

# PR 1

Office of the President  
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1. UK Raises Starting Pay, Makes Benefit Changes to Better Serve Workforce, Commonwealth

A comprehensive package of changes designed to better support employees, increase their financial well-being and expand their capacity to care for their families away from the workplace was announced December 19. Changes include: an increase of the starting wage beginning July 1, 2020; staff employees' ability to use up to 12 weeks of accrued sick time for parental leave for childbirth, adoption, or foster care; use of up to two sick days per year by staff members for personal well-being; and, pending Board of Trustees approval, requiring all new eligible employees to participate in the UK matching retirement savings plan immediately.

2. \$24 Million Partnership to Advance Next Generation Manufacturing Technologies in Kentucky

The Kentucky National Science Foundation's Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) has awarded UK, the University of Louisville, and six other institutions across the state a five-year, \$24 million grant to support the fundamental science needed to advance next generation manufacturing technologies, flexible electronics, and robotics. The grant will also support the development of a greater science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-literate workforce. The project will harness the collective research power of 40 multidisciplinary researchers from the eight Kentucky universities and colleges.

3. UK Awarded \$3 Million to Study Influences on Using Opioid Medications in Criminal Justice Setting

UK received \$3 million from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and National Institute on General Medical Sciences to fund new opioid-related research in the criminal justice system. Known as the *Geographic Variation in Addiction Treatment* study, the five-year project is led by Carrie Oser, professor of sociology in the UK College of Arts and Sciences. Oser and her colleagues will focus on the factors that influence a person's decision to use one of the three FDA-approved medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder – methadone, buprenorphine, and extended-release naltrexone.

4. New CAER Grant Seeks to Turn Coal Into Carbon Fiber

The UK Center for Applied Energy Research (CAER) has received a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) grant to transform coal tar pitch into high-value carbon fiber for use in aircraft, automobiles, sporting goods, and other high-performance materials. The \$1.8 million project includes DOE funding and industry and university cost-share. CAER researchers and partners will be converting coal tar — a byproduct from coke production for the steel industry — into mesophase pitch, a liquid crystal, which can then be spun and thermally converted to carbon fiber.

5. New \$1.2 Million Grant Prepares Early Childhood Educators, Applied Behavior Analysts

The UK College of Education has received a \$1.2 million grant to uniquely prepare school personnel who are in high demand — preschool teachers and applied behavior analysts. The grant will cover tuition for two cohorts of master's students in the college's Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education and Applied Behavior Analysis programs in the Department of Early Childhood, Special Education, and Rehabilitation Counseling.

6. More Than \$100,000 Raised at Annual Feast on Equality Benefit

The UK Office of LGBTQ\* Resources hosted its annual Feast on Equality benefit December 6, 2019. The event was sponsored by more than 35 businesses and UK entities, including Ketel One as the presenting platinum sponsor. Through the event, the Office of LGBTQ\* Resources raised more than \$100,000 that will be used to fund student scholarships, support a peer advocate and ambassador program, augment inclusive health care initiatives, and enhance outreach and community building initiatives.

7. Kentucky Health Collaborative Hospitals Join Forces to Decrease Lung Cancer Mortality Rates in Kentucky

Kentucky Health Collaborative (KHC) members, including UK HealthCare, are joining forces to reduce lung cancer deaths in Kentucky. As the KHC's first collaborative effort to improve health outcomes in the Commonwealth, it has launched a Lung Cancer Screening, Detection, and Treatment Initiative with objectives to diagnose more lung cancer cases in earlier stages of disease, improve access and coordination of treatment, and decrease Kentucky's lung cancer mortality rates. Key components consist of screening and early detection, treatment and retention, improving areas of health care policy, data gathering, and prevention and awareness.

8. KGS to Study Deep Unconventional Oil and Gas Potential With U.S. Department of Energy Grant

The Kentucky Geological Survey (KGS) at UK recently began work on a major research project to investigate the unconventional oil and gas potential of the Rogersville Shale formation in Eastern Kentucky and other related formations. The multistage project, primarily funded by the U.S. Department of Energy with cost-share contributions from KGS and its partners, will have a total budget of \$7.4 million.

9. UK Family Center Utilizing Pilot Program to Better Serve Clients

Earlier this year, the UK Family Center, served by the Couple and Family Therapy Program in the Department of Family Sciences in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, was selected as one of only two marriage and family therapy program clinics nationally for a pilot program enabling clinicians to administer online psychological assessments to clients.

10. UK is Home to New Center for Economic Analysis for Rural Health

The newly formed Center for Economic Analysis for Rural Health has found a home in the UK College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment. Alison Davis, agricultural economics professor and director of the college's Community Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky, will lead the national center. The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy at the Health Resources and Services Administration is funding the new program with a three-year, renewable grant.

11. UK College of Pharmacy Researchers Uncover New Biomarker for Cardiovascular Disease

A new biomarker, uncovered by researchers in the UK College of Pharmacy, could change cardiovascular care for patients with high risk of disease. Pharmacy graduate students David Henson and David Nardo, PharmD worked in the lab of Vincent Venditto to uncover potential new indicators of heart disease. Referred to as biomarkers, these indicators can be a sign that a patient is at risk for cardiovascular issues.

12. Tri-Alpha Honor Society Inducts 1st Class on UK's Campus

In an inaugural ceremony in November, UK inducted 51 members into the Alpha Alpha Honor Society, recognizing the accomplishments of high-achieving first-generation students, alumni, staff, and faculty. The University established the chapter of the Tri-Alpha Honor Society as a way to acknowledge high-achieving, and often resilient, first-generation students who bring a diverse set of ideas and backgrounds to UK.

13. Kentucky Law Schools Partner to Introduce HBCU Undergraduates to Law School

The Commonwealth of Kentucky's three law schools, including the UK Rosenberg College of Law, partnered to host a joint initiative to diversify the legal profession. The "Become the Change: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Law School Preview" program was developed to expose diverse students to the legal profession and provide networking opportunities and pertinent information about excelling in the application process. The program for diverse undergraduate students, specifically those from HBCUs, was held at the Rosenberg College of Law.

14. UK Working to Combat Martin County Obesity Rates

UK personnel are working to implement environmental changes to help lower the obesity rates of residents in the state's most obese county. Faculty and staff with the UK College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment are collaborating with multiple community leaders in Martin County to improve the county's built environment infrastructure, increase food accessibility, and encourage healthier eating and shopping. The project is the result of a five-year, \$2.5 million grant UK Family and Consumer Sciences Extension received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

15. Faculty and Staff Achievements

Mary Chandler Bolin (UK Counseling Center) was awarded the 2019 Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors Lifetime Achievement Award.

Subbarao Bondada (College of Medicine and Markey Cancer Center) has been named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dong Han (College of Medicine) was named 2019 Psychologist of the Year.

Bobi Ivanov (College of Communication and Information) and Kimberly Parker (College of Communication and Information) have been selected to participate in the Fulbright Scholars Program for the 2019-20 academic year.

Kunlei Liu (College of Engineering) has been named a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors.

Tim Mullett (Markey Cancer Center) was named chair-elect of the Commission on Cancer, a program of the American College of Surgeons.

Susan Odom (College of Arts and Sciences) is the recipient of the Women Chemists Committee's "Rising Star" award.

UK's Opioid Stewardship team was awarded the Best Practices Award from the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists.

UK Philanthropy and the UK Alumni Association received 12 awards from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Kentucky Conference.

Ellen Riggle (College of Arts and Sciences) has been named a Fellow of the American Psychological Association.

Sue Roberts (College of Arts and Sciences) has been named a fellow of the American Association of Geographers.

Travis Scheadler (College of Education) was selected as the first junior associate editor for the Journal for Advancing Sport Psychology Research.

Amy Murrell Taylor (UK College of Arts and Sciences) was awarded the prestigious Frederick Douglass Book Prize for the best book published in English on slavery, resistance, or abolition.

John Thelin (College of Education) was recognized by Forbes Magazine for writing one of the 10 best books of the year on higher education.

Nancy Webb (College of Pharmacy) has been honored by the American Heart Association with the Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology Distinguished Achievement Award.

## 16. Student Achievements

Blake Best (Gatton College of Business and Economics of Duluth, Georgia) was named to the College Sports Information Directors of Academic All-America first team.

The UK Graduate Student Congress was named the National Member of the Year and the Midwest Regional Member of the Year by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Student Associations.

Angela Jones (College of Arts and Sciences of Attica, New York) was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship from the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation.

Natalie Malone, (College of Education of Smiths Grove, Kentucky) finished in first place at the Three Minute Thesis competition in the traditional 3MT track.

Kameron White McDaniel (College of Education of Louisville) finished in first place at the Three Minute Thesis competition in the Pre-3MT track.

Landon Young (College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment of Lexington) was voted captain of the 2019 Allstate American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Good Works Team.

## 17. Alumni Achievements

Zhiqiang An (College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment), Patrick Henderson (College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment), Sarah Tabb Henry (College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment) and the late Dorothea Smith Oatts (College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment) were inducted into the UK College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment Hall of Distinguished Alumni.

Kris Deskins (College of Fine Arts) was honored for her costume designs on "Cemetery Tales: A Tale of Two Sisters" at the Southern Shorts Awards, Asian Cinematography Awards, IndieX Film Festival, South Film & Arts Academy Film Festival in Chile, and The Queen Palm International Film Festival.

Peggy Noe Stevens (College of Communication and Information) was inducted into the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame.