

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

# **FORWARD TOGETHER**

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2021

## Inspired by the past, focused on the future

For a quarter of a century, I've had the privilege of seeing our students step onto campus — some of them for the very first time — for the start of a new schoolyear. But this year is particularly special to me because it's the first year that I'll be watching from a presidential perspective.

The start of a new schoolyear is always so alive with hope and energy. From the flowering plants and our outstanding landscaping to the verve of our new and returning students, one can't help but be inspired by the promise of it all.

This year is no exception. With our campus opening back up, Wichita State is infused with a feeling of optimism — albeit cautious optimism. There are already countless plans in the works for campus activities, and I encourage each of you to take advantage of all Wichita State has to offer this fall, including homecoming, athletic events, and fine arts performances.



[Read more of Dr. Muma's message](#)

## In the News at Wichita State



### **President Muma welcomes students back to WSU**

It's great to see so many Shocker faces on campus! Dr. Muma encourages students to stay safe and healthy, enjoy our beautiful campus, and wishes them the best of luck this semester.

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## **NSF awards WSU researcher \$200K to study fairness in facial recognition**

The National Science Foundation has awarded a \$200,000 grant to Dr. Ajita Rattani, an assistant professor in the College of Engineering's School of Computing, that seeks to improve facial recognition technology, addressing civil liberties concerns that some demographic groups are more likely to be misidentified.

Facial recognition technology — known as biometrics — has become a common tool used to authenticate a person's identity and is used by smartphones and laptops to unlock devices and by law enforcement to identify suspected criminals or undocumented immigrants.

[\*\*Learn more about Dr. Rattani's research\*\*](#)

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## **Track coach uses iPhone, drone, slushies to document Kansas small towns**

People from France farmed and produced silk in Kansas in the 1860s as part of a dream of a utopian community.

“Who knows what was going on here in Silkville,” John Wise says as he stands in front of a stone schoolhouse in Franklin County near the end of his 12-minute video.

We know a bit more, thanks to Wise’s wanderings across Kansas and his skill with an iPhone 11, a selfie stick and a DJI Mavic 2 Pro drone.

Wise, Wichita State University assistant director of track and field, documents his love of history, travel and frozen soft drinks in “Travel With a Wiseguy” on YouTube. He posts a video weekly, many from trips around Kansas to visit small towns, ghost towns and places such as Old Oxford Mill and Little Jerusalem.

[\*\*Read more about Wise's travels\*\*](#)

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## **New bridge name promises to embrace Barton School's commitment to Wichita**

The marquee exterior fixture of the W. Frank Barton School of Business' new home, Wayne and Kay Woolsey Hall, has been officially named the Promise Bridge. The 300-foot-long pedestrian bridge will span over a water feature south of the building.

"The Promise Bridge is a literal and symbolic connection between Wichita State University's main campus and our Innovation Campus. It's a physical manifestation of the promise we make to our students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners," said Dr. Larisa Genin, dean of the Barton School of Business.

[\*\*Learn more about the Promise Bridge\*\*](#)

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## **Researcher awarded \$175K NSF grant to help improve data-driven decision-making**

The National Science Foundation has awarded a \$175,000 grant to Wichita State University's Dr. Saideep Nannapaneni for research that has implications for increasing the speed and accuracy of data-driven decision-making.

In decision-making – whether in engineering design, health care management or financial investments – people make predictions about what will happen based on what has happened in the past, using the data available, but recognizing that data may be incomplete or some of it inaccurate.

"In most real-world scenarios, a system's behavior is not completely known; it is uncertain, often influenced by several external factors," said Nannapaneni, assistant professor of industrial, systems and manufacturing engineering. "Typically, we collect data using sensors to understand such uncertain system's behavior. Sensors are not perfect. This imperfection results in noise and imprecision in collected data and therefore, we need to make decisions in the presence of noisy imprecise data."

[Read more about Dr. Nannapaneni's research](#)

## Aviation geeks team up on book that investigates causes of flight anxiety

Lindsey Harvell-Bowman and Eric Wilson consider themselves aviation geeks. They tease each other about their favorite airlines and digest every bit of airplane news and research.

It is fitting their friendship began as graduate students at Wichita State University, in the Air Capital of the World. Their collaboration continues in Harvell-Bowman's "The Psychology and Communication Behind Flight Anxiety: Afraid to Fly," a book that examines the intersection of journalism, communication, and psychology in affecting the flying public.



[Learn more about 'Afraid to Fly'](#)



**FABI AYARZA ANORGA**



**DRE THOMPSON**



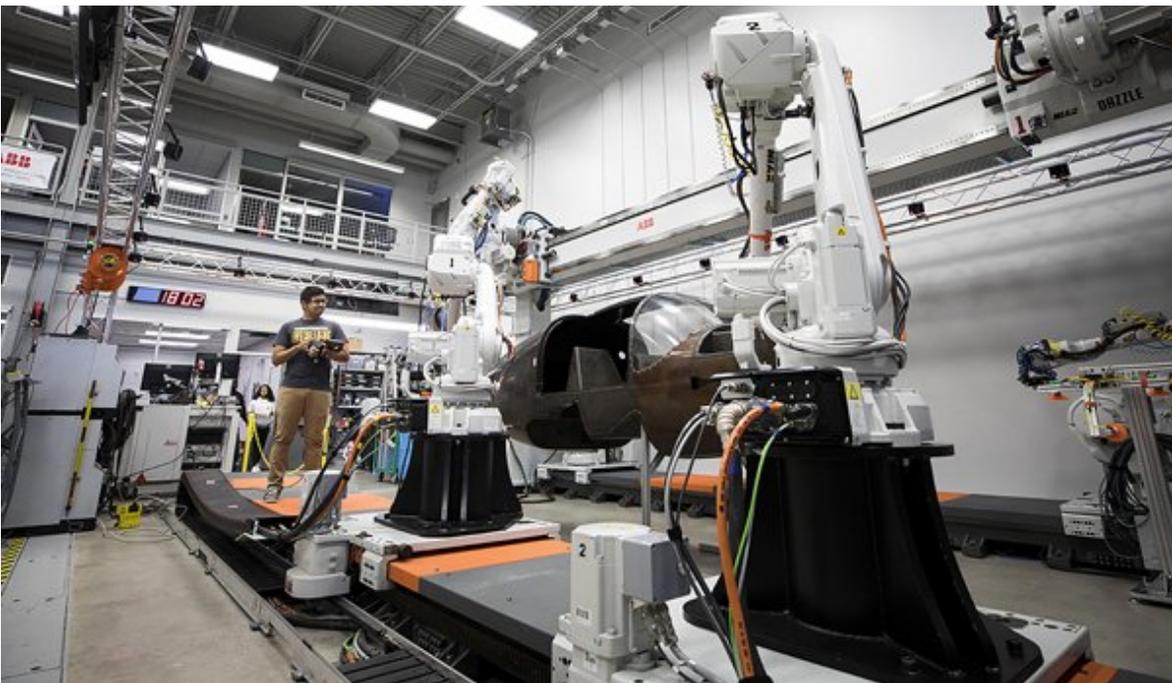
**RICKY REDFORD**

## Business school awards scholarships to transfer students

For the first time in Wichita State history, the Barton School of Business has awarded three, multi-year scholarships to transfer students committed to joining the business program, in association with the Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

The recipients of the scholarships are Ricky Redford of Hutchinson Community College, Dre Thompson of Tallahassee Community College, and Fabi Ayarza Anorga of Butler Community College. Each of the three students have been awarded \$1,000 per year for two years. This scholarship will take effect in fall 2021.

[Read about the PTK scholarships](#)



## Mechatronics program earns ARM endorsement

Wichita State University's partnership with the Advanced Robotics Manufacturing Institute (ARM) has resulted in the Department of Engineering Technology being among the first programs in the nation to earn an ARM endorsement for their mechatronics track – a certification that will translate to stronger job prospects for graduates.

[Find out how WSU achieved this ranking](#)



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