

Forward Together: President's February 2021 Message



Wichita State committed to Regents' Building a Future plan

Yesterday, we welcomed our students back to campus — both virtually and in-person — for the first time in 2021. It's a beautiful and uplifting vision to see so many Shockers' faces in the Rhatigan Student Center, on our beautiful campus, in classrooms, and in Zoom meetings. And even more heartwarming is seeing everyone observing our COVID-19 health and safety precautions — wearing masks, physical distancing and handwashing. We have almost 100% compliance, which tells me that our students, faculty and staff care about their own health, as well as protecting those around them. Keep up the good work, Shockers!

Several months ago, the Kansas Board of Regents adopted a new strategic plan called [Building a Future](#). This plan, much like our own strategic plan, prioritizes our state's families, businesses and economy:



Dr. Richard Muma, interim president

Provide opportunity for affordable, accessible and impactful education

We are working hard to make sure we keep tuition affordable by keeping down costs as much as possible and raising private funds for need-based scholarships. We know the most important step we can take to support our community and Kansas is to provide educational opportunities for the citizens in our own backyard so they can go on to live productive lives for themselves and their families.

Support businesses by providing a talent pipeline that meets their needs

Through our Shocker Cities initiative, we are recruiting out-of-state students along the I-35 corridor at in-state tuition rates and inviting them to come to Wichita State to learn and, hopefully, stay and use their education and talents in Kansas. All of this is meant to help address local workforce and community issues and also helps to grow the Kansas economy.

Grow and diversify our state's economy

Through our concerted efforts in digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and smart manufacturing, Wichita State is at the forefront of growing and supporting innovative industries, career opportunities, and economic prosperity in Kansas.

Wichita State supports these initiatives with robust curriculum and degree options, faculty and staff at the forefront of their fields, cutting-edge labs and institutes throughout campus, and innovative industry and community partnerships. All of these elements combine to create the only urban-serving research institution in the state.

Our commitment to the people and communities of our state was the cornerstone of Wichita State's first 125 years, and it will continue to be our driving force as Shocker Nation continues to grow and prosper.

To all of our students, faculty and staff — I wish you the very best this semester and throughout your academic journey. Your hard work and perseverance are an inspiration, and I look forward to watching you grow into your potential.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rick Muma

Interim president of Wichita State University