

Testimony on Amendment to Budget  
House Appropriations Committee  
March 11, 2021  
Richard B. Myers, President  
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

Good Morning, I am Richard Myers, President of Kansas State University. Thank you for inviting me to testify today to discuss the heroic efforts of the K-State students, faculty, and staff over the past twelve months. This has been an unprecedented year in almost every respect, and while we are not out of the woods yet, I think we all can see brighter days ahead.

I can't say enough about how proud I am as to how the Wildcat family responded to the COVID-19 health crisis. Our Faculty and Staff moved mountains in order to provide a highly flexible instructional system to meet the needs of individual students no matter their health status throughout each semester. Faculty were prepared to pivot and offer flexible options for students who suddenly found themselves in isolation or quarantine or in the event the instructor themselves became ill. Our staff learned new ways of doing business while working remotely in order to keep the university operating for our students. Our Lafene Health Center suddenly found themselves at the forefront of developing and implementing testing procedures for two campus communities to track and mitigate the spread of the pandemic.

Decisions about our academic instruction during the pandemic were guided by the following principles:

- Protect the health and safety of students, faculty, GTAs, staff and our communities.
- Maintain high quality learning environments for our students.
- Balance the needs of students and of faculty/GTAs.
- Be adaptable to respond to changing conditions related to COVID-19.

Based on these guidelines and recognizing how many unknowns existed at the time, for Spring 2020 the University suspended classes for one week following Spring Break on March 16 to allow faculty to prepare for remote teaching for the remainder of the semester. The university was not closed in Summer 20, Fall 20, or Spring 21. The Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine (KSUVMC) followed the same suspension and provided remote instruction the remainder of the Spring 20 semester.

For the Summer 2020 term, K-State students were notified April 13, 2020 that classes would be fully remote. However, KSUVMC was the first college of veterinary medicine in North America to return senior veterinary students to in-person clinics in Summer 20. This allows those students to remain on track to graduate in May 2021.

### Fall Semester 2020

Plans were made early in the summer for Fall 20 classes. The University announced on June 9, 2020 the following steps:

1. The Fall semester would start one week early.
2. Courses would be taught using hybrid format; remote, hybrid, and face-to-face.
3. Seating was limited in face-to-face classes due to capacity limits to adhere to federal, state and local health guidance.
4. All classes would continue following Thanksgiving break, with most classes going fully remote for the remainder of the semester which included finals week.

The announcement took into consideration that many students wanted a remote option as they chose not to attend class in person to protect themselves from the virus. Once in a hybrid class, students had the option to attend in person or remain in the class virtually. In addition, if students were not satisfied with instructional formats, they had through the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of classes to withdraw from classes or the university and receive a full refund.

On July 22, 2020 KSUVMC notified students their courses would be delivered face-to-face in the Fall. Every veterinary student was provided with all the hands-on opportunities they would receive in a normal school year. Classes at KSUVMC started one week early. Again, accommodations were provided based on students wanting to attend remotely. Classes were divided into sections to limit capacity to adhere to federal, state and local health guidance.

### Spring Semester 2021

Plans were made early in the Fall for Spring 21 classes. The University announced on September 11, 2020 the following steps:

1. The Spring semester would start one week later.
2. Courses would be taught using hybrid format; remote, hybrid, and face-to-face.
3. Seating was limited in face-to-face classes due to capacity limits to adhere to federal, state and local health guidance.
4. There would be no Spring Break and the semester would end on the original date on the calendar approved prior to the pandemic. Students asked for a mental health break and were granted a one-day suspension of classes for a mental wellness day while maintaining the appropriate number of instructional days for students.

As in the fall semester, the announcement took into consideration that many students wanted hybrid or online options as they chose not to attend class in person to protect themselves from the virus. In addition, if students were not satisfied with instructional formats, they had through the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of classes to withdraw from classes or the university and receive a full refund.

On October 22, 2020 KSUVMC notified students their courses would be delivered face-to-face in the Spring. The same format developed for Fall 20 was utilized in Spring 21.

Additionally, I want the Appropriations Committee to know the entire system was designed to be flexible - to pivot in an individual class as students were in and out of quarantine or isolation during the school year and unable to attend a hybrid or face-to-face class. By providing online instruction these students did not miss the material provided in their classes. The flexible system was also necessary in the event the faculty or instructor was quarantined or in isolation to ensure the class could continue.

Finally, the system was designed to pivot, if needed, due to surges in our communities. Due to the post-holiday pandemic surge in positive cases throughout Kansas and the nation, K-State opted to begin the spring semester for most classes in remote mode. This was designed as a temporary measure to lessen the spread of the virus in our communities and amongst our student populations.

#### Federal, State and Local Health Guidance

The following list is the Guidance the University adhered to for all Semesters beginning in the Summer of 2020 and continuing to the present.

- **Prior to May 26, 2020:** Mass gathering limits didn't appear in local orders.
- **May 26 - July 29, 2020:** Mass gatherings limited to 50 individuals. Large venues of more than 2,000 capacity shall remain closed. (Local Orders # 10 - 15).
- **July 30 - August 16, 2020:** Mass gatherings limited to 50 individuals, but less than 2,000. Large venues of more than 2,000 capacity shall remain closed. Events with 50+ individuals must obtain a permit (Local Orders # 16, 17).
- **August 17, 2020- Feb 28, 2021:** Mass gatherings limited to 50 individuals, or 15% capacity for venue, whichever is greater. Events with 50+ individuals must obtain permit. (Local Orders # 18, 19).
- **March 1, 2021 - Unknown:** No mass gathering limits (Local Order # 20)

#### Preparing Campuses

The University Facilities staff and Registrar's staff evaluated over 750 classrooms and teaching laboratories across all three K-State campuses (Manhattan, Salina and Olathe). The spaces were evaluated for their compliance with ASHRAE 62.11 ventilation requirements as a best practice to mitigate potential effects of COVID-19 through aerosol transmission. Class sizes/layouts were reduced to adhere to federal, state and local health guidance for social distancing criteria. Teaching spaces that did not meet ASHRAE 62.11 guidelines were taken off-line for the purposes of instruction. On the K-State Manhattan campus 124,000 sq. ft. of space was upgraded to proper ventilation to comply with ASHRAE 62.11 standards which enabled us to hold more classes in a face to face and hybrid format this spring. In addition to ventilation upgrades, all types of spaces were evaluated for the potential to accommodate classes while adhering to social distancing requirements. In fact, classes were held in such places as meeting rooms in the K-State Union, in the Sheep and Meat Goat Center, even in Weber Arena which has a dirt floor.

The Facilities staff deployed 10,000 signs across the campuses, installed 400 electric static sprayers in classrooms, countless bottles of sanitizer and thousands of bundles of paper towels.

This feat was accomplished the first time in 60 working days in the summer of 2020 and continued throughout the Fall 20 semester and into the Spring 21 semester.

Technology improvements were also necessary, 450 classrooms in Manhattan were upgraded for flexible and remote instruction. The University converted 187 in-person computer lab computers to remote software access for students and 46 additional computers were converted to remote access for Division of Biology courses specifically.

### Fiscal Affairs, Budget Levers and COVID-19 Expenditures

State funding accounts for 45% of the University's general use budget and is a key component for the university to operate and fulfill the instruction, research and service mission as the state's land-grant university. K-State's efforts from the outset of the pandemic have been to ensure the continued safe education of our students while protecting the health of our communities. The past year has been challenging and navigating factors out of everyone's control related to fiscal affairs has been daunting. The University has incurred significant losses due to the pandemic from decreased enrollment, and reduced tuition and sales revenues. Total losses from FY 20 through FY 21 are projected at \$96.0 million.

The University implemented deep budget cuts and used the key levers in the following table to address budget losses.

Budget Lever	Estimated Amount
Administrative furloughs*	(\$5.9M)
Use cash balances and backfill with other funding	(\$7.2M)
Voluntary salary reductions (executive leadership and others)	(\$1.1M)
Eliminate vacant and student employee positions	(\$12.8M)
Terminations and layoffs**	(\$3.1M)
Cut operating expenses and other adjustments	(\$7.5M)

*\*Administrative furloughs impacted 1,438 faculty and staff*

*\*\*Approximately 45 positions*

The COVID-19 funds were designated to be spent on COVID-19 expenses to open and operate the campuses in a safe manner. The expenditure of these funds were required to have a clear nexus for responding to the pandemic.

Actual and Budgeted Expenditures	KBOR SPARK	GEER	HEER I & II
PPE, Disinfecting Measures and Quarantine & Isolation Spaces	\$5.7M		\$1M
Classroom Ventilation/HVAC Improvements	\$4M		\$1.6M
University COVID Testing and Contact Tracing	\$2.9M		\$1.5M
Public Safety	\$1.8M		
Classroom and Remote Work Technology Upgrades, Network Security and Miscellaneous	\$3.4M		\$2.5M
Emergency and Institutional Student Aid		\$7M	\$16.1M
Utilities		\$400k	
Housing/Parking Refunds due to Spring 2020 Campus Closure			\$9.8M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17.8M</b>	<b>\$7.4M</b>	<b>\$32.5M</b>

Chairman Waymaster and members of the House Appropriations Committee, I want to close my remarks with several key points which demonstrate student success at K-State:

- K-State was never a COVID-19 super-spreader.
- K-State graduated over 5,600 students last year.
- A recent survey of graduates found 95% have jobs or are going onto higher education and 70% stay in Kansas.
- The salaries of these graduates held steady from the previous year at the average of \$50,000.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to represent Kansas State University before the Appropriations Committee.