

A university's success is rooted in the spirit of generosity

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

– Leo Buscaglia

I love this quote because it captures the essence of Fort Hays State University – a university centered on creating transformational experiences for our students. Those experiences begin with access, followed by effort, which then leads to transformation. It is a formula resulting in a university that excels at unlocking untapped potential. And at the center of it all is our donors.

Access

The college choice journey begins with “fit,” affordability, and being an institution of quality. Our donors’ philanthropy to the university has the Journey campaign ahead of schedule – making college affordable through scholarships and driving academic quality with endowed professorships and support for our academic departments. Donor-initiated projects such as the new Fischli-Wills Center for Student Success propel students to success and enrich the student-athlete experience. The results:

- 19 consecutive years of record enrollment (15,908 students) and a 12-percent increase in serving more Kansans (8,048) over the past seven years. We serve students in every county in Kansas, every state in the nation and every branch of the military. Our on-campus enrollment includes students from 35 countries and our overall enrollment is represented by students from 53 countries.
- The Journey campaign has raised \$38,605,361 thus far for scholarships. Total scholarship funds allocated during the same period was \$15,619,013.
- We are one of a select few universities (less than 10 in the nation) to earn certification from the U.S. Distance Learning Association. This certification is based on a thorough, 120-point evaluation administered by senior leaders in distance education. We also earned a top-10-in-the-nation ranking from Washington Monthly magazine as one of the best colleges for adult learners.

"I want to thank you for your financial support! I always knew that I wanted to attend a university, but I didn't think it would ever be possible. It is because of people like you that I am here at Fort Hays State University following my dreams. Thank you!"

– Joni Enns, Satanta junior majoring in agricultural education

Effort

One of the enduring concepts in college student success is that of quality of effort – the more effort the student exerts toward the college experience, the more likely the student will not only graduate but truly tap into their talents and dreams.

As a partner in student learning, the university is responsible for investing in the quality of the facilities and experiences it offers in order to inspire a matching quality of effort by its students. Learning is all about that partnership.

Generous philanthropy has made it possible for the university to build new, state-of-the-art facilities and create more powerful experiences for our students. We thank them all for enabling FHSU to:

- Offer more than 110 graduate programs and over 70 undergraduate majors;

- Engage students through paid internships, scientific fieldwork and research, study abroad, varsity athletics, intramural sports, concerts, theatre productions, gallery exhibits, and student clubs and organizations;
- Renovate Stoup Hall in partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation and Hays Med for a cutting-edge nursing simulation lab; dedicate the Schmidt Foundation Center for Art and Design; and break ground this spring for the Fischli-Wills Center for Student Success.

So far in our Journey campaign, 22,629 donors have given a total of \$92,750,000, and \$2,813,293 of those funds have come from 63,427 gifts under \$100. That is undeniable proof that every gift matters in our mission to unlock the untapped potential of our students and help them grow into engaged citizen leaders.

“Dr. Beth Walizer, a professor in teacher education, was and still is very influential in my life. She has a deep passion for teaching and the needs of her students. To this day, I still enjoy working with her and bouncing ideas off of her! I'm proud to be a Tiger because it's full of people who work to make sure FHSU students are successful!”

– **Andrew Dempewolf**, principal at Bickerdyke Elementary School, Russell; B.S. in education 2012, M.S. in education administration 2014

Transformation

A great education transforms students. Devani Prieto’s transformation story started in elementary school, where she met social worker Michelle Daniel. Devani was born in Juarez, Mexico, and spoke no English when she met Michelle at Riley Middle School in Great Bend. At a very young age, Devani knew that one day she would do for others what Michelle did for her. She too would become a social worker.

At Fort Hays State University, faculty in the social work program immediately recognized Devani’s determination. For four years, she worked full time, commuting to class from Great Bend several times a week. She graduated summa cum laude in 2018 with a 4.0 GPA. She is now a social work specialist at Larned State Hospital, doing what she believes she was born to do – keeping hope alive for others.

Clearly, in living her dream, Devani pays forward the transformational experience that Fort Hays State provided for her – and that is the impact of a Fort Hays State University education.