

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**\$11.25 million pledge from Koch Industries and the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation advances
Wichita State University academics, athletics, Innovation Campus**

In a gift commitment with sweeping impact, Koch Industries and the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation have pledged \$11.25 million to create and advance programs at Wichita State University aimed at helping students excel and become the next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators and business leaders.

It will be the largest gift ever to the WSU Foundation from a corporate/foundation source and also represents the lead gift in the quiet phase of a comprehensive campaign underway at Wichita State, said Elizabeth King, WSU Foundation president and CEO. King announced the gift at a news conference today attended by representatives of Koch Industries, the Koch Foundation and Wichita State.

“What makes this gift particularly exciting is the breadth of its impact,” King said. “That impact will affect many different areas of campus academically, all of Wichita State's athletic programs and the economic vitality of our community and surrounding region.”

WSU President John Bardo described the gift as a substantial and farsighted investment in both Wichita State and south-central Kansas.

“This transformative gift will have an impact on generations of Wichita State students,” Bardo said. “It is a tremendous investment in our vision of building a university that is internationally recognized as the model for applied learning and research.”

The gift pledge makes good business sense for Koch Industries, said Steve Feilmeier, the company's executive vice president and chief financial officer.

“Wichita is Koch Industries' global headquarters and Wichita State is an important asset for us and the community,” said Feilmeier, who serves on the WSU Foundation Board of Directors. “We have many connections to the university including scholarships, academic and athletic support, and we hire many graduates from WSU every year. We want WSU to be successful and its teaching programs to be top tier.”

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The total pledge of \$11.25 million targets five areas of the university:

- 1) **Maker Space.** Funds totaling \$3.75 million from the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation and Koch Industries will help Wichita State establish a Maker Space facility on the Innovation Campus that is open to the public through memberships. A Maker Space is a cross between a business incubator, a manufacturing plant and a design studio — a place where creative people of all ages and skill levels will have access to sophisticated equipment and training, shared work spaces, expert advice and a supportive community of like-minded people.

Koch Industries and Wichita State collaborated on the idea of establishing an open innovation lab that removes high-cost barriers so that aspiring entrepreneurs can build prototypes of their ideas and begin to commercialize business opportunities. Bardo views this as an important way to stimulate economic growth in the region. The gift pledge will provide scholarships and training stipends to qualifying applicants based on financial need, as well as mentoring support through faculty fellowships.

“We have a special relationship with Wichita State that goes back many years but this is by far the most exciting thing we’ve done together,” said Liz Koch, president of the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation. “Maker Space fits me like a glove because I’m determined to help young people stretch their minds and dream big. This will be an incredible resource for them and for Wichita.”

- 2) **Charles Koch Arena.** Koch will contribute \$4.5 million to help expand and renovate the facility named for Charles Koch in 2001 in recognition of his company’s \$6 million gift to expand and improve what was then Henry Levitt Arena. Among improvements planned is a major expansion of the Student Athlete Success Center, which would house academic support services, nutrition services, and personal and career development for all student athletes.

“We continue to be indebted to Charles Koch and the Koch Industries family for their belief in Shocker athletics,” said WSU Athletic Director Eric Sexton. “This extended commitment will allow us to build Shocker basketball to new heights while also supporting the continued success of all 15 intercollegiate sports.”

- 3) **Honors College.** Koch will donate up to \$1.54 million to create the Honors College Koch Scholars Program, a competitive award for high school seniors who plan to enroll in the Honors College and major in business or engineering. As many as 10 scholarships per year of up to \$7,500 for in-state students and \$15,000 for out-of-state students would be awarded beginning with the 2015-2016 academic year.

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- 4) **Koch Innovation Challenge.** A gift of \$1 million will support an annual program in which WSU freshmen and transfer students compete for funding and scholarships to invent products and technologies. The College of Engineering will oversee the program aimed at fostering a culture of creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and teamwork among WSU students. The Koch Innovation Challenge will begin in the 2016-2017 academic year.

“This program will be key to providing an environment for students that ignites curiosity, instills a desire for knowledge, awakens a passion for their chosen profession and inspires an enthusiasm to think big that will carry over into their career,” said Royce Bowden, College of Engineering dean.

- 5) **Koch Global Trading Center.** Koch will contribute \$460,000 to help pay for costs associated with moving the center from Clinton Hall to the new building being planned for the W. Frank Barton School of Business. The trading center opened last July. Koch Industries provided the lead gift to establish the center, which helps educate students about financial and commodity markets. Construction of a new facility for the business school is expected to begin in 2017.

Feilmeier said Koch Industries and the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation want to help Wichita State achieve its ambitious agenda for the future.

“Our support recognizes in a very concrete way the bold commitment by Dr. Bardo and WSU leadership to pursue a new, reenergized vision,” he said. “We are honored to play a role in making possible these programs and initiatives.”

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Media note: A photograph (from the news conference) can be found at
www.wichita.edu/foundationphotos.

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