K-State names Schuh to lead agricultural research

Longtime North Dakota faculty member impressed with state’s reputation in agriculture

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Jane Schuh, a longtime and decorated faculty member at North Dakota State University, has been selected to lead the research program in Kansas State University’s College of Agriculture.

Schuh is a veteran of academia, having built a successful career in cellular and molecular biology. She was most recently the director of strategic initiatives for NDSU’s Division of Agricultural Affairs.

She will begin her duties as the director and associate dean for the K-State College of Agriculture’s research and graduate programs on July 1, the first day of the university’s new fiscal year.

“As luck would have it, I wasn’t looking for a new job,” said Schuh, who said she first talked with outgoing director Marty Draper about the position.

“The more I looked (at what the position entails), the more impressed I was. K-State has a great reputation in agriculture. I knew that before coming for the interview. When I arrived, it was clear that K-State has a lot to offer. The campus is beautiful, and there are some big initiatives in agriculture that I think will be game-changing.”

Schuh served as the vice president of research and creative activity at NDSU from 2018-2021; the associate director of research for the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station from 2016-2018; the interim dean of the College of Business from 2014-2016; and the assistant dean for the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources from 2012-2015.
As vice president for research, she increased federal research awards to near record levels while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, overseeing safety and compliance across all research units, increasing inter-institutional and inter-agency collaborations, and gaining Carnegie R1-very high research status for the university.

Schuh also was a fellow of the Food Systems Leadership Institute from 2013-2015, and the LEAD21 Leadership Training program from 2010-2012.

At K-State, she will lead an agricultural research program that routinely leads the university in acquiring extramural awards for research, and in research expenditures.

“This is such an exciting time in agriculture,” Schuh said. “New agricultural technologies, digital transformation, microbiome discoveries, and collaborative research -- just to name a few things -- are enabling new tools for the farmers and ranchers who feed, clothe and fuel the world. The established strength of agriculture in the state of Kansas and Kansas State makes this a great place to be a part of that transformation.”

Ernie Minton, dean of K-State’s College of Agriculture and director of K-State Research and Extension, said Schuh’s hire helps to build on one of the university’s strengths.

“I believe that Dr. Schuh will help us continue to look toward the future in agricultural research, to meet the needs of farmers in Kansas and beyond,” Minton said. “She’s the right person not only to lead our research enterprise, but also to help lead the College of Agriculture’s role in the university’s strategic plan.”

Schuh said that while successful programs and robust facilities are nice, it’s the people she has worked with that she values the most: “And I’ve been really impressed with the people I’ve met so far at K-State and in Manhattan.”

“One thing that I’d love to do early on in this role is to get out and meet people across the university and across the state,” she said. “I want to know the people that we serve. I come from a rural farming background, so these are my folks. I want to get their perspective.”

Schuh said she will also actively engage students and faculty – “Who’s doing what? What’s new? What is needed? How can I help?,” she says – and hopes to “honor the tradition” of agricultural research at K-State.

“I want to hear the history; it’s important to me to honor the tradition of the place that will be my home, and I want to understand it. I can’t wait to get started.”

Schuh is an active community member, have participated in numerous boards and advisory councils that range in scope from agricultural safety, the arts, ethics, substance abuse treatment, ethics, entrepreneurship and financial security. She and her husband, Troy, have two children, Jacob and Samantha.
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