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Welcome from Dean Karen Pedersen

Off-campus units take the college or university to learners, wherever they are. They unbundle the traditional educational experience to meet the needs and expectations of today's learners and tomorrow's employers.

I recently gathered insights from my personal experience over the last 20 years serving in leadership roles in various off-campus academic enterprises, as well as insights gleaned across the industry in my role as chief knowledge officer for the Online Learning Consortium for the last three years. I identified 16 key tenets of success for today's off-campus units. Three of these tenets are particularly germane for Global Campus as we seek to become more competitive in today's higher learning landscape:

- Make learning opportunities flexible to meet learner needs. Educational opportunities are often modularized, flexible, agile, customizable and offered throughout the year. Off-campus units are often the innovators for new learning experiences.

- Maintain leading-edge teaching and learning approaches. No matter the delivery modality, off-campus units work to leverage the use of leading-edge teaching and learning technologies to maximize engagement and learning.

- Nurture and leverage business partnerships. Offerings are built with quality in mind, as well as with input from regional/national/global employers, to enhance connectivity and to better position the institution to realize maximum benefit from business-to-business (B2B) relationships.

I hope you will join us as we continue transforming our academic enterprise to meet changing demands for education. You are our eyes and ears in your market, as well as in your company or organization. Please do not hesitate to reach out and share your insights and perspectives. Just know, today more than ever, we are listening.

Best regards,

Karen L. Pedersen, Ph.D. Dean of Global Campus

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On the cover: Dean Karen Pedersen

Being selected as dean of Global Campus is very exciting. As I assume my new position, I am grateful for all the work done before me by all of the deans, staff and faculty to build Global Campus into one of the largest distance and continuing education units in the country. Their long history of innovation will serve as a solid foundation as we take Global Campus to new heights.

As I look across the higher education landscape today, it is apparent that we find ourselves in a hypercompetitive environment. More institutions are offering online programs than ever before, and today’s learners are looking for highly customizable learning experiences that will support their lifelong personal and professional development. Today’s

You are our eyes and ears in your market, as well as in your company or organization. Please do not hesitate to reach out and share your insights and perspectives.

Karen Pedersen, Ph.D.
Dean of Global Campus
Karen Pedersen has a passion for higher education, particularly when advocating for the needs of today’s college students.

“Most policymakers think that college students are 18 years old, are living on campus and are full-time students,” she said. “But when we look at college students across institutions, 85 percent are working, they have families or they’re in the military. Only 15 percent of college students are first-time, full-time freshmen.

“It’s critical to advocate for policies that really support those 85 percent of college students today.”

Pedersen earned a master’s degree in textile science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a doctorate in home economics from Oklahoma State University. She taught textiles and apparel for several years and was on the tenure track when she realized she wanted to pursue a different path in academia.

She took a position at Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa, where she had her first exposure to distance education through what was called the “correspondence study program.” Students enrolled in a course and received a box of materials in the mail, completing their coursework at their own pace.

That was in 1998, before online learning had turned into the widely available option it is for students today.

“That experience got me thinking about lifelong learning and an approach to education that serves people where they are — where they are in their career, where they are from a geographical perspective, where they are from an educational training perspective,” Pedersen said.

Pedersen has served in many leadership roles related to distance education and has had responsibility for credit and noncredit courses, conferences, online programs and business development. Her most recent position was chief knowledge officer of the Online Learning Consortium, an organization that aims to improve the quality of digital learning.

Supporting the 85 percent

While at the Online Learning Consortium, Pedersen advocated for the needs of distance students in many ways, including securing a $2.5 million grant for underserved students from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She spent time educating policymakers about the needs of nontraditional students such as distance and adult learners.

Legislators and others often enact policies that exclude or even negatively impact nontraditional college students. For example, sometimes a student must be enrolled full time to get financial aid. That’s not always an option for adult learners, who have other responsibilities.

“An adult learner who’s working full time makes choices. Sometimes they don’t apply for or don’t receive financial aid and that slows their progress to a degree,” Pedersen noted. “Or they take more class hours than they can really manage effectively. They can get themselves in trouble with their grades, which means they’re not making progress toward their degree.”

Pedersen hopes to continue to be a voice for these students through national and international policy as well as internally at K-State by looking at ways the university can even better serve its Global Campus students.

Meet the New Dean

Building on Global Campus’ outstanding track record, Dean Karen Pedersen is looking for ways to “shake up” higher ed to meet the needs of the majority of college students who aren’t full-time, on-campus students.
A learner-centered approach

Pedersen says online learners shop for education just like anything else. Succeeding in that competitive environment means looking at education through the lens of the learner, which could mean some significant changes to the traditional university paradigm.

"Historically, institutions have faculty with expertise, and they develop a program based on that faculty expertise," Pedersen said. "A learner-centered approach is one where you understand the market and what learners are looking for, then you develop curriculum based on their needs."

One way to do that is to offer what are sometimes called "chunks of learning." In a traditional university course, faculty provide several different learning outcomes, but many of today’s learners only want or need specific learning outcomes that advance their professional careers.

"It may not be a degree that someone actually needs but rather just a course or even a chunk of a course. So they may choose to educate themselves in a university environment, or they may find another way."

With the amount of knowledge to be gained online through a variety of sources — YouTube, Lynda.com, podcasts, massive open online courses, or MOOCs, or even just Googling, among myriad others — Pedersen believes it’s important to repurpose the knowledge of an institution into useful and marketable chunks.

"It’s really kind of unbundling some of what we do and delivering it in ways that are different and innovative," she said.

Pedersen hopes to expand that innovative approach to the other services offered by K-State, not just educational ones.

"I think about all of the services that we offer to students on campus, such as the Student Union. How do you create that sort of informal space for learners at a distance? How do you help the learner at a distance participate in commencement when they are not here?"

A unit on the move

When Pedersen assumed her new role as dean in February, she could tell that K-State Global Campus was "a unit on the move," ready to take on new ways of serving students with zeal and determination.

"The learners that we serve, the participants who attend the conferences that we support, the people who are enriched through the work of UFM Community Learning Center — we are talking about thousands of individuals who are impacted by a very small staff.

“What I have learned in my short time here is that the dedication of the staff to the learners that we serve at Global Campus is palpable when you walk through the building."

The opportunity to become dean of Global Campus was exciting to Pedersen because it allowed her to bring together many facets of her professional life. The fact that she would be part of Kansas State University was just the icing on the cake.

“My husband and I were in Kansas for a number of years. He earned his doctoral degree from Kansas State University, so we feel like we’re coming home.

“I just said to myself, ‘It’s a good fit.’"
Online Academic Advising Program Plays to K-State’s Strengths

Depth in program and on-campus expertise enhance distance student experience

A deep commitment to student success, empowered by the land-grant mission; a nationally recognized degree-granting program; and collaboration with the national professional association all combine to make Kansas State University a leader in the academic advising field.

In fact, K-State Global Campus graduate Kristi Lax-Walker calls the online master’s in academic advising a powerhouse for anyone thinking of working in higher education.

“For anyone who’s passionate about working with the developing college student and improving their lives and academic experiences, academic advising at K-State is hands down the best choice,” she said.

Ken Hughey, professor and chair of the department of special education, counseling and student affairs, is justifiably proud of the strong academic advising graduate programs offered by the College of Education through K-State Global Campus.

In fact, K-State’s online academic advising programs — which include a master’s degree and a graduate certificate — are among the best student services in the nation.

“The mission of our graduate programs is to prepare professional academic advisors who will contribute to the development and learning of students in higher education through the application of theory-informed and research-guided practice,” Hughey said.

These degree and certificate programs were developed in collaboration with NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, an organization with which the program has close ties. In fact, Charlie Nutt, K-State assistant professor, is the executive director of NACADA, which is housed on the Manhattan, Kansas, campus.

Lax-Walker, who currently works as an advising faculty member at the University of Notre Dame, agreed. She gets together with her former professors at NACADA conferences and feels like part of the K-State family.

“My professors treated me like an advising professional long before I ever saw myself as one,” she said. “Their expert knowledge and passion for their work lit a fire in me that continues to burn.”

Lax-Walker is a proud member of the K-State family, from her affinity for purple to her prized photo with Willie the Wildcat. She even made it to her graduation ceremony in Manhattan, with colleagues and friends watching the livestream back home.

“As I walked across the stage, I thought about how blessed I was to accomplish something that I told myself I would never achieve,” she said.

Want to know more? To hear more of Kristi’s story and learn more about the academic advising online master’s program, visit global.k-state.edu/education/academic-advising/masters.

Education at K-State is hands down the best choice.”

— Kristi Lax-Walker

Advisors Take the Journey with Students

Outstanding advisors serve Global Campus students

Rebecca Dale

Advice distance students in the general business bachelor’s degree program and master’s in food service and hospitality management.

Many hats: I have students who come to me when they need a cheerleader, someone to be in their corner at the university, to help them through a tough situation. Others only contact me when they need advice on which courses to take. I’m happy to fulfill either role, or something in between.

Right place, right time: I sort of fell into advising. Working with college students was my goal since my junior year in college, but I thought I had to become a faculty member to do that. In my second year of grad school at K-State, a few key faculty with advising responsibilities were retiring in my department. The department head then created a professional academic advisor role and I was lucky enough to get that position.

Fun fact: I speak fluent movie quotes!

Ashley Blake

Advises distance students in nutrition and health, general human ecology, interdisciplinary social science and the master’s in academic advising online through K-State Global Campus.

Pay it forward: I did my freshman year until I was matched with an incredible academic advisor who changed my path by simply taking the time to have some conversations with me. I didn’t think we ever talked about academics until our third or fourth meeting. It didn’t hit me until after I completed my undergrad degree that I wanted to be that person for someone else.

Even there, done that: The flexibility of completing assignments in the evenings, after working full-time job, was exactly what I needed as a distance education student myself. The faculty in academic advising all have experience in advising and it shows in their courses. I truly felt prepared to start a position in the field by the time I walked across the stage.

Biggest challenge of advising: The thing I love most about my job is also the most challenging, and that’s building a positive rapport with students via distance. I treat emails like appointments and respond right away. But a lot can get lost in translation ever email, so I make sure my tone is encouraging.

Fun fact: I have mad Nintendo skills.
One axiom of the modern educational model is that no matter how good a learning experience is, there’s room for improvement.

For over 50 years, Global Campus has been improving in every way it can, looking for practices and technologies to enrich and innovate distance learning, whether that learning has been delivered in local communities, broadcast through public television, viewed on VHS cassette tapes or streamed over the internet.

In 2012, when Kansas State University transitioned to the Canvas Learning Management System, the Global Campus team quickly realized that some online courses weren’t taking advantage of technological developments to maximize student learning and help students connect with faculty. The team decided to begin measuring all courses that receive K-State Global Campus program development grants against the K-State rubric for quality e-learning.

Laura Widenor, then the faculty services coordinator for Global Campus, began using this rubric to provide feedback to faculty grant recipients. As Global Campus grew, in part thanks to grant funding, to nearly 600 courses per semester and around 400 participating faculty today, so too did this segment of Widenor’s workload, resulting in a full-time position as course quality coordinator in 2017.

In addition to reviewing courses that receive funding, Widenor also supports faculty members directly through online faculty development courses, such as the Online Essentials course, distance education conference funding and one-on-one and group help sessions.

“All Global Campus courses belong to the colleges at Kansas State,” Widenor explained, “and we’re the facilitators.” This philosophy underpins everything she does, because as a facilitator, Widenor hopes to not only better connect online students with on-campus instructors, but ultimately to make the distance education experience stronger for students through better course structure and communication channels.

“Many times I start working with a fabulous professor and wonder, ‘How am I ever going to have anything to say?’ But I always find something that I
Help ensure the quality of online courses at K-State Global Campus

How you can make a difference for future Global Campus students? Please contact Melinda Sinn, alumni and external relations coordinator, at sinnpio@k-state.edu or 785-532-2515.

PEGGY HONEY

Associate professor in Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design
Teaches History of Interior Design

What did you get out of working with a quality coordinator?

I'm a seasoned educator, but felt out of my depth as I tried to think about converting courses I love teaching to the online format. I hoped to create classes that took advantage of an online format and were made better because of it. Perhaps the most valuable outcome of meeting with Laura was her reassurance that everything would be OK and that I was on the right track with my ideas. She was incredibly positive and encouraging!

Many of my questions were technical in nature, such as the best ways to capture a lecture. One of her most helpful recommendations, which my students have really appreciated, was to create an introductory page for each module, listing each step required for successful completion. I've implemented that idea for the start of each week, with embedded links to each lecture, quiz, file or assignment.

Putting a course online forces you to think really concretely about what you want your students to learn and the best teaching method to reach those outcomes. It requires you to be creative in finding ways to engage the student in the learning process. I love that part of the process, but doing all of that takes a lot of time!
Everyone Can Learn, Everyone Can Teach

UFM Community Learning Center celebrates 50 years of making learning fun for everyone

In January 1968, University for Man — known today as the UFM Community Learning Center — offered its first seven seminars and workshops on the Kansas State University campus. The inaugural event included The Creative Experience, What Is Woman Today, The Future of Belief, New Media Workshop, Studies in Problematics, Military-Industrial Establishment and Toward the Year 2000, described as:

“An engaging look into the future of man. Not a utopian, mainly irrelevant speculation on future events, but a hard look at the next 40 years, focusing on how our decisions and efforts today will shape the events of tomorrow.”

One has to wonder if the small group of K-State students who dared to experiment with the idea of a free university ever dreamed that it would still exist in the new millennium, or how much of an impact it would have 50 years later.

Debbie Newton, who has been a yoga instructor with UFM for 11 years and a board member for six, has seen firsthand how the organization has continued to thrive through the years.

“UFM just has this way of keeping its history and at the same time, envisioning its future. UFM is unafraid to keep moving ahead, while keeping that strong sense of mission from the past,” she said.

The belief that “everyone can learn, everyone can teach” has been UFM’s foundation for five decades. No one knows this better than Linda Teener, who has served as executive director — she is just the fourth in the organization’s history — for 28 years and counting.

“Manhattan is a community that really respects and loves education,” she said.

“UFM connects people with similar interests. We fill a need for adult education that is just for fun.”

At its roots, UFM is about learning for the fun of learning. Its founders wanted UFM to be the link between the K-State campus and the Greater Manhattan community. As such, UFM quickly became affiliated with continuing education, and today the organization serves as a unit within K-State Global Campus. Together, UFM and Global Campus make education accessible for anyone with a desire to learn.

“From the beginning, UFM was designed to be a program to bridge communication between campus and community. The importance of that idea continues now — being able to learn from each other and share ideas and opinions in a neutral environment,” Teener said. “UFM quickly grew into what you see now — it caught on, the idea of people wanting to share something they know and people wanting to learn from that.”

The organization has certainly seen many changes over the years, from offering a handful of courses to hundreds today, and expanding the programs and services it provides in the community and across the state. One thing that hasn’t changed is UFM’s focus on bringing people together through learning, a mission that is just as relevant today as it was 50 years ago.

“When I think about the variety of people that come to my classes, there’s just a lot of joining together of different people in the community. It makes Manhattan a more welcoming, stronger community,” Newton said. “UFM is offering what people need, what people like, what makes them feel a part of things.”

The original instructor! Here are a few examples from the spring session:

**A Blast From the Past**

This year, area residents can take a UFM class that was offered in the past from its original instructor! Here are a few examples from the spring session:

- **Edible Wild Plants** — 1975
  Instructor: Sue Maes

- **Introduction to Mountain Dulcimer** — 1979
  Instructor: Linda Teener

- **Loom Beading** — 1980s
  Instructor: Georgia Perez

- **Stamp Collecting** — 1982
  Instructor: Tim Lindemuth

Enroll and view more courses at tryufm.org.

**Caring for the Community**

Over the years, UFM has branched out beyond its course offerings to bring some much-needed programs and services to the Manhattan area:

- **Project EXCELL** — provides classes to adults with developmental disabilities, with help from Global Campus
- **Manhattan Community Gardens** — started by UFM in 1974, when community gardens were largely unheard of
- **People’s Grocery** — grew out of a UFM co-op initiative to provide local and natural foods
- **The Crisis Center** — helps those dealing with domestic abuse; got its start in 1971 when a class on sexual assault was taught through UFM
- **Teen Mentoring Program** — when it began, was the first of its kind to offer a place to go and things to do for local high-risk teens; is now 20 years old.

To learn more about UFM’s 50th anniversary and how you can join the celebration at various events throughout the year, visit tryufm.org/50th-anniversary.
Longtime Global Campus staffer sets up K-State Family Scholarship for Global Campus students in honor of her own family

Like many who give back to Kansas State University, Melinda Sinn wanted to honor her family’s commitment to education by helping K-State students earn their education at her beloved alma mater.

But unlike most donors, Sinn has had a unique, decades-long immersion in the motivations and challenges of a particular group of Wildcats, having served the needs of adult distance learners for nearly four decades at Global Campus.

When Sinn says she knows the impact her dollars will make, she really knows what she’s talking about.

Student stories inspire Sinn
In 2017, Sinn, Global Campus alumni and external relations coordinator, set up the K-State Family Scholarship for Global Campus students in honor of her parents, Kenneth and Leah Mae Bever. Sinn has bachelor’s and master’s degrees from K-State herself and has worked in marketing and student outreach for Global Campus — and its previous iteration, Division of Continuing Education — for 37 years. She had been searching for a way to honor her late mother’s memory after receiving a legacy from her in 2013.

“Over and over, for many years, I’ve heard the stories of the sacrifices people have to make to finish their education after they’re adults, and just how challenging that can be with families and jobs and not living near a college campus,” Sinn said.

Because of her experience at Global Campus, Sinn understands better than most that finishing college is not always a four-year, straight-line process.

“Many people go to college but then they get married, have financial challenges or experience other events that cause them to not finish. Later they realize how valuable that degree would have been for them,’ she said. “And then they find Global Campus and realize they can finish. It just makes a huge difference in their lives.”

That commitment to education resonated with Sinn and it reminded her of her parents.

Strong work ethic a shared value
Sinn’s parents had an incredibly strong work ethic and wanted to build a better life for themselves and their family.

“My dad started working full time out of the eighth grade. He worked in the oil fields in southeast Kansas as a roustabout and then raised cattle and farmed until he was 81. My mom came from a family of five kids, but she did get to go to college for two years and earned her teaching certificate.

“Because my parents valued education so much, all three of us girls have college degrees, and two of us have masters.’”

Reflecting on her parents’ work ethic made Sinn feel that a Global Campus scholarship would be the best way to invest the legacy from her mother, because Global Campus students also work hard.

“They’re going to school, they have families, they have other obligations, and I just felt like their dedication to education matched up really well with what my parents had done all their lives,” she said.

Sinn had a series of discussions with the Kansas State University Foundation about the best way to set up the scholarship. Then, amazingly, thanks to a generous, anonymous donor, matching funds became available that doubled her investment into a $60,000 endowed scholarship.

Sinn’s dad Kenneth was happy to hear about his daughter’s donation. Having grown up during the Great Depression, he has a frugal outlook on life.

“I think what pleases him the most is that I doubled my money,” she said. “And of course, he was very pleased that I’d honored my mom’s memory, and he appreciated how I’d gone about it.”

The first $1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a Global Campus student this fall, and will be awarded each semester after that.

Continuing to serve K-State
Sinn, who also farms near Manhattan with her husband Greg, assumed her current position in 2017. A crucial part of her job is to develop and maintain relationships with alumni and to share their successes with current and potential students.

Sinn encourages donors to consider including part-time students in more scholarship opportunities since most Global Campus students are part-time adult learners.

“A good example is a foundation scholarship in northwest Kansas that was only available to full-time students. We talked to them about expanding their reach with their scholarship, and they were happy to start including Global Campus students once they knew about the need.”

“Global Campus students are going to school, they have families, they have other obligations, and I just felt like their dedication to education matched up really well with what my parents had done all their lives.” — Melinda Sinn

Want to help distance students succeed?
Many opportunities are available to contribute to Global Campus students’ success, including possible matching of funds. If you’d like more information, contact Melinda Sinn, sinnpio@k-state.edu or 785-532-2515.

Want to help distance students succeed?
Many opportunities are available to contribute to Global Campus students’ success, including possible matching of funds. If you’d like more information, contact Melinda Sinn, sinnpio@k-state.edu or 785-532-2515.
EDITOR’S NOTE: When we launched Link magazine in the spring of 2015, we did so to build and maintain relationships with our K-State Global Campus alumni. Getting to hear your stories and share them with others who have gone through similar experiences has helped shape our mission and strengthen our resolve to deliver the highest-quality online education anywhere. But we know there are stories we’re missing. We want to give each of you the opportunity to share with us what you’re doing. We want to know what having a degree through Global Campus has meant to each of you. Maybe it’s a career milestone such as a promotion, or perhaps you’ve embarked on an entirely new professional path. Or maybe it’s a personal milestone, like a marriage or a new child. If you’re willing to share, we want to hear it!

This page is a sample of what we’ve received so far. If you’d like to participate, just go to global.k-state.edu/alumni and follow the Alumni Information Form link at the bottom of the page.

Rebecca Giertz, a 2017 graduate of the master’s in psychology with an emphasis in industrial and organizational psychology from K-State, has started a new job as a human resource professional for Cummins Corporate Headquarters in Columbus, Indiana. Giertz is looking forward to putting into practice all that she learned in her online master’s degree through Global Campus.

Giertz says she is excited to work at Cummins because it is a global organization with a diverse population, has a corporate philosophy of “Working Right” and incorporates many human resources best practices.

Kyle Bures, director of the Teaching and Learning Center at Neosho County (Kansas) Community College – Ottawa Campus, recently met with Julie Hunt, the Global Campus program coordinator for online programs in the College of Education, along with others from Global Campus and the DirectLink program, which focuses on providing a smooth transition for students transferring from a community college. Bures received his academic advising master’s degree through Global Campus in 2014. He lives in Princeton, Kansas, with his wife Amanda and two children, Deacon and Deni.

We want to hear from you! Send us your updates! Go to global.k-state.edu/alumni and follow the Alumni Information Form link at the bottom of the page to share any news you might have.
Link joins thousands of students, alumni and supporters of distance education who want to learn online, grow professionally and connect globally through Kansas State University.

BEST ONLINE PROGRAMS 2018

U.S. News & World Report ranked 19 of Kansas State University’s online degree programs among the top 100 in the country for 2018.