A man with curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, is speaking at a dark wood podium. He is gesturing with his right hand. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

2023-2024

# Annual Report

**KANSAS STATE**  
**College of Business**  
Center for Principled Business



Front Cover: Ethan Brown (Menard Scholar 2020) gives a speech after being selected for the Resilient Senior Award.

Inside Cover: Maddie Rimmer (Menard Scholar 2020) was recognized with the Outstanding Senior award at commencement.

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# Business and Society

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## Academic

Our Business & Society class was approved by K-State’s faculty senate early in the spring of 2024 and is now a permanent course in the K-State Course Catalog. It will count as a general education elective for all students and a restricted elective for our business students; we anticipate significant growth in the class over the next couple of years.

The fall course is full with a waitlist. We will offer the class each spring and fall semester and will also host a study abroad option during our May 2025 Intersession. Our Center is exploring options for scaling the class as we anticipate increased demand for enrollment as students move through our new curriculum.

## CAT Community

In Fall 2023, we launched our Business & Society CAT Community. We are excited to host our second community in Fall 2024, already at capacity with 22 students participating.

CAT Communities bring together incoming first-year students, providing them with a well-rounded academic and community experience that enhances their transition to university life. The community fosters a supportive environment, boosts student engagement, and facilitates the development of key skills and knowledge in business principles and entrepreneurship. Additionally, the structure of the CAT Community program helps build strong relationships and networks from the start, crucial for personal and professional growth.



## Study Abroad May 2025

We are excited to offer a study abroad option for our Business & Society' course, set in Athens and Crete, Greece, in May 2025. These destinations provide a unique lens to examine the evolution of business from ancient times to the modern day, providing a striking contrast to U.S. economic conditions.

As students immerse themselves in Greece's rich historical and cultural heritage, coupled with its dynamic economic recovery and innovation, they will gain invaluable insights into global economic practices and challenges. This experience is designed to broaden their perspectives, equipping them with the critical ability to compare and contrast diverse economic environments. By observing how businesses adapt and innovate within these varying contexts, students will enhance their capacity to navigate and influence the increasingly interconnected global economy.

# K-State Business Innovation Challenge

Powered by Koch Industries

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**Left:** Winners William Tranbarger and Autumn Race each received \$1,000 scholarship

**Above:** The second place team made up of Rachel Yenni, Shayla Cowin, Grant Rumsey, and Sophie Osborn.

This spring we hosted the finals of the 5th Annual K-State Business Innovation Challenge – powered by Koch Industries. The challenge aims to cultivate entrepreneurial skills and encourage innovative solutions to real-world problems. Teams were asked to develop a proposal to improve an existing product, service, or technology.

The top six teams (out of 74 total teams) advanced to the final round and presented to a panel of judges. Our alumni judges—**Nick Chong**, Zoom; **Victor Ojeleye**, Cargill; **Ken Selzer**, former Kansas Insurance Commissioner; and **Katie Small**, University of Chicago—provided valuable expertise, further enriching the experience for our participants. Nearly \$10,000 in scholarship prizes were awarded to this year’s top finalist teams.

This year’s event saw Autumn Race and William Tranbarger triumph with their AI Leap Pad concept, highlighting the innovative thinking fostered within our student community. Second place pitched a digital business card integrated into LinkedIn, and third place went to a team suggesting a barefoot version of a popular tennis shoe.

# Menard Family Scholars



## Case Competition

This year, the Menard Scholars program proudly sent its first team to compete in the Cornhusker Case Competition at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Four sophomores—Jayme Wagner (Organizational Management), Adam Ackerman (Finance), Lilly Graham (Accounting), and Reese Reitz (Entrepreneurship)—represented Kansas State University in this intense two-day event, competing against students from across the nation.



## Learning Trips

Throughout the year, students are invited to attend learning trips, where they visit companies in the region to learn about business operations, network with professionals, and explore internships and full-time career opportunities. Menard Scholars visited:

- Omaha, Nebraska
- Wichita, Kansas
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Chicago, Illinois



## Workshops

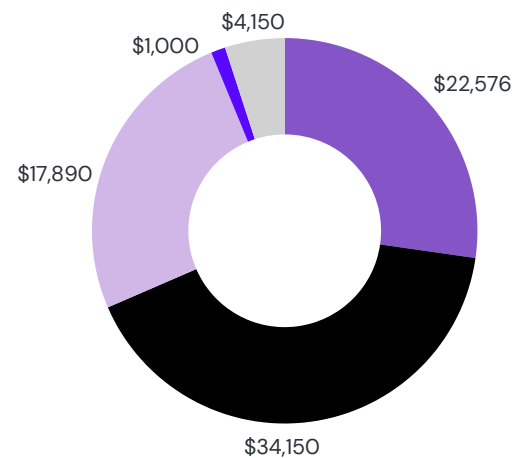
Students are provided sessions in class focused on leadership development, ethical decision making, and innovative thinking.

- Mindset & goal setting with Victor Ojeleye
- Economic updates with Dr. Eric Higgins
- Scholarship & undergraduate research opportunities
- Business ethics



## Opportunity Fund Funds utilized 2020–2024

- Professional Attire
- Study Abroad
- Tuition, Textbooks & Educational Enhancements
- Conferences
- Internship Living Expenses



# Menard Family Scholars

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We are excited to celebrate a landmark moment as the first cohort of the Menard Family Scholars Program graduated this spring! The outstanding graduating senior was awarded to Menard Scholar Maddie Rimmer. Menard Scholar Ethan Brown was nominated as the resilient senior speaker.

## Grad Stats of 2020 Cohort

50+

internships completed during time at K-State

7

continuing their education after graduation

\$80k

average reported salary

Since its launch in Fall 2020, Menard Scholars has become a signature program for our college, shaping high-achieving freshman business students into tomorrow's leaders. Since the program launched, 100 students have participated as scholars and our first cohort graduated in May 2024.

This spring, we saw unprecedented interest with over 100 applications and selected 32 outstanding students for the 2024 - 2025 cohort. As this program grows, it continues to enhance the reputation of the K-State College of Business and bring significant value to our educational community.

*"The Menard Scholars program opened my eyes to the opportunities within the College of Business Administration and equipped me with the skills to thrive as a student and prepare for success beyond graduation. It deepened my understanding of how business can improve lives and connected me with like-minded peers who share my passion for making the most of our education. The sense of community and lasting friendships I gained are something I will cherish forever."* -Janis Asaris, 2024 graduate

# Women in Business



The third annual Women in Business Career Summit welcomed nearly 600 attendees to engage in professional development and networking during the fall. The Women in Business student organization hosted over 200 high school students in an afternoon session at the College of Business building, where \$12,000 in K-State College of Business scholarships were awarded.

An additional \$18,000 in scholarships were awarded to K-State student attendees. Special thanks to our keynote speaker, Jeanette Prenger, for her \$5,000 donation in scholarship awards.



The Career Summit was a highlight of the year, featuring an inspiring morning keynote address from K-State alumna Kristine Davis, a spacesuit engineer at NASA. Jeanette Prenger, founder and CEO of ECCO Select, a leading Hispanic tech company in Kansas City, delivered the lunch keynote. The event also included insightful breakout sessions and panels featuring our Women in Business students and regional women officials.

We were honored to present our second Impact Award to Amy Button Renz. The K-State Women in Business Initiative Impact Award recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to advancing women in the workplace, their community, and other spaces, including higher education.

We are proud that 90 students who attended the Summit as high school students are now part of the K-State community.

The Women in Business student organization is thriving, with membership exceeding 200. The new executive team is focused on expanding opportunities for WIB members in the coming year.

We appreciate the critical support from our sponsors: Koch Industries, ConocoPhillips, Fastenal, BNSF, Kansas State University Foundation, and Cintas.





# Summer Institute

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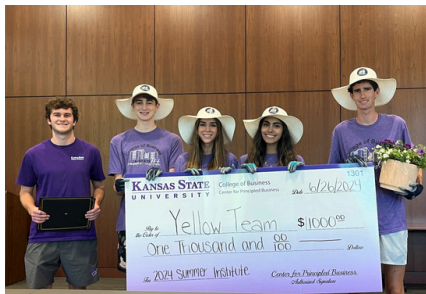
Our College of Business Summer Institute has had overwhelming success since its inception in summer 2022. In summer 2023, we hosted 70 students across two sessions and increased that number to 80 students in summer 2024. Students must apply as a rising sophomore, junior, or senior. Our participants were from Kansas and seven surrounding states in our 2024 sessions.

This program introduces high school students to business essentials through interactive projects, team collaborations, local business visits, and a concluding Business Challenge. These activities not only provide a comprehensive overview of business disciplines and principles but also foster connections and future opportunities within the College of Business. We are excited to continue this tradition of nurturing potential future leaders in their early exposure to the business world.

In their final business challenge, students pitch an idea for a mobile business and must show consideration to each area of business in their presentation to a panel of judges. Top teams are awarded scholarships to be used on business courses at K-State.



For the first time, we were excited to award a \$1,000 scholarship to ALL participants of the Summer Institute (on top of any additional winnings they may receive from their presentation). With the success of the program thus far, we are excited to see the impact of additional scholarship dollars on enrollment.



30% of participants\* have enrolled at KSU

\*out of 56 students who have graduated from high school

# Center News

Jake Duke, Ph.D.

## Classes:

- ENTRP 340: Entrepreneurial Mindset
- FINAN 561: Entrepreneurial Finance
- GENBA 195: Name, Image, Likeness
- MANGT 596: Business Ethics

## Research:

### Published

- “How strategic alliances shape problematic search intensity: Evidence from responses to social and historical underperformance”

### In Process

- “Entrepreneurial activity from local ties to digital ties: punctuated equilibrium perspective on venture capital syndication”
- “How the interplay of utilitarian versus normative organizational identities impact social venture capitalists (SVCs) and their investment decisions”
- “More than cheap talk: Tweets as a novel type of competitive action that can instigate competitive reactions”



Rachel Mui, Ph.D.

## Classes:

- ENTRP 340: Entrepreneurial Mindset
- ENTRP 540: Entrepreneurial Consulting
- ENTRP 575: Entrepreneurship & Innovation Capstone
- MANGT 840: Advanced Entrepreneurship

## Research:

### Published

- “How strategic alliances shape problematic search intensity: Evidence from responses to social and historical underperformance”
- “Delving into feminine stereotypes: female CEOs and the corporate social (ir)responsibility-firm performance relationship”
- “Reputation belongs in more strategic decision models (and some data to measure it)”

We said goodbye to **Dr. Brian Silverstein** as he continues his career in South Carolina. We wish him luck with his future endeavors!



Holly Loncarich, Ph.D.

## Classes:

- MANGT 498: Business & Society
- MANGT 595: Strategic Management
- MANGT 596: Business Ethics
- MANGT 860: Managing the Triple Bottom Line

## Research:

### In Process

- “Conservative CEOs and vertical integration”
- “Firm reputation risk and CBAs”

## Additional Center-funded research

Jim Bloodgood, Ph.D.

## Research:

### Published

- “The hidden negative effects of governmental protectionism on entrepreneurship and innovation: Overcoming good intentions gone awry”

# Center News

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## Center Staff Receive Recognition

This year our Center staff all received recognition for their work in different areas. It is exciting to see the hard work of our team be recognized across the University!

**Marcia Hornung**, Menard Family Director: President’s Award of Excellence for Unclassified Professionals in the Leadership category for the University

**Megan Ronnebaum**, program consultant: Intrust Bank Staff Award in the College of Business

**Katie Schmit**, student assistant: finalist for the Kyle Pelton Student Employee of the Year for all University student employees



Advisory board member Bill Keller was the spring 2024 College of Business commencement speaker.



Brexten Bland graduated this spring with her master’s in accountancy. Brexten worked with the Menard Scholars as a learning assistant and graduate assistant since 2020.



Both Kailei and Lily attended Summer Institute in 2023 and are seen here attending the 2023 Women in Business Summit. Kailei participated in MAPS as an incoming freshman in business this summer. We hope to see Lily next year!

**2023-2024**  
**Scholarships Awarded**

*Innovation Challenge*

**\$13,000**

*Summer Institute*

**\$100,500**

*Business and Society*

**\$18,000**

*Women in Business*

**\$30,500**

*Menard Family Scholar Opportunity Fund*

**\$43,500**



## Connect With Us



[ksucpb@ksu.edu](mailto:ksucpb@ksu.edu)



785.532.2650



[cba.ksu.edu/cpb](http://cba.ksu.edu/cpb)

Center for Principled Business  
1301 Lovers Lane



Suite 3086  
Manhattan, KS 66506