

Strategic Affiliation Monthly Newsletter

April 2025

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC AFFILIATION - Peter Laipson, Ph.D.

Professional and Continuing Education at FHSU pilots its first Business Retention Expansion program course

The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) course will equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to lead task forces within communities to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate programs that support local businesses and economic growth. This course is intended to challenge and engage learners to foster the practical application of BRE principles and is designed for economic development professionals, government officials, community stakeholders, and those with a vested interest in improving the business environment and overall health and sustainability of rural communities. Whether novice or experienced, this course offers valuable resources and techniques for your BRE Program success. The course results in an intermediate digital credential issued by FHSU Professional & Continuing Education.



Students who complete the BRE course will be prepared to...

1. Transform economic insights into local action by learning to apply proven economic development principles creatively and effectively in their community.
2. Harness data to inform strategic decisions by exploring innovative business assessment methodologies and mastering data analysis techniques to uncover actionable insights that can enhance local business performance.
3. Build powerful stakeholder alliances and develop

comprehensive strategies for engaging public and private stakeholders and fostering collaborative relationships that amplify community and economic development efforts.

4. Utilize advanced communication skills to negotiate with businesses and stakeholders clearly and effectively.
5. Gain the leadership skills needed to spearhead a community-led task force, inspiring collective action and fostering a culture of collaboration among local businesses.



Course completers will be prepared to create a detailed and actionable Business Retention and Expansion plan tailored to address their community's specific needs and strengths. They will also move forward armed with a rich tool kit of BRE resources, including templates, best practices, and connections to economic and community development networks. Finally, BRE program graduates will learn how to leverage sophisticated project management tools and BRE software to increase any initiative's efficiency and effectiveness.

(continued)

The BRE pilot offering will be offered via three community-based cohorts in Beloit, Goodland, and Hays. Some modules will be delivered on-site in person at FHSU in Hays, while other modules will be offered virtually through FHSU's online platform and/or with participants joining via Zoom.

The FHSU BRE course is organized around the following seven modules:

- Module One: The Big Picture – setting the stage for BRE success
- Module Two: Assembling a BRE dream team
- Module Three: Crafting a winning BRE strategy
- Module Four: Planning & launching a BRE initiative
- Module Five: BRE business visits & data-gathering
- Modules Six & Seven: From data to action

Charting new academic pathways between the technical colleges to Fort Hays State University

Several Affiliation Implementation Teams (AITs) are currently mapping academic program pathways from the technical colleges to FHSU. These pathways are designed to provide students with an opportunity to smoothly and efficiently progress in their educational journey as they expand their education and training experiences, and, for many, earn an advanced degree.



Completed pathway maps - Fort Hays Technical Colleges to FHSU

Agriculture

From
A.A.S. in Precision Agriculture Technology at FH Tech | NW

A.A.S. in Agricultural Equipment Technology at FH Tech | NC

To
B.S. in Agricultural Business at FHSU



Nursing and Allied Health

From
A.A.S. in Respiratory Care at FH Tech | NC and NW
A.A.S. in Medical Assistant at FH Tech | NW
A.A.S. in Healthcare Specialist at FH Tech | NW*
*Degree still pending

To
B.S. in Health Sciences at FHSU

Applied Technology

From
A.A.S. in almost all applied technology degree fields, including construction management, construction technology, engineering design technology, manufacturing technology (at FH Tech | NC and NW)

To
B.S. in Technology Studies at FHSU

From
A.A.S. in industrial-based programs from both tech colleges that do not align or have direct content overlap with the disciplines above (e.g. electrical, plumbing, HVAC, heavy equipment)

To
B.S. in Technology Leadership at FHSU