

FHSU thriving through resilience

We conclude not just another academic year – but a year when Fort Hays State University not only survived the pandemic, but thrived. That is resilience in action.

I am deeply grateful to the entire campus and local community who came together to ensure our students, colleagues, and neighbors were well cared for as we blazed our path together. The challenges of the past year did not deter our community from our relentless student-centered and learning-focused priorities.

I think I might have been standing a little taller as our graduates celebrated their sweet victories last week. I know my smile was bigger. What a year!

In addition to commencement ceremonies, we also had the opportunity to say thank you to our retirees. This year, we honored both our 2020 and 2021 retirees –57 colleagues who provided a total of 1,443 years of service to FHSU. We also congratulated our faculty who earned tenure and promotions.

While there were several other accomplishments celebrated in the past few weeks, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight a small sample of accolades earned by our faculty and staff this spring.

Laura Wilson, associate professor of geosciences, was featured on the Paleo Nerds podcast. I have become a big fan of podcasts and was so proud of Laura to have been chosen for this interview. Intrigued? Download the podcast and listen to episode 30: Diving into Hell's Aquarium with Laura Wilson.

Kim Chappell, assistant professor of advanced education programs, received a grant to enhance our partnership with Seward County Community College to develop a team-teaching model to improve student learning in career and technical education.

Our counseling program earned accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs. This rigorous self-study and peer evaluation process entails an assessment of the program's resources, objectives, strengths, and limitations with the ultimate purpose of improving the educational effectiveness of the program. Accreditation signifies that the content and quality of the program was evaluated and meets standards set by the profession. Students can be assured that appropriate knowledge and skill areas are taught and that the program is stable – professionally and financially.

Paul Adams, dean of the College of Education, received two Kansas NASA Spacegrant awards to conduct teacher workshops on engineering for middle school teachers and high altitude balloon launch system to support teacher and student research. Yes, I cannot resist it: Dr. Adams is far out!

Matthew Clay, assistant professor in teacher education, and Scott Gregory, director of Field Experiences, were awarded the Teacher Education Competitive Grant from the Kansas Board of Regents. This grant was established to increase the number of licensed teachers in hard-to-fill disciplines and/or underserved geographic areas of the state. This has always been a priority

of Fort Hays State. Did you know that in 1911 our faculty voted to offer correspondence courses free so that one-room school teachers across western Kansas could afford to gain the education required to teach? That in a nutshell describes our passion for access and affordability and why we are the best value in higher education – anywhere.

Eric Deneault, associate professor of applied technology, was listed among the 2021 leaders to watch by the journal, Technology and Engineering Teacher. This annual list recognizes those who have contributed to the technology and engineering education field for many years and are known for their teaching, written work, presentations, research, and recognition received from professional groups.

Edie McCracken, director of the Memorial Union, was awarded the Founders Award by the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA). The Founders Award is the association's highest honor, given to those individuals who, during the years, have given their time and talents to contribute significantly to NACA. Edie has exemplified the standards of professional integrity and conduct, achieved stature in her profession, holds the esteem of colleagues and peers, and has worked to further the field of campus activities programming. This is not only a proud moment for all of us to share with Edie but another signal that Tiger Nation excels in the classroom as well as in the delivery of student services and student life.

Leslie Paige, research and scholarship coordinator, won the Presidential Award from the National Association of School Psychologists. This award recognizes excellence in the provision of school psychological services by a field-based practitioner and serves to recognize an outstanding practicing school psychologist. Leslie has earned this award four times!

Three faculty in the Department of Geosciences – Todd Moore, associate professor; Rich Lisichenko, professor; and Tom Schafer, associate professor – were awarded research funding from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to collect samples of drinking water from domestic water wells in the alluvial plains of Prairie Dog, Sappa, and Beaver Creeks in northwest Kansas. Once KDHE tests these samples for commonly occurring contaminants, the Department of Geosciences will map and spatially analyze the results. What a great service to our region.

Teresa Clouch, assistant vice president for student affairs, was elected to serve on the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) board of directors. The NASPA board establishes the association's strategic goals and ensures that they are being achieved. NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. The association provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and eight U.S. territories. As part of her service to the national board, Teresa will also serve as the IV-West regional director. The IV-West encompasses the states of Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming, as well as the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Christy Craig, associate professor of sociology, was featured in the Washington Post for her research on women's book clubs: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/03/27/womens-book-clubs-history-oprah-reese/>. Great read!

Also featured in the Washington Post was the very interesting research on Tornado Alley by Grady Dixon, dean of the Werth College of Science, Technology and Mathematics. His work was also featured in Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/marshallshepherd/2021/03/30/why->

