

Office of the President
February 19, 2021

1. UK Plays Major Role in COVID-19 Vaccinations in Kentucky

UK HealthCare began providing centralized COVID-19 vaccinations January 20, 2021, at a rate of about 250 people per hour, six days per week. The University of Kentucky, UK HealthCare and UK Athletics partnered to offer the public vaccination clinic at Kroger Field. The clinic is following the state's guidelines of vaccinating people based on category of need, and began with people over 70, K-12 Fayette County school personnel, first responders and health care providers in the area. UK HealthCare mobilized hundreds of volunteers including students and staff from the colleges of Pharmacy and Nursing to assist with making the clinic run smoothly. The Kroger Field Blue Lot has also been in use for public COVID-19 testing provided by UK partner Wild Health.

2. UK HealthCare Providers Received Vaccine in December

The Food and Drug Administration approved an emergency use authorization Dec. 11, 2020, for the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, making it the first-ever approved vaccine ready to administer in the fight against the virus. After receiving the Pfizer vaccine shipment December 15 at UK Chandler Hospital, five emergency department employees were the first to receive the vaccine about four hours later. In approximately a week, nearly 2,000 front-line health care workers who either take care of COVID-19 patients or who are exposed to patients being ruled out for the virus, received the first dose of the two-dose vaccine. UK HealthCare's allotment of the vaccine was among nearly 12,000 doses available in the first rollout for Kentucky's health care workers in December.

3. COVID-19 Testing of Students Increases in Spring Semester

The university instituted COVID-19 entry testing for students between January 14 and 30. Three sites were available at Kroger Field, K-Lair and the Blue Box Theater in the Gatton Student Center. UK also is requiring ongoing maintenance testing of students throughout the semester as well as continuing wastewater testing of residence halls and testing of specific subpopulations when data indicates a higher prevalence of the virus. Students and employees continue to complete a daily symptom screening and UK Health Corps continues to provide holistic support with contact tracers, academic coordinators and wellness connectors seven days a week.

4. Chimene Ntakarutimana is UK's Sixth Marshall Scholar

Chimene Ntakarutimana, 2020 psychology, sociology and Lewis Honors College graduate, was named a 2021 Marshall Scholar on December 7. The prestigious scholarship will finance two years of graduate study for her at an institution of her choice in the United Kingdom. Ntakarutimana is the sixth UK student to receive the honor from the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission. The daughter of Charlotte Habuhazi and Desire Ntakarutimana, of Lexington, Ntakarutimana will use her Marshall Scholarship to pursue two master's degrees. She will attend the University College London for her graduate study in the fields of global migration and gender, society, and representation. As part of the two dissertations she will need to complete, she would like to examine gender-based violence in times of atrocity.

5. Swimmer Asia Seidt Became UK's First NCAA Woman of the Year

High-achieving University of Kentucky alumna swimmer Asia Seidt, who made headlines throughout the fall, reached the pinnacle of her athletic career November 13, 2020, when she was named the 2020 NCAA Woman of the Year. The prestigious honor marked UK Athletics' first NCAA Woman of the Year winner. Of all swimmers and divers — male or female — who have ever come through the Kentucky swimming and diving program, Seidt holds the most records. The Louisville native earned more All-America honors, NCAA Championship podium finishes, Southeastern Conference Championship medals and All-SEC First Team selections than any UK swimmer or diver, man or woman, who came before her. Meanwhile, Seidt maintained a 4.0 cumulative grade-point average and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology in May 2020. She is currently attending UK's physical therapy graduate program.

6. UK HealthCare's eCAT ICU is First Program of its Kind in Kentucky

Miles from UK HealthCare's intensive care units (ICUs), in a room with as many computer monitors as a NASA command center, critical care nurses examine patients' vital signs, review lab results and assist care teams with urgent assessments. UK HealthCare's Enhanced Care through Advanced Technology Intensive Care Unit (eCAT ICU) is the only program of its kind in Kentucky. UK HealthCare and Royal Philips, a global leader in health technology, created the clinical command center for tele-critical care. Using Philips' acute telehealth platform, eCareManager, analytics and artificial intelligence are used to synthesize patient data and deliver insights to support care. Although they are miles from their patients, UK HealthCare's eCAT ICU team uses advanced surveillance technology to monitor patients and interpret clinical algorithms and protocols that can detect changes in a patient's status.

7. UK Study Could Potentially Lead to Reduced Progression of Alzheimer's

More than 5.7 million Americans live with Alzheimer's disease, and with no known cure that number is projected to triple by 2050. Florin Despa, a professor with UK's

Department of Pharmacology and Nutritional Sciences, says the mechanisms underlying neurodegenerative diseases are largely unknown and effective therapies are lacking. Numerous studies are ongoing worldwide to solve the mystery. One of those studies by UK researchers, including Despa, was recently published in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical Interventions*. Despa says that a major scientific goal is to understand whether the same factors that are involved in age-related metabolic disorders such as type-2 diabetes may also play a role in the development and progression of cognitive decline and dementia. He says that is a goal because those factors can be used as therapeutic targets to improve or possibly reverse processes underlying cognitive impairment. Researchers believe their newly published study found a potential alternative approach to reduce the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

8. UK HealthCare's Gill Heart & Vascular Institute Network Now in Paducah

UK HealthCare and Mercy Health – Lourdes Hospital announced a new collaboration to expand cardiovascular services in the Paducah area. As the first hospital in far Western Kentucky to join the UK Gill Heart & Vascular Institute's Gill Affiliate Network, Mercy Health – Lourdes Hospital now offers area residents the benefit of UK HealthCare physicians' expertise in subspecialty cardiovascular services.

9. UK Study Revealed "Wasp Dope" Use in Appalachian Kentucky

Data from part of the \$5.5 million CARE2HOPE project co-led by researcher April Young revealed the use of a new substance known as "wasp dope" or "hot shots" that has appeared in the Appalachian region of Kentucky. Wasp dope is a crystalline substance created by electrifying pyrethroid-containing substances — such as wasp sprays — that may give users a methamphetamine-like "rush." Young said reports have highlighted the emergence of this new drug as an issue of concern, and this is the first epidemiological study to her knowledge describing wasp dope use in the U.S. Young is an associate professor of epidemiology in the UK College of Public Health and faculty member of UK's Center on Drug and Alcohol Research.

10. UK Leads Effort to Develop Next-gen Batteries, Energy Storage

Chad Risko, an associate professor of chemistry and affiliated faculty researcher at UK's Center for Applied Energy Research, is leading a multidisciplinary research effort aimed at accelerating the development of safe and reliable energy storage. The nearly \$4 million, four-year project seeks to create new domain knowledge in materials science for the creation of next-generation batteries. The project is being funded by the National Science Foundation-sponsored Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Risko said the research will look at various areas such as the need for lighter, safer and longer-lasting batteries for electric and hybrid vehicles and electronics. It will also look at reliable ways to store energy coming from various sources such as wind, solar, hydro and thermal.

11. CAER Program to Create High-performance Concrete for U.S. Military

A new Center for Applied Energy Research (CAER) project seeks to create new, high-performance cements and concretes that will aid United States military operations both domestically and abroad. Titled “High Performance Cementitious Materials to Advance Expedient Repairs and Structural Hardening Priorities,” this \$2.5 million program is funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineer Research and Development Center. Research program manager Bob Jewell says deployment of American military in areas with heavily damaged, or nonexistent infrastructure means that bridges, runways, roadways and hardened structures often need to be built or repaired very quickly. The CAER project seeks to solve this issue through the development of new high-strength, high-bond cements and concretes that are simple to deploy and use.

12. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebrated With Pandemic Changes in Place

The University of Kentucky, along with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government and other community sponsors kicked off the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday celebration with the annual Freedom March January 19. COVID-19 health and safety protocols included wearing masks and physically distancing, and there were no early indoor line-ups at the Central Bank Center (formerly Lexington Convention Center). Also, the traditional commemorative program following the march was not held this year. Instead, the MLK Day planning committee partnered with Lexington-born filmmaker Joan Brannon to create the documentary, “Fire and Heart: A Blueprint for Liberation.” The 60-minute film is a three-segment journey through the experience of the African American social justice movement.

13. Inaugural Cornerstone Community Innovation Partner Announced

A collaboration of three Lexington-area nonprofits, led by Believing in Forever, has been selected as the inaugural Cornerstone Community Innovation Partner. Believing in Forever, in partnership with Black Soil and Operation Making a Change, will have an ongoing presence at The Cornerstone, UK’s newest facility, designed to foster community, creativity, technology, entrepreneurship and equitable economic development. The partnership will facilitate innovative programming as well as increased community engagement with students and faculty. These three nonprofits — collectively known as the Campus Community Connection — will focus on inequality, injustices and communities of color in Lexington. The Campus Community Connection plans to address three major community needs, including providing places for youth to express themselves, aiding those experiencing food insecurities and offering mentorship for youth.

14. Book by Associate Professor Crystal Wilkinson Chosen for 2021 Kentucky Reads

Author Crystal Wilkinson's novel "The Birds of Opulence" was selected by Kentucky Humanities for the 2021 Kentucky Reads. Wilkinson is an associate professor in the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences, and her book was published by University Press of Kentucky, which is housed at UK. As the Kentucky Reads choice this year, the novel will be at the center of statewide conversations on the dynamics of family and community, the strength of women, and stigmas surrounding mental illness. Kentucky Reads will offer 25 scholar-led discussions of "The Birds of Opulence" to community organizations throughout the Commonwealth. This is Wilkinson's first novel, and it centers on several generations of women in the bucolic Southern Black township of Opulence as they live with and sometimes surrender to madness.

15. Martin School and Henry Clay Center Formed Affiliation

UK's James W. Martin School of Public Policy and Administration and the Henry Clay Center have established a formal affiliation to aid in the advancement of public policy education and bipartisan engagement. As a result of the new alliance, UK will serve as the host campus for the center's flagship college and high school student congresses, which will receive academic curriculum support from the Martin School. The Clay Center will now be physically based in the Martin School. The center has launched a new monthly digital series, "The Craft of Compromise," where guest speakers will discuss the skills and values needed to solve problems in today's political climate.

16. Postcards of Encouragement Sent to Freshmen During Semester Break

Looking to lift the spirits of first-year students returning to campus for the Spring 2021 semester, UK staff and faculty volunteers from across campus participated in a postcard-writing campaign to spread messages of positivity and encouragement after what was an unprecedented Fall 2020 semester. The effort, organized by the Office for Student Success and Institutional Research, Analytics and Decision Support, took place during the holiday season. Sarah Ballard, executive director of the First-Year Experience and Early Outreach Programs, said this is a personalized way of connecting with students on an individual level to let them know that UK cares and that they matter to the university community.

17. UK Police Toy Drive for KCH Fills Four Police Cruisers

On December 18, 2020, UK Police delivered four police cruisers full of new toys and gift items to Kentucky Children's Hospital (KCH) for the patients there. During the month of December, the police department held its fourth annual toy drive called "Cram the Cruiser," resulting in the largest number of donations to date from the campus and Lexington communities.

18. Faculty and Staff Achievements

William Andrews (Kentucky Geological Survey) was elected president-elect of the Kentucky Association of Mapping Professionals for 2021.

Kathy Grzech (Proposal Development Office) received the 2020 Research Staff Excellence Award.

Julian Vasquez Heilig (College of Education) was named a member of the steering committee for Education Deans for Justice and Equity, an alliance of deans of colleges and schools of education across the country.

Candice Hargons (College of Education) was elected to the Board of Directors for the American Psychological Association.

Debra Harley (College of Education) received the 2020 Outstanding Senator Award by the UK University Senate.

Kentucky Office of Rural Health received the MediStar Excellence in Education Award.

Angela Knapp (Office of Sponsored Projects) received the 2020 Research Staff Excellence Award.

Robert G. Lawson (Rosenberg College of Law) was awarded the 2020 UK Libraries Medallion for Intellectual Achievement.

Fadyia Lowe (University Health Service) is the staff winner of the 2020 Sarah Bennett Holmes Award.

Deborah Reed (colleges of Nursing and Agriculture, Food and Environment) is the faculty winner of the 2020 Sarah Bennett Holmes Award.

Ernie Scott (Kentucky Office of Rural Health) received the 2020 Dan Martin Award for lifetime contribution to rural health in Kentucky.

UK HealthCare's neonatal intensive care unit providers and staff were recognized for their outstanding performance in the Vermont Oxford Network, a nonprofit voluntary collaboration of health care professionals with a mission to improve the quality, safety and value of care for newborn infants.

Nathan Vanderford (College of Medicine) received the 2020 Excellence in Science Education and Outreach Award from the Kentucky Academy of Science.

Sherali Zeadally (College of Communication and Information) was named to Clarivate's annual list of Highly Cited Researchers, which recognizes the world's most influential researchers of the past decade.

19. Student Achievements

Rasheed Flowers (Education), of Monee, Illinois, was selected to participate in the University Council for Education Administration's Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Network.

Sara Green (Education), of Ashland, Kentucky, took the first place prize in UK GradResearch Live's 3-Minute Thesis competition for early-stage research.

Lauren Hudson (Neuroscience), of Villa Hills, Kentucky, received the first place award in Science Education at the Kentucky Academy of Science 2020 Annual Meeting.

Oscar Istas (Biology), of Nolensville, Tennessee, won first place honors in UK's 5-Minute Fast Track Research Oral Competition.

Jonghee Lee-Caldararo (Geography), of Seoul, South Korea, took the first place prize in UK GradResearch Live's 3-Minute Thesis competition for late-stage research.

Steven McBride (Plant and Soil Science), of Salem, Virginia, took the first place prize in UK GradResearch Live's 3-Minute Thesis competition for postdoctoral research.

Emily Moseley (Social Work/Human Development Institute), of Lexington, Kentucky, received the Anne Rudigier Award at the 2020 Association of University Centers on Disabilities Conference.

Tamara Vest (Social Work), of Nicholasville, Kentucky, was UK's December 2020 Commencement speaker.