

Student Engagement & Belonging

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Overview

At Fort Hays State University, the Office of Student Engagement is passionate about creating unforgettable experiences for students. During the 2025–2026 academic year, we strengthened student connections, cultivated leadership, and amplified community impact through dynamic programs and events that empowered Tigers to thrive and leave a lasting legacy on campus and beyond.

One significant addition to our office this year was the return of Tigers in Service. Previously housed within the Civic Engagement Office, this initiative was transitioned to Student Engagement to expand service opportunities for students. Through Tigers in Service, our goal is to empower students, foster personal growth, and prepare them to emerge as engaged global citizens and leaders.

Points of Pride 2025–2026

Student Involvement

FHSU Student Engagement continued to increase student participation, supporting more than 120 active student organizations. Over 2,000 unique students engaged in campus activities throughout the year, demonstrating a strong commitment to community, involvement, and leadership. Another significant addition to involvement was bringing back a very successful SOAR Awards to recognize our student organizations. We are very proud to bring a successful gathering like this back!

Signature Fall Events

Event	Attendance	Notes
Logan Mize Concert (w/ Sigma Chi)	953 students	Largest fall event
Fall Fest	353 students	Family-friendly tradition
DJ PForreal	153 students	New late-night event
Homecoming	Over 1,400 students	T-shirts and major costs funded through a Student Affairs
Tree Lighting	443 students	Annual campus tradition

Signature Spring Events

Event	Attendance	Notes
Grocery Bingo	288 students	Popular giveaway event
Stuff A Tiger	640 students	Biennial campus tradition
College Cup	108 students	Annual competition among the colleges
SOAR Awards	231 students	Student leadership recognition event
Jammin Into Summer	304 students	Annual end-of-year concert and social event

Welcome Weekend & Back-to-School Picnic

The 2025 Welcome Weekend and Back-to-School Picnic continued to provide meaningful opportunities for students to connect and engage with campus. Despite weather challenges impacting attendance, the Back-to-School Picnic welcomed 881 students and served as an important opportunity for students to reconnect at the start of the semester.

Welcome Weekend remained a tremendous success, with 92% of incoming first-year students participating in Student Engagement-sponsored Welcome Weekend activities. These programs fostered school spirit, introduced students to campus resources and traditions, and helped create a strong sense of belonging from the very beginning of their FHSU experience.

Together, these events played a vital role in welcoming students to campus and building connections that support student success throughout the academic year.

Leadership and Development Programs

The Office of Student Engagement elevated leadership development by conducting one-on-one consultations with more than 30 student organizations, providing tailored guidance to enhance organizational success.

The Tiger Leadership Academy welcomed 95 students representing a variety of organizations and offered workshops focused on communication, teamwork, and strategic planning. Additionally, the Black and Gold Academy empowered students to strengthen their leadership skills within their organizations, fostering a new generation of confident Tiger leaders.

Community and Campus Impact

FHSU students made an extraordinary impact by contributing more than 7,000 volunteer hours through initiatives such as Tiger Day of Service and partnerships with organizations including the Hays Food Bank and Ellis County Animal Shelter. These efforts created a significant positive impact throughout the Hays community while reinforcing FHSU's commitment to civic engagement.

The Alternative Spring Break program brought 30 students to Colorado, where they served local communities through a variety of meaningful service projects.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, 24 students spent their day off delivering gifts to members of the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) community throughout Hays, creating meaningful connections while honoring Dr. King's legacy.

As mentioned previously, the reintroduction of Tigers in Service created numerous opportunities for student involvement, including pancake feeds, the Tiger Tots partnership, and a large-scale care package initiative. The ten students serving on Tigers in Service will continue to plan and expand service opportunities in the years ahead.

Conclusion

The Office of Student Engagement is proud of its accomplishments during the 2025–2026 academic year. These achievements have enriched the FHSU experience and empowered students to lead, connect, and serve. We look forward to building on this momentum and creating even more impactful opportunities in the coming year.

Focus Areas for 2026–2027

Increase Student Organization Participation by 12%

Action: Expand outreach to new students during the first month of classes. Increase Student Engagement staff presence in Freshman Seminar courses to promote involvement opportunities.

Boost Attendance at Student Engagement Events by 15%

Action: Strengthen collaboration efforts by ensuring each major event partners with at least one student organization.

Increase Tracked Events in TigerLink by 15%

Action: Provide one-on-one training for student organizations to improve event attendance tracking and reporting through TigerLink.

Expand Service Learning and Community Projects by 10%

Action: Utilize the growth of Tigers in Service to add more than 10 new service opportunities. Reintroduce Swipe Out Hunger as a signature service initiative during the fall semester.

Implement and Refine a Co-Curricular Assessment Model for Leadership Development

Action: Continue development and implementation of the TIGERS Assessment model.

By the Numbers 2025–2026

For the third consecutive year, the Office of Student Engagement operated under the Collaborative Programming Model, with staff and students working together to create and facilitate programs that promote belonging, leadership, fraternity and sorority life, service, community engagement, and student success.

Throughout the year, Student Engagement partnered with numerous departments and organizations across campus, launched innovative programs, redesigned existing traditions, and expanded opportunities for service and leadership development.

As a result, Student Engagement facilitated more than 70 events and programs throughout the academic year and welcomed over 9,500 attendees to Student Engagement-sponsored events, according to TigerLink and Corq reporting.