Pittsburg State University President Steve Scott has announced the establishment of an endowed speakers series designed to bring nationally prominent leaders and innovators to the campus. The inaugural speaker in the H. Lee Scott Speaker Series: An Examination of American Life will be President Bill Clinton, founder of the Clinton Foundation and 42nd president of the United States, who will deliver an address at 4 p.m. on Monday, November 23.

The new speakers series is made possible by a $2.076 million gift from alumnus and former Walmart CEO Lee Scott and his wife, Linda.

“We hope that the exposure to these successful leaders will enhance the educational experiences for students and inspire them to some day be invited to speak about leadership on this same stage,” Lee Scott said.

President Steve Scott, who is Lee Scott’s brother, announced the new speakers series in the Linda & Lee Scott Performance Hall of the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts in front of a crowd composed of media and members of the campus and community. The president said the series helps complete the vision for the Bicknell Center.

“When we set out to construct this beautiful facility, we did so with the vision of creating a new era of expanded opportunities by introducing our students, faculty, staff and citizens of the region to a wide range of artistic, enriching experiences,” Scott said. “Our goal was to bring to southeast Kansas musicians, artists, thinkers and performers who we’ve all heard about, but never thought we’d see in our region.”

The president recalled that within the first year of the Bicknell Center’s operation, it has hosted former first lady Laura Bush, nationally known entertainers and local productions.

The first of three Broadway productions is set to begin in just weeks.

“Together, we have already accomplished so much...but believe it or not, there is one thing on our wish list that we haven’t accomplished,” Scott said. “That is to bring to the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, to this campus, and to this community a lecture series featuring speakers from various backgrounds and disciplines who all share one thing in common -- their stature as national and even international figures.”

President Scott said Linda and Lee Scott’s gift to establish an endowment to support such speakers is one of the most significant and distinctive gifts ever given to PSU.

“Its impact will be felt for years to come,” Scott said.

PSU officials said they expect the demand for tickets to President Clinton’s remarks to be great. Tickets information is available at the PSU Ticket Office in the Weede PE Building at 1701 S. Homer, by phone at 620-235-4796, or online at www.pittstate.edu/tickets. For non-ticket related questions, please contact the Office of University Advancement, 620-235-4762.
PSU among top five family-friendly schools

The Kelce College of Business at Pittsburg State University is once again among the top five family-friendly business schools in the nation. The Princeton Review recently published its 2016 list of the top 10 family-friendly business schools, and Pittsburg State ranks No. 4 in the U.S., one spot above Harvard University. Pitt State is joined in the top five by Brigham Young University, the International Institute for Management Development and Dartmouth College. Other institutions in the top 10 include the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Indiana University, Duke University, Texas Southern University and the University of Notre Dame.

“We are incredibly proud to once again be ranked among the top business colleges in the United States,” said Paul Grimes, dean of the Kelce College of Business. “Not only are we again in the top five, we’ve also moved up one spot from last year. To see our name on a list right above Harvard is pretty incredible, and it’s a testament to the family-friendly culture we cherish here at Pittsburg State.”

For the Family Friendly category, the Review examined student answers to survey questions concerning how happy married students are, how many students have children, how helpful the school is to students with children, and how much the school does for spouses of students. Along with being among the most family-friendly schools, the Kelce College of Business was also named by the Review as one of the top 295 business colleges in the nation.

Mike Neden, associate professor in the technology and workforce learning program, said the minor was created to help teachers implement STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) concepts into their classrooms.

“What we’re trying to do with this new minor is give education majors appropriate experience in applied learning so that they’re ready to teach STEM in their future classes,” Neden said. “We’re looking at integrated technology concepts, STEM experiences, problem solving using technology and various other components of technological literacy in the 21st century.”

Along with preparing current students to teach today’s diverse technology concepts, Pitt State is also working with current teachers to train within the framework of the new minor’s curriculum.

“We’re currently working with teachers from George Nettels and Lakeside elementary schools on how to best use STEM concepts in their schools,” Neden said. “The teachers come in every Thursday afternoon for STEM-related workshops, and we go through many of the same lessons our students go through.”
Safety management degree earns national recognition

Graduates of Pittsburg State’s environmental and safety management program will now leave the university with more than a diploma.

The Institute for Safety and Health Management (ISHM) has announced that Pitt State’s Environmental and Safety Management Program has been added to ISHM’s national board-approved programs, a distinction that carries with it benefits for the university and its students. The Environmental and Safety Management Program is housed within the College of Technology’s School of Construction.

According to ISHM, a student earning an environmental and safety management degree from a board-approved institution is automatically qualified for the Associate Safety and Health Manager (ASHM) credential offered by the ISHM.

Also, graduates from a board-approved program can earn Certified Safety and Health Manager (CShM) status after gaining two years of work experience. Graduates from programs not approved by ISHM’s board need four years of experience before being eligible for CShM status.

“Although our students complete at least one internship prior to graduation, their work experience will be minimal,” said Assistant Professor Ann Petersen. “ASHM can be earned by graduates in the short term, while other certifications require years of experience. Potential employers will see this designation and know the rigor of study students have accomplished.”

ASHM credentials help potential employers know that the individual has been formally educated and prepared to address safety and health issues and are ready to step into an entry-level position, according to ISHM. This credential acknowledges that the individual has a broad understanding of business and financial principles, hazard analyses, accident investigation, environmental law and other safety principles, and can apply a variety of safety tools.

Pitt State senior Zach Axton said having the ASHM certification will be beneficial to him and fellow students once they enter the workforce.

“I look forward to jumping starting my career with an ASHM certification, which shows employers that I care about continuing my education throughout my career,” Axton said.

Pitt State’s program joins degree programs from more than 12 other higher education institutions in Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin that are recognized by ISHM.

“Pittsburg State provides tremendous value to students by requiring management coursework as part of its EHS degree program,” ISHM CEO Larry Curtis said. “We look forward to contributing to Pitt State graduates’ career-readiness by offering them ASHM credentials.”

Online HR degree ranked 4th in nation

Pittsburg State University’s online Bachelor of Science Degree in Workforce Development is among the best online human resource degrees in the nation, according to the Affordable Colleges Online (AFC) website.

Pitt State’s program is ranked 4th in the nation, according to AFC. The rankings are based on a variety of factors, including student-teacher ratio, cost and financial assistance options.

The online workforce development program at Pittsburg State is an online bachelor’s degree completion program designed for busy working adults seeking a flexible and convenient way to finish their degree. Students who have completed an associate’s degree can complete the 60-hour degree program to earn their bachelor of science degree.

Pitt State’s program offers two emphasis areas: Supervision and Leadership, for those seeking mid-level management positions in all industry areas, and Human Resource, for those interested in the human resource development field.

To be eligible for the program, students must have completed a 64-hour or more associates degree of science or art and meet the 25-hour general education requirement.

Benefits of this online coursework include the ability to complete coursework in the evening after work, online collaboration with students all over the country and more control of the learning process.

This past spring, the program graduated its first students. There are approximately 40 students currently in the program.

See Affordable Colleges Online’s full ranking list at http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/degrees/human-resources-programs.

For more information about the online Bachelor of Science Degree in Workforce Development, visit http://www.pittstate.edu/office/graduate/online/bs-in-workforce-development-online.dot.
As a member of the Pittsburg State Spirit Squad, Tori DeClements is used to performing in front of large crowds. From Gorilla athletic events to national cheer competitions, the Olathe native is no stranger to crowds of thousands.

And next spring, her performance career will advance to a new level as she begins performing before an international crowd of millions.

DeClements, a senior family consumer science major at Pittsburg State, was selected to be an entertainer at Walt Disney World as part of the Disney College Program, an initiative that gives college students the opportunity to work and learn in Disney parks and resorts.

As part of the program, DeClements will live and work at Disney World in Orlando, Fla., from February to August 2016. Details of her role as an entertainer, however, are not known.

“Part of the Disney Magic is keeping specifics confidential,” she said. “All I can say is I’m a part of the entertainment.”

Stay. We then learned a few other things and then performed it for the judges. Almost everyone else got sent home after that. But again, they asked me to stay longer.”

In the end, only 10 of the 170 were selected.

“I’ve heard so many positive things about this program,” DeClements said. “I’m so excited to start.”

DeClements credited her experiences at Pitt State for preparing her for this unique opportunity.

“Performing in front of huge crowds at games and having to pick up material quickly for cheer definitely helped me out for the audition,” she said. “I also took a musical theater dance class at PSU. I got one-on-one help with my resume and received lots of helpful tips to prepare me for this wonderful opportunity.”

- Neden said the technological literacy minor will give Pitt State graduates another leg up in the job market.

“If there is a school in Joplin, for example, looking to hire a new teacher, what sets a PSU grad apart from a graduate of a different school?” Neden asked. “The answer is that we have the Kansas Technology Center and others do not. So we want to take full advantage of this great asset we have in as many ways as possible.”

Tracy Rampy, an instructor in the College of Education’s Department of Teaching and Leadership, said the goal is to enable students to do more than just talk about STEM.

“We have created an environment that provides them with relevant, hands-on learning experiences that they can transform into their future classrooms,” Rampy said. “They have the opportunity to investigate and explore activities, create rich, inquiry-driven lesson plans, and work alongside elementary students and their teachers to gain the confidence and knowledge needed to weave STEM concepts into the classroom.”