

# House Committee on Appropriations March 11, 2021

# Blake Flanders, Ph.D. President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents

Good morning Chairman Waymaster and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you about the impact the global pandemic has had on our universities.

## **COVID-19** Timeline

When the first new reports appeared on the coronavirus outbreak in China in <u>early January 2020</u>, it seemed far removed from Kansas. Little did we know how quickly this novel virus would spread so far and wide. Remember that when the virus started to appear in the United States, we did not understand how it spread or whether someone could transmit the virus without exhibiting any symptoms of illness. Nor did we know the potential impact that the COVID-19 illness could have on different age groups or how vulnerable those with underlying health conditions could be with an infection. Now we know that people who are infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus can transmit the virus to others before symptoms start<sup>1</sup>. We also must keep in mind that guidance from the Centers for Disease Control was changing, as scientists learned more about transmission of the virus.

On <u>March 11, 2020</u>, the Kansas Board of Regents voted to allow state university chief executive officers to make changes to their academic calendars in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and left it to each institution's CEO to determine the best method for delivering courses as part of their campus response to the event later determined to be a pandemic.

The universities suspended in-person instruction and moved classes to a virtual format. Universities took other steps such as limiting students from staying in on-campus housing and accessing dining facilities, to protect the health of students, staff, and communities. All these steps came at a cost, which were subsidized in part with federal monies. We have documented those federal funds for the universities in Attachment 1.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/fag.html

Campuses made difficult decisions, including cancellation of commencement ceremonies and summer events. Not only did that greatly impact operating revenues to those parts of the enterprise, the universities lost opportunities for in-person recruiting of students.

In <u>June 2020</u>, the seven public universities started gathering cost estimates for their fall reopening plans. We applied for Coronavirus Relief Fund support from the SPARK Task Force and were authorized \$55.5 million for the public universities. The request for CRF was to cover those unusual expenses for which the universities did not have a ready source, particularly at a time when the pandemic had impacted a variety of revenue streams for the universities.

The universities reported on what it would cost the universities to purchase necessary equipment and supplies (e.g., personal protective equipment, gloves, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, thermometers), to deliver a higher than customary proportion of courses over remote or blended modes of instruction, to make changes to facilities (signage, plexiglass barriers, HVAC improvements for improved filtration), and to develop measures to isolate and quarantine ill students. The figures were the best estimates for what was known, using the guidance available at that point in time.

We also made it clear that if any of the public universities were found to have received funding from the state via a separate process or from the local county (which did happen but not in a uniform manner), the university was to return anything that duplicated what was included for the "Fall Reopening" grant. There was no intent for an institution to be reimbursed twice for any pandemic related expense. Included in those plans were campus community virus testing and quarantine procedures to limit the spread in universities' communities.

Guidance from the Department of Administration was given to the universities as to how they must segregate the potential sources of COVID-19 funding. It was complex for the campuses to be strategic in how they leverage each funding source – keeping in mind that the federal funds each have their own limitations for time and use, and with their own reporting requirements.

In <u>August 2020</u>, our campuses returned to in-person instruction for many classes, and each state university regularly published COVID-19 testing and case data online, so the local community and the public knew the status of cases at the campuses.

All institutions have felt the financial impact of the pandemic. Fall enrollments dropped 8.1 percent across the system on a headcount basis. That decline in students carries the obvious reduction in tuition and fee revenues as well as the associated economic impact for the local communities that would normally see activity from students attending in person. Attachment 2 details Fall headcount enrollments over the past ten years.

To get students physically back on campus in the fall, institutions took extensive precautions, delivering a mix of in-person, online and hybrid instruction. Facilities were

re-organized to "de-densify" classrooms and labs. Residence hall capacity was capped. Extensive cleaning and sanitation procedures were instituted, mask wearing was required on campus, and many utilized COVID testing of campus communities to limit spread — both upon entry at the start of semester, prevalence testing, and for symptomatic persons. They also offered guarantine options for students testing positive.

Our institutions were pleased to support their communities with donations of ventilators, personal protective equipment and lab supplies, and production of 3-D printed face shields. A testing lab was quickly established at Wichita State University for the benefit of south-central Kansas with the support of the SPARK Task Force funding. Graduating classes of health-related degree programs were credentialed early in some cases last spring to get students to work in their field as soon as possible.

We were also pleased to deliver courses and to resume research and other on-campus functions this fall but operating a campus in a pandemic was difficult and the CEOs will want to talk to you about how they handled it. I commend them and their staff for how they managed through it all.

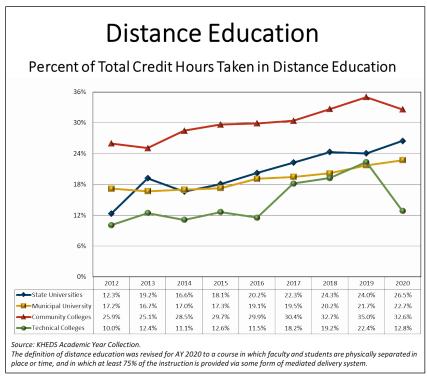
## **Board of Regents Policy Manual**

In support of the state universities, the Board of Regents has amended or adopted several policy changes over the past year:

- Tuition and Fees policy portions of this policy were temporarily suspended to allow students who have an outstanding balance to enroll.
- Tenure for Tenure-Track Faculty Appointments policy a one-time systemwide exception was approved for tenure-clock extensions granted based on COVID-19.
- Credit by Examination policy a one-time exception to the policy allows the state universities to use International Baccalaureate's alternative framework for awarding credit for equivalent courses at the universities.
- Academic Calendar policy a temporary exception allows the Board Chair and Board President to make revisions to a university academic calendar that are related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Auxiliary Enterprises policy the policy that prohibits a state university from subsidizing an auxiliary was suspended from July 1, 2020 until June 30, 2021.
- Suspensions, Terminations and Dismissals a policy was adopted to grant state universities authorization to suspend, dismiss or terminate a staff member, including tenured faculty, using a documented framework for making such decisions, effective through December 31, 2022.

#### **Modes of Course Delivery**

Like with so many other trends, the pandemic accelerated changes to our institutions of higher education. We had already seen greater levels of course delivery online in the past eight years. With its wider adoption, we had reviewed the definition for our data collections of what is considered distance education and it changed in AY 2020 to a course in which faculty and students are physically separated in place or time, and in which at least 75% of the instruction is provided via some form of mediated delivery system. This change did impact two of our technical colleges as you can see in the chart below. Institutions are meeting student demand, providing access to those who cannot get to campuses, and making more courses available.



The sudden switch from in-person to on-line university courses in March 2020 was unplanned and is not reflected in the chart. The universities will each talk about their campuses, but we were fortunate to have access to the federal funding that could be used to cover hardware and software costs to handle the much greater demands placed on campus networks.

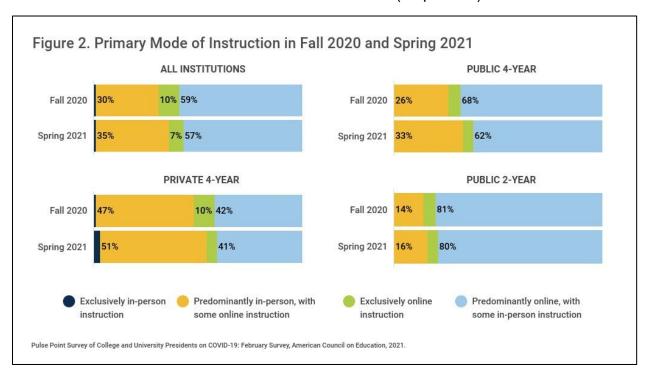
A national survey of college and university presidents by the American Council on Education showed the reliance on online instruction as the primary mode of instruction in Spring 2021 was less than in Fall 2020<sup>2</sup>. Presidents were asked to identify the mode of instruction that best described their institution in Fall 2020 and which type of instruction they were currently offering or planning to offer at the start of the Spring 2021 term. Presidents were given four categories to select from: "exclusively in-person instruction,"

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.acenet.edu/Research-Insights/Pages/Senior-Leaders/College-and-University-Presidents-Respond-to-COVID-19-2021-Spring-Term.aspx

"predominantly in-person, with some online instruction," "predominantly online, with some in-person instruction," or "exclusively online instruction." As 2020 ended and COVID-19 cases were increasing, some institutions reported plans to begin the Spring 2021 term primarily online and then shift to primarily in-person instruction later in the term once positivity rates decreased.

More than half of all presidents indicated that they were currently offering or planning to offer "predominantly online, with some in-person instruction" in Spring 2021 (57 percent). This was slightly lower than the percentage of presidents who indicated that their institution offered this mode of instruction in Fall 2020 (59 percent).



To clarify modes of course delivery, I share some key points about online courses.

#### Online Learning

- Primarily asynchronous with some synchronous components
- Most likely a chosen experience by the student
- Flexibility and autonomy for students built into the course design
- Built with instructional designers and content experts (faculty) prior to the course delivery/semester. This planning and early design allows for diverse and creative ways to interact and communicate beyond a traditional classroom context.
- Experiences are not designed to emulate a face-to-face classroom
- Involves the intentional use of learning management system in the design
- Students are expected to be self-directed with the instructor monitoring progress and providing feedback
- Student interaction is intentionally built into learning activities

## Remote Learning

- Trying to emulate a face-to-face classroom
- Most often synchronous/real-time
- Supported by learning technology, but may have moved to this format due to an emergency
- May or may not use a learning management system for student interaction and communication/feedback
- Faculty may be building the course as they teach it (as they would plan a class before they walk into the classroom)
- Instructors are present like they would be in a face-to-face course
- Instructor-led student interaction

When the question arose from legislators last fall as to how universities were delivering courses, we provided the information below. Those numbers would have fluctuated week to week depending on students or faculty who contracted COVID-19 and needed to isolate.

State Univers	sities - Fall 2020 In	struction		
		Delive	ry Method	
	In-person	Hybrid	Online	Individual Study
ESU	74%	20%	6%	
FHSU	5%	61%	34%	
KSU	28%	34%	34%	4%
ΚU	33%	33%	33%	
PSU	56%	20%	20%	4%
WSU		87%	13%	

Source: Survey of University Staff and University Dashboards

https://www.emporia.edu/covid-19-information/esu-fall-2020-return-campus/esu-covid-19-dashboard/

https://fhsu.edu/covid-19-response/dashboard-reports

https://www.k-state.edu/covid-19/communities/

https://protect.ku.edu/covid-19-test-reporting

https://www.pittstate.edu/office/health-services/coronavirus/index.html

https://www.wichita.edu/about/COVID-19/covid\_dashboard.php

The University CEOs are here today to talk to you about the impact COVID-19 has had on their campuses and the devastating financial impact the amendment adopted on our appropriation would have this year. We are proud of how the universities rose to this challenge in meeting their mission in service to the state and we look forward to the time when more courses are delivered in person, recruiting can be on campus, or when patrons can attend performances or athletic events with no limitations. The decisions that were made in the past year with respect to limiting transmission of the virus were made in order to keep our students, our faculty, our staff and our local communities safe.

Again, thank you for your support of higher education and I appreciate the opportunity to present this important information to the Committee.

#### Attachment 1

## Federal COVID-19 Funding for Higher Education

#### **CARES Act**

#### Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Fund Round 1

The HEER Fund was allocated to states on a population basis with the largest portion of this federal grant for those institutions with students who are Pell grant recipients. Announced on April 9, 2020, the first wave of money from this appropriation was given to institutions for the benefit of their students. At least 50 percent of an institution's allocation must be used to provide direct emergency aid to students, including "grants to students for food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare." The second half of the funding was sent later, "to each institution of higher education to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus." The bill also stated that recipients of funds must retain current employees to the "maximum extent practicable." This HEER grant must be spent within one year from the date of their award.

	Student	
	Emergency	Institutional
University	Grants	Share
University of Kansas/KU Medical Center	\$7,594,823	\$7,594,822
Kansas State University	6,343,277	6,343,277
Wichita State University	4,393,233	4,393,232
Emporia State University	1,758,810	1,758,810
Pittsburg State University	2,659,385	2,659,384
Fort Hays State University	1,262,038	1,262,037
Washburn University	2,250,087	2,250,087
Total	\$26,261,633	\$26,261,649

#### Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund Round 1

Another portion of the CARES Act allocated \$26,274,163 to Kansas for distribution among elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. This portion of the bill includes a maintenance of effort provision with a three-year lookback for state funding to K-12 and higher education in FY 2020 and FY 2021. This appropriation was intended to empower the Governor to "decide how best to meet the current needs of students, schools, postsecondary institutions, and other education-related organizations in Kansas so that faculty continue to teach and students continue to learn." The \$26.3 million must be spent within one year of award. On May 29, 2020, Governor Kelly submitted a certification and agreement form and the Kansas GEER Fund allocation was awarded to the Governor's Grants Office.

In her budget allotment announced on June 29, 2020, the entire allocation from the GEER Fund was designated for use by the state universities, but with a commensurate reduction in each university's State General Fund appropriation.

The Board Office pays each University on a reimbursement basis, with payment due only after the University has incurred expenses associated with the approved grant activities. The University must expend all funds for which it intends to seek reimbursement under this agreement between March 13, 2020 and September 30, 2021.

State University	GEER Swap
University of Kansas	\$6,316,593
University of Kansas Medical Center	4,729,440
Kansas State University	6,690,455
KSU Polytechnic Campus	301,989
KSU Veterinary Medical Center	451,058
Wichita State University	2,997,749
Emporia State University	1,505,594
Pittsburg State University	1,684,463
Fort Hays State University	1,596,822
Total	\$26,274,163

## Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)

The Coronavirus Relief Fund was established in the CARES Act to provide payments to states, cities, and tribal governments. Kansas received \$1.25 billion, of which \$116.3 million went to Johnson County and \$99.6 million went to Sedgwick County directly. The \$1.034 billion remaining was administered by the Office of Recovery appointed by the Governor, as well as a Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Taskforce. Within this process, the public universities were awarded \$55.5 million to prepare and operate the campuses for the Fall 2020 semester. The grant originally had a deadline of December 30, 2020, which was later extended to March 1, 2021.

University	<b>Grant Award</b>
University of Kansas	\$19,013,829
University of Kansas Medical Center	2,802,917
Kansas State University	17,814,311
Wichita State University	5,222,375
Emporia State University	3,251,141
Pittsburg State University	2,719,658
Fort Hays State University	2,353,549
Washburn University	2,364,243
Total	\$55,542,023

## Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

# **Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Fund Round 2**

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II) is authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260, signed into law on December 27, 2020. In total, the CRRSAA authorized \$81.9 billion in support for education. The HEER Fund must be spent within one calendar year from the date of their award.

University	Student Emergency Grants	Institutional Share
University of Kansas/KU Medical Center	\$7,594,823	\$15,477,323
Kansas State University	6,343,277	13,501,741
Wichita State University	4,393,233	10,598,199
Emporia State University	1,758,810	3,835,236
Pittsburg State University	2,659,385	5,694,361
Fort Hays State University	1,370,261	4,786,907
Washburn University	2,250,087	5,773,929
Total	\$26,369,876	\$59,667,696

## Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund Round 2

CRRSAA also appropriated \$2.75 billion to the U.S. Department of Education for "GEER 2" grants to the states, allocated on their relative population ages 5 through 24 and children counted under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Kansas Board of Regents received a Grant Award Notification from USDE on January 12, 2021 under the GEER 2 grant program in the amount of \$11,676,834. The Governor endorsed the Board's plan on March 2<sup>nd</sup> to target the grant to initiatives that will position Kansans to come out of the pandemic and its associated economic downturn with better career opportunities. The initiatives will map to the new Board of Regents' strategic plan, "Building a Future." In broad terms, we plan to ask the Board to allocate this federal grant for the following functions, which must be spent by September 30, 2022:

Function	Planned Expenses
Address Equity Gaps	\$5,000,000
Improve Student Well-Being	4,500,000
Establish a Postsecondary Education Plan	
for High School Students	2,000,000
Incentive Widespread Adoption of	
Open Educational Resources	30,000
Administrative Costs	146,834
Total	\$11,676,834

At the time this document was prepared, Congress was close to enacting the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319). It is expected that a third round of HEER and GEER will be awarded for higher education in this new legislation. Specific dollar amounts, limitations on the time and use, or maintenance of effort requirements of any potential grant awards for Kansas public universities are not yet known.

#### Attachment 2

## Fall Preliminary (20th Day) Enrollment Summary for:

#### Headcount 2010 - 2020

#### Kansas Board of Regents System

							20,000							
State Universities	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		5 Year Chg	10 Year Chg
Emporia State University	6,262	5,976	5,867	6,033	6,114	6,094	5,887	5,732	5,796	5,877	5,828	-0.8%	-4.4%	-6.9%
Fort Hays State University	11,883	12,802	13,310	13,441	13,825	14,210	14,658	15,100	15,523	15,908	15,033	-5.5%	5.8%	26.5%
Kansas State University	23,124	23,406	23,914	24,116	24,290	23,678	23,318	22,343	21,758	21,252	20,377	-4.1%	-13.9%	-11.9%
Kansas State University-Veterinary Medicine	464	457	464	465	476	468	461	452	463	467	477	2.1%	1.9%	2.8%
Pittsburg State University	7,131	7,275	7,289	7,400	7,479	7,244	7,102	6,907	6,625	6,645	6,398	-3.7%	-11.7%	-10.3%
University of Kansas	26,266	25,448	24,577	24,435	24,612	24,708	24,892	24,891	24,815	24,629	23,964	-2.7%	-3.0%	-8.8%
University of Kansas Medical Center	3,196	3,270	3,362	3,349	3,371	3,383	3,509	3,556	3,695	3,794	3,655	-3.7%	8.0%	14.4%
Wichita State University	14,806	15,100	14,898	14,550	15,003	14,495	14,474	15,081	15,784	16,058	15,550	-3.2%	7.3%	5.0%
State University Total	93,132	93,734	93,681	93,789	95,170	94,280	94,301	94,062	94,459	94,630	91,282	-3.5%	-3.2%	-2.0%
Municipal University	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		5 Year Chg	10 Year Chg
Washburn University	7,230	7,303	7,204	6,973	6,722	6,615	6,636	6,691	6,571	6,285	5,880	-6.4%	-11.1%	-18.7%
Washburn Institute of Technology	834	865	920	1,162	1,217	1,330	1,335	1,393	1,417	1,480	1,107	-25.2%	-16.8%	32.7%
Municipal University Total	8,064	8,168	8,124	8,135	7,939	7,945	7,971	8,084	7,988	7,765	6,987	-10.0%	-12.1%	-13.4%
Community Colleges	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	·	5 Year Chg	10 Year Chg
Allen Community College	2,942	3,078	3,148	2,955	2,776	2,385	2,344	2,574	2,540	2,407	2,113	-12.2%	-11.4%	-28.2%
Barton Community College	5,173	5,430	5,617	6,252	6,223	6,281	5,884	5,424	5,042	5,034	4,285	-14.9%	-31.8%	-17.2%
Butler Community College	10,116	10,061	9,951	9,363	9,205	9,150	9,375	8,944	8,554	8,028	7,182	-10.5%	-21.5%	-29.0%
Cloud County Community College	2,681	2,702	2,622	2,323	2,269	2,063	2,036	1,873	1,839	1,803	1,589	-11.9%	-23.0%	-40.7%
Coffeyville Community College	2,039	1,932	1,792	1,848	1,609	1,741	1,707	1,802	1,899	1,760	1,381	-21.5%	-20.7%	-32.3%
Colby Community College	1,322	1,257	1,354	1,311	1,291	1,258	1,255	1,345	1,415	1,407	1,327	-5.7%	5.5%	0.4%
Cowley Community College	4,850	4,298	4,342	3,966	3,371	3,083	2,866	2,871	2,672	2,463	2,475	0.5%	-19.7%	-49.0%
Dodge City Community College	1,807	1,924	1,865	1,785	1,768	1,779	1,804	1,773	1,543	1,493	1,459	-2.3%	-18.0%	-19.3%
Fort Scott Community College	2,129	2,013	1,962	1,931	1,816	1,852	1,862	1,792	1,840	1,827	1,509	-17.4%	-18.5%	-29.1%
Garden City Community College	2,009	1,867	2,059	1,997	2,086	2,091	2,013	2,081	1,920	1,914	1,873	-2.1%	-10.4%	-6.8%
Highland Community College	3,569	3,353	3,093	3,037	3,053	2,903	2,917	3,024	2,701	2,486	2,312	-7.0%	-20.4%	-35.2%
Hutchinson Community College	5,630	5,560	6,159	6,128	5,718	5,546	5,880	5,854	5,574	5,321	4,907	-7.8%	-11.5%	-12.8%
Independence Community College	1,164	1,212	1,166	1,031	945	978	1,050	891	910	882	798	-9.5%	-18.4%	-31.4%
Johnson County Community College	20,869	21,033	20,443	19,684	19,442	19,113	19,154	18,638	18,373	18,311	13,899	-24.1%	-27.3%	-33.4%
Kansas City Kansas Community College	7,566	7,561	7,486	6,575	6,202	5,631	5,731	5,833	5,887	6,003	5,149	-14.2%	-8.6%	-31.9%
Labette Community College	1,762	1,986	1,746	1,574	1,528	1,516	1,587	1,596	2,062	1,636	1,419	-13.3%	-6.4%	-19.5%
Neosho County Community College	2,308	2,588	2,624	2,670	2,218	2,069	2,084	1,990	1,980	1,907	1,727	-9.4%	-16.5%	-25.2%
Pratt Community College	1,664	1,524	1,527	1,541	1,383	1,189	1,191	1,114	1,234	1,181	1,164	-1.4%	-2.1%	-30.0%
Seward County Community College	1,874	1,906	1,968	1,858	1,861	1,971	1,927	1,746	1,870	1,838	1,580	-14.0%	-19.8%	-15.7%
Community College Total	81,474	81,285	80,924	77,829	74,764	72,599	72,667	71,165	69,855	67,701	58,148	-14.1%	-19.9%	-28.6%
Technical Colleges	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	·	5 Year Chg	10 Year Chg
Flint Hills Technical College	679	752	748	832	833	941	1,006	1,137	1,425	1,514	1,222	-19.3%	29.9%	80.0%
Manhattan Area Technical College	664	731	747	826	766	870	825	926	779	906	797	-12.0%	-8.4%	20.0%
North Central Kansas Technical College	763	767	801	767	762	846	909	858	820	885	835	-5.6%	-1.3%	9.4%
Northwest Kansas Technical College	384	473	561	626	647	779	812	896	821	735	676	-8.0%	-13.2%	76.0%
Salina Area Technical College	396	401	431	451	467	522	580	615	787	791	697	-11.9%	33.5%	76.0%
WSU Campus of Applied Sci and Tech	2,030	2,136	2,677	2,935	3,369	3,319	3,592	4,267	4,596	4,920	4,607	-6.4%	38.8%	126.9%
Technical College Total	4,916	5,260	5,965	6,437	6,844	7,277	7,724	8,699	9,228	9,751	8,834	-9.4%	21.4%	79.7%
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System Total	187,586	188,447	188,694	186,190	184,717	182,101	182,663	182,010	181,530	179,847	165,251	-8.1%	-9.3%	-11.9%

Source: Fall Preliminary Collection

 ${\it Request supplemental notes for more information}.$