Dear colleagues and students,

As the university for Kentucky, we have ambitious, but achievable goals for the next five years: significant increases in graduation and retention rates, fostering a more diverse and inclusive campus community, expanding research and creative scholarship, and advancing subspecialty care that helps solve the Commonwealth’s biggest challenges.

We have tremendous momentum in reaching our goals – momentum made possible because of you and your colleagues in colleges, units, and departments throughout this campus. Collectively, we must build upon that momentum in the context of a challenging financial climate.

This is why we plan.

In October, the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees endorsed the institution’s five-year strategic plan, which was built with your support and input during a campus-wide process.

Over the last several months, we laid the groundwork for further success on our priorities. Our next step includes realigning parts of our campus to make greater progress on the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, with a specific focus on bolstering student success and academic excellence.

Our realignment – as part of the budget the Board will consider in June – is designed to generate nearly $6 million in savings in the coming year.

Those savings will go toward more than $40 million in budget needs for strategic investments in areas such as advising and counseling, student success initiatives, competitive compensation for faculty and staff, increased costs for utilities and other fixed costs, increases in institutional student aid, as well as offsetting the decrease in state appropriations we face in the coming year.

More specifically, our plans include:

- $1 million in savings generated by realigning areas within the Provost’s office that focus on student success and academic excellence. The realignment will include the merger of Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs to work more deliberately in support of the colleges. The new division, with a smaller administrative structure and more resources devoted to frontline, student support, will be called Student and Academic Life. The new unit will help drive our priority to increase student success by focusing on four key elements central to excellence: academic success, financial stability, belonging and engagement, and wellness.
- An initiative over the next two years to modernize and refocus Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, generating $2.6 million in savings, as well as an additional $500,000 in strategic savings within the college.
• Changes in instructional and research faculty effort in the College of Medicine, which will generate $1 million in general fund budget savings.
• Streamlining operations to generate an additional $500,000 in efficiencies through new business processes within the University’s facilities areas.

As part of this process, work is currently underway to complete a review of positions across several departments, which are projected to include reductions in force of up to 75 positions. The first phase affecting the new unit Student and Academic Life will conclude by Aug. 1. Later phases will assess other units within the Provost area.

Those impacted will be afforded a 90-day notice with full pay and benefits, and we will work with everyone in a compassionate way to help position them to move forward, either at UK or in another capacity.

The goal of every move is to increase the number of personnel directly working with and in support of students, while removing administrative layers to provide a more integrated and seamless structure.

We did not approach any of these decisions lightly, and all were made with considerable input and reflection from affected college and unit leadership.

The steps we are taking are focused entirely on aligning our resources to support those efforts and priorities we value most – our students and the work we do on behalf of the Commonwealth we serve.

Your tireless efforts have helped position the University of Kentucky as a recognized place for student success, excellence in academics, pioneering research, community engagement, and sophisticated health care. We are the state’s indispensable institution.

Because of you, we are the university for Kentucky.

Sincerely,

Tim Tracy  Eric N. Monday
Provost  Executive VP for Finance and Administration