

University of Kentucky Strategic Plan 2006-2009 (Provisional*)

Steeped in the rich tradition of America's land-grant universities, the University of Kentucky has for over 140 years touched every corner of the Commonwealth. Time and again, Kentuckians have looked to their flagship University as a major resource for educating their children, supporting their businesses, strengthening their communities, protecting their health, and improving their lives.

As this new century unfurls, UK is challenged to do more than ever. In a knowledge economy, there is a strong symbiotic relationship between a state's condition and its intellectual capital. And that capital is most readily available at the statewide research university. Compared to the national average, people in states that are home to the nation's leading research universities enjoy higher educational attainment and higher incomes; are less likely to live in poverty; and more likely to lead healthier lives.

The Commonwealth's strength and prosperity therefore depend on the quality and vitality of its leading research university. In 1997, Kentucky's elected representatives enshrined in statute their recognition of this valuable instrument for progress when they mandated that UK become a top 20 public research university. This bond between the people of Kentucky and UK affirmed their mutual dependence and shared ambition. In return for substantial new investment from the state, UK would produce tangible benefits for the Commonwealth.

At its December 13, 2005 meeting the UK Board of Trustees adopted the Top 20 Business Plan. The Business Plan identifies the financial resources UK will need to implement a series of ambitious academic strategic plans that in the aggregate will chart our direction over the next fifteen years. The 2006 Kentucky General Assembly then embraced the Business Plan, allocating substantial public resources to the achievement of its specific objectives. That support is accompanied by the expectation that UK has the vision and the will to transform itself.

In his letter transmitting the Business Plan to the Board of Trustees, UK President Lee T. Todd, Jr. wrote:

The next Strategic Plan will define specific measures of quality, establish strategic goals for excellence, and direct the allocation of resources across campus... We will discuss as an academic community what our priorities and specific goals are, how we can best achieve those goals, and how resources will be allocated.

These discussions will translate the Business Plan into a plan of action. It must be a dynamic, serious, and honest conversation about what kind of

* Subject to full vetting by the University community, to be completed in early fall 2006

university we want to be. Make no mistake about it. This institution must change if we are going to succeed. A university wedded to the status quo in a dynamic world will fail. Just as we need to force a discussion with the state about our need for more resources, we must force the internal discussion about our priorities. And those priorities must ultimately find their core in the needs of the people of Kentucky and what their flagship university is uniquely qualified to provide.

At the direction of President Todd and under the leadership of newly appointed UK Provost Kumble Subbaswamy, the University Committee on Academic Planning and Priorities began crafting this Strategic Plan for 2006-09 in March 2006. By building on the 2003-06 Strategic Plan and marking the first step in the implementation of the Business Plan, the 2006-09 Strategic Plan represents both renewal and change. It articulates the goals of a University community that will continue its determined march toward Top 20 status and will have a broader and deeper impact on lives across the Commonwealth. The five goals of this strategic plan identify the principal areas of activity in which the talents and resources of the University will be invested over the next three years. Enumerated under each goal are several objectives, intended to bring some specificity to the broad outline of each goal.

Goal I - Enhance the University's Stature among its Peers

The University of Kentucky brings considerable strength to the task of achieving Top 20 status. It is home to a comprehensive mix of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, combined with land-grant responsibilities and extensive health-care operations. The University's present organizational structure implemented during 2003-2005 positions it to capitalize on intellectual diversity through the development and integration of its academic, research, extension, and health-care resources. This expansive collection of integrated resources encourages sharing ideas across disciplines and promoting multidisciplinary endeavors. It also enriches the educational and social experiences of a highly diverse and talented student body.

UK's responsibility to the Commonwealth requires that the University not only become a Top 20 university, but do so while increasing substantially its engagement with the state. And that engagement will go beyond the vast clinical, extension, and outreach services the University already provides. It will include more active partnerships with communities to solve problems and create a better society.

The hallmark of a Top 20 public university is an unwavering and across-the-board commitment to excellence, with a considerable number of programs ranked among the best in the United States. A Top 20 university cultivates and celebrates success in the classroom, the laboratory, the extension office and the clinic with equal vigor. And it builds futures for its students by emphasizing emotional and physical health as well as intellectual growth. UK's ability to reach this level of consistent excellence will require the significant advance of every aspect of the University. As the Business Plan makes

clear, 40 percent of the resources needed to achieve Top 20 status will be self-generated, through a combination of internal reallocations and increased research, clinical, and gift income. The state and UK students will be asked to bear the remaining cost of this investment. The Strategic Plan therefore must articulate the framework for identifying programmatic and infrastructure priorities and the strategies for investing in those priorities.

Objectives:

- 1. The University will develop or update plans for achieving excellence in all its endeavors, in accordance with the Top 20 Business Plan.** To attain Top 20 status is to have most of the University's programs ranked in the top quartile among their peers, with some considered the very best. Every college, department, and auxiliary and support unit must examine its strengths and weaknesses, take stock of emerging trends in their areas, and make strategic decisions about how to attain further excellence. Taking full advantage of the strengths of a flagship, land-grant, research university with an extensive health care enterprise, the entire University community must enthusiastically embrace its obligation to serve the Commonwealth. Every strategy for excellence must aim to assure education and research benefits that accrue to the people of the Commonwealth - in the areas of health and welfare, economic development, education for life, public policy development, and quality of life. Many parts of the UK community, including UK Healthcare and the UK Athletic Association, have developed strategic plans aligned with the Top 20 Business Plan. However, the University-wide Strategic Plan for 2006-09 will fully integrate plans for all sectors of the University.
- 2. The University will update its capital project priorities and Master Plan to accommodate a larger faculty and student body and the expansion of research and clinical operations.** The correlation between rank and size is well-known. To be competitive, the University must increase the size of its student and faculty body. The challenge of growth is exacerbated by the constraints of current physical space; the lead time needed for planning, constructing, and utilizing future space; and the limitations on available University bonding capacity. Priorities for classrooms, student facilities, laboratories, and health care facilities must be assigned carefully.
- 3. The University will recruit additional faculty members to teach a larger student body and enhance substantially its research and engagement efforts.** The University will expand its faculty in order to maintain competitive student-to-faculty ratios and build a foundation for rapid improvement in the quality of its academic missions. The attendant growth in the University's research enterprise will increase Kentucky's intellectual and cultural capital and enhance the health and economic welfare of its people.
- 4. The University will offer competitive salaries, benefits, and professional support to retain and attract outstanding faculty and staff.** Achieving Top 20 status hinges on the aggressive cultivation of current faculty and strategic hiring of outstanding

new faculty members. It also depends on the continuous professional development of university faculty and staff. Competitive compensation and progressive career advancement opportunities are essential resources for developing and retaining excellent faculty and staff. They will foster and sustain an enjoyable professional climate in which employees can manage effectively the way they live, work, and raise their families.

Goal II - Prepare Students for Leadership in the Knowledge Economy and Global Society

A university's chief responsibilities are to provide its students with knowledge about the human and natural worlds, train them to organize that knowledge, and teach them to express and apply that knowledge effectively. These pursuits carry with them civic and economic dimensions that are intertwined. Students will be challenged to become active members of their communities, welcoming different points of view and systems of belief while examining and refining their own. And they must develop the skills they will need to become productive members of an increasingly educated work force. In a world where jobs and knowledge flow freely across industries and national boundaries, the success of University of Kentucky graduates demands an education that prepares them to participate effectively in an increasingly interdependent global economy and society.

Kentucky's success in this global economy depends on a broadly trained workforce and well-informed society. UK has the capacity to cast off Kentucky's legacy of diminished expectations, replacing it with a confidence in the prospect of a more prosperous Commonwealth. The University is among the handful of American higher education institutions that offers on one campus a full range of academic programs and colleges, including the full spectrum of health science colleges. It must take full advantage of connections across academic programs at all levels of study to encourage international experiences that broaden perspectives, emphasize interdisciplinary and inter-professional training, and inspire student partnerships with faculty to explore knowledge at the fluid borders of academic disciplines. The University must demonstrate again and again that teaching and scholarship are inextricably linked, are pursued with equal dedication, and create extraordinary opportunities.

The key to Kentucky's success in the global flow of talent is to ensure that much of the human capital built at home and recruited from beyond Kentucky's borders remains in Kentucky. As one of the top public research universities in the United States, UK can become a beacon for attracting top talent from across the world who will enrich the campus community through their participation in it. And when their days as UK students are complete, their professional and civic accomplishments will add cultural and economic capital to the Commonwealth and across the United States and the globe.

Objectives:

1. **The University will enhance interdisciplinary learning and inter-professional training.** The University community must foster innovation in teaching and learning, emphasizing critical thinking and cultural sensitivity; revise and reform curricula, increasing connections within and across colleges by blurring disciplinary and professional boundaries; integrate curricular and extracurricular experiences and ensure those experiences reflect the goal of diversity to the fullest extent possible; and expand internships, externships, and community-based engagement activities. UK will create an academic environment in which students can hone their problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills.
2. **The University will increase opportunities for international and multicultural educational experiences for its students.** Being a Top 20 university in the 21st Century is to be engaged effectively in the international educational marketplace. UK must build aggressively on its longstanding relationships with educational institutions in other countries to form new partnerships for the exchange of students. Every UK student must develop a broad international perspective through curricular, extracurricular, on-campus, and off-campus experiences.
3. **The University will set and achieve six-year growth and quality targets for undergraduate, graduate, and professional enrollments.** The Business Plan establishes goals for enrollment growth, the mix of resident and non-resident students, and first-year student ACT/SAT scores. The Plan does not specify an ideal distribution of students across academic areas. Recruitment and admission strategies need to respond to the imperative to train highly-educated professionals in areas of pressing social need. For example, strategies must be developed to address both in-state and national shortages of physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, and engineers, as well as math, science, and foreign-language teachers. Careful study is needed to set targets and develop the consequent recruitment strategies. Viable targets and strategies will incorporate the interests in various majors and programs expressed by students and employers. UK's holistic screening process in undergraduate admissions is part of a national trend away from over-reliance on standardized tests in making admission decisions. More than selective admission, the true measure of the quality of all UK's educational programs is the breadth and depth of what students learn, their timely graduation and career success, and the impact they have on their communities.
4. **The University will more aggressively integrate its teaching, research, and outreach missions.** Nationally acclaimed programs provide rich and broad opportunities for inquiry-based learning. The University of Kentucky must seek to provide every student with meaningful research and service-learning opportunities at all levels of instruction. Students must be integrated more fully into research and outreach programs to facilitate their roles as new investigators and future community leaders. Such a combination of increasing quality, productivity, and recognition for the University can stimulate high-end economic growth in Kentucky. All these efforts will enhance UK's ability to recruit the finest students and postdoctoral scholars, who in turn strengthen every facet of the University community.

Goal III - Enhance the Intellectual and Economic Capital of Kentucky through Growth in Research

As Kentucky's land-grant research university, the University of Kentucky pursues with equal vigor the dual purposes of research: the expansion of the body of knowledge and the translation of basic research into practical innovations for the people of Kentucky and those beyond the state's borders. All missions of the University are infused with and benefit from this dedication to the creation and application of new knowledge. While scholarship often has an immediate impact, experience teaches that the benefit of research and creative work is not always immediate or predictable. The University must be Kentucky's most celebrated locale where creative work can be pursued purely for the advancement of knowledge and enlightenment. This is the true meaning of intellectual capital.

Research and creative activity in the 21st century has been re-invented as a thoroughly interdisciplinary and collaborative pursuit, employing theoretical and clinical constructs, analytical tools, and laboratory techniques scarcely imaginable a few decades ago. UK has made significant advances in its research and creative activities in recent years and enthusiastically embraces the challenge of substantially increasing the volume and the quality of those efforts in the next decade.

Objectives:

- 1. The University will cultivate and celebrate the full range of efforts in creative achievement and research.** The University of Kentucky is home to a broad range of disciplines and intellectual endeavors that enrich lives and improve communities across Kentucky. Cultivating excellence in students and faculty requires fostering leading scholarship and creative endeavor throughout the University; increasing collaborations across departments and colleges; celebrating the accomplishments of faculty, staff, and students; and communicating successes inside and outside the University.
- 2. The University will invest strategically in research areas of current strength, emerging interest, and greatest importance.** A program's ability to rise in national rankings is a function of multiple factors, including size, existing strengths, competition, and available resources. The University has made significant investments to build on current strengths and the most promising of these initiatives should continue. To serve the Commonwealth, the University also must identify and invest in emerging research areas of importance, excitement, and promise.

3. **The University will develop the infrastructure and administrative support required to achieve Top 20 status.** Growth in research and creative endeavor depends upon adequate space and facilities. The University of Kentucky is committed to modern laboratories, clinical facilities, performance and studio spaces, information technology, libraries and analytical services. It is likewise committed to efficient business operations and strong staff support. The University must assess and address facilities carefully and support administrative needs in a timely manner.
4. **The University will actively transmit the benefits of its knowledge and expertise to the public it serves.** More than ever before, the engaged research university can serve as an economic development partner - producing qualified students for industry; providing intellectual and research resources; and promoting cultural experiences. The University of Kentucky will directly and indirectly address needs across the Commonwealth by extending its research and creative endeavors to every school, business, and community in Kentucky. With equal tenacity, research and creative endeavor must be aimed at improving the quality of individual lives, in areas such as health, education, and the arts.

Goal IV - Embrace and Nurture Diversity

It is a simple but profound fact of life that participation in diverse families, workplaces, schools, and communities is the norm and not the exception. This diversity should be celebrated as a strength of American society. But social isolation as a function of ethnicity, race, class, gender, or other differences is an enduring problem that continues to do much harm - locally, regionally, and nationally. The University of Kentucky has a responsibility to help prepare students for meaningful and responsible engagement within and across diverse communities. Through its own example and engagement, the University will strive to improve the climate for diversity throughout Kentucky, a commitment given special importance and emphasis by shared history. The composite effect of work with students in classrooms, residence halls, offices, laboratories, clinics, libraries, and public places should be to enable them to develop a more enlightened worldview; attain a deeper understanding of and commitment to authentic democratic values and social justice; embrace a greater commitment to service and leadership for the common good; exhibit greater cultural knowledge and competence; and facilitate Kentucky's success in the global economy.

Embracing and nurturing diversity is the responsibility of every member of the University community. It must be demonstrated in a clear and convincing way that diversity is an essential value of the university community that informs its every aspect. A genuine commitment to diversity as a core value makes necessary the adoption of a comprehensive view that celebrates diversity in all its dimensions as a systemic influence on our conduct as students, faculty, staff, and members of society.

Objectives:

1. **The University will adopt an organizational structure that supports diversity, makes explicit the shared responsibility of the entire community, and facilitates the achievement of its aspirations.** Diversity must be woven fully into the academic and administrative fabric of the University of Kentucky. Until then, diversity goals must be articulated again and again by leaders at the highest levels and embraced by the wider University community as an individual and collective responsibility. In particular, the existing structure of administrative offices, commissions, and standing committees will be reexamined and streamlined to address more effectively issues of diversity and the concerns of students, staff, and faculty.
2. **The University will establish a coherent, focused, university-wide implementation strategy to achieve diversity to the fullest extent possible.** The United States Supreme Court has affirmed the principle of diversity and its signal contribution to the campus environment. The University will build on existing implementation strategies to enhance demographic diversity and monitor progress. In particular, the University will be aggressive in recruiting and retaining students, staff, and faculty from all segments of society in order to create an even more diverse campus community.
3. **The University will ensure that its core belief in the value of diversity is manifest in its curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and campus climate.** Recognition of the value of different cultural traditions is an integral component of a 21st-century education. Curricular and enrichment activities must reflect the histories and aspirations, at once shared and discrete, that community members bring to campus. All UK students must graduate with an understanding of, and respect for, cultures and traditions other than their own and become effective members of today's pluralistic society.
4. **The University will use its community engagement efforts to affirm the value of diversity and promote dialogue about pressing social issues.** The University of Kentucky is an important participant in communities across the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world. As a consistent standard bearer for diversity, UK will use its intellectual resources and scholarly activity to expand community commitment to equal opportunity.

Goal V: Engage Kentuckians through Partnerships to Elevate Quality of Life

Outreach has been the historic hallmark of public research universities with the dual roles of flagship and land-grant. The University of Kentucky must recognize fully and embrace enthusiastically its outreach responsibilities and its potential for improving lives across Kentucky.

An *engaged* university in the 21st century has a commitment to share its human, intellectual, and material resources with the larger community for the benefit of both.

Consistent with the fundamental premise of the Top 20 Business Plan, the University rededicates itself to improving the lives of Kentuckians through its time-honored commitment to outreach and community engagement. The key to success is creating and sustaining efforts to build stronger communities, advance schools, recruit and create businesses, fight disease, and improve and enrich lives.

It is incumbent upon UK to be an activist institution, reaching out to communities to combine local understanding of problems with University expertise to seek practical solutions. Likewise, the engaged university also must listen to the communities it serves to fully understand their needs and ideas in the formation of responsive partnerships. While the primary ground for UK's engagement is Kentucky, the scope of the University's involvement must extend to the region, to the nation and to the world.

Objectives:

- 1. The University will encourage greater engagement with outside communities.** The engaged university forms effective partnerships with outside communities, matching community needs with university resources, marshalling funds for projects and maintaining a database of service and engagement activities. To facilitate the expansion of its engagement efforts, the University will develop a single point of contact for individuals and organizations seeking to partner with the University. Assessment efforts such as focus groups, advisory committees, and surveys will be used to foster interactions between the University and outside communities to identify projects that hold the greatest promise of mutual benefit.
- 2. The University will define research and scholarship more broadly to include work that engages the communities it serves.** Engaged research and scholarship addresses significant, current, and relevant problems that face groups and individuals. It is almost always "applied" and can have immediate and important effects on people's lives. It is important that the value of this type of research and the procedures for its validation be understood by all constituents, whether in the university or in the community. As such, faculty and staff reward structures need to be aligned with an appropriately broad definition of applied research.
- 3. The University will increase learning opportunities for its students by involving them in its engagement efforts.** Service learning opportunities, internships, and practica will be enhanced through engagement with community, government, and industry partners as well as in programs and projects in underserved parts of the world. Student-led research, learning, and service will provide opportunities for value-added learning, leading to improved quality of life for both the students and the community members with whom they are engaged. Engaged learning will extend to global learning through participation with industry, government, non-governmental organizations, and academia across the United States and around the world.