



A Message from University of Kentucky

PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO



Dear Campus Community,

Yesterday marked the last meeting of the Board of Trustees before the end of the academic year. I reflected with the Trustees on only a few of the remarkable moments of the last year and also discussed some of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We have now administered nearly 240,000 doses of lifesaving vaccines at a makeshift clinic outside the concourse of a football stadium. Hundreds of people from across campus have come together to inject hope in our community.

A team from the UK Department of Physics and Astronomy recently contributed to a major study some herald as potentially transforming an entire field. On the UK team – among 200 scientists from 35 exemplary institutions in seven countries – was an undergraduate student from Louisville, Kentucky: Mitchell Turner.

A little more than a month ago, one of our own – Crystal Wilkinson, who grew up in Casey County – was named the state's poet laureate. Professor Wilkinson said: "I'm hoping that young girls can see they, too, can be writers, as well as all people of color."

And, at the board meeting, we honored two national championship teams – Volleyball and Rifle – led by the two best players in their sports this year, Madison Lilley and Mary Tucker.

Over the last year, I believe we have honored our values and mission more deeply and in more compelling ways than ever before in our history. That commitment to our values is so important because our state has never needed us more.

One way we reflect those values is in how we spend the resources entrusted to us. In the budget, I will propose to our board in June, we will put forward investments that will help us continue our progress. The proposed budget, if approved by the Board, will:

- Hold down costs for students, while investing more in support for their success.
- Invest in our staff at all levels with higher compensation, and particularly those on our team who most need support.

- Restore benefits such as the 10 percent retirement match, while adding additional leave options for our people, who must take care of their families in times of need.
- Establish incentives for our continued efforts in diversity, equity and inclusion and student success. We will propose investing millions each year over the next several years in our colleges – but they must commit to and make measurable progress year-after-year in these priority areas.

I will be discussing these initiatives in more specific details with you over the next several weeks. We will match money to principles and resources to priorities. Moreover, as we begin the process of a new university strategic plan this fall, I will outline a framework of priorities that I believe we must share for our future success and that will each be tied to more specific measures of performance, transparency and accountability.

All will support a central idea – how does this institution, in everything that it does, work to advance Kentucky and its future? We will focus on five areas:

- The success of our students
- Our willingness to foster greater trust, transparency and accountability with each other
- Our distinctive capacity for innovation and discovery
- The necessity of taking care of our people
- Our fundamental faith in the idea that we are many people, but one community

These areas are based squarely on the themes I have heard repeatedly in more than 100 conversations with members of this community over the last two months as part of a recent listening tour.

I am amazed by the devotion of so many, even as I know our people are tired. We've all dealt with loss and anxiety. And we are, at times, weary of challenge. We all need a break – time to reflect, renew and be close to those we love. Yet there is also a fierce sense of urgency in our community that we must meet the challenges before us. Our mission won't change, but some of the ways we meet it will.

We are a community unlike any other, one inextricably bound to the state we were created to serve and dedicated to advance. Thank you all you do to make our community's progress possible.

Eli Capilouto
President