student Services	Unclassified	37.0
Institutional Support	Unclassified	19.2
Physical Plant Administration	Unclassified	2.0
Other	Unclassified	12.6
Educational and General	Classified	254.2
Auxiliary Services	Classified	29.6
Other	Classified	15.0

Similar to any other institution of higher education, building the highest quality faculty is a top priority. At the end of FY2005, 139 faculty held tenured appointments, and 75 were employed in tenure-track positions. The terminal degree is held by 217 of the teaching faculty. All new faculty participate in an extensive orientation during their entire first year. Faculty are collectively represented by a long-standing elected Faculty Senate and Graduate Council. About 185 tenured and tenure-track faculty are in the bargaining unit represented by a local American Association of University Professors chapter. Table IO-5 details FHSU faculty salaries by academic rank.

**Table IO-5. Average Salaries by Rank for AY2006.**

Rank	Average Salary	Number
Professor	\$66,374	52
Associate Professor	\$54,733	64
Assistant Professor	\$45,474	87
Instructor	\$38,365	62

FHSU employs 129 male classified staff members and 172 female staff members with an average salary of \$26,047. Position control and salaries for classified positions are monitored by the Kansas Department of Administration. Staff are represented in campus governance through an elected Classified Senate.

## 06. Facilities, Equipment and Technology.

FHSU has an annual budget allocation of \$52.1 million (FY2007), which comes from state funds and tuition. Additionally, the university has restricted funds that are used for operating expenses in the amount of \$22.3 million (Table IO-6). The university has an annual economic impact on the city and county of \$177 million and is the second largest employer in the county.

**Table IO-6. Actual FY2006 Budget Expenses.**

Budget Line Item	Budget Amount
Instruction	\$28,651,641
Academic Support	\$8,537,106
Student Services	\$5,334,067
Institutional Support	\$5,368,785
Physical Plant Administration	\$7,149,860
Research	\$247,010
Public Service	\$2,886,324
Scholarships	\$9,518,143
Auxiliary and Other Expenses	\$5,878,189
<b>Total Operating Budget</b>	<b>\$73,571,125</b>

FHSU continues to be a front-runner in the state in implementing mediated classrooms beginning in the early 1990s. Since then, every new classroom built is equipped with media tools, and every existing classroom has been retrofitted to offer the same media functionality. Students, faculty and staff have access to nearly 2,700 computers. Students also have high speed Ethernet access in their dorm rooms, and in August 2006 the entire campus was covered in a secure wireless umbrella, accessible by all campus visitors, students, and employees. Every faculty and staff member has at least one computer dedicated to them. FHSU has upgraded our infrastructure to be Internet2 compliant. Over the last year, an operations group has implemented our "One Faculty" model with the goal of upgrading all faculty machines to the latest tablet technology by Fall 2007. With Fall 2007 enrollment FHSU plans to become a "laptop" university, requiring uniform technology of all on-

campus students. FHSU continues to be a central point of coordination for IPTV for western Kansas.

The university has a long history of teaching students at a distance and was the number one developer of Blackboard courses in the country in 2003. In addition, more than 500 courses, eight undergraduate and eight master's programs are available at a distance. Faculty extensively use our Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning Technology as they evolve their instructional design practices for both on- and off-campus courses. Expanded support like virtual tutoring and 24/7 technical support have systematically improved our distance education offerings.

FHSU is home to the world renowned Sternberg Museum of Natural History. Annually, over 110,000 people attend a variety of permanent and temporary exhibitions at Sternberg, hosting exhibitions from the Field Museum, among other notable collections. The university farm also serves an important research function for farmers and ranchers of western Kansas.

For citizens of western Kansas, the university serves as a cultural nexus. Last year FHSU recorded nearly 200,000 participants at a wide variety of cultural and social events. As a member of NCAA Division II, FHSU fields football, volleyball, tennis, golf, wrestling, basketball, cross country, track and field, softball, and baseball teams. FHSU is well poised to offer Broadway productions because of the accommodations afforded by the Beach Schmidt Performing Arts Center and Felten-Start Theatre. The Moss-Thorns Art Gallery hosts at least two major exhibitions for the general public as well as hosts artists-in-residence for the joint purpose of teaching students as well as providing a context for their exhibitions.

Fort Hays State University is also home to Forsyth Library, the largest library center in western Kansas, hosting nearly 800,000 volumes. There has been a concerted effort to increase the digital holdings through cooperative arrangements with digital libraries and external partners. Forsyth Library recently partnered with the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Museum to offer video on demand and other digital archival services in return for exclusive access to the priceless collection of NASA memorabilia.

## 07. Competitive Institutions.

Fort Hays State University, like other public universities and colleges in Kansas, is administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. FHSU is the only university located in the western half of the state; however, six community colleges are located in our service area. Distance education classes have allowed place-bound students in western Kansas the ability to complete their baccalaureate degrees in 2+2 partnerships with area community and technical colleges. Statewide, many community colleges and universities (including FHSU) have embraced the challenge of providing educational opportunity to high school students. With

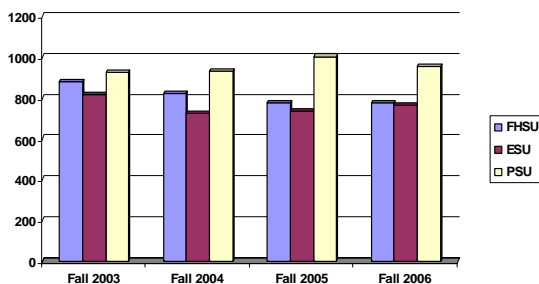
the proliferation of distance education providers there is a growing tendency to view for-profit institutions as competitive.

FHSU has lived under a set of assumptions regarding the market that we are competing within:

- Population centers in eastern Kansas drive the market,
- Population has been on the decline in western Kansas since 1881,
- Enrollment in western Kansas high schools has been on the decline for over 50 years,
- Staying competitive requires accessing the largest population centers in western Kansas,
- Distance education to support place-bound students is a necessity, and
- Enrollment from the contiguous states can offset losses from population decline.

FHSU offers many distinctive programs, several with appeal to a natural market (Agriculture, Business, Nursing, and Education). While many community colleges offer classes in these areas, FHSU is the only competitor in the area to offer degree programs in these areas. The Kansas Board of Regents monitors program development and tracks duplicative programs with the goal of increasing the overall efficiency of the system while providing quality education to all students.

**Figure IO-4. Comparison of Regional Regents Institutions in New Freshmen Students.**



FHSU has been a leader in development of new programs and degrees to meet emerging market demands. Our mission highlights the role of technology in educating our students, and over the last ten years FHSU has initiated a variety of degree programs to educate our computer literate students. The Bachelor of Science degree in Information Networking and Telecommunications has become the degree of choice for students interested in web design and CISCO networking. Our customizable Bachelor of General Studies and Master of Liberal Studies degree programs allow students to complete theme-based degree programs in emerging fields. Our Bachelor of Science in Leadership Studies has become a popular alternative for students seeking “soft skill” expertise.

**Table IO-7. Majors in Selected New Degree Programs.**

Degree Program	Majors Fall 2005	Majors Fall 2006
BS, Secondary Education	1	3
BA/BS, Information Networking and Telecommunications	182	200
MS, Instructional Technology	21	29
MLS, Liberal Studies	373	317
BA/BS, Justice Studies	226	232
BS, Geography	42	37
BA/BS, Organizational Leadership	127	124
AS, General Studies	47	57
BS, Technology Leadership	21	40
BS, Athletic Training	31	36

## 08. Opportunities and Vulnerabilities.

Over the past three years FHSU committed to substantive action on a variety of projects of opportunity with the belief that improvement in these areas would better position the university for long-term growth. The university’s strategic goals are articulated in our KBOR Performance Agreement and our AQIP Action Projects:

- Improve undergraduate student’s writing abilities,
- Develop mobile learning environment,
- Internationalize the campus and curriculum,
- Strategically manage new enrollment, opportunities around the Kansas Turnpike and our service area,
- Improve student learner outcomes in computing.

One of the key challenges that FHSU faces is in the area of new markets. With our shrinking base of students FHSU has worked closely with other institutions, both in Kansas and beyond, in an effort to boost otherwise flat enrollments. Our partnerships with international institutions like SIAS International University, University of International Business and Economics, Shenyang Normal University, and Tak Ming College in China, and Bakheshir University in Turkey are maturing, allowing for cultural exchanges and new enrollment markets. In lean fiscal times, these partnerships have allowed FHSU to grow enrollment and provide a stable fiscal environment for our faculty, staff and students.

FHSU faces the same specialized accreditation challenges that other universities are facing. Our College of Education and Technology was recently reviewed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and granted continued accreditation. FHSU continues in candidacy in the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) as a means of positioning the programs in our College of Business and Leadership.

A final challenge facing the university comes from strategically adapting to the new state funding model of tuition ownership. Even as FHSU works to understand the implications of this new way of funding higher education, reductions in budget have forced a rapid rethinking of how we can best position ourselves for successful long-term funding. Once the state budget for higher education is stabilized, FHSU can quickly and strategically respond. FHSU maintains a strong strategic planning model that connects quality improvement with goal stimulation and resource allocation. The Performance Agreement system of the Kansas Board of Regents, implemented in Fall 2005, reflects an organized attempt to link resources and strategy at the state level. At the campus level the strategic planning process is under substantial review and revision.

Professor Emeritus James L. Forsythe, in his 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary book Lighthouse on the Plains: Fort Hays

State University, 1902-2002, reflects the state of the campus most adroitly,

*“Dedicated faculty, service to western Kansas, the presence of an agrarian value system, the Christian heritage, loyalty to the region, dedication carried to the extreme of sacrifice, the aspirations of starry-eyed farm youths, patriotism, and, of course, rugged individualism, these were some of the underlying themes that I found. Overriding these themes and perhaps equal with the theme of a special destiny is the pioneering spirit. General Philip Sheridan thought that it was impossible for anyone to live in the area that is now served by Fort Hays State. Those who came to settle were beset by many tribulations, and Fort Hays faced the same tribulations... But down deep at the local level on campus, it was the pioneering spirit that permitted the dreams of the visionary leaders to come true.”*