

# PR 1

Office of the President  
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1. UK Scientists Assemble Genome That May Hold Key to Human Regeneration

On January 24, scientists at the University of Kentucky announced they have assembled the genome of the axolotl, a salamander known for its ability to regenerate body parts. Randal Voss, a professor in the UK Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Research Center, and Jeramiah Smith, an associate professor in the UK Department of Biology, are co-principal investigators on the project that may one day lead to human therapies in applications such as spinal cord injury, stroke, joint repair, and more.

2. Hadeel Abdallah Named Prestigious Rhodes Scholar

Political science and Arabic and Islamic studies senior Hadeel Abdallah, of Lexington, was named a recipient of the highly prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. She is one of 32 American women and men selected as Rhodes Scholars representing the United States. Abdallah is the first female from the University and the 10th UK student named a Rhodes Scholar, the last being selected in 1955. Rhodes Scholars are chosen not only for their outstanding scholarly achievements, but for their character, commitment to others and to the common good, and for their leadership potential in whatever domains their careers may lead. UK remains home to the largest number of Rhodes Scholars from institutions in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

3. UK Named to Forbes 2019 Best Employer for Diversity List

The University of Kentucky is among the Best Employers for Diversity in the country, according to a 2019 ranking from Forbes magazine. UK ranked 41st on the list and is the only Southeastern Conference school to be included. The list, among other factors, recognizes employers who elevate their commitment to attracting and developing diverse talent and acknowledge diversity as an imperative pillar of success. The University ranked best in direct recommendations surrounding the topics of age, gender equality, ethnicity, disability and LGBTQ\* inclusion, and the existence of positions and public initiatives responsible for diversity.

4. College of Dentistry Awarded \$1 Million Grant to Reduce Oral Cancer

A \$1 million grant from the United Health Foundation will enable the University of Kentucky's College of Dentistry (UKCD) to launch its "Eradicate Oral Cancer in Eastern Kentucky" project. The three-year project will raise public awareness of the symptoms of oral cancer and its links to heavy alcohol and tobacco use, provide approximately 1,000 oral cancer screenings at local health departments, and help connect patients who need additional care to cancer specialists in Lexington. The grant was awarded to tackle the high prevalence of oral cancer in Harlan, Letcher, and Pike

counties in Eastern Kentucky, as well as address the lack of access to local health care providers who specialize in oral cancer treatment. The three-year grant allows UKCD to lead an integrated outreach and care program delivered to local residents through their local health departments.

5. Markey Receives ACS Grant to Help Patients Overcome Transportation Barriers

On December 12, the Markey Cancer Center was awarded a new transportation grant from the American Cancer Society (ACS). The funds will be used to address the transportation needs of cancer patients traveling to the UK Markey Cancer Center for treatment. An estimated 25,990 Kentucky residents will learn they have cancer this year and getting to their scheduled treatment may be one of their greatest roadblocks. To help patients get the critical care they need, ACS community transportation grants are awarded at a local level to health systems, treatment centers, and community organizations. The grants are available in select communities through an application process and focus on addressing unmet transportation needs of cancer patients, particularly vulnerable populations experiencing an unequal burden of cancer.

6. UK Again Named Top Oncology Program by Becker's Hospital Review

The Albert B. Chandler Hospital is again one of the nation's "100 Hospitals and Health Systems with Great Oncology Programs" according to Becker's Hospital Review. The UK Markey Cancer Center, whose clinical programs are integrated with UK Chandler Hospital, recently received a five-year renewal of its National Cancer Institute cancer center designation. According to the health care industry trade publication, organizations included on the 2018 list are at the forefront of cancer treatment and research, and the hospitals have invested in growing oncology departments and regional cancer centers to provide an important service to patients locally and nationally.

7. Partnership to Use Data-Driven Approach to Curb Opioid Crisis

A new partnership between the University of Kentucky College of Public Health, the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, UK College of Pharmacy, the UK Institute for Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Policy, and UK HealthCare will use data analytics for "Action Research to Reduce Opioid Supply and Demand." The work will be supported by a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The project will use data from the Kentucky All Schedule Prescription Electronic Reporting linked with UK HealthCare patient records. UK HealthCare will develop and pilot targeted interventions. A multidisciplinary team of UK HealthCare physicians including Phillip Chang, Lowell Anthony, Kristy Deep, Michael Harned, Michael Kindred, and Lindsey Ragsdale will collaborate with additional specialists to develop diagnosis-specific educational materials to address opioid pain management options post-discharge, non-opioid pain management alternatives, and information on safe opioid use, storage, and disposal.

8. College of Pharmacy Announces Partnership with Kentucky State University

The University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy has launched a new partnership with Kentucky State University (KSU), the premier Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) of Kentucky. The partnership allows students to earn both a bachelor's degree and a Doctor of

Pharmacy degree in an accelerated time frame. The innovative 3+4 program allows participating students to count their first year of pharmacy school as their final year of undergraduate school. Students will earn a Bachelor of Arts in chemistry from KSU upon completion of their first year at UK College of Pharmacy and after finishing a three-year pre-pharmacy sequence of courses at KSU.

9. \$3.4 Million Grant Employs UK, UL to Support Children with Hearing Loss

Building on their history of community-engaged research, University of Kentucky social worker and public health researcher Christina Studts and otolaryngologist Dr. Matt Bush have received a five-year, \$3.4 million Research Program (R01) grant from the National Institutes of Health, Deafness, and Other Communication Disorders to adapt and deliver an evidence-based parenting program for families of young children with hearing loss. The team will test the program at 10 state-funded hearing health offices in Kentucky, led by trained “coaches” who are themselves parents of deaf and hard of hearing children. Families who participate in the program will receive a strengths-based assessment and up to six parent coaching sessions annually for three years.

10. College of Engineering Embarks on Growth Plan for Commonwealth and Beyond

Given new tools and technology, society is calling upon engineers to solve the world's most complex problems. The College of Engineering is answering that call by embarking on a strategy for growth — a plan to improve Kentucky industries and the lives of the citizens they serve. More than 3,900 students, undergraduate and graduate, are currently enrolled in the college, but the goal is to reach 6,000 by 2025. An additional 2,100 students require investment on various levels. In doing so, the college will become an engine for economic development — turning its graduating students into a successful workforce for the state and the nation.

11. Pilot Plant Launched to Extract Rare Earth Elements

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) selected Rick Honaker's pilot-scale project to move onto a second phase of research in an effort to recover rare earth elements (REEs) from coal and coal byproducts. The DOE invested \$6 million in the project and partners contributed an additional \$1.5 million over two and a half years for a total of \$7.5 million. Honaker recently launched a pilot-scale processing plant aimed at recovering REEs from coal and its byproducts in Webster County. If successful, the process would provide a domestic source of REEs. The project is scheduled to be complete in March 2020.

12. Mayor of Lexington Announces METRO C.A.T.S Program

On December 10, Mayor Jim Gray announced that MetroNet and the City of Lexington have partnered to create METRO C.A.T.S., a gig-fueled after-school course for Lexington Traditional Magnet School students (LTMS) at the Charles Young Center. The program deploys students from the College of Engineering at the University of Kentucky to teach middle school students about digital literacy and, eventually, computer programming. The C.A.T.S. in the program name stands for Computer Access to Succeed. Courses will evolve over time, but at the outset will focus on digital literacy for middle-school-aged kids, with students chosen by LTMS. Each week, two

classes of eight each will be taught by UK undergraduate engineering students — who will receive credit for teaching the courses.

### 13. UK Named Most Bicycle Friendly College in America

Bicycling Magazine, the world's leading cycling magazine, has named UK the most bicycle-friendly college in America out of 45 universities, ranging from small liberal-arts colleges to large, public universities. Amelia Neptune, program director at the League of American Bicyclists (LAB), said the University stood out from other schools because of the creative incentives offered to students, faculty, and staff and the dedication that the University puts forth toward overseeing the support of cycling. Bicycling Magazine mirrored its ranking process off of LAB's program, which rates schools who apply for the Bicycle Friendly Award from bronze to platinum based on the “Five E’s”: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. Although a rigorous application, the process forces colleges to notice holes in initiatives they have in place and to improve their current bicycle accessibility on campus.

### 14. Faculty and Staff Achievements

Carol Boggess (University of Kentucky Press) has been named recipient of the 2018 Kentucky History Award by the Kentucky Historical Society.

Doug Boyd (Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History) has received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award to conduct research in Australia.

Andrew and Brenna Byrd (College of Arts and Sciences) have been awarded a \$30,000 National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Projects for the Public Discovery Grant.

Daret St. Clair (UK HealthCare) was named the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient from the Society of Rebox Biology and Medicine.

Matthew Gentry (UK HealthCare) has received the Landis Award for Outstanding Mentorship from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Patricia Kunz Howard (UK HealthCare) has been named the president of the Emergency Nurses Association for the second time in her distinguished career.

Ron Zimmer (Martin School of Public Policy and Administration) was named as one of the top education scholars in the nation whose published research moves from academic journals into the national conversation.

### 15. Student Achievements

Xiaobo “Max” Dong (Chemical and Materials Engineering of China) has been awarded the American Membrane Technology Association Ian C. Watson Fellowship for Membrane Advancement.

Kerry Gathers (New Maps Plus of Brooklyn, New York) received the national first prize in the Dynamic Map Competition at the North American Cartographic Information Society annual meeting.

Esther Putnam (Biology and Neuroscience of Lexington, Kentucky) was named one of 2018's 50 recipients of a \$10,000 scholarship from the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation.

16. Alumni Achievements

Nick Wilson (Political Science) claimed the \$1 million prize as winner of the CBS Emmy-award winning show, "Survivor."

Bridget Nicholas (Modern and Classical Languages and International Studies) received one of only 30 Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowships.