

Chair, Board of Trustees
June 30, 2026

Members, Board of Trustees:

APPOINTMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
MINING ENGINEERING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve the appointments of Sam McKown and Nate Waters to the University of Kentucky Mining Engineering Foundation Board of Directors for a two-year term ending June 30, 2028.

Background: The Nominating Committee of the University of Kentucky Mining Engineering Foundation, which includes the dean of the college of engineering, recommended these appointments to the Provost. These recommended appointments require approval by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws for the University of Kentucky Mining Engineering Foundation approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on December 14, 1982. This nomination is supported by the President and Provost.

Biographical sketches of the appointees are attached.

Action taken: ☒ Approved ☐ Disapproved ☐ Other _____

University of Kentucky Mining Engineering Foundation, Inc.
Board of Directors Biographical Information

Sam McKown is president of the Kentucky Coal Association (KCA) and serves as a member of the National Coal Council. Prior to joining KCA, McKown was a national political consultant and pollster. In 2023, he served as Political Director for U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum's presidential campaign. He has also served as an aide to House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Congressman Brett Guthrie (KY-02) in Washington, D.C., and as an aide to Governor Bevin in Kentucky.

McKown is a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

Nate Waters is a mining professional with over 19 years of experience in the coal industry, including 14 years with Arch Resources, now Core Resources. A native of Southeast Kentucky, Nate comes from a long line of coal miners—his great-grandfather, grandfather, and numerous uncles worked for the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company in Stearns, Kentucky. Growing up just outside this small coal town, he was inspired by his family's deep connection to the industry and chose to pursue a career in mining engineering.

O'Dea is a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mining Engineering.