

# UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jay Blanton, Chief Communications Officer



# **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSE**

### Viral Video: Unprecedented Response

- Video posted by UK student was quickly shared by millions of people
- Led to unprecedented volume of demands and questions flooding UK social media, email accounts and phones across campus
  - UK's social media accounts garnered more than **9 million impressions** (an increase of 351%) and 682,645 engagements (an increase of 1189%) from Nov. 6-12
- News spread to national and international media
- Supported partners across campus in answering questions, addressing concerns and sharing accurate information

### Principles

Guiding principles serve as the north star for operational and communication decisions.

- We will preserve the mission we've held for more than 150 years.
- The health, safety and well-being of our campus community will always be top priorities.
- We will continue, as a priority, a return to safe and normal operations.
- We must position UK to thrive as we emerge from this crisis.
- At each step, we pledge to communicate with the campus clearly and transparently.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSE**

### **Actions**

- Activated crisis communications team at 8:30 a.m. Nov. 6; provided a statement that morning through social media, emails, media statements page
- Halted other communications, including enrollment ads, during heat of crisis
- Provided talking points to campus communicators and leaders across campus
- Kept campus informed through:
  - Four email messages from President Capilouto sent to all students, faculty, staff
  - Email from Vice President for Student Success Kirsten Turner to all students
  - Email from Provost Robert DiPaola to all faculty
- Shared campus messages to broader audiences on social media
- Monitored and responded to hundreds of questions via social media, email and phone calls
- Sent news releases and provided accurate information to dozens of local, state and national media

### Communication

- We condemn the behavior and will not tolerate it under any circumstance.
- We defeat hate and ignorance, racism and violence, by calling it what it is and confronting it where it exists. We defeat bad and prejudiced ideas with better and more hopeful ones.
- The safety and well-being of our community is our top priority.
- The university took swift and decisive action against the perpetrator while following essential processes.
- Resources are available for students in the aftermath of the racist assault, including virtual and in-person mental health support.
- Moving forward: Asking our campus to recommit to creating a community of belonging for everyone and providing more updates on continued and new DEI efforts.

### Transparency

- Clear, consistent, frequent communication on all platforms reaching campus, local, state, national audiences.
- Prioritized communicating with our campus community first, before external stakeholders and media.
- Information on conduct process shared with community and media.
- Ensuring up-to-date information was readily accessible online for community and media, including answers to frequently asked questions.

# QUESTIONS

