



# Building a Comprehensive First-Year Program

Kansas State University

[www.k-state.edu/first](http://www.k-state.edu/first)

## *Brief History of K-State First*

- 2001, 2004: NSSE results
- 2005-07: Two task forces
- 2008-12: FYE Annual Conferences
- 2008-09: Pilot study of FYS
- 2008: The Great Recession
- 2009: Change in University administration
- 2009: Site visit to the University of Oregon
- 2009: Creation of GPS (Guide to Personal Success)
- 2010: Launch of KSBN (K-State Book Network)
- 2010: Creation of CAT Communities
- 2010: Launch of K-State First

## *K-State First Assessment Measures*

**Direct measures:** Course embedded assessments, Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), Retention, GPA, Degree completion

**Indirect measures:** MAP-Works, IDEA course evaluation, NSSE, Focus groups

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**KANSAS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

## *K-State First by the Numbers*

Students served in the fall of 2011

# 1st - Year Seminar

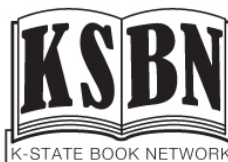
**610** in 36 sections



**CAT Communities**

**178** in 11 learning communities

**350** students matched



more than **3,550**

## *Lessons Learned*

For building a comprehensive first-year program

- Strategic inclusivity matters
- Use experts, internal and external
- Assess & use your own data
- Talk about your success

## *A Great College Experience Starts With a Great First Year!*

### **Connecting Across Topics (CAT) Communities**

In this learning communities program, a small group of twenty-two students take an interdisciplinary group of classes together, usually two general education courses and one connections course.

Each CAT Community is designed around a particular theme or interest, and each one offers mentoring from a professor and an advanced undergraduate Learning Assistant.

Enrollment is limited to 22 students per CAT Community.

### **First-Year Seminar (FYS)**

These small, hands-on classes are specially designed versions of regular general education courses in a range of fields. The FYS classes enroll only first-year students, and dedicated faculty members teach these seminars in a lively, interactive manner. As a place to ask questions about the University and to practice the skills needed to succeed as a first-year student, FYS courses provide outstanding support for the transition to college life and the K-State community.

Enrollment is limited to 22 students per FYS course.

### **Kansas State Book Network (KSBN)**

K-State's university-wide reading program, KSBN, selects a common book each year and then coordinates a series of exciting classroom and campus activities to correspond with the reading. KSBN not only provides incoming students with their own copy of the common book but also creates a shared experience for everyone on campus, as new students, returning students, and the whole campus community come together to discuss, question, and learn from the selected reading each year. Selections include:

2010 - *The Hunger Games*

2011 - *Zeitoun*

2012 - *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

### **Guide to Personal Success (GPS)**

A one-on-one mentoring program, GPS matches new students with a personal guide - not an academic advisor but another friendly face on campus. The guides are faculty, staff, graduate students, and K-State alums who have knowledge of university resources and an interest in helping students.

The program helps students navigate their transition to K-State and make the most of their experience by connecting them to the resources and opportunities that will ensure success. Guides and mentees are expected to connect in-person three times during the Fall semester and three times during the Spring.