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Docking Institute of Public Affairs

ANNUAL REPORT

20

45th YEAR



Policy Fellows

- Paul Adams, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Dean, College of Education
- Micki Armstrong, M.S.
Fort Hays State University
Coordinator/Mediator
Family Development -
Services (Retired)
- Reese Barrick, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Director, Sternberg Museum of
Natural History
- Emily Breit, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Economics, Finance
& Accounting
- Melissa Dixon, B.F.A.
Hays Convention
& Visitors Bureau
- Larry Dreiling, M.S., F.A.A.E.
Freelance Journalist
- Robert Duffy, M.A.
Fort Hays State University
Drug & Alcohol Counselor
- D. Nicole English, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Sociology
- Jesse Jacobs, D.B.A., C.B.E.
Fort Hays State University
Economics, Finance
& Accounting
- Thomas Johansen, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Economics, Finance
& Accounting
- Scott R. Jones, Ed.S.
Missouri Department of Elementary
& Secondary Education
- Becky Kiser, M.S.
Hays Post / Eagle Radio
News Reporter
- Richard Lisichenko, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Geosciences
- Deborah Ludwig, M.L.S.
Fort Hays State University
Forsyth Library (Retired)
- Jean Majercin, M.P.S.
Fort Hays State University
Sociology
- Mary Martin, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Applied Business Studies
- Kate McGonigal, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Sociology
- Alexandra Middlewood, Ph.D.
Wichita State University
Political Science

- Patrick R. Miller, Ph.D.
Kent State University
Political Science
- Luis Montelongo, M.B.A.
Educational Management Solutions
National Market Coordinator
- Claire Nickerson, M.L.I.S.
Fort Hays State University
Tebo Library
- Lori Peek, Ph.D.
University of Colorado - Boulder
Sociology
- Chapman Rackaway, Ph.D.
Radford University
Political Science
- Wendy Rohleder-Sook, J.D.
Fort Hays State University
Chair, Communication Studies, Law,
& Political Science
- Samuel Schreyer, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Economics, Finance & Accounting
- Kevin A. Shaffer, M.S., CCAI
Fort Hays State University
Informatics
- Michael A. Smith, Ph.D.
Emporia State University
Political Science
- Morgan Steele, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Criminal Justice
- Jay Steinmetz, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Political Science
- April N. Terry, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Criminal Justice
- Stephanie Weigel, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Psychology
- Greg Weisenborn, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Management

Student Staff


- Graduate Research Assistant**
Hannah Cross
- Student Research Assistants**
Mickey Mason
Kori Massner
Mamadou Oumar Ndiaye
Anabeth (AB) Ratzlaff
Katelyn Stieben

Senior Policy Fellows

- Joseph Aistrup, Ph.D.
Auburn University
Professor - Political Science
Docking Institute Director, 1999 - 2002
- Mark Bannister, J.D.
Boise State University
Dean - College of Business & Economics
Docking Institute Director, 1992 - 1999
- Gary Brinker, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Professor - Sociology
Docking Institute Director, 2008 - 2017
- Preston Gilson, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Emeritus - Finance
- Larry Gould, Ph.D.
Fort Hays State University
Political Science (Retired)
Docking Institute Founder & Director, 1984 - 1991
- Leslie Z. Paige, M.S., Ed.S., NCSP
Fort Hays State University
Director - Office of Scholarship & Sponsored
Projects (Retired)

Message from the Staff


We are here for you! The Docking Institute staff welcomes the challenge of meeting your organization's needs, and, as appropriate, we invite policy fellows to projects to help ensure that the insights from our work are always expertly informed. We invite you to review our 2025 projects and client list. Visit our website for more details about the activities that interest you and, follow us on LinkedIn for posts highlighting successes of organization and community initiatives. Never hesitate to reach out to us for a conversation about how the Docking Institute might assist your organization or community.


Brett Zollinger, Ph.D.
Director


Jian Sun, Ph.D.
Assistant Director


Leslie Watson-Divittore, M.S.
Research Coordinator Administrative Specialist


Marisa M. Johnson, M.B.A.
Administrative Specialist


Michael Walker, M.S.
Research Scholar



Hays, Kansas
www.fhsu.edu/docking
(785) 628-4197
FAX: (785) 628-4188



Docking Institute of
Public Affairs

Survey Research

Survey & Focus Group Research

The Docking Institute provides professional survey design, data gathering, and data analysis services. Docking Institute researchers confer with clients to select the most appropriate survey methodology based on the client's needs, goals, and budget. Available survey methods include online surveys, telephone surveys (using a 10-station CATI system), mail questionnaires, videoconferencing personal interviews, a combination of these survey methods, and in-person or videoconferencing focus groups.

- FHSU Strategic Affiliation** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Online survey of Fort Hays Tech | North Central; Fort Hays Tech | Northwest students; and randomly selected Fort Hays State University main campus students
- Food and Hunger Initiatives** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Mail survey about FHSU on-campus student food insecurity
- Kansas Speaks Survey** - The Docking Institute of Public Affairs - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Online survey of Kansans to assess opinions and attitudes about public policy, public affairs issues, and elected representatives
- Graham County Community Development** - Hill City, Kansas - Mail survey to measure perceptions and attitudes about a prospective multipurpose gym
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health** - Topeka, Kansas - Telephone, mail, and online surveys to collect workforce data from primary care, mental health, and dental practice sites
- Center for Applied Research and Evaluation** - Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas - Telephone survey for Managed Care Organizations (MCO) in Kansas
- University Support Staff (USS) and Unclassified Professional Staff (UPS)** - Online survey of University Support Staff and Unclassified Professional Staff employed at six universities: Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Kansas State University, University of Kansas, Pittsburg State University, and Wichita State University addressing satisfaction with work assignments, wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement; changes in workloads; holding or looking for second jobs; and additional work-related issues
- Health and Wellness Services** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - On-campus student survey measuring self-reported use of alcohol and other substances
- Office of Administration and Finance** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Professional Development online survey of FHSU benefits-eligible staff members, academic program chairs, and deans
- Financial Assistance Office** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Online survey of FHSU spring semester 2025 students
- College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Focus Group

Program Evaluation

Process & Outcomes

Conducting assessments of both program implementation and outcomes is essential for agencies seeking to make informed decisions about program effectiveness. Government and nonprofit organizations often need tangible documentation of a program's effectiveness to receive or maintain funding.

- Office of the President** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Evaluation of continued affiliation with United States Distance Learning Association
- College of Education** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Validity and Reliability testing of new teacher education assessments Phases 1 and 2
- Arizona Supreme Court** - Phoenix, Arizona - Multi-survey data processing and analysis for the Arizona Judicial Performance Review Program including survey process improvement
- Kansas Academy of Mathematics and Science (KAMS)** - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Formative evaluation, including online surveys of KAMS students and parents and a focus group with students
- National Science Foundation's Grant** - Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas - Grant to advance health equity for gender-based violence survivors in Western Kansas, including design, data collection, and data analysis
- Fort Hays Tech | Northwest**, Goodland, Kansas - Evaluation of the "SEATSS - System for Early Alert, Tutoring, and Student Support" program
- National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Grant** - Science Teachers for Rural America, A Post-Baccalaureate STEM Teacher Licensure Program to Prepare Teachers for Rural Places - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Third-party evaluation including online surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, reviewing outcomes, and assessing program progress
- National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Grant** - Recruiting, Preparing, and Retaining STEM Teachers of Western Kansas - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Third-party evaluation including online surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, reviewing outcomes, and assessing program progress
- National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Grant** - Certified Rural Enhanced STEM Teachers (CREST) - Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas - Third-party evaluation including online surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, reviewing outcomes, and assessing program progress

Public Affairs

Public Affairs & Grant Writing

Through public affairs programming, the Docking Institute provides critical resources for today's public leaders to plan for a successful future.

- Kansas County Treasurers Association** - Vetting and certification services for KCTA's training program
- Kansas County Treasurers Association** - Annual maintenance of online course instruction related to the duties, responsibilities, and the operation of a treasurer's office
- Local Election Forum** - Hays, Kansas - Collaboration with the American Democracy Project, FHSU Student Government Association, Tiger Media Network, and The Chamber in Hays, Kansas to coordinate and co-sponsor local debates for the Hays City Commission and USD 489 Board of Education candidates
- Smoky Hills PBS Television Station** - Bunker Hill, Kansas - Moderating live call-in program "The Kansas Legislature" featuring Kansas Senators and Representatives discussing state issues during the legislative session

Housing Studies

Needs & Trends

Effective decision-making and planning are dependent upon valid and reliable information. Federal and state granting agencies require accurate survey/assessment data to authorize funding for housing projects vital to communities, cities, and counties of all sizes. Businesses are increasingly looking at features such as housing quality, availability, and affordability for their workers when selecting new site locations. With up-to-date housing information, site selectors can accurately evaluate your community, city, and/or county as being acceptable for their labor force and, consequently, locate their operations in your area. With correct and accurate housing information, public officials can correctly determine housing needs and trends and can apply scarce public funds in an efficient and effective manner.

- Phillips County Economic Development** - Phillipsburg, Kansas - Housing needs analysis to document key characteristics of the housing stock in Phillips County, providing trend and comparative analyses to facilitate decisions/actions for promoting adequate housing in Phillips County

Strategic Planning

Environmental Scan, Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Visionary leadership begins with a plan that strategically prioritizes scarce community or organizational resources. The Docking Institute has worked with more than 60 entities, including state agencies, school districts, educational institutions, museums, communities, economic development organizations, and chambers of commerce to conduct strategic planning. The Docking Institute customizes the strategic planning process to meet each organization's requirements.

- Kansas Museums Association** - Wichita State University - Public listening session, membership survey, board goals, and strategies session
- Tebo Library** - Fort Hays State University - Hays, Kansas

Economic Impact

Economic Impact, Cost-Benefit & Feasibility Analysis

Policy assessment often requires an economic impact analysis of existing and proposed activities or programs. Government agencies and nonprofit organizations can use economic impact assessments to determine the total monetary benefit of their activities in a local or regional economy. Our researchers have analyzed the economic impact of manufacturers, service organizations, hospitals, correctional facilities, institutions of higher learning, business incubators, infrastructure upgrades, and other existing and potential programs and projects. Decision-makers often turn to cost-benefit analysis (CBA) as a tool for understanding whether benefits of a program/project exceed the costs. The purpose of a CBA is to comprehensively identify and measure all relevant economic costs and benefits that accrue to a program and can be used for a projection of whether income streams will achieve sufficient thresholds.

- MABLE Grant** - Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas - Grant to advance technologies to improve the quality of life and economic empowerment for persons with disabilities through an indoor
- Salina Airport Authority** - Salina, Kansas - Economic impact of the Salina Regional Airport and Airport Industrial Center
- The Center for Counseling and Consultation** - Great Bend, Kansas - Operational Feasibility Study of a Crisis Intervention Center (CIC)

Labor Studies

Employment & Migration Studies

Based on government labor data alone, firms considering relocation or expansion may often conclude incorrectly that there is not sufficient qualified labor to meet their needs. A labor study assesses the labor supply, availability, and skill level of a region. Labor studies determine the working status, education training levels, willingness to commute, desired wages and benefits of people looking for employment or available for the right opportunity.

- Ponca City Development Authority** - Ponca City, Oklahoma - Mail and online surveys assessing labor force availability in north central Oklahoma and south central Kansas
- Chillicothe Development, Inc.** - Chillicothe, Missouri - Mail and online surveys assessing labor force availability in north central Missouri
- Central Missouri Economic Development Alliance** - Warrensburg, Missouri - Mail and online surveys assessing labor force availability in central Missouri

