



Ready to talk about research

David Rosowsky speaks plainly, positively about research at K-State

BY TIM SCHRAG '12 PORTRAIT BY DAVID MAYES '96, K-STATE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

David Rosowsky jokingly refers to himself as the university's "chief optimism officer" and "cheerleader-in-chief," but he also describes himself as a builder and a storyteller. But Rosowsky's role as Kansas State University's vice president for research requires him to wear many hats.

So what does the vice president for research do? Rosowsky is the university's chief research officer, and as such, he provides leadership and expertise campuswide that should in the endgame help the university to increase its research profile, portfolio and visibility.

"My responsibility is oversight of the research enterprise for the entire university – all of the colleges, all of the departments, all of the labs, all of the facilities, all of the farms, and our three campuses in Manhattan, Salina and Olathe. So the research enterprise writ large, even though we abbreviate it to research, it's really research and scholarly and creative activity."

It's his job to promote K-State's research and innovation, advocate for resources, as well as celebrate accomplishments — every major grant, every patent issued, every gallery opening and so much more. The fields of agriculture, engineering, physical and life sciences are prominent, but the arts, social sciences and humanities are just as important to Rosowsky.

"The important thing for me to understand is what do the different faculty need to be successful? In some cases, it's money," he said. "In some cases, it's time. In some cases, it's facilities. In some cases, it's partnerships, whether it's with other universities or with industry, and I try to keep up on all of that so that our office can best serve all of our faculty with equal support and commitment."

One of the ways he does this is through clear communication. He has built a following on Twitter. That wasn't his goal.

"I use my social media feeds to be very clear about my excitement for what we're doing, but also to make it as accessible as possible — the work that K-State is doing in research and scholarship and creative works and economic development," Rosowsky said. "I don't use technical language. I really just try to say, 'Here's what we're doing. Here's why I'm excited. Here's why it matters for Kansas, and for Kansans.'"

Nevertheless, Rosowsky spreads the word of research, academic life and purple pride daily through his tweets.

Research, Rosowsky said, is often thought of as extra by those outside of academia; however, it is mission-critical to K-State's role as a major public research university and, most importantly, as a land-grant institution.

"I view [research and teaching] as sort of a hand-in-glove kind of relationship," he said. "I believe the importance of research and discovery is measured by its impact, by its potential for good. And I think the role of any great public university is to conduct research that can have direct impact on the quality of life of people and families and businesses and communities here in the state."

Furthermore, Rosowsky and his team work to enhance K-State's research, scholarly and creative activities across the university's colleges, centers and units. These enterprises help the university in its mission.

"Research doesn't take away resources from our undergraduate teaching mission. We have to generate additional resources, often through

competitive grants, to support our research enterprise. And when we want to attract the best teachers onto our faculty, they often come with scholarly and research agendas that they want to pursue as well."

K-State is home to more than 90 research centers, including the Konza Prairie Biological Station, the Johnson Cancer Research Center and the Biosecurity Research Institute, which focuses on infectious diseases, as well as plant and food-borne pathogens.

Additionally, Rosowsky serves as chair of the board of directors for K-State Innovation Partners, K-State's hub of corporate engagement, technology commercialization and economic development.

"Economic development is our effort and our commitment to translate what we discover and what we create here at the university, out into the world to translate it into either professional practice, or policy, or technology that can be licensed or a company that can be spun out," he said.

Late last year, K-State launched the economic prosperity plan, which aims to create 3,000 jobs and \$3 billion in direct investments to the state of Kansas by 2029. Through the plan, K-State will leverage its strengths in food and agriculture systems innovation; digital agriculture and advanced analytics; biosecurity and biodefense and extension and outreach. Learn more about the plan at k-state.edu/economic-prosperity.

"In addition to fulfilling our land-grant mission and serving Kansans through our research and discovery, we can help Kansas as a state to become globally competitive in businesses around those areas," he said. 🐾

The Rosowsky File

Education:

- Bachelor of science in civil engineering – Tufts University – 1985
- Master of science in civil engineering – Tufts University – 1987
- Ph.D. in civil engineering – Johns Hopkins University – 1990

Hobbies:

- Music (plays several instruments and sings)
- Cooking
- Hiking
- Spending time with his wife, Michelle, and their two children

Favorite Manhattan restaurants:

- Taco Lucha
- Bourbon and Baker
- Wine Dive

Online:

Twitter



@DavidRosowsky

LinkedIn



David Rosowsky