Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee
University of Kentucky
Friday, September 12, 2025

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC) of the University of Kentucky (UK) Board of Trustees met on Friday, September 12, 2025, in the Harris Ballroom of the Gatton Student Center.

A.   Meeting Opened

Chair Alex Boone called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

B.   Roll Call

The following members of the ASAC answered the call of the roll: McKenna Dowell, David Figg, Ron Geoghegan, Brenda Baker Gosney, Hannah Myers, Paula Leach Pope and Hollie Swanson.

C.   Approval of Minutes

Chair Boone reported that the minutes of the June 13, 2025, ASAC meeting had been distributed. Trustee Gosney moved approval of the minutes and Trustee Figg seconded the motion. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

D.   ASACR 1: Deletion of Certificate: College of Fine Arts

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the closure of the undergraduate certificate in Dance in the College of Fine Arts.

By way of background, to simplify and streamline the musical theatre undergraduate certificate offerings, the College of Fine Arts has added a Dance and Voice track to the existing undergraduate certificate in Musical Theater making the standalone certificate obsolete. This change enables students to concentrate on theater, dance or voice while ensuring they receive the full breath of musical theater education in the certificate program.

This proposed closure of this undergraduate certificate was recommended to the Provost by the College of Fine Arts faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Pope moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Myers. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

E.   ASACR 2: Deletion of Certificate: College of Fine Arts

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the closure of the undergraduate certificate in Voice in the College of Fine Arts.

By way of background, to simplify and streamline the musical theatre

undergraduate certificate offerings, the College of Fine Arts has added a Dance and Voice track to the existing undergraduate certificate in Musical Theater making the standalone certificate obsolete. This change enables students to concentrate on theater, dance or voice while ensuring they receive the full breath of musical theater education within certificate program.

The proposed closure of this undergraduate certificate was recommended to the Provost by the College of Fine Arts faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Swanson moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Figg. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

Trustee Dowell inquired about the factors the college considered in modifying the specialization certificates listed in ASACR 2. Nancy Jones, professor in the College of Fine Arts, explained that the college previously offered three distinct musical theater certificates tailored to different student groups: one for voice majors, one for dance majors and one for theater majors. She stated that these certificates, while similar in content, were categorized separately in a way that created administrative confusion and complexity for students and staff.

She reported that the college decided to consolidate the three certificates into a single "Musical Theater Certificate" to simplify the structure, clarify participation guidelines and improve administrative efficiency. She emphasized that this change does not involve eliminating any of the content or opportunities associated with the original certificates. Instead, students from all three disciplines—voice, dance and theater—will continue to have access to the same content under a unified certificate name.

F.　　ASACR 3: Deletion of Certificate: College of Nursing

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the closure of the graduate certificate in Tobacco Treatment Specialist in the College of Nursing.

By way of background, due to low student demand and decreasing enrollment, the College of Nursing is closing the Graduate Certificate in Tobacco Treatment Specialist.

The proposed closure of this graduate certificate was recommended to the Provost by the College of Nursing faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Swanson moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Myers. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

G.　　ASACR 4: Graduate Certificate: College of Nursing

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of a clinical graduate certificate in Addictions in the College of Nursing.

By way of background, the clinical certificate in Addictions is designed to prepare graduate students to enhance their skills in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of addictions, equipping them with the skills to sit for the Addiction Nursing Certification. With an emphasis on transdisciplinary care and team-based treatments, this certificate will provide opportunities for disciplines other than nursing to expand their knowledge in recognizing and treating process and behavioral addictions, such as gambling and internet addictions.

The proposed graduate certificate has been recommended to the Provost by the College of Nursing faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Gosney moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Pope. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

H. ASACR 5: Degree Recommendation: Gatton College of Business and Economics

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of a bachelor of science degree in Applied Economics in the Gatton College of Business and Economics.

By way of background, the bachelor of science in Applied Economics will address the increasing industry demand for graduates with skills in data-driven decision making, critical thinking, data collection, and the application of economic principles to solve problems across various industries. Utilizing a quantitatively intensive approach, the bachelor of science in Applied Economics will bridge the gap between economics and data science. The emphasis on advanced analytical and quantitative skills will prepare students for careers in finance, businesses, government, public health and environmental policy.

The proposed bachelor's degree has been recommended to the Provost by the Gatton College of Business and Economics faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Figg moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Dowell. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

I. ASACR 6: Undergraduate Certificate: Gatton College of Business and Economics

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of an undergraduate certificate in Accounting, Ethics and Technology in the Gatton College of Business and Economics.

By way of background, developed through extensive engagement with employers and stakeholders, the undergraduate certificate in Accounting, Ethics and Technology will address the growing need for graduates with strong technical accounting knowledge,

ethical reasoning skills and the ability to leverage information systems and data analytics in business decision making. The integration of accounting, ethics and technology aligns with national trends and directly supports the University's commitment to preparing students for excellent career placement opportunities.

The proposed undergraduate certificate has been recommended to the Provost by the Gatton College of Business and Economics faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Dowell moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Myers. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

J.   ASACR 7: Degree Recommendation: Pigman College of Engineering

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of a bachelor of science degree in Artificial Intelligence in the Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering.

By way of background, artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most transformative technologies, having a critical impact in most sectors of the economy. The program will provide students with in-depth knowledge of foundations and skills for building, evaluating and using AI systems that can learn from data and interactions, reason through information and leverage acquired knowledge to solve real world problems.

The proposed bachelor's degree has been recommended to the Provost by the Pigman College of Engineering faculty given their expertise within their respective disciplines. The Provost of the University supports the program faculty's recommendation.

Trustee Pope moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Figg. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

K.   Provost Report

Provost DiPaola provided an overview of current academic programs and an update on a new course under development aimed at giving all students foundational knowledge in artificial intelligence (AI). He noted that this initiative is connected to updates in the UK Core curriculum. He reported that the University offers nearly 450 academic programs across bachelor's, master's, doctorate and certificate levels. He emphasized that program growth aligns with the evolving workforce needs and the University's mission to prepare students for meaningful lives in a rapidly changing world.

Provost DiPaola explained that the programs can be grouped thematically, with social and behavioral sciences being the largest category—encompassing fields such as psychology, sociology, political science and social work. He stated that thematic organization reflects student interests and helps guide them into suitable academic paths. He reported that the previous academic year saw the approval of 23 new programs, including an undergraduate certificate and a bachelor's degree in AI, which were designed in response to increasing demand in technology and related sectors. Additional programs

in areas like mental health, healthcare and sports communication were also highlighted as key examples of responsive program development.

Provost DiPaola further reported that, in just the first quarter of the current academic year, eight new programs have already been launched, including a reinstated public health program and new offerings in STEM-H fields. He highlighted the Doctor of Audiology program as a successful collaboration between the Colleges of Health Sciences and Medicine. He also cited the Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Science as another interdisciplinary effort, involving joint curriculum planning between the Colleges of Pharmacy and Arts and Sciences. He emphasized that these programs were developed with sustainability, workforce demand and inter-college cooperation in mind, demonstrating the University's strategic approach to academic innovation.

Provost DiPaola stated that the University continues to develop new academic programs across a wide range of disciplines, including agriculture, veterinary sciences, public service, education and social sciences, offering students expanded opportunities. He reported that the most enrolled undergraduate programs include nursing, psychology, finance and biology, with nursing showing consistent growth due to intentional efforts to address workforce needs in Kentucky. At the graduate and professional level, programs in social work, medicine and nursing have seen significant increases, with further expansion anticipated following the completion of the Health Education Building in December 2026.

Provost DiPaola emphasized the collaborative nature of program development, citing interdisciplinary efforts—particularly those involving technology and AI—as essential to preparing students for an evolving job market. He reported that revisions continue on the UK Core curriculum, with progress made across five focus areas: curricular framework and competencies, student experience, assessment, program oversight and communication. He reiterated that these ongoing efforts are designed to meet both student needs and broader societal demands, ensuring the University remains responsive and forward-looking.

Provost DiPaola stated that the University has identified a pressing need to enhance digital and AI literacy across its student body and is addressing this through the development of a new one-credit course. He reported that this initiative stemmed from recommendations to focus more on emerging technological competencies, especially in the context of rapid advancements in AI. The course is being developed collaboratively by faculty members from multiple colleges, with Katherine Thompson (Arts and Sciences) and Tom Atay (Medicine) leading the curriculum design. Brandi Frisby facilitated the formation of this interdisciplinary team, which includes contributors from engineering, communications, education, social work, design and other fields. The course, designed to be asynchronous with synchronous options, is set to launch in October following final approvals.

The Provost explained that the course will focus on AI fundamentals, emphasizing ethical considerations and critical thinking skills in AI usage. He shared an example from the medical field illustrating potential over-reliance on AI, citing a study where physicians' diagnostic accuracy decreased without AI support. This example was used to underscore the importance of maintaining fundamental skills while using AI as a tool or collaborator. He highlighted a unique module called the "Socratic Sparring Partner," in which students

propose a thesis or decision, then engage with AI to challenge their ideas. The students must respond to AI's critiques with reasoned counterarguments, fostering deeper critical engagement and reflective thinking when working with AI technologies.

Provost DiPaola emphasized that the course is designed not only to teach technical usage but to prepare students for real-world applications by instilling responsible and informed interaction with AI tools. He reported that plans are underway to create a parallel non-credit version of the course to make it accessible to a broader University audience, including faculty and staff. Additionally, the team behind the course will continue to monitor the evolving AI landscape and revise course content as needed, ensuring its long-term relevance. He concluded by stating that this adaptive approach reflects the University's commitment to equipping its community with essential skills for navigating an AI-integrated world.

Trustee Swanson expressed appreciation for the creation of a non-credit version of the course. She noted that it would allow her to reinforce AI-related concepts with students in later academic years. Provost DiPaola agreed, emphasizing the value of instructors engaging with the same content students are exposed to. Trustee Petrone also expressed support and raised two questions: one regarding the oversight committee's role in UK Core revision, and the other about the potential addition of new requirements, particularly in relation to the AI course and the already extensive core curriculum.

Provost DiPaola reported that the oversight committee includes several members from the original UK Core task force and continues its work on refining the curriculum. One significant development includes the reduction of more than 90 student learning outcomes down to a more manageable and clearly defined set of 30. He stated that the committee is currently reviewing the large number of courses offered under each competency, identifying which are being effectively utilized by students, and conducting a full assessment to streamline offerings. He offered to provide a formal, detailed update at a future meeting once the committee's work progresses further.

Provost DiPaola emphasized that, at present, the AI literacy course is not a required component of UK Core but could potentially become one in the future depending on student interest and enrollment trends. He noted that the course is expected to launch in October, pending final approvals, and will be delivered over eight weeks in a rolling format to offer maximum scheduling flexibility. He stated that student uptake in the initial and subsequent semesters will help determine whether the course remains optional or evolves into a more formal component of the University's general education program.

L.   Vice President for Student Success Report

Vice President for Student Success Turner reported that the number of student events on campus has grown significantly since before the pandemic. In 2019-2020, the University hosted 812 events, compared to more than 3,200 this past year—a 303% increase. Additionally, distinct student attendees rose from approximately 13,000 to over 21,000, marking a 60% increase. She stated that the number of registered student organizations also grew by 21%, from 585 to 710. Early indicators from events like K-Week and Labor Day show record attendance across undergraduate, graduate and transfer populations.

Vice President Turner emphasized the University's Student Success framework, which focuses on four key pillars affecting student retention: academics, physical and mental well-being, belonging and engagement and financial stability. She introduced Dr. Paul McKinney, associate vice president for financial stability, and Brian Erslan, executive director of student financial aid and scholarships, to address major upcoming changes in federal financial aid policy. Dr. McKinney, formerly with Mississippi State University, and Mr. Erslan, a Kentucky native recruited from Ohio State University, now oversee UK's financial aid operations, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) implementation, scholarships and basic needs initiatives.

Dr. McKinney stated that changes to federal financial aid include capping Parent PLUS loans at $20,000 annually and $65,000 total, down from the previous "cost of attendance" limit. These changes, effective July 1, 2026, will not affect currently enrolled students, who are grandfathered in for four years. Additionally, Graduate PLUS loans will be eliminated entirely under the same timeline. In response, the University is actively working with private lenders, monitoring Department of Education rulemaking and creating a comprehensive marketing and communication plan to help future students transition. He reported that outreach and planning efforts will focus on employer tuition reimbursement, private alternatives and potential updates to the scholarship matrix.

Executive Director Erslan reported that the federal government fully funded the Pell Grant program for the 2025-26 academic year with a $10 billion appropriation, maintaining the maximum award at $7,395. This represents a continued investment in access to education for low-income students, with the University distributing nearly $39 million in Pell Grant funds this year. He stated that UK anticipates exceeding $40 million in awards for the upcoming academic year. He noted that while Pell funding remains stable, campus-based programs such as Federal Work Study and the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) may face potential reductions, pending outcomes from the ongoing federal budget process.

Executive Director Erslan emphasized that a significant new regulatory development involves institutional accountability measures. Under the regulation, institutions will be evaluated by comparing the median earnings of program completers with earnings of similarly credentialed working adults (e.g., high school or bachelor's degree holders). Programs that fall below the designated threshold could lose eligibility for federal financial aid participation. He stated that while the timing for implementation is still being finalized, UK is proactively analyzing program-level income data in collaboration with institutional research teams. He concluded by noting that the University is awaiting final federal rules and will adjust policies and communication strategies accordingly once those are released.

Trustee Swanson raised concerns about how new institutional accountability regulations might impact degree programs whose graduates may initially earn less, particularly in socially essential fields like K-12 education. Trustee Petrone asked how the Department of Education would account for societal value versus starting income in the accountability framework. Dr. McKinney explained that final rules are still pending through the negotiated rulemaking process and questions remain about whether comparative income data will be evaluated at the local, state or national level. It was clarified that programs failing to meet the earnings threshold are not immediately disqualified from Title

IV eligibility. Instead, a program would have to fall below the standard two out of three consecutive years before being removed from eligibility. Additionally, an appeals process will be available for programs seeking reinstatement.

Trustee Petrone also expressed concern that some majors—particularly in the liberal arts and service fields—may have lower earnings early in a career but exceed others over a longer period. Dr. McKinney noted that the accountability window is currently set to evaluate graduate earnings four years after completion, not just in the first year. While that offers more time for earnings growth, concerns remain about capturing true long-term career value. University officials committed to continuing analysis and advocacy as federal rulemaking proceeds.

M.   SGA President Report

McKenna Dowell, student government association (SGA) president provided an update on summer and early fall activities of the SGA. Key highlights included:

- Southeastern Conference (SEC) Exchange Conference: In July, seven UK SGA representatives attended the SEC Exchange in Austin, Texas. Student leaders from SEC institutions shared ideas and learned from one another. A primary focus was mental health advocacy. The group of 16 SGA presidents collaboratively developed a unified mental health awareness campaign, emphasizing that "No student is alone." This campaign will be launched across SGA social media channels during finals week, with links to university-provided mental health resources.
- Commonwealth-Wide SGA Coordination: President Dowell met with student body presidents from across Kentucky to begin planning the 2026 Rally for Higher Education in Frankfort. She also participated in submitting student nominees to the Council on Postsecondary Education, including UK nominee Michael Wheeler.
- Campus Partnerships and Outreach: Meetings were held with UK Parking and Transportation Director Lance Broeking to develop an interactive parking map that will help clarify available parking options and reduce student confusion—and fines.
- Collaborated with the UK Invest team to begin recording short informational videos addressing frequently asked student questions, designed to increase engagement with the financial literacy program.
- K-Week and Campus Engagement: SGA participated in multiple K-Week events, including Campus Ruckus, Big Blue U and Catapalooza. President Dowell spoke to the Class of 2029 at Big Blue U about involvement, community-building and campus resources. She attended the grand opening of Wildcat Wheels, a program offering students free bicycle rentals and repairs, and recognized the dedication of those who made the project possible.
- SGA Senate Expansion: The 86th SGA Senate—the largest in UK history—held its opening retreat at the Good Barn. The retreat focused on goal setting, internal collaboration and reinforcing SGA's mission of student representation.

Trustee Swanson asked about student views on parking. President Dowell noted that student frustration and confusion are common, particularly around unclear signage and fear of incurring fines. The new interactive parking map is being developed to offer real-time guidance on parking zones, costs and enforcement risks.

Chair Boone called for additional questions. There were none.

N.   <u>Meeting Adjourned</u>

Hearing no further business, Chair Boone adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shavonna Ross
Academic and Student Affairs Committee
Secretary