



## President's Message: Starting anew, facing important issues for WSU's future

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Posted: Monday, August 15, 2016 Posted: 1:17:37 PM CT



The beginning of fall semester is a traditional time of renewal on campus. No matter how many years you've worked here, the arrival of new students, faculty and staff and the return of others brings fresh energy and a sense of possibilities. We'll need both of those as we work this year to greatly increase enrollment. At a time of diminishing state support, enrollment growth is crucial. Faculty and staff must be part of the solution.

This Friday I hope to see as many of you as possible at the faculty-staff opening event from 2-4 p.m. in Beggs Ballroom in the Rhatigan Student Center. I plan to talk for 45 minutes and then respond to your questions. We can continue the discussion informally during a social hour to follow.

If you aren't able to attend, you can watch the event on WSUTV 13 on the Cox cable system or at <http://youtube.com/wichitastatetv>. Scroll down to where it says "Live Now" and click on the blue WSUTV Live Stream.

The theme of my presentation is "Student centered, innovation driven." Here are several topics we need to address with urgency this year:

- There's too large a gap between the number of prospective students who apply and are admitted and those who eventually enroll. Are we harming ourselves by creating barriers to enrollment?
- There's a concerning rate of attrition of enrolled students. What additional steps can we take to help students be successful and make good progress each semester toward degree completion?
- How are we doing on the details of the student experience? Are we providing advising in a timely fashion? Are we offering classes at the times that fit best into their work schedules and family lives? Are we opening up new sections of courses that are oversubscribed?
- Are we practicing smart inclusion in addressing the diverse needs of first generation, minority, adult, military veteran and online students? Are there support systems in place to aid the success of all students?
- Do we need to restructure our financial aid packages in light of rising tuition and fees? How do we reduce financial barriers?
- How do we continue to drive innovation with urgency, while treating each other with respect and kindness?

My goal in raising these questions is to start or continue discussions involving all of you. You'll have another chance to participate on Aug. 29, when the Strategic Enrollment Management study team holds an event to discuss its recommendations.

# A Shocker You Should Know: Sarah Sell

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Posted: Monday, August 15, 2016 Posted: 1:19:29 PM CT



At Wichita State for just four years, Sarah Sell has already made quite an impact as director of Veteran Student Services.

It's a position she helped create after the Military and Veteran Student Center was opened in 2013. A 12-year military veteran working as a specialist in the Office of Student Success at the time, Sarah knew she could help lead the center as it continued its quick growth.

"I realized these students really needed a point of contact and intentional support," she says. "I pitched this position, and the timing worked well."

Sarah says she's impressed with the efforts being made at WSU to increase services for veterans and active military. That population of students, she says, needs targeted help because of their unique backgrounds and situations. And when they get that guidance, she says, they have the potential to be some of our top students – earning high GPAs and continuing on toward graduation.

*"I speak higher ed and military."*

Sarah came to Wichita State from her hometown of Topeka as an undergraduate and a member of the rowing team. She earned her bachelor's in sociology and masters of education in counseling and was highly involved in campus life during her stay. She says she knew early on that she wanted to work in a university setting.

"I love the atmosphere of a college campus, and I love WSU," she says. "One day I looked around and realized all these staff got paid to be here and I didn't want to leave."

Her entrance into the military was originally a tactic to help pay for college. It was also a bit of a family tradition -- her dad and aunt were in the military, and Sarah wanted to serve her country.

It didn't take long for her to build a strong sense of camaraderie in the military, and it eventually turned into a way of life.

Serving as a military police officer for the first 12 years of her military career, Sarah was deployed multiple times, including to Baghdad during Operation Enduring Freedom. She now deals with personnel issues for the 190th Air Refueling Wing and is the first woman in her squadron to reach the rank of master sergeant.

When not at work, Sarah spends time with her 6-year-old son, Braden, who is excited to start first grade.

Always up for a challenge, Sarah is starting in the MBA program this fall and is busy training Riley, a therapy dog that will soon be used at the Military and Student Veteran Center.

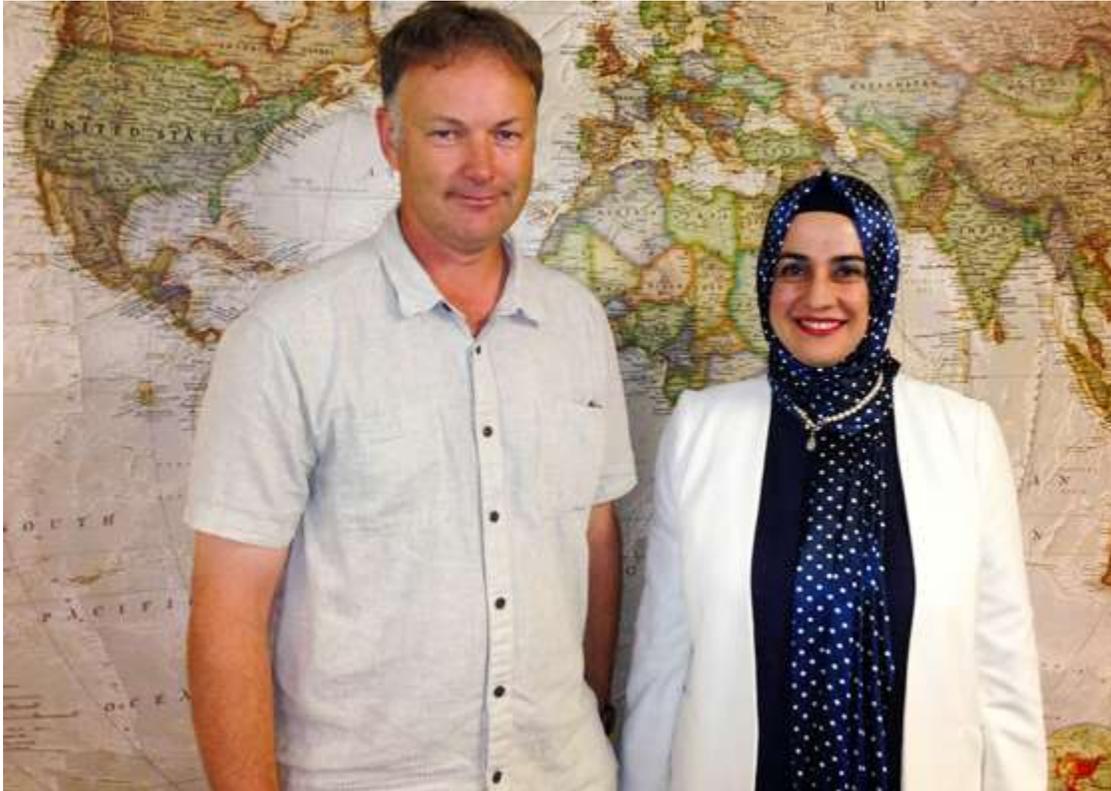
She calls her job the perfect blend of her two passions – higher education and helping veterans.

"Because of my background, I have an understanding of vets on a level that most civilians don't," she says. "It's kind of like being an interpreter; I speak higher ed and military."

# Research Grant of the Month: Invasive species research

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Gregory Houseman, associate professor of biology, and Esra Buyuktahtakin, assistant professor of manufacturing and industrial engineering, recently received a \$430,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture grant for their research on weed management in Kansas rangeland systems.

The research encompasses studying the invasive weed sericea lespedeza throughout Southeastern Kansas and assessing its potential effects on natural plant life and grazing, as well as its economic impact on ranchers.

# A message from the assistant to the president for diversity

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As we start the new academic year, I encourage you to remember that diversity responsibility belongs to all of us. Last year, faculty, staff and students made tremendous progress to ensure this campus is reflective of the community we serve, and we look forward to making a greater impact in the coming year.

The President's Diversity Council has been working diligently over the past several months, and I'm excited to share major plans for fall semester:



- Coordinated and consolidated university diversity mission statement
- Diversity survey
- DiverseCity Showcase
- Annual report
- Benchmarking analysis – WSU Strategic Plan
- Student town hall meetings
- Campus culture and student outreach committee report

We have heard from many throughout the campus and encourage each of you to [contact us](#) via email or phone.

I firmly believe the best is yet to come because of the unwavering commitment of those who want our campus to be a great place to learn, work, live and play.

Have an aWSUme semester!

Dr. Marché Fleming-Randle  
Assistant to the president for diversity

# What I'm Reading: "The Typical College Student Is Not Who You Think It Is"

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Do you know who today's college students are?

The common assumption is that 40-60 percent of students are recent high school graduates enrolled in a four- year institution and living on campus. But that number is far from reality. Only 5 percent of students fit that description.

In The Atlantic's July article "The Typical College Student Is Not Who You Think It Is," Lumina Foundation President and CEO Jamie Merisotis argues that there's a real disconnect in the understanding of who today's students are.