



Transforming Tomorrow: The University of Kentucky's Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Notable Impact and Near-term Continuing Efforts

Undergraduate Student Success

Be the University of choice for aspiring undergraduate students, within the Commonwealth and beyond, seeking a transformational education that promotes self-discovery, experiential learning, and life-long achievement.

Recent Impact:

- Unmet financial need¹ is a key barrier to student success. To address this challenge, the University launched the UK LEADS program (Leveraging Economic Affordability for Developing Success).
 - The program began with a pilot project of 178 freshman in fall 2016 with high unmet financial need. Pilot participants received one-time financial grants, which improved their predicted first-year retention rate by approximately 18 percentage points.
 - Bolstered by an additional \$2 million in support from donors, the University expanded the program to include 365 freshmen in fall 2017 with high unmet financial need. As a result, their predicted first-year retention improved by approximately 17 percentage points.
 - As an additional UK LEADS component, approximately 1,500 freshmen in fall 2017 were offered a Kentucky Futures award based on high levels of academic preparation and unmet financial need.
- Through these combined efforts, 2017-18 freshmen from Kentucky were projected to have their average unmet need decline by 12 percentage points from the previous year. As a result, unmet need for this cohort is at the lowest level since 2013.
- This program has been a primary driver of a nearly three-percentage-point improvement in second fall retention in two years.

Continuing Effort:

- The Office of the Provost merged the divisions of Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs to create Student and Academic Life (SAL). The change is leading to additional direct student support and more seamless and integrated advising and student support services.
- The first-year student experience is critical to long-term student success. To that end, SAL, along with more than 200 faculty, staff, and students, is completing a redesign of the first-year experience, known as Wildcat Foundations, to better support students during their first year.
- To address all dimensions of student success and wellness, the University invested in additional counseling and testing staff, adding eight new counselors over a two-year period.
- The new Student Services Center is providing high-touch support to student populations at higher risk of not completing their degrees (first generation, off-campus, and first-year transitions).

¹ Unmet financial need is the cost of attendance minus a family's expected contribution and earned financial aid.

Graduate Education

Strengthen the quality and distinctiveness of our graduate programs to transform our students into accomplished scholars and professionals who contribute to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world through their research and discovery, creative endeavors, teaching, and service.

Recent Impact:

- The Graduate School developed the New Graduate Student Leaders Conference and GradDegree+ program to develop leadership and transferrable skills for graduate students entering multiple fields and career paths.
- To meet interest in a number of high-demand fields, the University approved several new graduate programs in 2017-18:
 - Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Secondary Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education
 - Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Curatorial Studies
 - Master of Science (MS) in Urban and Environmental Design
 - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Forestry and Natural Resources

Continuing Effort:

- Following its initial analysis and recommendations, the Provost's Blue-Ribbon Panel on Graduate Education will continue its work as the University reimagines graduate education in a way that enhances the fundamental goals of graduate education, further supports graduate student success, and considers new ways to prepare graduate students for a career in the academic, public, and private sectors.

Diversity and Inclusivity

Enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our University community through recruitment, promotion, and retention of an increasingly diverse population of faculty, administrators, staff, and students, and by implementing initiatives that provide rich diversity-related experiences for all, to help ensure their success in an interconnected world.

Recent Impact:

- Acknowledging the University's priorities around diversity and inclusivity, UK was recognized as a "Diversity Champion" for the second year in a row by INSIGHT into Diversity Magazine.
- UK was ranked among the top 25 campuses in the nation for LGBTQ* inclusion and safety, receiving five out of five stars for overall campus climate from Campus Pride Index, a national benchmarking tool for colleges and universities.
- The UK Police Department created a liaison position dedicated to fostering relationships within the LGBTQ* community.
- To improve diverse and inclusive campus programming, the University awarded 17 Inclusive Excellence Program Grants during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Continuing Effort:

- To advance progress on the University's diverse and inclusive hiring targets in the Strategic Plan, the Office of the Provost doubled the funding allocated for hiring underrepresented minority faculty for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.
- The University's campus-wide Unconscious Bias Training is continuing for all campus members.
- This fall, internationally-acclaimed artist Karyn Olivier completed an installation in Memorial Hall, "Witness," to contextualize the O'Hanlon mural. The University's work will continue as these two installations spark further campus conversation about place, belonging, and our history.

Research and Scholarship

Expand our scholarship, creative endeavors, and research across the full range of disciplines to focus on the most important challenges of the Commonwealth, our nation, and the world.

Recent Impact:

- Extramural grants and contracts awarded to UK investigators increased by 17 percent (\$48.7 million) since the start of the Strategic Plan. The compound growth rate for federal peer-reviewed grants and contracts is 10.8 percent during the same period. These awards represent more than 1,500 sponsored projects, 759 principal investigators, and more than 565 individual sponsors.
- The Markey Cancer Center earned a \$10.8-million renewal of its designation as a National Cancer Institute-designated (NCI) Center, the only cancer center in Kentucky with this designation.
- UK was awarded a prestigious \$3.7 million grant from the American Heart Association to create a center, within a national network, focused on the impact of gender on the development and treatment of aortic diseases.

Continuing Effort:

- The Office of Research identified Strategic Investment Funds for targeted growth in six research priority areas (energy, neuroscience, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, obesity/diabetes, and substance abuse) critical to Kentucky. These areas address challenges in the Commonwealth, make a meaningful economic impact, and include researchers across a wide range of disciplines.
- The institution held minor and major research equipment competitions that contributed to the purchase of more than \$5.7 million in cutting-edge research equipment across campus to enhance high-tech capabilities within core facilities that service investigators across the institution, and to retain faculty through replacement and modernization of aging equipment.
- The new \$265-million Multidisciplinary Research Building will open in September. The building was designed with Kentucky's future in mind, and will make efficient use of space and resources to address cardiovascular disease, obesity/diabetes, cancer, and substance abuse. The new facility, its purpose, and the resources it provides will be essential in recruiting new faculty in these key areas.

Outreach and Community Engagement

Leverage leading-edge technology, scholarship, and research in innovative ways to advance the public good and to foster the development of citizen-scholars.

Recent Impact:

- The University created the Civic Engagement Digital Badge Program to document student competencies in service engagement, civic engagement, and active citizenship. Student community engagement supports student success and prepares students to be active and engaged citizens.
- More than 3,000 outreach partnerships and more than 2,000 community engagement partnerships exist across the UK campus, further tying Kentucky's flagship university to its host city and the state it serves.

Continuing Effort:

- Approximately 20 percent of UK faculty are currently teaching community-based courses that emphasize UK's land grant mission and hands-on service learning.
- Students, and through them, the community, enjoy more than 300 opportunities to participate in community engagement courses.