Kansas State University – Innovation Planning Group
Online Growth White Paper
March 6, 2020

Executive Summary:

As part of its 2025 strategic planning, K-State identified innovation as an essential component of its future ambition and launched this planning group to better define that ambition. This white paper is concerned with the 'online growth' workstream of that planning group. While our current online footprint is not small, K-State recognizes that the growth of its online portfolio is essential for maintaining and enhancing the quality of education it offers to current students, while continuing to reach a broader set of non-traditional students and fulfill our land grant mission.

The types of online programs demanded by students are shifting rapidly with the emergence of new industries, technologies, and employer requirements. This shift is magnified by the evolution in the types of students who are demanding these programs, who are increasingly 'non-traditional' in their family circumstances, age, and employment status. Additionally, the competitive market is intensifying, with large national providers (e.g., SNHU, ASU, WGU) contending to serve Kansas residents, while the range of potential delivery mechanisms available to both K-State and these competitors is also rapidly growing. K-State needs to position itself to monitor, evaluate, and react to these market forces pro-actively – while setting a clear ambition and ensuring consistent quality standards – in order to stay competitive.

We have organized recommendations for K-State's online portfolio using an adapted version of the classic 'playing to win' framework. This framework helps to organize our recommendations into two key strategic decisions: where we play – i.e., the who, what, and where of our online portfolio, and 'how to win' – i.e., the structures and processes put in place to deliver on our 'where to play'. This framework also helps clarify each recommendation's intent and ensure their collective strength and comprehensiveness.

The recommendations for each part of the innovation system are as follows:
WHO: Develop highly flexible courses for adult learners. Develop organizational/NGO partnerships. Design targeted programs to recruit high school students. Drive alumni re-enrollment through incentives.
WHAT: Simplify and create a more competitive pricing structure. Pursue developing a portfolio of micro-credentials offerings. Link online portfolio to strategic plan focus areas, and areas of institutional strength.
WHERE: Unify all K-State's marketing and branding efforts for online offerings. Map K-State's online portfolio to Kansas workforce initiatives, economic hotspots, state needs, and available programs.
HOW: Establish quality benchmarks for online course design. Expand distance advising availability. Invest significantly in developing high-quality instructional design capabilities.

Obviously, there are risks and barriers to each of these recommendations. These include faculty resistance to new and unfamiliar modes of operation, existing internal processes that impede the development of new online offerings, and organizational discomfort with non-traditional course offerings. We propose several risk mitigation strategies, including creating the right processes to expedite the development of new, 'risky' programs, systems for incentivizing faculty buy-in, and a set of change management activities.

While developing an appropriately shaped and delivered portfolio of online offerings is challenging, K-State is committed to taking the requisite steps today for making its future ambition a reality.

Contents

1 – Organizational context of this project

Kansas State University engaged Huron to lead two planning groups comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders through a process to consider recommendations for improving K-State's capability to effectively innovate. These two planning groups were given two distinct areas of focus: "Academic Innovation" and "Online Growth". This white paper is concerned with the recommendations resulting from the combined efforts of the Huron team and the Online Growth planning group. At the beginning of this process, the academic innovation planning group was given the following charge:

> *"Through this planning group, K-State will develop recommendations for the strategic expansion of K-State's online portfolio. The strategy emerging from this planning group will be designed to generate revenue and enhance K-State's position as a market-leader in online higher education"*

In assessing the current organizational context of online education at K-State, we considered some of the relevant strengths, weaknesses, barriers, and opportunities that exist in the current state. This included a review of past/ongoing work, as well as qualitative input from the planning group based on their (and their team's/colleagues') experiences with K-State's online education apparatus. *A set of these current state analysis materials can be found in Appendix A.*

It is also worth noting other ongoing efforts at K-State which do or could relate to this effort:

- **SEM:** Our effort was in part launched to build upon the work that Huron has conducted to date with K-State related to Strategic Enrollment Management.
- **2025 Refresh:** Our effort is concurrent with K-State's ongoing efforts to refresh their 2025 vision.
- **Two other planning groups:** At the time of writing, the efforts of K-State 2025 strategic initiative planning groups focused on "The Cyber Land-Grant University" and "Global Food, Health, and Biosecurity" are ongoing.
- **Global Campus:** The current locus for the majority of online programming at K-State.
- **Graduate Global and International Students Task Force:** Convened in late summer 2018 as part of the SEM initiative.
- **K-State in Kansas City Task Force:** Convened in fall 2019.

It is also worth acknowledging the great work that has been done to bring K-State's online portfolio to where it is today. K-State's Global Campus has already established a portfolio of approximately $25 million in online program revenue, with further online offerings across the university's other campuses as well. These recommendations represent an effort to build upon the strong foundation that has already been laid. We want to emphasize the importance of making the necessary incremental improvements to consolidate previous work, while moving the conversation forward to what K-State's online programming might look like in the future.

2 – Market context: additional perspectives

This effort considered not just internal context, but also those factors that are external to K-State but nonetheless have significant implications for the future of online education at the university. These factors include – but are not limited to – trends related to the scale of online institutions, other regional players, macro-economic forces influencing enrollment, and those stakeholders we believe we ought to be targeting. S*ee Appendix B for more detail on the market context of online education in North America.*

The online education landscape is evolving as universities – and flagship publics in particular – look to their online operations as a means of extending their core mission in the face of evolving market forces. Demographic shifts in the coming years threaten traditional revenue pipelines, such as undergraduate tuition. In response, institutions are increasingly looking to online markets as revenue opportunities. Demand for online programming is indeed growing, as adult and professional learners pursue degrees, credentials, and additional training throughout their careers in order to keep up with rapidly changing industries. Still, the supply of online education is growing at least as fast as the demand at this moment, meaning that universities must move deliberately and strategically in these markets in order to target and enroll new learners effectively. Practically, this means that ongoing market research and monitoring is an essential component of a university's online strategy. Additionally, universities must consider how to address demand from non-traditional customer types, such as through partnerships directly with employers, including corporate, governmental, and non-profit organizational collaborators. The ability to optimize for rapid market responsiveness and to deliver to new customer types will determine the "winners" in the evermore competitive market to deliver online higher education.

3 – Scope definition

Scope of 'Online' for the purposes of this effort:

- For the sake of simplicity, 'online education' should refer to all educational programming delivered online, by any entity within K-State. (i.e., not just Global Campus programming).
- In a similar vein, these recommendations are written as prescriptions for what the desirable future state of online programming ought to look like at K-State, rather than purely an extrapolation of what incremental improvements are possible within the current apparatus of K-State's online education infrastructure.
- That said, these recommendations seek to identify strategic focus areas for K-State's online programming, rather than assert specific courses or programs that the university should offer.

4 – The 'where to play, how to win' framework

This organization paradigm has been adapted for our purposes in part from Roger Martin's classic 'Playing to Win' framework. Our intent is not to mimic that concept, but to leverage that insight to form a helpful intellectual structure for this set recommendations to the University.

Essentially, we are organizing our strategic thinking into four categories:

- **WHO:** The audiences and types of learners we should target
- **WHAT:** Value proposition, offerings, and academic program focus areas
- **WHERE:** Geographic footprint and scale of our ambition
- **HOW:** Delivering on the WHO, WHAT, and WHERE

See Appendix C for a visualization of this framework

5 – Recommendations for online growth at K-State

These recommendations are organized by the four components of our adapted 'where to play, how to win' framework defined above, though there are obviously numerous places of overlap. The end of this section also includes a visualization of these recommendations organized by their relative levels of likely impact, and effort required to implement (This depiction is Huron driven, but planning group informed). *See Appendix E for detail on the process the planning group undertook to develop these recommendations.*

For each recommendation, we will provide the following detail and commentary in addition to an overview of what each recommendation is calling for:

- **Critical success factors:** What the success of the idea will hinge upon, and what K-State needs to get 'right' to drive the desired impact.
- **Key risks/barriers to overcome:** Those execution risks and implementation barriers that will need to be overcome to drive the desired impact.
- **Huron supplementary recommendations:** Additional input, detail, and perspective from the Huron team for the university to consider.

WHO: The audiences and types of learners we should target

Problem Statement	Which audiences and types of learners should K-State's future state online portfolio be targeted at?
Recommendations	A. Meet the needs of the adult learner market by designing online courses that are highly flexible and customizable B. Develop company/government/NGO partnerships and consider co-designed curriculums with these partners C. Targeted programs for high school students who are considering college and/or K-State D. Drive alumni re-enrollment through targeted incentives (discounts, package deals, etc.)

A: Meet the needs of the adult learner market by designing online courses that are highly flexible and customizable

K-State currently has a robust core of credit-bearing online degree programs, which warrants maintenance and sustained growth. One avenue for doing so (while also appealing to a whole new market) is to explicitly make our online offerings more accessible and attractive to adult learners. We should work to tailor our offerings by making flexibility, customization, and outcome orientation key course design principles, while also advertising our online offerings accordingly. Additionally, we should consider finding ways to connect adult learners with support services including senior care, childcare, financial advice, etc., to allow them to better focus on their studies. This would not entail K-State offering these services ourselves, but rather connecting adult learners with reputable third parties.

Critical success factors:

- Understanding the needs of adult learners (e.g., how do they define 'flexibility'?).

- Robust faculty and student support staff training and incentives for engaging with non-traditional students online vs. undergraduates learning on campus. We need to 'de-risk' this process for faculty, other educators, and student support staff.
- Effective instructional design resources and collaboration with faculty.
- Concerted marketing efforts to reach populations not commonly targeted.

Key barriers/risks to overcome:

- Faculty resistance to needing to learn new teaching methodologies and course design practices.
- Program will require significant instructional design resources to execute effectively.
- Resources and internal alignment to reach populations that K-State does not traditionally target.

Huron recommendation:

Targeting adult learners could form a (if not 'the') central pillar of K-State's online offerings. In the near term, we recommend that K-State focus on two adult learner populations in particular, for designing and marketing its online courses:

1) **Alumni:** Those with a pre-existing affiliation to the university are easiest to reach, design for, and appeal to for further education at K-State.
2) **Kansas City:** Target the large population of K-State alums and other adult learners concentrated in a familiar and accessible geography.

B: Develop company/government/NGO partnerships and consider co-designed curriculums with these partners

Align course 'success' with desired employer talent 'outcomes'. The intent is not to undermine the liberal arts education that is a feature of BS/BA degrees, but to allow some students to more specifically curate their experiences for an employability outcome. There is also an extended version of this concept where employers commit to tying success in these courses to internships and scholarships. This initiative could take two forms (K-State could pursue either or both):

1) **K-State retains full ownership of curriculum design** but works with partners to tailor teaching to student skills-based outcomes, enhancing their employability.
2) **K-State shares design of curriculums (in select cases)** with partner organizations, optimizing for curated teaching, and perhaps driving revenue through these partnerships**.**

Critical Success Factors:

- K-State building on the work of various outreach efforts in Kansas City, and deepening select existing partnerships to reach an initial 'safe' population to test this model with. K-State should then use this platform to build a more robust network of collaborating institutions.
- K-State developing a robust micro-credentialing offering could be a helpful enabler for tightly tailoring short, focused courses to the needs of these organizational audiences.

Key risk/barriers to overcome:

- Historical wariness of corporate influence will need to be examined and discussed at the departmental level in order to allay fears and make progress.
- Designing courses tailored to employability outcomes is a new capability that will not be entirely straightforward to develop. This will require significant testing and iteration.
- Organizational partners may be unwilling to commit financially to this proposition, making it hard to sustain for K-State in the long term.

<u>Huron recommendation:</u>

We believe K-State should develop this recommendation in a resource-light stepwise fashion.

    i.   The first step would be to pilot short micro-credential courses, with the curriculum fully owned by K-State, with a select group of trusted organizations.

    ii.   Once this model has demonstrated viability, K-State should attempt co-designed curriculums with the same/similar group of trusted partner organizations.

    iii.   Once this co-design model has demonstrated both practical and financial viability, only then should K-State seek to scale this is into a true revenue driving program.

C: Targeted programs for high school students who are considering college and/or K-State

This initiative is intended as a recruitment and yield driving initiative and is unlikely to generate significant revenue on its own. These programs would offer targeted marketing and price discrimination to accomplished or high-value enrollment target high school students. The goal would be to both expose and familiarize the students with K-State, while also including credits (or micro-credentials), making K-State even more appealing for students looking to accelerate their path through college. This also aligns well with the university's ongoing strategic effort to increase out-of-state student pipelines.

It is worth highlighting that this program is not intended to compete with or replace K-State's general education offerings. The focus of this program would be those departments and colleges where K-State has a regionally renowned or differentiated program. (i.e., a success story would be convincing a high-school junior contemplating an engineering degree that K-State's engineering program is right for her).

<u>Critical success factors:</u>

- This program needs to be focused and resource-light. Leadership must ensure these programs are designed to increase exposure to and affinity for K-State, with short high-impact experiences.
- Establishing a universal understanding that the intent is to drive yield to K-State, rather than significant revenue through this program. Structure goals, metrics, incentives, etc. accordingly.
- Ability to effectively (and cheaply) select, adapt, and deliver college-level courses to offer to targeted, high-value high school students.

<u>Key barriers/risks to overcome:</u>

- It will be challenging to appropriately frame this activity given its intent is to drive recruitment rather than generate significant revenue on its own. Without the appropriate internal positioning, this initiative may be viewed as a 'resource-sink' with limited benefits to the university.
- Challenges associated with the unfamiliar collaboration between those delivering the programming and those engaged in recruitment and marketing efforts.

<u>Huron recommendation:</u>

This program, which is unlikely to be a significant revenue-driver, needs to tightly align to the 'Strategic Enrollment Management' work, to increase recruitment and yield to K-State. As such, we would not recommend dedicating significant resources to this effort until the foundations of the SEM work have had a chance to take hold.

D: Drive alumni re-enrollment through targeted incentives (discounts, package deals, etc.)

K-State's alumni population represents perhaps the most promising and accessible population for K-State's online offerings. K-State should seek to track alumni, and selectively offer financial incentives for

online courses and programs. This should be part of a larger effort to stress the importance of lifelong learning, all the while and making it easy and comfortable to do so through K-State.

Critical success factors:

- The appropriate platforms, systems, and processes for tracking and engaging with alumni are the essential capability for delivering on this recommendation.
- A simplified and more competitive online pricing structure (see recommendation WHAT:A) will substantially improve alumni engagement and course uptake.
- A key differentiator in this realm could be stackable courses that provide pathways for alumni to build on their undergraduate qualifications in an accessible and gamified manner.

Key risks/barriers to overcome:

- There may need to be somewhat significant up-front resourcing ask to develop the necessary infrastructure needed to track, segment, and engage with the alumni we seek to recruit.
- Shifting faculty, administrator, and broader university mindsets to think of alumni not as finished products, or as just potential donors, but as partners in a lifetime of learning.

Huron recommendation:

This should be a high priority for execution in the near term. This is more feasible than some other recommendations given the existing relationship with alumni, and the fact that this could be launched with fairly limited net-new course design/creation, particularly in its initial pilot form.

This recommendation also coincides with developing the strategically important capability for K-State to more effectively track and engage with its alumni population. That capability has significant value in its own right, but attaching it to this initiative has the potential to drive near term revenue impact in addition to the strategic value of a large, organized, and engaged alumni body.

WHAT: Value proposition, offerings, and academic program focus areas

Problem Statement	What program types and focus areas should K-State's future state online portfolio build around? (at a strategic level, not program-by-program)
Recommendations	A. Deliver online courses with a simplified, and more competitive, pricing structure B. Actively pursue developing a portfolio of offerings around micro-credentials: shorter, more intense, course and program options C. Link online portfolio to strategic plan focus areas, and other areas of institutional strength

A. Deliver online courses with a simplified, and more competitive, pricing structure

The current tuition and fees model is too complex and difficult for students to navigate. We need to reduce and/or consolidate student-facing fees into simpler, easier-to-understand models, while figuring out the money allocation on the backend so students don't have to. Students should not have to calculate up to 3-4 different fees for each credit hour, and we should look to standardize the price to students for online offerings across the whole institution. Long-term we should work to reduce our prices to a more industry standard $25-$50/hour, saving students $300/class or more and making us more competitive.

One reason we currently operate with this level of complexity is that students can be charged a combination of tuition, a fee from whichever college they are taking the course from, a Global Campus fee (if applicable), and an additional 'online fee' that varies by college or department. This prolific 'fee' system exists due to how K-State accounts for revenues generated by tuition vs. fees. It is relatively easy to raise fees, but raising tuition requires approval from KBOR and increases the 'tuition' cost that is marketed to students. This problem is not unique to K-State and applies to many public university competitors.

Critical success factors:

- The ease for students to understand and select price options should be the key metric for determining the effectiveness of this new pricing system.
- A re-imagined backend accounting system is required to enable a simplified student-facing front-end. This system will require institution-wide buy-in and may necessitate proactive communication with KBOR about these adjustments to our pricing system.
- Finding a way to charge students a single 'fee' (at least as they perceive it) on top of tuition to replace the 3-4 college-specific or global campus fees. Students need to know what they will pay as simply as possible. University leadership may need to articulate this priority clearly in order to ensure success.

Key risks/barriers to overcome:

- Disputes between departments/faculty/campuses on the money allocation in the new system. If students are charged a single fee, controls must be in place for the allocation of those funds.
- Raising tuition (to simplify fee structure) will invite KBOR scrutiny and will require (potentially extensive) justification and communication to achieve approval.
- Lowering fees and raising tuition may create a communication challenge with students, given the norm has been to market programs based on tuition rates alone.
- Technical and technological challenge of creating an effective back-end allocation system.
- Potential for initial drop in revenues as we seek to make ourselves more competitive.

Huron recommendation:

This is a critical enabler for the broader success of K-State's online portfolio. Accessibility and ease of use – particularly when it comes to payments – are key performance differentiators for online education and must be delivered upon for K-State to achieve notable scale for its online offerings. Given the importance of this work, we recommend that K-State examines its *entire* online fee structure, including all fees charged by colleges, departments, and campuses, in concert with an examination of its base online tuition costs. While improvement could be made with smaller incremental changes, a full re-examination might provide the opportunity to design the optimal fee and pricing structure for not just the next two years, but for the next two decades.

As such, we believe that establishing simplicity and ease of understanding in the pricing structure is a 'table-stakes' activity, that needs to happen early and effectively to enable subsequent recommendations. Lowering the overall price structure to be more competitive should be a longer-term project, aligned tightly with the new budget model and the strategic enrollment management work.

B: Actively pursue developing a portfolio of offerings around micro-credentials: shorter, more intense, course and program options

While it is critical that K-State continues to maintain and grow enrollment in existing online programs, differentiation in the future state is likely to require offerings that break the mold of traditional online courses and degree programs. To that end, offering 'micro-credentials' to those looking for tangible outcomes from education but who not able to make a program-length commitment could prove a powerful

differentiator. Aim to deliver high impact learning experiences, with tangible and rewarding outcomes that students can leverage to improve their skillset, employability, or applications for further higher education. This is a separate concept from 'short courses', in that each micro-credential has a specific skill-based qualification attached. We should consider both greenfield and versioned (i.e., building off existing full-length courses) development models.

Critical success factors:

- 'Stackability' is likely be an attractive and differentiating design feature, as is a willingness to explore other next-generation credentialing mechanisms, e.g., digital badges.
- Delivery of material to different audiences should take different forms. This includes consideration of organizational partnerships to test and pilot these programs.
- New internal enterprise systems in the registrar's office to accommodate the flexibility needed for these different types of offerings; new policies to provide direction and order for that system.
- A new academic review system for these non-credit course offerings and programs.

Key risks/barriers to overcome:

- The lengthy and difficult-to-navigate course approval process will need to be amended, circumvented, or dealt with in some way if micro-credentials are to gain meaningful traction.
- This will create path dependencies and action items for admissions and marketing departments.
- Faculty resistance to new and unfamiliar offering-types.
- Contingent on assistance with identifying promising opportunity areas – e.g., EMSI.

Huron recommendation:

This is best executed upon with an agile and versioned approach (as opposed to a single 'big splash' investment) that tests and refines the concept in small settings before scaling. These steps can be thought of in the following way:

1) Identify appropriate departments and specific faculty champions to lead piloting efforts; protect their time and evaluation criteria appropriately so they can dedicate sufficiently to this effort
2) Initial versioning of micro-credentials should involve low-cost, low-risk adaptations of existing courses, led by those department/faculty champions
3) Once proof-of-concept is established, seek voluntary participation from other departments
4) Gradually scale the capability, optimizing the process for effectively adapting courses for micro-credentialing and training faculty in the new delivery model
5) Once the capability is well established, develop process for greenfield development of stand-alone micro-credential offerings

C: Link online portfolio to strategic plan focus areas, and other areas of institutional strength

Configure a significant part of K-State's online portfolio to focus on those programs K-State is comparatively strong and well-regarded in. These 'core' programs will not form the entirety of K-State's online portfolio but would potentially require tradeoffs for online 'non-core' programming.

Critical success factors:

- Effective coordination between online programming leads and those leading ongoing development of K-State's strategic priorities.
- Clear and transparent resourcing mechanism with explicit designations for strategic focus areas.

Key barriers/risks to overcome:

- Significant disagreement amongst faculty/colleges/administrators on what the actual areas of institutional strength are at K-State.
- Frustration and 'jealousy' exhibited from those departments/colleges not deemed focus areas.
- Lack of understanding of and experience with the new budget model, leading to turf protection and lack of trust to 'share' with other departments.

Huron recommendation:

This will have to be coordinated from above to a large extent. As such, a leadership group (potentially the provost's office) should play an active and directive role in identifying those areas of institutional strength and prescribing focus areas for the expansion of K-State's online portfolio. We recommend designating no more than 3-5 explicit online programming focus areas. While a robust selection process should be designed explicitly to align on these focus areas, we recommend that process be informed by a data-driven assessment of the market and a qualitative assessment of K-State's existing areas of organizational strength.

WHERE: Geographic footprint and scale of our ambition

Problem Statement	What is the right level of ambition and geographic footprint for K-State's future state online portfolio?
Recommendations	A. Leverage current university branding strategy work to unify all K-State's marketing and branding efforts for online offerings B. Map online degree offerings to Kansas workforce initiatives, economic hotspots, state needs, and available programs

A. Leverage current university branding strategy work to unify all K-State's marketing and branding efforts for online offerings

Consolidate campus and online marketing efforts into a single centralized team with a strategic marketing plan and dedicated budget. Broaden the focus of the centralized team beyond a single "campus" and charge it with growing enrollment for the university regardless of modality. Define not only how we communicate about offerings holistically across the institution but also create an internal understanding and equal level of urgency around the importance of online learning as a growth area.

Critical success factors:

- Dedicated, centralized proactive marketing funds to use on advertising (rather than ad-hoc reactive asks each year, or directly passing these costs to students through online fees).
- A unified institutional understanding that offering a degree online is an integral form of pedagogy; it serves a collectively larger market than "traditional" students (while still serving them also).
- Remove all sense that we are "competing against one another".

Key risks/barriers to executions:

- 'Turf battles': Unifying and centralizing marketing and branding efforts will likely create unrest in those places where separate dedicated funding is being removed.
- Generating institution-wide buy-in to a unified branding and marketing strategy.

Huron recommendation:

This is a key critical enabler for K-State's overall online success. It should be highly prioritized in the near term, as a unified branding and marketing vision will be a critical enabler for some of the 'new' initiatives that are being recommended (e.g., micro-credentialing, targeting new audiences). Furthermore, we recommend integrating the online student experience such that there is no meaningful distinction from the student's perspective between being a 'global campus' online student vs. being an online student attached to a different, predominantly in-person, campus.

That said, we believe that K-State still has additional work to do in defining the optimal future-state geographic footprint for its portfolio of online offerings. This will be an important piece of work that will have significant implications for both K-State's course development and marketing activities.

However, Huron would recommend taking a hypothesis-driven (rather than completely open-ended) approach to this process. Specifically, we suggest adopting the working hypothesis that K-State's online footprint – and footprint of its future-state portfolio of degrees/credentials offered online – should focus on areas with a high concentration of K-State alumni.

B: Map online degree offerings to Kansas workforce initiatives, economic hotspots, state needs, and available programs

This entails explicitly tailoring our online offerings to the state of Kansas, potentially in collaboration with state government, to serve the state's online education needs. This could also include consideration of smaller qualifications (minors, certificates, etc.) to enable targeting of specific state government programs.

Critical success factors:

- Collaboration with state government to best align online programming with state needs.
- Our ability to demonstrate the value of Kansas State (and higher-ed more generally) to the population of Kansas, given increasing skepticism about the value of higher-ed in the US.
- Strong strategic mechanisms for translating state needs and priorities into university academic programming priorities; further mechanisms for translating those academic priorities into real online courses and credentials.

Key risks/barriers to executions:

- Poor quality of guidance or collaboration levels from the State government.
- Internal pushback to aligning with State priorities.
- The challenge of communicating the alignment between K-State's emerging portfolio to broader state priorities.

Huron recommendation:

We believe it is important for K-State to articulate some degree of geographic focus and prioritization, and this is certainly a step in that direction. However, we recommend that K-State go one step further.

We believe K-State needs to align around and clearly articulate a clear strategic vision for both the scale and footprint of its future-state online education portfolio, as well as the time horizons for reaching different scale and footprint milestones. Scale aspirations and metrics should be defined in terms of enrollments, offerings, and revenues, while footprint aspirations require strategic geographic focus areas with associated enrollment and revenue targets.

By articulating a clear vision and level of ambition, K-State will be better equipped to design a portfolio of online academic programming to pursue that aspirational vision, while providing stakeholders across the university with a sense of strategic direction and purpose for their role in striving towards that vision.

As a starting point, K-State should consider aligning its target online geographic footprint with the strategic geographic targets of the main campus. Further work would need to be done to determine whether this overlap is 'right' for K-State's long-term strategy, but in the short-term it would fit with efforts to align the university's branding strategies and likely provide a more cost-effective platform to build from.

HOW: Delivering on the Who, What, and Where

Problem Statement	Organization: What are the structures, people, and technologies needed to deliver on K-State's future state online portfolio?
	Processes: What systems, training, support, and relationships needed to deliver on K-State's future state online portfolio?
Recommendations	A. Establish consistent quality benchmarks and standards for online course design B. Expand distance advising availability C. Invest significantly in developing high-quality instructional design capabilities

A: Establish consistent quality benchmarks and standards for online course design

Set elements of course design to be consistently formatted across all courses; aiding student navigation and making it easier for faculty and instructional designers to actually build the courses. Implement industry standard quality rubrics such as Quality Matters and require those standards be followed in order to teach a course online. Review course quality on a regular basis to ensure best practices are followed.

Critical success factors:

- An effective market-driven process for identifying and articulating the appropriate standards and benchmarks for course design, informed by industry best-practices and extensive consultation with K-State's instructional designers.
- Buy-in and ratification from across the institution as to what these standards are.
- Effective and prominent socialization of these standards to all those engaged in course design. (e.g., a rubric for online courses has been regularly updated for 10 years, but many members simply do not know about it).

Key barriers/risks to overcome:

- Disagreement amongst faculty, instructional designers, and administrators about what constitutes optimal quality and course design standards.
- Sustainably enforcing these standards when faculty and designers have significant budget and time constraints.

Huron recommendation:

In addition to the traditional standards and benchmarks that the university uses, we suggest that K-State supplement those benchmarks with an analysis of the standards set by industry leaders in online higher ed. (e.g., University of Michigan, Penn State World Campus, University of Maryland Global Campus). Standards and benchmarks may carry more weight if they are perceived to have a credible third party as the driving force behind the effort (rather than a single department and/or college at K-State).

Furthermore, in order to effectively enforce the application of these online quality benchmarks, K-State could decide to give authority to the dean's office or department heads to enforce adherence to best practices with tangible consequences in real-time for poor practice, and not just after the course is over.

We would also recommend that this is made a near-term priority, as it will likely be a key enabler for the development of subsequent high-quality online programming. It also sends a strong signal that the university is committed to delivering high-quality and impactful education in the online space.

B: Expand distance advising availability

The ideal-state aspiration would be to have human advisors available 24/7, which would be particularly valuable for our targeted population of adult learners who generally prefer talking to a human being. This should also include advisors with language proficiencies that cater to international students, or advisors with specific training for engaging with certain non-traditional students (e.g., military and veterans).

Critical success factors:

- Appropriate balance of helpfully presented online information / navigation tools, and real human advisors who are accessible as needed.
- Robust guidelines for delivering effective academic advising at distance for online students (We could explore a potential for collaboration with NACADA).
- The fully online PhD in academic advising that is being launched could be a source of thought leadership on best practices in this space.

Key risks/barriers to executions:

- Resource constraints for providing significantly expanded human advising.
- Time constraints for training or recruiting additional advisors.
- Potential for faculty to systematically de-prioritize the importance of advising and advisors vis-a-vis the development of new academic programming.

Huron recommendation:

There are obvious resource constraints that would prevent K-State from offering extensive 24/7 human advising capabilities, and we do not believe this is a realistic aspiration. However, we believe there are several smaller, less resource-intensive steps that could be taken to improve distance advising offerings:

1) Establish clear best practices and guidelines specific to distance advising for online students.
2) Involve academic advisors in departmental meetings, online faculty meetings, etc., such that they are better equipped to access and provide helpful information and advice to students.
3) Mandate that faculty and instructional designers provide more robust and detailed advising materials embedded within their online course interfaces, syllabi, and platforms.
4) Consider pooling some advising resources, and cross-train advisors to be able to serve multiple types of students. This should better accommodate peaks and troughs in online advising needs.

C: Invest significantly in developing high-quality instructional design capabilities

This recommendation calls for investments in both the number of people and the tools available to them for the purposes of instructional design (ID) of online offerings. An effective ID team needs dedicated funds, the authority to make strategic decisions quickly and flexibly, and an expanded media development capability that allows designers to produce high quality, engaging online course content. It should be recognized that some colleges/departments already have some embedded ID capabilities. However, the

planning group feels strongly that an increased ID presence and investment is essential for meaningful expansion of K-State's online education portfolio while maintaining high quality standards.

Critical success factors:

- Significant investment, that includes funding, FTEs, technical resources, training, and faculty time allocation in order to make instructional design core, rather than peripheral to the development of online programming at K-State.
- A clear set of quality guidelines and benchmarks for designers, standard across K-State's ID capability, and consistently applied to create a distinct 'K-State feel' for all online programming.
- Incentives for departments and faculty to take advantage of instructional design services, in order to teach online in areas of strategic importance.

Key risks/barriers to executions:

- Wariness of change from those entities that already have ID resources in-house.
- Wariness from certain faculty who may feel less comfortable either teaching online or collaborating in course design with those who are not 'academics' in the traditional sense.
- Pushback from non-online faculty/departments who perceive the resources being put into online instructional design as allocated at their expense.

Huron recommendation:

We recommend that K-State work towards a future-state in which instructional design has a robust service-delivery model, available to all parts of the university, which negates the need for colleges to have in-house design assets. This model, if deployed correctly, allows the greatest resource and personnel flexibility, is more cost-effective in the steady-state, and presents a superior value proposition for designers (who get to work on a diverse set of projects, improving talent recruitment) and to faculty (designers take on the majority of design work, with faculty acting as content matter experts). However, given existing assets in some colleges, we recommend attempting to reach this future state in stages:

Stage 1: Start to develop centralized ID service capability, while allowing departments/colleges with in-house designers to keep their current assets. Prevent departments with in-house assets from using centralized services. Allocate scarce ID services purposefully in alignment with K-State's online programming strategic priorities.

Stage 2: Start to scale centralized ID service capability and begin to test and deploy service-delivery or 'concierge' model, where departments/colleges request ID services from a central hub. Allow departments with in-house assets to leverage centralized services but only to a limited degree. Continue some strategic allocation of central resources but start to allow more organic use of ID service capability.

Stage 3: Move centralized capability towards its full scale and start to refine/optimize the process. Request transition plans from those entities with in-house assets (though don't forcefully requisition or cut funding) to begin engaging fully with the centralized service. By this point, ID 'concierge' capacity should be sufficient to accommodate both strategic and organic online ID needs across the university.

Stage 4: Fully centralized 'instructional-design-as-a-service' model operating at steady state, where all faculty can access instructional designers without adding significantly to their everyday workloads.

Impact vs. Feasibility: **Huron perspective**

	HIGH EFFORT NEEDED	MODERATE EFFORT	MODEST EFFORT
HIGH IMPACT	- **WHAT:** micro-credentials - **HOW:** ID as a service - **HOW:** online quality benchmarks	- **WHO:** target adult learners - **WHAT:** simplified pricing	
MODERATE IMPACT	- **WHERE:** map offerings to state initiatives - **WHO:** organizational partnerships	- **WHAT:** link to strategic focus areas - **WHERE:** invest in and unify university branding	- **WHO:** alumni re-enrollment
MODEEST IMPACT		- **HOW:** expand distance advising - **WHO:** high school student recruitment/yield tool	

This framework represents the best judgement of the Huron team based on our understanding of K-State, our discussions with the planning groups, and our experience with comparable institutions and situations. It is not intended to be scientific or represent the last word on the potential impact and feasibility of each of these recommendations. While it would be nice to prioritize ideas based solely on their likelihood of driving positive impact, we are always operating under a set of constraints, and feasibility *must* be considered in conjunction with impact when evaluating the attractiveness of a menu of strategic options. We want to call out two notable details here:

1) Empty top right:

We would argue that everything that is likely to drive a significant impact, while requiring only modest effort to implement has happened already. There likely wouldn't have been a need to convene this group had there been a number of those low-hanging-fruit ready for the university to deliver on immediately.

2) Empty bottom left:

Thanks to the diligent efforts and thoughtful discussions of our planning groups, we would argue that all those ideas that require massive amounts of effort, while unlikely to drive notable positive impact, have been effectively filtered out of consideration.

6 – Near term priorities and next steps:

<u>This section has two parts:</u>

    I.   Huron perspective on which recommendations are near term priorities
    II.   Huron suggestions for important follow-up analyses subsequent to this effort

I. A perspective on which recommendations are near term priorities

<u>WHERE A – Invest in and unify university branding and marketing:</u>

Suggested timeline: Complete by end of 2020

Reasons for prioritization:

- **Increases feasibility of other recommendations:** A strong brand and a robust, unified marketing strategy will be invaluable for growing K-State's online portfolio.
- **Lowers resource requirements for future activities:** This should help to streamline the marketing budget, while ensuring efforts present a unified message for maximum impact.
- **High strategic value independent of this effort:** Unifying branding/marketing strategies will have value for K-State's broader marketing and recruitment efforts.

<u>HOW A – Online quality benchmarks:</u>

Suggested timeline: Initiate in 2020. Aspire to full implementation by end of 2021

Reasons for prioritization:

- **Potential path dependency:** Clearly articulating the standards to which all online programming across the university should adhere to is critical to get right before working to re-configure the portfolio of online offerings themselves.
- **Increases feasibility of other recommendations:** Establishing best practices and universal design and formatting requirements will both raise the overall standard of our online offerings, while making it easier to develop new, high quality online courses, as designers and faculty will have templates and best practices to work with.

<u>WHAT A – Simplified pricing structure:</u>

Suggested timeline: Develop during 2020-21 academic year (Simplification only. Reducing prices will take longer)

Reasons for prioritization:

- **Increases feasibility of other recommendations:** A simplified pricing structure will help with creating, marketing, and enrolling students in future online programs.
- **High strategic value independent of this effort:** A simplified pricing structure is likely to be a real differentiator for students considering multiple online education offerings and will also improve the quality of experience for those who enroll.

WHO A – Alumni re-enrollment incentives:

Suggested timeline: Launch first alumni incentives programs in 2021

Reasons for prioritization:

- **General Feasibility:** This is arguably the most accessible population for K-State's emerging portfolio of online programs that exist today.
- **Increases feasibility for other recommendations:** Alumni are a relatively 'safe' and accessible community for K-State to experiment with for new offerings and programming.
- **High strategic value independent of this effort:** Building an engaged alumni network is important for K-State, and this could be one pathway for working to do so.

II. Proposed important follow-up analyses

- Market study to assess the appropriate geographic footprint for K-State's online portfolio, including the development of an expansion plan.
- Internal assessment to determine the appropriate operating model for instructional design services (embedded resources vs. service delivery model vs. a hybrid model).
- As part of ongoing enterprise strategy work taking place in 2020 (K-State 2025 refresh, branding strategy, and additional planning groups), K-State should determine those areas of academic / pedagogical focus for the growth of K-State's online programming. While this does not preclude potential programming in other academic spheres, developing clear strategic priorities will help guide organizational efforts in a cohesive and effective direction.
- Conduct study to review and assess K-State's entire pricing structure for its online offerings. This should be a forward-looking study, intended to define the optimal tuition and fee structure for K-State's online portfolio for the next 10-20 years.

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APPENDIX A:

CURRENT STATE CONTEXT ANALYSIS REVIEWED BY PLANNING GROUPS

Survey results – responses for the performance dimensions

*Please rate K-State's **current state effectiveness** in each of the following areas as they pertain to online education [Average ratings]:*

Dimension	Rating
Cross-department collaboration	2.8
Student support services	4.3
Outcomes performance	3.8
Student self-reported satisfaction	4.1
Quality of materials, lessons, UI, etc.	3.8
Alignment to K-State's mission	3.4
Consumer centricity/market responsiveness	3.3

Axis: 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5
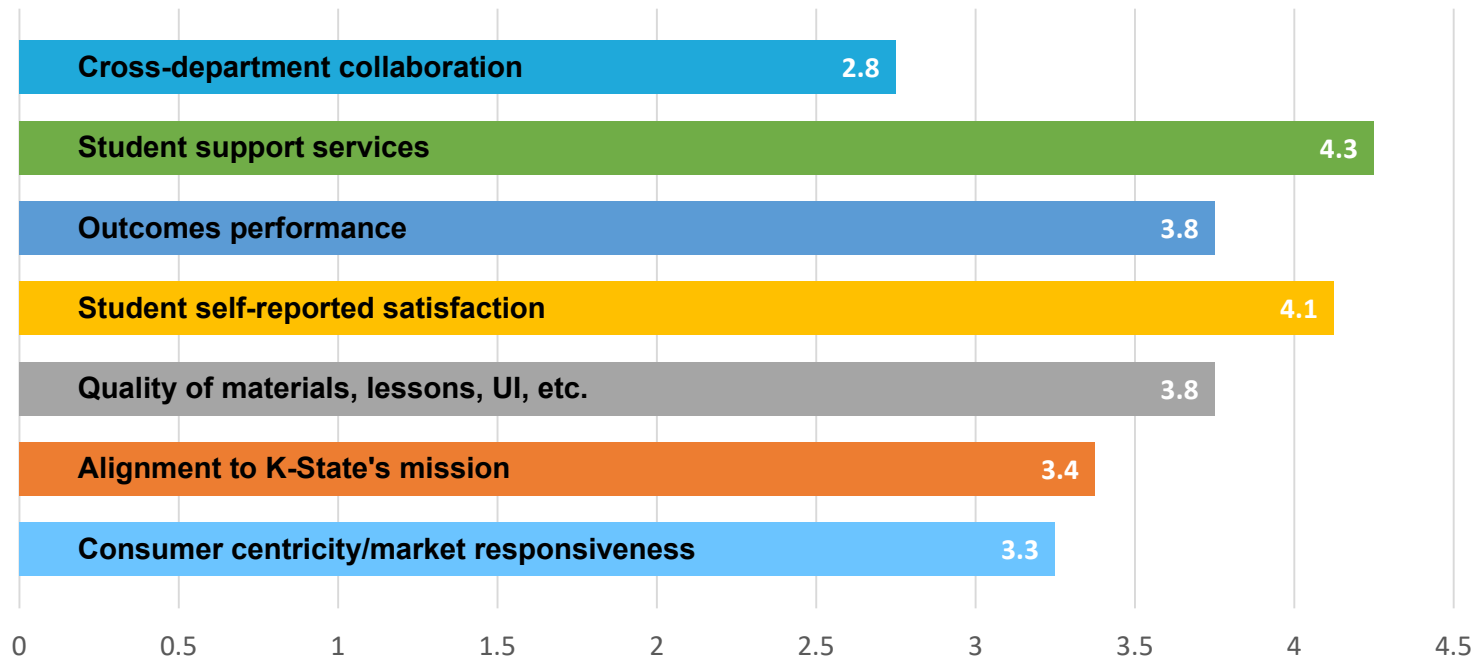
Degree of effectiveness 1 = not effective at all, and 6 = highly effective

Write in votes:

☐ **Cost structure:** Not effective at all
☐ **Consistency:** Highly ineffective
☐ **Finding new markets:** Somewhat ineffective

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Survey results – barriers to performance

Thinking about K-State's current online programming, **what barriers exist** to K-State performing optimally across those offerings? How do these barriers relate to the dimensions referenced in the previous question?

1 **Lack of strategic direction** for online from enterprise strategy

> "Courses/programs are developed based on the **time and interests of individual faculty** and **not a centralized growth strategy**"

> "Determining what the **university's overarching strategy** is for online education and **ensuring buy-in** from the colleges and departments."

2 Insufficient **instructional design and training support** for faculty

> "faculty desiring assistance **often have to wait considerable amounts of time** for support to develop programs and courses"

> "lack of **instructional design** support readily available to faculty… **lack of funding** to support **accessibility** helping faculty create and maintain accessible content and lectures."

3 **Fee structure complicated** and **too high** for most students

> "Our **fee structure is highly complicated** and impossible for many students to decode. It **also prices many offerings too highly** to be competitive"

> "**Extra fees** discourage students from enrolling online **especially for a lower level class** that can be taken cheaply from **another university or college**"

4 Inconsistent **market research**, **marketing**, and **messaging**

> "Market **demand exists** for courses but **unless a department is willing** to provide those courses **the demand is unmet**"

> "Market research, when performed, **is not central to the decision process** and is often ignored"

> "**inconsistent messaging, support**, and **training** opportunities"

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Survey results – opportunities to explore

Are there any **online programming opportunities** that you feel K-State could feasibly pursue yet currently does not? (please provide as much detail as you can to explain what the opportunity for K-State is in this circumstance)

Responses to this question fell roughly into 3 categories…

New audiences and types of offerings

- "**Adult learner**, digital badging, market-based tuition"

- "Increased outreach to **military personnel**"

- "**Hybrid classes** especially for lower level lab classes where lecture is all online and labs are in person"

- "**Audience specific** price structures"

- "**Accelerated programs**/short courses allowing faster completion"

- "Increased **offering of certificate programs** to meet the needs of **industry switchers** and employees wanting to **accelerate** their careers"

- "Provide **online professional development** for professionals **across the lifespan** for those not enrolled in a college degree"

Process and system improvements

- "**Required training for all faculty** who teach online; ready **access to instructional designers**; regular training on instructional software"

- "**Multiple entry dates**, so learners not on an 'academic' time frame can participate more quickly"

- "I believe **programs that align with our four areas of strategic focus** are the next wave for K-State … a small set of degree programs along those pathways **available fully online or through a hybrid style**"

- We are "**Restricting the market**" by not offering bachelors degrees for those post-grad programs that require one as a pre-requisite in that discipline

Specific course recommendations

- "**Biology 198 and other natural sciences** have high demand and **students are continually referred to other institutions to complete**"

- "**A large vacuum** in the field of **criminology and criminal justice** exists in the marketplace"

- "No separate **accounting, finance, marketing** or other popular [business-related] degrees"

- "Certificate in Public Administration: **By not offering a masters** we are missing the market requiring one"

- "We currently have **no undergrad. engineering programs**, or Arts and Science programs in these areas such as **mathematics, biology**, etc. The **lack of computers and IT curriculum** plays into this as well"

APPENDIX B:

FUTURE STATE CONTEXT MATERIALS REVIEWED BY PLANNING GROUP

Online program audiences: who are we vs. should we be targeting

Audiences we serve today

	Ave. Rank	Total rankings	#1 rankings	Top 3 rankings
Adult learners	2.0	6	3	5
Those seeking bachelor's degrees (fully online)	2.4	8	2	6
Campus-based students supplementing their classes	2.7	7	2	4
Those seeking post-graduate degrees (fully online)	3.4	7	0	4
Military and veteran degree seekers	4.0	6	0	3
High school students seeking college credit	5.7	3	0	1
Those seeking non-degree level technical qualifications	5.7	3	0	0
Those seeking associate's degrees (fully online)	7	1	0	0

Audiences we *should* be serving

	Ave. Rank	Total rankings	#1 rankings	Top 3 rankings	
Campus-based students supplementing their classes	2.5	6	4	4	⬆
Adult learners	2.5	8	3	6	⬇
Those seeking bachelor's degrees (fully online)	3.1	8	1	5	⬇
Military and veteran degree seekers	4.2	6	0	2	
Those seeking post-graduate degrees (fully online)	4.3	8	0	2	⬇
High school students seeking college credit	4.4	7	0	2	⬆
Those seeking non-degree level technical qualifications	4.8	6	0	3	
Those seeking associate's degrees (fully online)	7	2	0	0	

TAKEAWAY: Survey responses seemed to indicate that we are roughly serving the right audiences.

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Online program scale: what should K-State's ambition be?

In your view, what should online education at K-State look like 10 years from now, in terms of ambition and scale?

> "Online education will be the **primary modality** for delivering on our land grant mission."

> "I would like to see us in 10 years time **double our on-line enrollment numbers to 26,000 students.**"

> "I would like to see **all faculty trained** in online pedagogy before teaching online. I would like to see 5 to 10 **instructional designers** readily available to faculty to support course development… Courses and curriculum are offered through colleges, not Global Campus... GC is infrastructure and support. **Colleges should manage distance courses like campus courses in scheduling and advising students** as colleges grant the degrees."

What might be the consequences for K-State of operating at different scales than the institution does today?

Online program scale: what should K-State's ambition be?

A cluster of so-called "mega-universities" or "mega-providers" have cropped up across the country. It is not clear that the market can support

Legend:
4-year public (median) · 4-year private (median) · 2-year public (median) · Arizona State University · Grand Canyon University · Liberty University · Southern New Hampshire University · Western Governors University
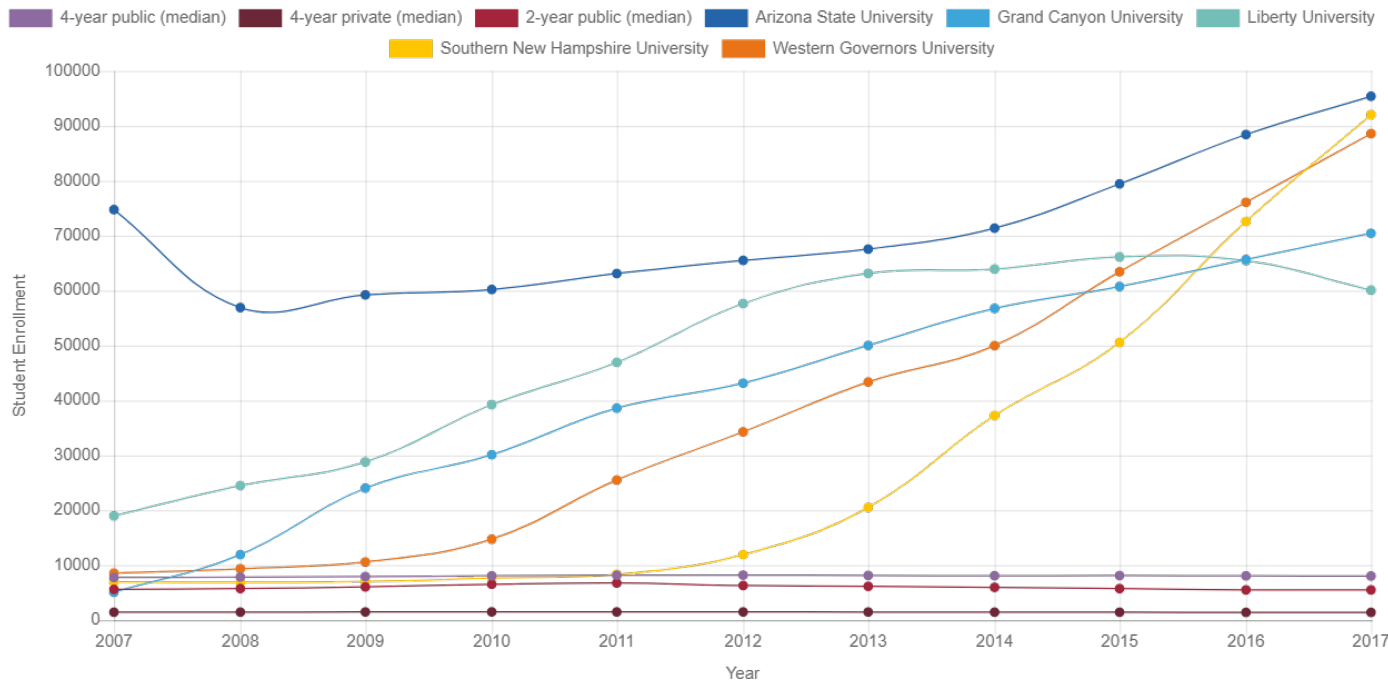
"Mega-providers" like those in the chart at left deliver online ed with a national or global scope and have brand reputations largely associated with online. The market can only support a limited number of providers at this scale.

Many universities offer niche online programming to very specific audiences defined by disciplinary area and geography. Offerings from these providers may be well-aligned with the institutions' on-campus portfolio.

K-State may land between these two scales.

Source: "The Rise of the Mega-University," Chronicle of Higher Education 2019

What might be advantages and draw-backs of operating at a mid-size scale: larger than niche but smaller than a "mega-university"?

Online organizational integration

The spectrum below, characterizing organizational and operating models for online education units, is one way of considering organizational models for online and their impact on growth. As our work progresses, we will introduce more sophisticated frameworks that allow for consideration of more complex factors.

Largely Integrated Model

- Colleges, schools or departments run and staff online programs
- Lower degree of central support structure for online education
- Tuition revenue flows through college/school/department
- Partnerships with OPMs more likely to be established on a unit-by-unit basis
- **Model may focus on quality / reputation enhancement in ways that could potentially limit scale**

Hybrid Models

- College, schools or departments run online programs
- Higher degree of administrative support from central structure
- Central unit helps maintain consistency
- Tuition revenue models vary

Largely Independent Model

- Online programs run and branded by a centralized unit
- Departmental/academic unit resources may contribute, although online unit may have dedicated faculty
- Tuition revenue flows through centralized unit
- Relatively higher ease of collaboration with external OPMs
- **Model may focus on scale / net revenue in ways that could be perceived as compromising quality**

More Integrated ←———————————————————→ *More Independent*

U. of Michigan

Dartmouth College

Georgetown U.

Quinnipiac U.
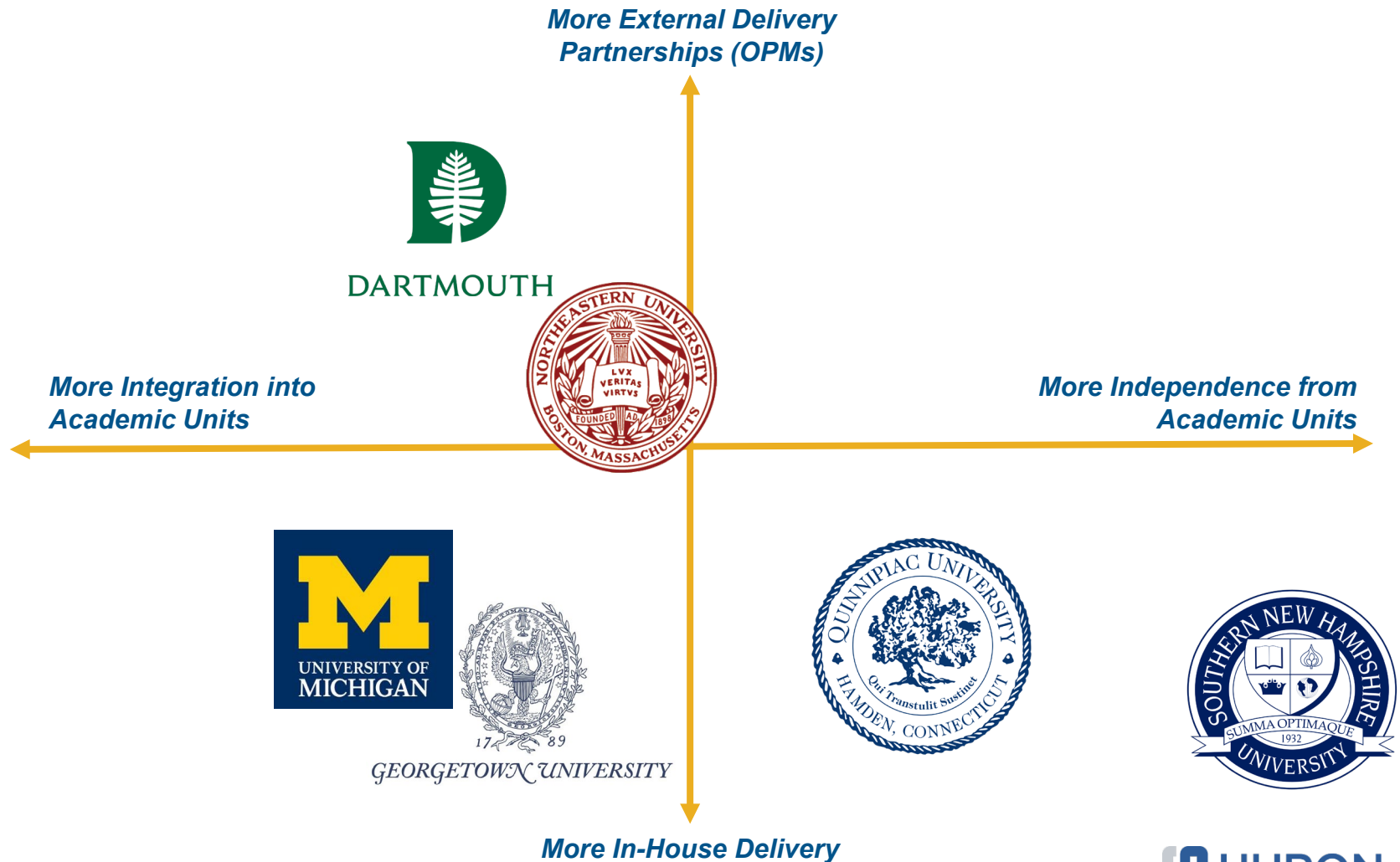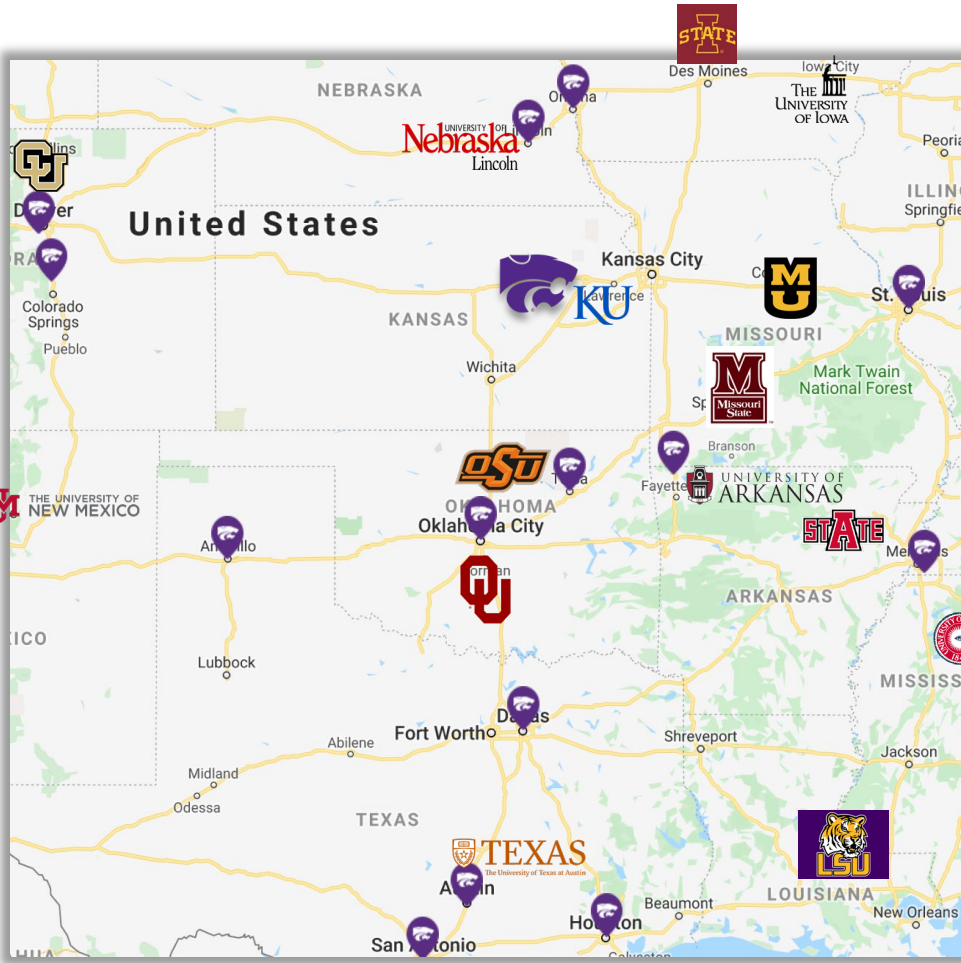
Southern New Hampshire U.

Online organizational integration

There are a wide variety of organizational and operating models for online education units. The graphic below provides one initial framing to visualize some of the possibilities.

More External Delivery Partnerships (OPMs)

More Integration into Academic Units

More Independence from Academic Units

More In-House Delivery

Online program geography: K-State faces choices about its identity

Nearby alumni club locations (outside of Kansas:

Denver, Colorado Springs, Lincoln, Omaha, St. Louis, Memphis, Northwest Arkansas, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Amarillo, Dallas, Austin, Houston, San Antonio

Nearby flagship public university competitors:

University of Kansas, Oklahoma State University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Arkansas, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of New Mexico, University of Mississippi
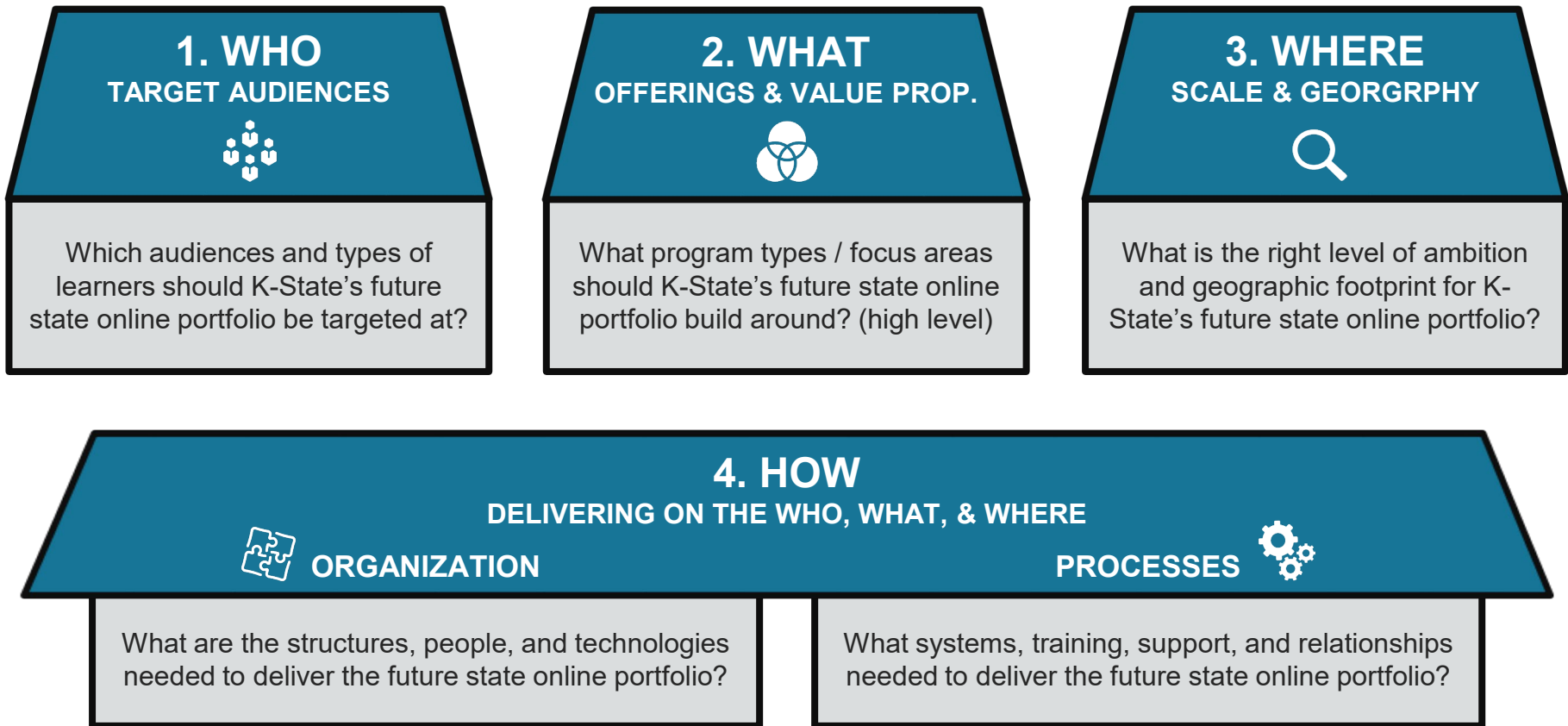
➤ How does K-State currently measure up to these other regional players?
➤ Does K-State have an opportunity to emerge as a regional leader online?

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APPENDIX C:

WHERE TO PLAY, HOW TO WIN FRAMEWORK

Who, What, Where, and How: a framework for organizing our recommendations

This concept has been adapted for our purposes in part from Roger Martin's classic 'Playing to Win' framework. Our intent is not to mimic that concept, but to adapt a helpful intellectual structure for the recommendations we make to the Provost.

1. WHO
TARGET AUDIENCES

Which audiences and types of learners should K-State's future state online portfolio be targeted at?

2. WHAT
OFFERINGS & VALUE PROP.

What program types / focus areas should K-State's future state online portfolio build around? (high level)

3. WHERE
SCALE & GEORGRPHY

What is the right level of ambition and geographic footprint for K-State's future state online portfolio?

4. HOW
DELIVERING ON THE WHO, WHAT, & WHERE

ORGANIZATION

What are the structures, people, and technologies needed to deliver the future state online portfolio?

PROCESSES

What systems, training, support, and relationships needed to deliver the future state online portfolio?

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APPENDIX D:

'LONG-LIST' OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS PROPOSED AND DISCUSSED BY THE PLANNING GROUP

Long-list: ideas for WHO we are serving

SOLUTION THEME	SOLUTION SUMMARY	ADDITIONAL DETAIL/DESCRIPTION
TARGETING ADULT LEARNERS	**A1:** Design online courses with sufficient degrees of flexibility and customizability to meet adult learner needs	Make flexibility and outcome orientation key course design principles and advertise our online offerings accordingly. Additionally, consider offering services connecting adult learners to support services including senior care, childcare, financial advice etc. to allow adults to focus on studies.
TARGETING CORPORATE PARTNERS	**A2:** Develop company partnerships and consider co-designed curriculums with these corporate partners	Align course 'success' with desired employer talent 'outcomes'. Intent is not to undermine liberal arts in BS/BA degrees, but to allow some students to more specifically curate their experiences for an employability outcome. Could also tie these courses to internships and scholarships.
TARGETING K-STATE ALUMNI	**A3:** Provide incentives (discounts, package deals, etc.) for alumni to re-enroll	Track K-State alumni, and selectively offer financial incentives for online courses and programs. Continue to stress the importance of lifelong learning and make it easy to do through K-State.
TARGETING CURRENT K-STATE STUDENTS	**A4:** Create a portfolio that serves current campus-based undergraduates and graduate students	Orient (part of) K-State's online portfolio around supplementing the classes available to on-campus students. Enrollment would not be limited to on-campus students, but these courses would take advantage of physical proximity of the students to optimize the experience (e.g., study groups and meet-ups, in-person advisors, etc.)
TARGETING HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS	**A5:** Offer programs targeted at high school students who are considering college and/or K-State	Such programs could offer targeted marketing, discounting, and price discrimination to accomplished or high-value enrollment target high school students.
TARGETING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	**A6:** Offer programs with increased cultural / language customization for international students	Design a program geared towards teaching (and marketing to) international students. Help these students feel welcome and access material better by providing some translation, while helping faculty be intra-culturally aware.

Long-list: ideas for WHAT we are offering

SOLUTION THEME	SOLUTION SUMMARY	ADDITIONAL DETAIL/DESCRIPTION
SHORT COURSES AND MICRO-CREDENTIALLING	**B1:** Micro-credentialing: shorter, more intense, course options	4-8 week courses for those not able to make a semester-length commitment. Aim to deliver high impact learning experiences, with tangible and rewarding outcomes that the student can leverage for their skillset, employability, or further higher education.
	B2: Short courses specifically geared towards engaging high school juniors and seniors	Help high school juniors and seniors stay engaged in their schooling through shorter courses focused on keeping them engaged, also earning college credits. Aim to deliver high impact learning experiences that ultimately enhances their senior year and recruits them to school at K-State.
PRICING	**B3:** Simplify the pricing structure	Current tuition and fees model is ridiculously complex and difficult for students to figure out. Reduce/consolidate fees into simpler, easier for the student to understand model and figure out the money allocation on the backend so students don't have to. Find ways to reduce the online fees from ~125-150/hour to a more industry standard 25-50/hour, saving students $300/class or more and making us more competitive. Minimally simplify college fees so students do not have to calculate up to 3-4 different fees into each credit hour. Ideally set a standard online tuition cost across the institution.
ACADEMIC SPECIALTY FOCUS FOR ONLIINE	**B4:** Offer flagship K-State programs online, e.g. agriculture degrees	Configure a significant part of K-State's online portfolio to focus on those programs K-State is comparatively strong and well-regarded in. These 'core' programs will not form the entirety of K-State's online portfolio but would potentially require tradeoffs for online 'non-core' programming.

Long-list: ideas for WHERE to play

SOLUTION THEME	SOLUTION SUMMARY	ADDITIONAL DETAIL/DESCRIPTION
REGIONAL PRESENCE	**C1:** Set an aspiration to be the premier online provider in the Midwest/Plains region	Establish key performance indicators related to benchmarked market share in target geographies and configure portfolio of offerings to optimally deliver online educational programming in this region.
UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET, DEMAND, AND K-STATE'S GEOGRAPHIC STRATEGY	**C2:** Build a market intelligence unit	Monitor labor market, competitor behavior, and conducts research to support business planning This function is critical to both determining new offerings and ensuring the market relevance of existing offerings. Create opportunity to be more flexible with our online offerings – be quicker to market when an opportunity emerges, be quicker to sunset when an opportunity diminishes…but rooting those decisions in what the market demands and our potential to corner that market.
	C3: Invest fully in university branding strategy	Consider consolidating campus and online marketing efforts into a single centralized team with a strategic marketing plan and dedicated budget. Broaden the focus of the centralized team beyond a single "campus" and charge it with growing enrollment for the university regardless of modality. Provide dedicated, centralized proactive marketing funds to use on advertising (rather than ad-hoc reactive asks each year, and rather than directly passing these costs to students through online fees). Create a unified institutional understanding that online is an integral piece of the institution's educational offerings – and it serves a collectively larger market than the "traditional" market (while still serving that market also). Define not only how we communicate about offerings holistically across the institution but also create an internal understanding and equal level of urgency around the importance of online learning as a growth area.
KANSAS AS OUR FOCUS	**C4:** Map online degree offerings to Kansas workforce initiatives, economic hotspots, state needs, and available programs	This entails specifically aiming our online offerings at the state of Kansas, potentially in collaboration with state government, to serve the state's online needs. This could also include consideration of smaller chunks (minors, certificates etc.) to enable targeting of specific state government programs.
	C5: Programs and fellowships to incent grads to stay in Kansas	Attach to online degree offerings for those based in Kansas already. Seek collaboration with state government given their incentive for this outcome.

Long-list: ideas for HOW we best deliver

SOLUTION THEME	SOLUTION SUMMARY	ADDITIONAL DETAIL/DESCRIPTION
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN INVESTMENT	**Increase instructional design resources:** We could increase both the number of people and the tools available to. The type of support needed depends on the role of the designer—if instructional designers are heavily involved in course development, more high-touch engagement will be needed. An effective ID team needs dedicated funds, the authority to make strategic decisions quickly and flexibly, and an expanded media development capability that allows for the production of high quality, engaging online course content. **We could take one of two routes to do this, and the options are articulated in D1 and D2.**	
	D1: Invest in instructional design as a service	Think of ID as a service-delivery model. Cultivate complementary partnerships between faculty and instructional designers. Launch internal system for matching instructional designers w. faculty 'customers'. This should be free and readily available to those faculty that want it.
	D2: Invest in assigning designers to faculty groups	OPPOSITE to ID as a service. Dedicated designers are embedded in faculty groups, with an appropriate ratio of faculty to designers, with the goal to work with faculty over time to build relationships
INTERNAL RECOGNITION AND MENTORSHIP INCENTIVES	**D3:** Recognition programs for excellent online teaching	Helps to signal institutional investment/value, but also encourages faculty to think more critically about what excellent online vs. in person teaching entails.
	D4: Provide feedback, mentorship, coaching, and a professional community/network for online faculty	Free and readily available coaching for online faculty. Provide mechanisms to recognize and reward small achievements and general professional development during the year. Also provide 'networking' opportunities to share and test ideas generated from online learning, to help online faculty who may feel isolated join a community of scholarship.
ALUMNI / DONOR COLLABORATION	**D5:** Allow donors/alumni to fund and/or help design innovative online courses	Seek funding from, and design collaboration with, alumni and donors for courses courses based on their fields of expertise/study.
INDUSTRY COLLABORATION	**D6:** Platform for faculty/industry collaboration and joint learning	Use online education as a venue for faculty (TT and otherwise) to gain additional exposure to latest goings-on in industry. Recognize our faculty in departmental documents and publications
STUDENT COLLABORATION	**D7:** Create a "Virtual Student Union" for on-line students.	Online space where students can from and join online student organizations, book clubs, discussions, watch/participate in live-stream events, take self-paced leadership training, diversity workshops, and shop for K-State merch.

Long-list: ideas for HOW we best deliver

SOLUTION THEME	SOLUTION SUMMARY	ADDITIONAL DETAIL/DESCRIPTION
STUDENT SUPPORT, ADVISING, AND WELFARE SERVICES	**D8:** Re-configure the role and organization of Student Support Services	Develop best practices for, and the desired outcomes from, student support services, with a distinction between campus and distance audiences. Consider assigning dedicated SSS for specific faculty units, and bringing SSS into professional unit meetings, and professional development for SSS staff.
	D9: Expand distance advising availability	Human advisors available 24/7. Valuable for adult learners (30-40+) who prefer talking to a human being, and international students in other time zones.
	D10: Automated advisor/steering device (like Mint.com) for K-State's online offerings. [largely a recruitment tool]	Used as a recruitment device aimed at prospective students. Automated advising system, letting students input goals, circumstances, qualifications, budgets etc. and the system would provide links to suggested online offerings.
	D11: K-State first steps programs	Suite of online classes and supporting online resources intended to lay foundation for future success at K-State, segmented by consumer groups
	D12: Online mental health services and programs for well-being	Offered alongside online courses; enhance mental & physical wellbeing. Help learners deal with the most stressful periods.
	D13: Online course 'Pause Button'	Fit online courses with the ability for students to hit a 1-2 week 'pause button' (i.e., freeze on all classes/assignments). No questions asked.
COURSE DESIGN INITIATIVES	**D14:** Establish consistent quality benchmarks and standards for online course design	Set elements of course design to be consistently formatted across all courses aiding student navigation and making it easier for faculty to build the courses. Implement industry standard quality rubrics such as Quality Matters and require those standards be followed in order to teach a course online. Review course quality on a regular basis to ensure best practices are followed.
	D15: Systematically promote and incentivize "gamification" to increase engagement in on-line courses.	Encourage the use of Apps like "Quitch" and "Socrative Student", as a first step. Gradually push towards gamification as a design principle to optimize student engagement and quality of experience.
	D16: Skills-based online progress dashboard	As opposed to credits or courses. This should include clear student learning outcomes so the student can clearly track progress and understand their assessment and accountability.

APPENDIX E:

PLANNING GROUP PROCESS

There were four phases to this process

PHASE:	ACTIVITIES:	KEY OUTPUTS
1. PROJECT LAUNCH *1-2 weeks*	• **Align on project context, objectives, and responsibilities** • **Share and discuss initial case studies** highlighting 1) creative approaches to academic program innovation, and 2) models for online program growth	*N/A*

2. ALIGN ON CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE CONTEXT
2-3 weeks
	• **Conduct and share initial analysis** of K-State's current state, including internal and external data
	  ‣ **Innovation:** Build a shared understanding of K-State's current innovation capacity and how this capacity may evolve in the future
	  ‣ **Online:** Build a shared understanding of K-State's online portfolio, while exploring market trends and peer/competitor activities
	• **Develop 'Gap analysis'** with both planning groups
		BASELINE OF THE CURRENT STATE AND 'GAP ANALYSIS'

3. IDENTIFY STRATEGIC OPTIONS *3-4 weeks*	• **Identify possibilities** for the future of K-State's academic innovation and online growth, as informed by analysis in previous phases • **Conduct Jobs to Be Done exercise**, focused on consuming (i.e., different student stakeholders), delivering (e.g., tenure vs. untenured faculty, designers, GTAs etc.), and enabling (e.g., leadership, donors, employers, alumni etc.) stakeholders. • **Initiate discussion with campus stakeholders** to vet leading ideas	*HIGH PRIORITY 'JOBS' AND INTIAL LIST OF POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS*
4. PRIORITIZE OPTIONS & DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS *2-3 weeks*	• **Prioritize** key recommendations for both planning groups • **Develop recommendations white papers**, led by Huron but to be reviewed and refined collaboratively with planning groups • **Capture all ideas** not prioritized in this process for future reference	*RECOMMENDATIONS IN WHITE PAPER FORM*