SECTION 1:
INTRODUCING THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY
Welcome to K-State! Every K-Stater is excited for you to start your transformative journey and we can’t wait for you to get involved in all that we have to offer. As you begin this journey, we want to share with you the rich histories and traditions that make K-State the university we know and love today. In learning more about where we come from, we can understand where we are and can help shape the future of K-State.

As you read this chapter, you will:

- Learn the history of K-State and our traditions
- Understand our legacy as a land-grant institution
- Develop your place in the K-State family, through participation in traditions, organizations, and more

In the first part of the chapter, you’ll learn a lot about the history of K-State. After reading, write a couple sentences that reflect on what you learned. Consider answering the following questions:

1. What surprised you about the history of K-State?
2. What is your favorite part of K-State’s history?
3. What would you like to learn more about? You can explore this more during your time at K-State!
**K-State: your first history lesson**

Our university began as Bluemont Central College and opened to its first students in 1860. Settlers in the area valued education and felt that a college was an important addition. Serving first as a primary and preparatory school for students underprepared for college, Bluemont College was privately run until 1863. At that time, Kansas had already become a state (January 29, 1861—be ready to celebrate Kansas Day!) and had accepted the Morrill Act, which allotted each state 30,000 acres of land for each member of the House and Senate. The land, or proceeds from selling the land, could be used to start a college. With 90,000 acres, the state of Kansas was ready to establish its first college, following the provisions set forth by the Morrill Act:

“…the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the states may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”

To put it in everyday terms, the Morrill Act aimed to create colleges that focused on agriculture, engineering, and military training, while not excluding other foundational areas of study that had long been the focus for higher education. The goal was to offer educational opportunities to a wider variety of students. These democratic ideals set the stage for the culture and feel of K-State then and now.

At the time, Bluemont College was experiencing financial difficulties. Its board offered 100 acres, a building, and library volumes to the State of Kansas. The State accepted on February 16, 1863—K-State’s official Founder’s Day. On March 3rd of the same year, the legislature passed an act establishing Kansas State Agricultural College.

Because of the land “granted” to the state through the Morrill Act, KSAC became a “land grant college”. The first class of 52 students was exactly 50% male, 50% female, and included studies in mental and moral sciences, mathematics and natural sciences, and music. From the beginning, our university was dedicated to being a co-educational institution ready to serve all students.

KSAC became Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science in 1931, and Kansas State University of Agriculture and Applied Science in 1959. Buildings have been added, razed, burned, and rebuilt. Our mascot started out as a black Labrador named Boscoe (no relation to our current Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Pat Bosco, but what a coincidence!). Later, K-State used a real wildcat named Touchdown, and, finally, adopted Willie in 1947. Willie has also changed significantly.

Throughout the many changes that K-State has seen throughout the years, there are a few things that remain the same. From our days as Bluemont College to the present, K-State has been committed to educating and including all students. We have also developed many traditions that honor our history and will continue to shape our future.
REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Next, you will learn a lot about opportunities available to you at K-State. As you read, take note of anything that sounds interesting to you, so you can try it out!

At K-State, we do FRIENDLY
Can’t find the building where you have class starting in t-minus two minutes? Ask that person walking by you on the sidewalk. We have all needed help, and our friendliness and willingness to help is part of The Wildcat Way.

K-Staters are known for their friendly demeanor. Open a door for a fellow classmate or professor. Direct a visiting family fumbling with a map. Walk the group of new first-year students, standing in the quad with a bewildered look, to the building they need, then sprint to your own class. Extraordinary? Nope, just The Wildcat Way!

At K-State, we do PURPLE
Purple Pride ice cream at Call Hall dairy bar. One of 30-plus flavors, all made by students!

Join more than 20,000 students, alumni, and fans at Purple Power Play at the Park for food, fireworks and more at the pep rally held the Thursday and Friday evenings before our first home football game. The Purple Masque Theatre, home to student-directed performances, is housed in the renovated West Stadium.

Purple! Purple shirts, purple shoes, purple bags, purple water bottles, purple pens. If it can be made in purple, you will find it here. Wear your purple with pride!

At K-State, we do the WABASH
After a fire in the 1960’s left the music department with only one piece of music, “The Wabash Cannonball” has become an easily recognizable tune that rouses any K-State crowd. Stand up, clap your hands, and get ready to WABASH.

Another great tradition occurs at basketball games. Students at men’s basketball games tear up newspapers into tiny bits, throwing them into the air at the introduction of the home team. (Forward to 1:20 if you want to go straight to the paper toss).

At K-State, we are FAMILY
Invite your family to join you for our annual K-State Family Day to participate in activities designed to welcome families to K-State and to introduce them to our history and traditions.

The Parent and Family Association helps families of K-State students feel connected to the University. Access to a hotline and invitations to family events on campus help our extended family stay close wherever they are.

Bill Snyder Family Stadium has been home to the K-State football team since 1968, and was re-named in 2005 to honor Coach Bill Snyder. The stadium is at the center of a growing athletic complex that includes Bramlage Coliseum, Tointon Family Stadium for baseball, the Ice Family basketball practice facility, a soccer complex, and more.

Many of our facilities throughout the university include the word “family” to recognize those who have generously given
of their talent and treasure to K-State, including the new Berney Family Welcome Center that houses New Student Services and the Career Center. These families have given generously to advance our university, and it is the community that is formed within those buildings—attending athletic events, concerts, guest speakers and graduations together—that truly make us K-State.

**At K-State, we do COMMUNITY**

The Principles of Community were developed in 2017 and endorsed by administrators, students, faculty and staff. We will explore these principles and how practicing them helps us accomplish our land-grant mission in Chapter 5.

CAT (Connecting Across Topics) Communities provide the opportunity for small groups of students to learn together while taking three courses focused around an area of study or a shared interest. CAT Communities offer mentoring from a professor and an advanced undergraduate Learning Assistant who shares the students’ interests. They are an ideal place for students to meet each other and to study together.

You have the opportunity to impact our community here at K-State, through your shared experiences with others. Whether it be through a love of sports, a passion for social justice, an appreciation of the arts, a desire to learn about cultures—or a combination—you can contribute to our community that is open and welcoming, inclusive of all people.

**At K-State, we do GREAT FOOD**

Remember that Call Hall ice cream? You can also get your fill of fresh-made cinnamon rolls and hot cocoa (among other mouthwatering goodies) at The Bakery in the lobby of Derby Dining Center and Cornerstone Coffee and Bakery, just off the lobby of Wefald Hall. Each Wednesday during the school year, the Bakery Science Club hosts a bake sale where you can stock up on fresh baked bread, monster cookies, brownies and more. The chocolate milk at the residence hall dining centers is also a student favorite.

Off-campus, you will find Varsity Donuts, Radina’s Coffeehouse, and Taco Lucha, as well as many other local eateries and shopping, in nearby Aggieville.

**At K-State, we do OPEN HOUSE**

Every year, for one Saturday in April, the entire campus throws open the doors and welcomes over 20,000 visitors to see all of the cool projects students and faculty have been working on all year. See robots in action, watch a glassblowing experiment, ride a weed-eater powered bicycle and enjoy free food throughout campus. Open House will be held on a Saturday in early April. Look for opportunities to get involved in your department and student organizations.

**At K-State we CELEBRATE STUDENTS**

Check in with #kstate, @KState on Twitter and the K-State Today emailed directly to your inbox daily to see what accolades your fellow students are earning.

Become part of the action by getting involved in research, taking leadership in one of our 500-plus student organizations, or serving your residence hall, scholarship house, sorority or fraternity through committee work.
At K-State, we LEARN TOGETHER

In your K-State First course, gone are the days of lecture after lecture. K-State First courses engage in co-curricular activities—activities outside of the classroom that support learning and community building. From rappelling down a cliff and walking the history of the Overland Trail, to participating in a challenge course side-by-side with your professor and classmates, everyone is engaged in academic endeavors.

Each year, a committee of students, faculty, and staff choose a common book for the campus. This year, you received your own copy of this year’s common book. People all over campus have read it, and you will be hearing more about it in your classes, at campus-wide activities, and during our main event each year. Some years you will even have the opportunity to hear from the author in a live, on-campus event!

Research opportunities are plentiful for undergraduates, and it’s not just for scientists. Collaborate with a professor to study sustainable energy, work with preschoolers at the Hoeflin Stone House Child Care Center, or dream big in the Electronics Design Laboratory. In fact, K-State is working towards being a Top 50 Research Institute by 2025.

Take advantage of the numerous other opportunities for co-curricular learning offered throughout campus. Whether it is a Landon Lecture, a class field trip, or a comedy act sponsored by UPC (see the UPC line-up of presentations, concerts, and more at www.k-state.edu/upc) you will learn just as much outside of the classroom as you will in it—though it is still necessary to attend class!

At K-State, we SERVE

K-State Proud, a student-led fundraising campaign, has raised more than $1.1 million in its first eleven years to help fellow students in need. Students raise money through selling t-shirts to wear at a specified home basketball game and through student donations. That money is used to help fellow students who are facing a hardship and need financial help in order to stay enrolled at K-State.

Students help students, and students help others. HandsOn Kansas State places students in many service and volunteer opportunities around campus and in the community. Student Program Coordinators are available to help you find opportunities connected to your interests and provide service-learning training when necessary. If you are a service-minded individual, add joining HandsOn K-State to your bucket list this first semester.

Join a Staley School of Leadership Studies International Service Team to serve abroad. You can master a language, gain leadership experience, and develop cultural appreciation during a summer of service.

Extend your leadership beyond campus through involvement in the Manhattan Good Neighbor program. Partnering with the City of Manhattan, Riley County Police Department, USD 383, Manhattan Housing Authority and others, you can help maintain safe, clean and welcoming neighborhoods for university students.
At K-State, we INCLUDE
From our first days as KSAC, inclusion has been the K-State way. Throughout our history, we have maintained a near 50/50 enrollment of men and women. Our first black alum graduated in 1899, and presently one of every five students is black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or multiracial.

Military men and women are part of our K-State family. Our Army ROTC program earned K-State a designation as a Top 30 College for Military Students in Military Advanced Education Magazine. The Air Force ROTC program continues to commission excellent officers, and the campus building which houses military sciences has been renamed General Richard B. Myers Hall after one of AFROTC’s distinguished alums and current university president.

Every year, military men, women and families are honored at various sporting events on campus. Many K-Staters have received the Outstanding Civilian Service Award, including Jon Wefald, former K-State President; Briana Nelson-Goff, professor of family studies and human services and director of the Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families; and Todd Holmberg, Executive Director of McCain Auditorium.

We are excited that you are among the newest members of the K-State Family! We hope that by participating in these and other campus traditions, you can find your place in the K-State Family.

Now that you’ve read this chapter, you should be able to:

✓ Show knowledge of the history of Kansas State University
✓ Understand that being a family means caring for each and every person at K-State—even when you disagree
✓ Identify a K-State tradition that you can participate in as you find your place in the K-State Family!
We hope you are enjoying your first days and weeks as a K-State student! Hopefully you have explored some of the histories and traditions of our university and have found a few opportunities to start finding your fit in the K-State Family. As you start exploring those opportunities, like doing The Wabash Cannonball, heading to the Rec, joining an amazing club or organization, getting connected with faculty-lead research, or setting yourself up for academic success, there’s a couple of things you should know.

Kansas State University is a land-grant institution, and a public, 4-year, R1, university.

So: what does that mean and why does it matter?

That’s a good question! Knowing what kind of university you’re attending can help you understand what kind of priorities faculty will have, the types of learning that will occur, what resources will be available, and more importantly, how you can engage in your college experience. These factors will help you to leverage opportunities so that you have the best possible experience while you’re here.

So let’s break down the basics:

**Land-grant**

K-State was actually the first public institution of higher learning in the state of Kansas when it opened in 1863. Land-grants were created to provide access to “practical arts” education to help citizens live full, professional, and civic lives. As you learned in Chapter 1, this is an important part of K-State’s tradition, and K-Staters are passionate about the land-grant mission. Faculty, staff, and community outreach offices come together every day

**As you read this chapter, you will:**

- Learn what defines a land-grant, public, 4-year, R1 university
- Explore what professors or student worker peers do for their jobs
to support the work to advance the land-grant mission of access and excellence.

**Public, 4-year**
Historically, as a public university, K-State received much of its funding from the State of Kansas. Over time, state funding has declined, and we rely heavily on student tuition, grants, and private dollars to support the day-to-day operations of the university. As a 4-year institution, we confer baccalaureate degrees, a degree that signifies the completion of undergraduate learning.

**R1 or Research 1**
This classification is given by the [Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education](#) and demonstrates that K-State has a substantial level of research activity. This means that many of your professors are working constantly to produce new knowledge both to advance K-State and enhance and contribute to their academic fields.

Understanding what kind of university you’re attending is important, but it is by no means the end of learning about your university. As a student, you can continue to explore in order to understand the organizational structures and many ways to navigate university life. Checking out public resources like the [Kansas State University organizational chart](#) can further help you understand how we break down this big system. On the chart, you can see a thousand-foot view of how the university works, which areas do what for students, and how all K-State staff—including the president, professors, advisors, student life professionals, and more—fit in to the university structure.

**REFLECTION ACTIVITY**
We’ve just talked through how our university is structured. Within that structure, we have faculty members, administrators, graduate teaching assistants, undergraduate peer educators—such as a Resident Assistant (RA) or a Learning Assistant (LA)—and students. Without investigating these various positions, it might be tricky to know what different positions require of their employees.

Before your next class period, choose either a K-State faculty member or a K-State student employee. To learn more about what they do, please complete the following:

**Faculty/staff or student employee name:**

**Job title:**

1. What are the stated requirements of your position?
2. What ‘hidden’ requirements also exist?
3. What is your favorite part of your job?
4. What challenges do you encounter with your work?

Reflect on the answers you received, using the following questions:

1. What surprised you?
2. Where might this person fit in the university organizational chart?
3. How does this person and their job relate to you as a student?
Now that you’ve read this chapter, you should be able to:

✓ Define what a land-grant, public, 4-year, RI university is
✓ Know what your professors or student worker peers do for their jobs
While reading this chapter, you will:

- Learn what academic integrity means and why it’s important
- Become familiar with K-State’s online resources
- Develop strategies for effective email communication

There are many ways to be a successful student at K-State, and we’ll examine these strategies in upcoming chapters (such as using your strengths or exploring a major). As you get started, it’s important to take time to think about how to engage with your courses—both in and out of the classroom.

Before we explore how to maximize your K-State experience, understand that K-State has many resources to help you succeed. From free tutoring to financial counseling, K-State has someone to help you with any situation. To see all of the resources K-State offers, check out the One Stop Shop for Student Success.

In this chapter, we will discuss three key strategies for making the most of your academic pursuit: engaging with your faculty member, understanding K-State’s online platforms, and practicing effective email communication.

**Engaging with your faculty members**

A first step is learning about the people teaching your courses as they may approach your class in different ways. The people who teach your classes might be tenure-track faculty who have research, teaching, and service expectations of their appointment; instructional faculty whose main focus is to teach courses, or graduate students that are completing post-undergraduate degrees at K-State. When you meet with an instructor for the first time, you might ask, “Tell me more about your role in the university,” or “What are your research interests?” Both of these questions will help you get to know the person teaching your course, what they value and love about working at a university, and how they might approach teaching your class.

Getting to know your professors and instructors will also help you understand
the expectations that they have for you in the classroom and as a student in their course. Students that maximize all that the K-State experience has to offer also increase their learning by utilizing faculty office hours, engaging in classroom discussions and asking questions, and generally demonstrating interest in learning.

Your faculty members also expect you to uphold academic integrity. K-State’s Honor Code states:

On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.

Let’s break this down:
• “On my honor, as a student…” – It’s up to you to make sure you know if what you’re doing is cheating or not. When in doubt, talk to your faculty member!
• “…I have neither given nor received” – It’s equally unethical to cheat or to help someone cheat.
• “…unauthorized aid” – You cannot receive assistance that you’re not allowed to have. For instance, you likely cannot complete an online exam in groups. However, if your faculty member tells you to work in a group, then completing the exam in a group would then be considered authorized (allowed) aid.
• “…on this academic work” – Any exam, essay, or other type of academic assignment you complete for class.

Understanding K-State’s online platforms
It is also important to know about the primary modes of communication and the platforms that you’ll be expected to use as a K-State student. Understanding which platform to use when, and how to use it to maximize your time, will set you on a pathway for success right from the start.

KSIS
KSIS is K-State’s internal system. This is what you’ll access to view your student records, see your class schedule and advisor information, and enroll in classes. Here’s an example of a student’s KSIS page:

When you’re ready to discover who your advisor is, enroll for a new semester, or apply for graduation, you can find detailed information about how to navigate KSIS.
REFLECTION ACTIVITY

To help you understand how KSIS works, please log in by visiting ksis.ksu.edu. Once you’re there, you’ll have access to a lot of information. Click on “Student Center,” and then find the following information:

1. Who is your academic advisor?

2. How many credit hours need to be completed for you to graduate? (Hint: this information can be found in your Degree Audit, or your DARS report)

3. What email is set as your preferred method of contact?

4. How many hours of transfer credit have you brought in?

K-State Online, powered by Canvas

K-State Online, also known as Canvas, is the platform that K-State uses to provide online access to your coursework. Each semester, your K-State Online will populate with your new classes. Professors and instructors each utilize the course pages differently, but you will likely be able to find syllabi information, grades, assignment guidelines, and more.

Before starting any class, access to your class Canvas page and make sure you know what is available. As a small note, faculty members have a report of who has accessed the Canvas page (with specific dates and times). That’s one reason it’s important to actively use this resource, as it will establish a positive relationship between you and your faculty member.

Practicing effective email communication

Communicating with your professors and instructors can seem like a daunting task, but it doesn’t have to be. K-State professors and instructors are dedicated to your success. They want to see you engaged in the class, staying curious about the coursework, and learning to push and experiment with new ideas. They want to walk alongside you to support your academic success. Sending an email will likely be the best way to communicate with your instructors outside of class time and office hours. Sending an effective email will ensure a timely response that helps you make progress on your goals.

When emailing, it’s crucial to always keep your audience and their needs in mind. If you’re emailing your faculty member, then they are your audience, or the intended recipient of the email. If you’re not sure what your audience needs, you can ask yourself “What does my audience already know? What does my audience need to know?” For example, your faculty member will know the purpose of the course you’re in, so you wouldn’t need to remind them of that. However, they would likely need to know why you’re writing the email. Is it to ask a question about class? To set up a meeting? Whatever the purpose is, clearly state it in the email.

Faculty members tend to respond well to concision and clarity in their emails. What does this mean? It means that if you can say something in one sentence or one paragraph, choose to say it in one sentence. This means that your email will be more to-the-point (concise) and your audience will have a better chance of following your ideas.

In terms of clarity, think through how your audience might perceive your content and
take the time to proofread anything you send. Also, consider having someone else read your email draft before you send it—especially if it’s an email you’re worried about sending.

Finally, consider what tone you use in your email. Emailing is different than texting a friend. When you text, there’s no need for punctuation, full sentences, etc., because you tend to have a closer relationship with your audience. Think about erring on the side of being more formal in an email if that helps.

**Structuring an effective email**
While each email is different, there’s a general structure you can use to send an effective email.

**Address**
An address is how you begin an email. This determines the reader’s first impression of you. To be successful here, you can research the title of the person you’re emailing and use an opening phrase like “Dear Dr. Smith,” or “Good afternoon Dr. Smith.” For instance, does your professor have an advanced degree, such as a Ph.D or Ed.D? If so, make sure to use Dr. unless they explicitly say otherwise. Have a conversation with your professor or instructor to find out how they prefer to be addressed. Some faculty may want you to use more formal approaches by addressing them as “professor” or “Dr.” Some faculty might invite you to use their first name. It’s important to ask them.

**Message**
The message is the bulk of your email, where you describe your purpose for emailing the reader. You can first introduce yourself (if your reader doesn’t know who you are), and then quickly convey why you’re writing to them. Professors will notice that you’ve taken initiative if you use more formal language in your email and provide appropriate information, context, or timelines. If necessary, you can use a bulleted list to convey a lot of information in an accessible format.

**Close**
The close is end of an email. Using a send-off like “Sincerely,” “Thank you,” or “Best wishes,” ends your email with a sense of good will for the person you’re writing to. Emails without a close can seem unfinished or signal to your audience that you don’t respect them.

Let’s take a look at an example of a successful email from a student to Dr. Willie Wildcat:

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Dear Dr. Wildcat,

My name is Kai Kansas and I'm in your MW section of Introduction to K-State Culture. I saw your office hours are Tuesdays at 10:30 am. Would I be able to schedule an appointment for that time to discuss our first assignment?

Thank you,

Kai
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Let’s break down what is effective about this email:

- The email has an address (“Dear Dr. Wildcat”), and it is specific and professional. Rather than saying “Hi,” or “Yo Wildcat,” the writer takes the time to look up his title (Dr.) and uses that when addressing him. Additionally, the use of “Dear” establishes an effective tone for a faculty audience.
- The body text is specific and gets to the point after a quick introduction. As a faculty member, you would read that email and immediately know who you’re talking to and what need that person has. Additionally, the tone of the message is more formal, which maintains a positive relationship between the reader and the writer.
- The email has a closing (“Thank you, Kal”) and it is formal in tone. “Thank you” is effective because it thanks Dr. Wildcat for taking the time to read the email.

As a quick sum-up of what we learned: when in doubt, err on the side of formality, and always keep the needs of your audience in mind.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

An undergraduate student, Brad, is writing an email to his faculty member, Dr. Lea Sarfati. Here’s the email he sent:

Leah, Hey so I’m not going to class tomorrow. Tell me what I miss so I don’t get behind okay – Brad

Equipped with the knowledge you gained this chapter, please answer the following questions:

1. What is currently working well in this email?
2. If you wanted to help Brad improve his email, what revision suggestions would you provide?
3. Draft a revised email that Brad could use.
4. After drafting this email, reflect on what you’ve learned about email etiquette. What information was new to you? What do you think is most important to remember?
Now that you’ve read this chapter, you should be able to:

✓ Define what academic integrity means
✓ Navigate K-State’s online resources
✓ Write an effective email to a faculty member
“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”
~Audre Lorde

What does diversity mean?
What is diversity? It is a word you might hear a lot, but how can we define it in a meaningful way, and how can we integrate it into our lives so we’re not just checking off the “diversity” box?

Diversity, in its most basic definition, is simply a group of people with different social and cultural identities working, learning, playing, and living together. You might hear the term diversity together with interculturalism. Here at K-State, and in most university settings, interculturalism means we actively work together to foster respect and understanding of varying social groups, races, religions, ethnicities, sexualities, and cultures. We also act on this respect and understanding by engaging with each other in meaningful ways.

Highlighted below are definitions for diversity, inclusion, equity, and intercultural learning, so you can begin to see the ways they connect and are incorporated into a college campus like K-State.

**Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued.

A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term “diversity” is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation,
socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.\(^1\)

**Inclusion** is active, intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity—inside and outside your classes and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.\(^2\)

**Equity** is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.\(^3\)

**Intercultural learning** is about strengthening your awareness of self, awareness of others, and response, behavior, and reflection when around people like you or different from you. Intercultural learning is not about changing who we are or what we value. It is about being able to work successfully in community with others who are different than us both in the classroom, professionally, and personally.

When thinking in terms of diversity, inclusion, equity, and intercultural learning, you should not simply be surrounding yourself with, or “collecting”, people who are different from you, but engaging with them to understand knowledge and ideas from varying perspectives. This means going beyond checking off boxes of people in your life, such as “I have a black friend”, or “I have a friend who is gay” and leaving it at that. We need to be having conversations about what those identities might mean to them or how it affects their lives.

It is also important to understand your own identity in terms of race, gender, sexuality, etc. Once you appreciate your identity, you can use that to explore various cultures that you belong to as well. Culture encompasses the beliefs, arts, and ways of thinking or behavior of a particular group. For example, part of the culture of K-State is that we are a family.

Some of the forms and categories that we use when discussing identity, culture, and diversity include:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Sex/Gender
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Mental/Physical Ability
- Age
- National Origin
- Socioeconomic Class
- Religion
- Political Affiliation

A good way to begin understanding these categories is to explore ways in which they connect to your own life. Throughout this chapter you will have questions that you can answer to help jump start your exploration. Take time to reflect and answer when prompted to do so.

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1 UC Berkeley Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, Glossary of Terms.


**Look in before reaching out**

Oftentimes when we think of diversity our minds immediately go to others, and how they are different from us. However, an important first step is to look inwards and examine our own culture, identities, beliefs, and biases before engaging with someone else.

Who are you? While this question seems short and simple, the answer can be difficult to work through. There are a variety of different identity categories that influence the ways that we shape ourselves. These categories can also inform our actions in the world and how we respond to those that differ from us. These include, but aren’t limited to, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical/mental ability, age, class, region, and religion. Try to think critically about the personal values and beliefs you hold.

**Reflection Activity**

Free write about the different sources that influence your understandings of yourself and of others. Some examples might include:

- Parents
- Peers
- Media (television, movies, social media, advertising, etc.)
- Personal experiences

If you’re not sure of where to start, consider the following questions:

1. What are some of your favorite movies, books, or television shows? How have they helped you to understand yourself and others?
2. Do you see share values with a particular comic or film hero?
3. Have you read or seen the story of someone completely different from you? Are these messages positive, negative, or a complicated mixture of both?
4. What areas of your life do these sources impact? What do you think might happen if you challenged the thinking of one of these sources?
Another way to explore your own culture and identity is through creative storytelling. The “I Am From Project,” created by George Ella Lyon and based on her original poem, *Where I’m From,* will help you to not only understand some of the things, people, and institutions that have shaped you, but will also help you connect to others in your classroom and community.

Before you write your own poem, check out sample *I Am From* poems to see what they look like.

Visit the [I Am From Project](https://iamfromproject.com/about/) website to explore other stories and ways to engage in diversity. On the site it emphasizes why these stories and our ability to interact with one another are so important, not only as students, but as citizens:

“Our deepest hope is to open a way for We the People to express who this country really is, what our values are, and how they unite rather than divide us. America’s embrace is wide enough to include all of us if we put our minds and money to our common welfare.”

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Use the following template to draft your poem, and then write a final draft to share on blank paper.

**I Am From...**

I am from ____________ (specific ordinary item)

From ____________ (product name) and ____________ (product name)

I am from the ____________ (home description) ____________ (adjective), ____________ (adjective), ____________ (sensory detail)

I am from ____________, (plant, flower, natural item) ____________ description of above item)

I’m from ____________ (family tradition) and ____________ (family trait)

From ____________ (name of family member) and ____________ (another family name)

I’m from the ____________ (description of family tendency) and ____________ (another one)

From ____________ (something you were told as a child) and ____________ (another)

I’m from ____________ (representation of religion or lack of), ____________ (further description)

I’m from ____________ (place of birth and family ancestry) ____________ (a food item that represents your family), ____________ (another one)

From the ____________ (specific family story about a specific person and detail)

The ____________ (another detail of another family member) ____________ (location of family pictures, mementos, archives) ____________ (line explaining the importance of family items)

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Try to keep in mind that mere tolerance should not be your end goal. Go beyond tolerance and begin to respect and celebrate the differences among people. Enhance your understanding, and the ways in which you learn. Remember that you are not an individual learning in the vast vacuum of space; rather you are part of a larger community, and other people will help to shape you and the culture you engage with.

**Why is diversity and inclusion important for me?**

While you’re at K-State, the other students, staff, and faculty are your community. We all have different backgrounds, but we are working together with the common goal of furthering our education and continually engaging in critical thinking. This is an easier task when working respectfully with a group of people. Part of being an educated person is knowing about others and working effectively with people who are different from you--college is a great place to gain practice for your future professional work and your place in diverse communities.

While the overall goal is to have communities that are equitable and allow us all to thrive in the world, research demonstrates that engaging with diversity has direct positive effects on you as an individual as well.

Some of these benefits include broadening your interests and building social self-confidence by adapting to unfamiliar social situations, accelerating and deepening your learning by helping you to step outside of your comfort zone through interaction and collaboration with more people that are different than you, strengthening your critical thinking skills by seeking out a variety of perspectives to see all sides of an issue, stimulating creative thinking by generating ideas with others who have diverse perspectives, and enhancing your career success to prepare you for a global society where you can solve problems and collaborate with diverse co-workers, customers, and clients.5

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In a 2013 study, researchers found that frequent diversity interactions fostered considerable growth for individuals in their leadership skills, psychological well-being, intellectual engagement, and intercultural effectiveness.6

Some of the specific ways that diversity and intercultural interactions can benefit you are highlighted below:

**Leadership skills**
- Consciousness of self – awareness of values, emotions, and attitudes that motivate one to take action
- Congruence – actions are consistent with one’s most deeply held beliefs and convictions
- Commitment – energy that motivates one to serve and drives the collective effort
- Collaboration – working effectively with others in a common effort
- Common Purpose – working with shared goals and values to achieve the task at hand
- Controversy with Civility – recognition that viewpoint differences are inevitable and that these differences must be aired with respect
- Citizenship – responsibility for and connections with the community and society
- Change – ability to adapt to environments and situations that are constantly evolving

**Psychological well-being**
- Autonomy – sense of self-determination and independence
- Environmental mastery – capacity to effectively manage one’s life and surrounding world
- Personal growth – sense of continued growth and development as a person
- Positive relations with others – quality interpersonal relationships
- Purpose in life – identifying and working toward a particular life purpose
- Self-acceptance – positive evaluation of self and one’s own attributes

**Intercultural effectiveness**
- Relativistic Appreciation – cognizance of both similarities and differences across people and groups
- Comfort with Differences – level of comfort with diverse individuals
- Diversity of Contact – interest and intent to participate in diverse cultural and social activities

Whether you are wanting to be a great leader, do well in your classes, or just get to know those around you a bit better, interacting in meaningful ways with people who are different than you can help you grow. Additionally, this growth happens not when you have one or two interactions with diverse individuals and groups, but when you have consistent intergroup interactions.

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You’ve Got This!

Reflect on the skills from the list on the previous page that you find important or the ones you feel you would like to continue to develop while here at K-State.

After you’ve created a list of important skills you use and want to explore, consider the following questions:

1. Which of the skills do you feel like you already have good practice with, and how might you maximize your use of these skills?

2. For the skills you would like to develop, what steps could you take to make progress on them?

Now that you’ve read this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define diversity and intercultural learning
- Recognize how your personal identity can impact your perspective and relationships
- Discuss a plan to further develop skills that will increase your intercultural appreciation
“I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer... education as the practice of freedom.... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created.”
- bell hooks

How to seek and celebrate diversity
While it may seem a bit daunting to interact with people who are different than you, the great news is that being in college offers you a unique and amazing opportunity to explore diversity in various ways.

While reading this chapter, you will:

- Become familiar with the K-State Principles of Community
- Explore additional opportunities to keep the learning going
- Develop ideas for how to have courageous conversations

Reflection Activity

Kansas State University is committed to celebrating diversity and inclusion. This is part of the Wildcat Way and is emphasized in our Principles of Community.

Read through the Principles of Community on the next page, and then free write with these questions in mind:

1. What does this principle mean to you?
2. How do you see it being explored, lived, or examined at K-State?
Where do I start?
In the classroom, through student groups, or at events, we have the chance to explore our common humanity and the ways we can work together to create meaning and shape our culture while also exploring our differences.

Classes
Within the university you have a unique opportunity for engaged learning. At K-State, many different people from varying backgrounds surround you. A world of difference is at your fingertips. Actively seek out any chance you can to learn from those around you.

When focusing on learning within the classroom, K-State has an inclusive curriculum and many opportunities for you to explore.

The K-State 8 general education program helps students widen their perspectives, explore relationships among subjects and build critical and analytical thinking skills. K-State 8 exposes students to a broad range of knowledge in different academic areas. The program shapes well-rounded thinkers and helps prepare students for careers, graduate school and other post-graduate experiences.

One of the 8 Areas is Human Diversity within the U.S., in which many classes focus on diverse perspectives. When deciding on your class schedule with your advisor you can actively seek out classes that fall into this category.

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When working with others in your classes, you can use the following strategies to learn cooperatively and engage with a diverse group of peers in a meaningful way:

- Intentionally form groups that include students from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Assign interdependent roles to each member to ensure everyone has equal status and equal opportunity to participate
- Pursue a shared common goal through collaboration rather than competition

Group work like this can help you and the other members to not only complete tasks and reach your goals, but a chance to have positive interactions that can reduce prejudice and promote friendships.

**Co-Curricular Events and K-State 360**

Your education does not end once you walk out of those classroom doors. Attending events outside of the classroom can have a major impact on your ability to navigate difference as well. Check out some of the various events and activities that are happening on campus on the university calendar.

After attending an event, lecture, workshop, or meeting, take the opportunity to reflect on the experience. If you attended with a group of peers, get together and process the ideas and cross-cultural experience. You can focus on the similarities and differences in your own and your group members’ experience afterward. Some questions you may ask yourselves:

1. What major differences in perspectives did you detect among group members during your discussion?
2. Were differences discussed sensitively and constructively?
3. What major similarities in viewpoints or background experiences did all group members share?
4. Were there particular topics or issues raised during your discussion that proved important or relevant for all members of your group? 

You also have the opportunity to track some of the events you attend throughout your college career through the K-State 360 program.

**K-State 360** is a program designed to provide students with a well-rounded experience of co-curricular programs with the ultimate goal of helping students stand out to future employers or graduate and professional schools. Out-of-classroom activities are often as important as in-class experiences.

K-State 360 helps navigate involvement while tracking progress, transforming students into well-rounded individuals. Activities are placed into a series of categories, guiding students toward an inclusive K-State experience and a developed skillset that will give students an edge.

Once students complete all the category requirements, students will gain the K-State 360 designation to share with potential employers and graduate schools. Students learn to communicate involvement and raise their potential through K-State 360.

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Objectives

K-State 360 will...

• Increase student success through exposure to a wide range of experiences.
• Encourage meaningful engagement through practical applications of skills.
• Prepare students for their post-undergraduate objectives.
• Provide connections within the community and decrease feelings of marginality.
• Further the overall mission of Kansas State University.  

Student organizations

Consider joining or going to meetings and events held by different student groups and organizations. This is a chance for you to get involved and meet new people!

Examples of student organizations at K-State:

• Sexuality and Gender Alliance
• BSU (Black Student Union)
• Asian American Student Union
• HALO (Hispanic and Latino Organization)
• Hillel (Jewish Student Organization)
• Christian Challenge
• International Buddies

K-State has hundreds of student groups that you can get involved with. There will be one that is a good fit for you!

Preventing and responding to discrimination and prejudice

Hate crimes and discrimination are not to be ignored or tolerated. But if you see this happening on campus, what actions can you take? Again, we ask that you look inward and examine your thoughts and feelings on the matter. How might you respond to discrimination? What if it doesn’t affect you directly? Have you ever witnessed harassment? What can you, as a bystander, do to prevent or intercede?

First off, you should know that the institution supports all individuals at the university, and K-State has a very inclusive nondiscrimination policy:

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, military status, veteran status, or other non-merit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities and employment, including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era, as required by applicable laws and regulations.
While any instance of discrimination is unacceptable and might reflect poorly on your experience at K-State, these instances also allow you the opportunity to unite with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to create a positive impact on your community. Some steps you can take might be to attend diverse events, training sessions, workshops, symposiums, movies, guest speakers, etc.

Also keep in mind that there are many campus resources available to help you or anyone else that has had to deal with discrimination or harassment, including the Office of Institutional Equality, the Office of Student Life, the Center for Advocacy Response and Education (CARE), the LGBT Resource Center, and the Campus Police.

**Courageous conversations**

Some issues might be solved or addressed through conversations. It can be tough to start exploring difference or addressing misunderstandings through these courageous conversations though. You might be in class, with your roommate, or at a workshop, and a subject comes up that is causing you anxiety. You might not have had the chance to interact with someone whose perspective and/or culture is so different from your own before. Or maybe it’s a subject that you feel very strongly about but you don’t want to get hurt or inadvertently hurt others.

Perhaps your stomach is tight, your heart is racing, and you’re feeling hot. Is it the flu? Maybe. It could also be your body’s reaction to having to talk about something that makes you uncomfortable. Ugh, why is it so hard to talk about certain things? We can’t make some of these conversations easier, but we do have tips for making them more productive.

**Steps to a productive courageous conversation**

- Identify what you want out of the conversation. If the answer is “I don’t know”, it’s a sure bet that you’ll look a hot mess when you try to talk about it. And it will probably be hard for others to follow what you are saying.

- Make it safe to talk. Be mindful of the mental, emotional, and physical safety of you and the person you are talking to. This means picking a location where the person you are talking to has the freedom to express themselves without judgement or humiliation. You don’t tell your boo that they are a bad kisser in front of their friends. And if the person you need to talk to is scary or makes you feel unsafe, you have that conversation in a public place around other people and not a small car parked in a dark lot.

- Ask simple, unbiased, open ended questions (and give people time to answer them). A good question is, “What do you think of my roommate?” A bad question is, “Why do you hate my roommate? Is it because they’re gay?” If a conversation is really difficult, folks may need time to take a breath and think things through so don’t rush them if it takes a while for them to respond.

- Use I statements. Saying, “You act like...” is an accusation that can put people on edge and turn them off. “I feel uncomfortable when…” avoids blaming someone and keeps communication moving forward.
• Listen. Stop talking, put down your phone (for real, put it down), face the speaker, and truly hear their words. Listen to them the way you want them to listen to you. Every once in a while, give a nonverbal signal to let people know you are listening. Better yet, summarize what you heard to make sure you’re on track. “Ok, so what I hear you saying is....”

Three-F Method
When we are confronted with an insensitive comment (e.g. someone makes a homophobic comment), it can be tricky to navigate the conversation. However, you can use the “Three-F Method” to shape the conversation and make it clear that there are ways to grow and change.

Here is the Three-F Method:

1. I felt (in the past) – At this stage, you can build rapport with the person you’re talking to by explaining a time when you had misinformation. If that time doesn’t exist, you can always
2. I found (out) – During this step, you can provide information about the subject.
3. I feel (now) – At the last stage, you can tell them why their comment might be perceived as offensive.

Let’s talk through an example. If someone makes a homophobic comment, for instance, you could proceed as follows:

1. I felt…that way (or have heard that said) when I was younger.
2. But then I found…out that 29% of LGB youth had attempted suicide at least once in 2015 compared to 6% of heterosexual youth.
3. Now I feel…that I have to speak up so no one feels unwelcome or unsafe in our community.

Continue exploring on your own
There are a lot of tools and resources available online to help introduce you to certain topics that you might be unfamiliar with. However, the deepest learning happens when you are interacting with others, so while this is a good step, it shouldn’t be your only step into diversity exploration.

Using the tools, resources, and strategies within this chapter can help you to meaningfully engage with a diverse range of people while you’re at K-State. Developing these skills will positively impact you beyond college and into your career and your community once you leave campus.
REFLECTION ACTIVITY

We have compiled a few videos that might help you get started as you explore further. Some are more lecture-based, others are stand-up comics describing their experiences, some are more news-oriented. This is by no means an extensive list, but we hope it’s a fun and interesting place to start!

General
- The Danger of a Single Story
- A Class Divided
- Cultural Diversity Examples: Avoid Stereotypes While Communicating
- Do One Thing For Diversity and Inclusion
- If the World Were 100 People
- The European Refugee Crisis and Syria Explained
- Generation Gap
- Defying Definitions: Exploring Identity, Stereotypes & Diversity
- Diversity: Overcoming Stereotypes
- Holding to Purpose: “Overcoming Stereotypes”

Race
- What Kind of Asian Are You?
- Margaret Cho – Racism
- Wanda Sykes – Dignified Black People
- Dave Chappelle – Racism
- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver – Dressing Up As Other Races (How Is This Still a Thing?)
- Kids React to Controversial Cheerios Commercial
- Race on the Oprah Show: A Twenty-Five Year Look Back

Sexuality and Gender Identity
- Wanda Sykes – Gay vs Black
- Key and Peele – Gay Wedding Advice
- National Equality March Rally: Staceyann Chin
- The Trans Panic Epidemic: The Daily Show
- Love Has No Labels
- Conversion Therapy – ImFromDriftwood.com
- When Did You Choose To Be Straight?
- Sex & Gender Identity: An Intro
- Zach Wahls Speaks About Family

Gender
- Miss Representation
- Tony Porter – A Call to Men
- SNL – Welcome to Hell
- SNL – The Handmaid’s Tale

Ability/disability
- Daily Mail – The Department of Ability: Comic Book Challenges Disability
- Maysoon Zayid – I Got 99 Problems… Palsy is Just One
- Stella Young - I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much
- The Daily Dot - 7 reasons you should be watching disabled comedians on YouTube

Use the following questions to reflect on what you choose to watch:

1. What perspectives are being shown?
2. Do you identify with one or more of the people/characters?
3. Do you have any personal experiences similar to what is being discussed? How do your experiences differ?
4. What is the central issue being explored? What seems to be the root of the problem?
5. How might this issue be solved or addressed in a meaningful way?
6. If the issue isn’t addressed, what are the future consequences?
YOU’VE GOT THIS!

Now that you’ve read this chapter, you should be able to:

✓ Discuss the K-State Principles of Community and how you see the principles in action.
✓ Identify a class, a co-curricular activity, and a student organization that would connect you with another culture
✓ Feel more prepared to engage in courageous conversations