

The UK-PURPOSE
(Plan for Unprecedented Research, Purposeful and Optimal Service and Education):
THE STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADVANCE KENTUCKY

Background: Challenge and Progress

Our mission — over more than 150 years — has never changed.

The north star that guides everything we do at the University of Kentucky must be to advance Kentucky — from its economy to its health and from its culture to its levels of educational attainment so critical to progress.

No other goal rivals this one in its importance. It's why we were created. It's why people continue to invest in us. It's more relevant and necessary now than ever before. And in recent years, we have made incredible strides have been made to honor that mission.

Graduation and retention rates have reached historic highs. We have done this not by getting smaller or more selective, but by growing to record numbers of students, increasing levels of diversity and honoring our commitment to serve Kentuckians first, anchored by nationally heralded efforts to make college more affordable and accessible.

Our health care system today serves every area of the state and is expanding regionally with advanced care that has been recognized nationally. For six straight years, UK HealthCare has been named the No. 1 hospital in the state, and for three straight years, our Markey Cancer Center has been among the Top 50 in the country.

Our research efforts have accelerated to historic levels as well. Total awards have grown from \$331.3 million in FY 2017 to \$468 million in FY 2021. Even more remarkable and significant is the fact that so much of that research focuses — intentionally and strategically — on our Commonwealth's most intractable problems, from cancer and heart disease to deaths of despair from opioid use disorders to ongoing efforts to solve our country's energy challenges. Over the last decade our faculty have won the National Book Award, been named the state's Poet Laureate, authored critically acclaimed novels and appeared on stages in New York and around the globe.

Last year alone, our Department of Athletics won two national championships — in Rifle and Volleyball — and a record 12 Kentucky Wildcats won Olympic medals in Japan. For 18 straight semesters, UK Athletics has surpassed its goal for a cumulative GPA of 3.0 across the department.

We've invested in the people who make this progress possible. As of January 2022, UK will have raised starting salary levels four times in the last six years and overall wages eight out of the last 10 years. When other institutions resorted to largescale layoffs to meet budgetary challenges in the midst of a global pandemic that forced the loss of some 10 million jobs nationally, we found other ways to operate more efficiently and generate the revenues necessary to grow our workforce and further invest in our talent. At the same time, we've transformed our campus, investing more than \$2.8 billion in infrastructure in the last 10 years alone — much of it classroom and living spaces and research facilities that support the work of students, scholars and staff.

We have, as a community, demonstrated tremendous resilience and resolve. UK launched incredible community efforts to stem the tide of the COVID-19 virus that has infected more than 200 million people worldwide as of this writing. The institution spearheaded efforts to vaccinate communities and much of our state, operating the largest vaccination clinic in the Commonwealth, injecting more than 250,000 shots of healing and hope. At its height, more than 4,000 people daily were vaccinated in a makeshift clinic established at Kroger Field. Priority was given to schoolteachers and personnel, first responders and health care workers and those with underlying health issues.

The nation's other simultaneous pandemic — a racial reckoning — saw cities and campuses erupt in spasms of protest, the aftershocks of which are still being felt and debated in classrooms, legislatures and school boards across the country. We confronted our own racial reawakening, focusing on the need to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community for everyone. An initial, but long-term, campus-wide effort around DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) has engaged more than 500 community members in more than a dozen substantive projects in every corner of our community.

In so many ways, on our campus and across our Commonwealth, we are seeking and finding new approaches to meeting our historic mission: to advance Kentucky.

But as we emerge from a time of such furious and tumultuous change — perhaps unlike almost any other period in our history — we are also facing historic skepticism and challenges about who we are and what value we provide. Throughout our community, there has been an understandable and palpable sense that we need to be bold and clear about the path we will chart for ourselves and our state.

The impact on everyone is profound. For example, a student at the University of Kentucky in 2021 may already have spent more than a year learning in a completely remote context. They missed proms and graduations, lived in quarantines and isolation rooms, wore masks and received all their meals on campus through carry-out.

That same student already has seen a global recession that created the deepest economic dislocation since the Great Depression and a global virus shut down a national economy virtually overnight. And those students saw, and in many cases participated in, protests over systems and institutions that many believe have fallen short, unable to fulfill foundational promises made around the idea of equality of opportunity.

Against this backdrop, universities already were experiencing disruptions unlike any in decades — even before twin pandemics dominated headlines. From just prior to the Great Recession in 2008 through 2017, as economist Nathan D. Grawe reported, births in the United States fell by more than 500,000.

The declines portend a demographic cliff that will potentially impact university enrollments for years to come. Demographics aren't simply destiny. They are our present reality.

In addition, students and families are increasingly skeptical and concerned about the value of higher education. A 2021 national survey of college students found nearly two-thirds of respondents said higher education was not worth the cost — up from 49 percent less than a year earlier. Their concerns? Finding a job after college and paying for their education. Another recent national survey drives home this point in a compelling way: around four in 10 prospective

students say they would choose an institution based on future job or paid internship opportunities.

What do those who will employ our students want from us? As New York Times Columnist Tom Friedman writes, the pace of change and disruption resulting from the COVID pandemic is accelerating and will spare no school or business.

Employers, he writes, will want graduates — who can expect to change not only jobs, but careers, multiple times — who are not simply “problem solvers” but “problem-finders” — “people with diverse interests — art, literature, science, anthropology — who can identify things that people want before people even know they want them.”

To this end, our competition hasn’t stood still, either. It’s moving and changing. And much of that competition comes from new places and new sources with deep pockets and strong financial incentives to compete with us.

The health care giant, Kaiser Permanente, recently formed the Tyson School of Medicine. With an inaugural class of 50 students, the plan is to offer free tuition to the first five entering classes, according to a recent report.

The technology behemoth, Google, has provided nearly free digital skills training across the country. In only three years, the tech giant has trained more than 4 million Americans, offering certificates in areas such as IT, project management, data analytics and user experience (UX) design.

We have learned in the last year that we can’t control everything. We can’t determine who our competitors are, how much money we will receive in state support for our efforts, where the next pandemic will start or how long it will last.

But the need for institutions of higher education — particularly those so tied to their communities and states like the University of Kentucky — has never been greater. American journalist and author George Packer, in a new book on the divisions in America, wrote that our country “has had great movements for justice in the past and badly needs one now. But in order to work, it has to throw its arms out wide. It has to tell a story in which most of us can see ourselves, and start on a path that most of us want to follow.”

He noted that this task has been complicated by the country’s failure in recent decades, “to sustain and enlarge the middle-class democracy of the postwar years.”

Universities and the education they provide have long been looked to as great equalizers of opportunity for more Americans, regardless of background or race, perspective or identity, to garner the skills they need to transform and succeed. Many are skeptical about whether we still play that role.

What do we bring to this moment of change and challenge?

What kind of collective community effort can we marshal and sustain to find new answers to large and looming challenges ahead?

The pages of this Strategic Plan represent our vision for how we Advance Kentucky. We don't know what the next global crisis will be; we only know that there will be one and we will be called to meet the moment again.

We cannot possibly imagine what new jobs and professions will dominate and change economies; we do know that we must provide our students with the critical toolkit of analytical skills and broad knowledge to not simply obtain a first job but to learn and grow for a lifetime of change and challenge.

The pages, then, that follow offer an outline for how we plan to **Advance Kentucky** — today and into the future.

A new strategic plan – what we are calling The UK-PURPOSE: The Strategic Plan to Advance Kentucky -- must clearly articulate for our campus, and all those who invest in and care about this place, how we are working to advance Kentucky.

This initial draft is provided for your input and includes the following:

- Five principles that will form the foundation for a new strategic plan and
- An initial draft of objectives, tactics and metrics to gauge and evaluate our progress over time.

The five principles included are as follows:

Putting students first. They are why we are here. Whether it is maintaining a modern curriculum that prepares our students for success, providing appropriate support for graduate students or ensuring that doctoral students start and complete their programs successfully, we must put students first.

Taking care of our people. We will only accomplish our mission of advancing Kentucky when our people — those who work with us and those we serve — are cared for holistically: their health, their safety, their well-being and their ability to prosper.

Inspiring ingenuity. How do we embed innovation and discovery into every aspect of our institution? The breadth and depth of programming and offerings on one campus makes us distinctive in higher education. How do we incentivize the spark of ingenuity throughout our campus?

Ensuring greater trust and transparency. We are Kentucky's institution. And that mantle holds with it heightened responsibilities around accountability and transparency. But we need to do more to instill a sense of trust in each other on issues ranging from shared governance to open accountability for how we perform and what we measure.

Bringing together many people, one community. UK is among the most diverse communities in the Commonwealth. Our students will enter a world riven by divisions, but more interdependent than ever before. How do we model unity amidst diversity for our state?

Putting Students First

As an institution, we have made tremendous strides in the last decade in making those words — **Putting Students First** — more than a handy slogan or tagline for an ad. We've tried to embody that imperative. One of the most compelling ways we manifest that commitment is how we support students — and more of them — in being retained and graduating as we prepare them to lead lives of meaning and purpose.

On virtually every dimension of that commitment, we are doing more and being more for our students during their curricular journeys driven by our faculty expertise.

Consider a few milestones:

- UK's first-to-second-year retention rate in the fall 2020 cohort is 86%, according to preliminary figures, up more than 4% points since the fall 2015 cohort alone.
- Similarly, six-year graduation rates reached a record 67.8% for the fall 2015 cohort, up more than a full percentage point over the previous year's cohort and up more than 4 percentage points since the fall 2010 cohort alone, preliminary figures show.
- UK's preliminary four-year graduation rates is 53.9% for the fall 2017 cohort, up more than 20% points since the fall 2008 cohort.
- UK has reformed and reorganized its student success offices, integrating advising across the campus, creating a public health infrastructure — the UK Health Corps — that is evolving into a centerpiece of holistic support for students and nearly doubling its investment in mental health counseling.
- The institution created a nationally recognized scholarship program — UK LEADS — that specifically addresses unmet financial need — perhaps the single largest barrier to student success. Using big data in new and more targeted ways, UK actually reduced overall debt levels among students.
- In the last four years, tuition and mandatory fee increases have been held to 1.7 percent, below the national rate of inflation.
- UK improved student success rates — and addressed financial need — even as the institution grew over the last decade to more than 31,000 students and continued its commitment to increasing levels of diversity and educating Kentuckians first.
- In its Strategic Plan — Stronger by Degrees — the state Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) reports that the University of Kentucky is the only institution in the state to have increased its enrollment over the last eight years.
- UK has extended its mission of service throughout the state by expanding programs of academic excellence that also directly impact the state's workforce needs. Preliminary data for fall 2021, for example, showed an almost 10% increase in the number of graduate and professional students in the UK community. The university opened medical campuses in two communities — Northern Kentucky and Bowling Green — as part of an effort to educate and place more primary care physicians throughout the state. And, in direct response to social and health needs in the state, online social work programs were launched, increasing student enrollment in these critical areas by 1,354%.

Now, though, we must strengthen and sustain this commitment to meet new challenges associated with a changing economy — an economy and world that require an even more sophisticated toolkit of skills and broad knowledge. Our students will navigate those dynamic workplaces and spaces, cultures and societies, while also needing even more resilience and

resolve as they enter and compete in a world that appears more deeply divided than ever before.

Narrative Basis:

Simply stated, *student success* is our collective objective. At the University of Kentucky, we aim to further grow an **ethos** that puts students and their educational experience at the forefront of everything we do. Students do not experience their education as a collection of discrete, siloed experiences. Rather, they experience one University of Kentucky. And as such, we must offer an integrated educational process that is defined as a holistic student experience — where the student and their academic journey, whether undergraduate, graduate or professional, is the centerpiece, surrounded by a scaffolding of student services and a culture of supportive faculty, staff, alumni and fellow students.

Key Objectives, Tactics and Metrics:

Objective 1: Expand on the foundation of a focused, intentional, purpose-driven curricular and co/extra-curricular experience with global relevance.

Based on the foundational words of our President, Eli Capilouto, our mission is *to prepare UK students to lead a life of meaning and purpose*. Studies have demonstrated the value of developing talent and passion toward a clear purpose in one's life. This encompasses not only career preparation, but also the exploration of one's passion and the world's humanity. We also know that leading a life of purpose will go beyond a student's experience on campus. To do so, we will continue to create a focused intention for every curricular stage of a student's educational experience, and purposefully enhance high-impact co- and extra-curricular opportunities, including mentorship within the Big Blue Nation alumni.

In short, a UK education, at all levels (undergraduate, graduate and professional), will continue to be a value-added education — built upon a foundation of academic excellence and measured through clearly-defined competencies, post-graduation outcomes *and* a humanistic approach to experiencing and understanding students' own passions, talents and sense of purpose in life.

Tactic A. Through a faculty-driven process, re-evaluate the undergraduate UK Core curriculum, associated competencies and instructor makeup to ensure we offer a curriculum that prepares students for a life of meaning and purpose, both personally and professionally.

Tactic B. Define **core skills** necessary for student success in chosen career paths and as citizens.

Tactic C. Through a faculty-driven process, evaluate undergraduate majors and graduate and professional programs to ensure they provide relevant and contemporary discipline-specific and transferable skills to prepare students for academic excellence and full spectrum of career pathways and the challenges of a globally connected future.

Tactic D. Expand access to and participation in high-impact practices, such as experiential education, capstone learning experiences, internships, mentorships, relevant work and research opportunities, education abroad, service learning and Living Learning Programs (LLP) among others.

Metric 1: The creation and utilization of metrics related to curriculum development and academic excellence to guide curricular development and evaluation.

Metric 2: Expansion of information regarding alumni salaries, career outcomes and overall alumni success.

Metric 3: Rates of participation in experiential education, internships, mentorships, education abroad, service learning and relevant work and research opportunities.

Objective 2: Develop perseverance through holistic student well-being as part of a comprehensive approach to support for our community, in connection with activities within the principle “Taking Care of Our People”.

We know today’s undergraduate, graduate and professional students are experiencing higher levels of mental and physical stress; UK students are no different. Anxiety, depression, issues of safety and financial insecurity, community membership and belonging, among other issues, are more evident than ever before. Given this, we plan to create a comprehensive holistic well-being experience for all UK students, and we are in a position of strength to achieve this ambitious goal. As one of a handful of institutions with a comprehensive medical center and a full complement of academic colleges, we have a rich opportunity to build a national model to address issues of well-being while simultaneously building a culture of prevention and resilience. We will leverage this multi-disciplinary expertise to create such a model and reach to connect with our students through multiple touchpoints across the campus. These efforts will help ensure students, both while at UK and after they graduate, create life-long skills so that they engage *fully* in their academic pursuits while preparing them to navigate life beyond UK.

Tactic A. Build supportive infrastructure and training for staff and faculty: Catalogue, realign and coordinate cross-campus student wellness efforts and services around a public health approach to ensure capacity, service delivery, integration and needs assessment. These activities will also inform participants involved in “Taking Care of Our People.”

Tactic B. Create an Effective Approach: Build out an analytical and qualitative, inter-culturally informed, proactive case management approach around all student wellness, leveraging aggregated student data and lessons learned from Health Corps.

Tactic C. Develop and implement clear competencies to best assure optimal life-long coping, health related and preventive skills across the range of mental, physical and financial wellness.

Metric 1: Service delivery indicators.

Metric 2: American College Health Association (ACHA) survey results.

Metric 3: Student financial health data (e.g., debt, financial aid, need).

Objective 3: Develop a smart enrollment plan for the economic growth and societal development of the Commonwealth that reflects the diverse, interdependent and complex world

our students will enter, in conjunction with objective 2 in “Many People, One University” and “Inspire Ingenuity.” A key component of CPE’s Strategic Plan is to dramatically increase the number of Kentuckians with college degrees.

As we consider the overall purpose of our University for Kentucky, and the potential lifelong purpose of many of our graduates, it is important to understand the needs and opportunities to help the students of our Commonwealth. As the university plans for the next decade, growth must be a certainty — not only for the success of the university, but, more important, for the success of the Commonwealth. Our plan must start with a firm understanding of what the Commonwealth needs, and it will align our degree and credential offerings with the economic and social development goals of the state.

And although our doors will always be open widest to Kentuckians, we must also attract and offer students from beyond our state and national borders a UK degree. Expanding markets, pathways and entry points to a UK education will be cornerstone to our overall smart growth plan, as will an intentional plan to reengage our alumni throughout their lifetime with continual UK experiences.

Tactic A. Build and implement a comprehensive, sustainable and detailed enrollment plan that leads to increased enrollment and retention in key areas addressing needs in the Commonwealth and globally, as well as across the degree and certificate continuum.

Tactic B. Build out lifelong learning programs and Big Blue Nation alumni outreach, including internationally, for optimal career networking and lifelong mentorship.

Tactic C. Through faculty-driven processes, expand in person and online curricular offerings that are relevant to the Commonwealth’s economic and societal needs, including the creation of innovative pathways into UK degree programs, transdisciplinary programs/majors/certificates and new cross-college opportunities at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels.

Metric 1: Numbers of new transdisciplinary majors, graduate programs and certificates.

Metric 2: Increase in enrollment in new markets.

Metric 3: Increase in degrees/credentials awarded in degrees/programs connected to identified workforce needs of the Commonwealth and other strategic areas.

Metric 4: Numbers of offerings and enrollments in online modalities designed to attract non-traditional students.

Objective 4: Enhance and engage in a students-first ethos that inclusively embraces all students (e.g., full-time, part-time, non-traditional, international, etc.).

Our students — undergraduate, graduate and professional — are why we are here. We must place all of them and their educational journey at the center of our work — serving, understanding and supporting *each student* at their highest level — and recognize that our students are individuals, who bring different life experiences to our campus.

Our ethos, then, needs to be intentional. It needs to ask: how does our individual work, our institutional policies, our collective decisions impact each of our students and their progression to degree? How do we ensure we have placed students and their needs first? How will we feed this clearly defined *students first ethos* and reward it?

Our ethos also needs to be driven by an equity mindedness. It needs to close the preparation gaps that students from all backgrounds bring from previous educational experiences. It needs to be a culture that recognizes the individual humanity of each student, valuing their background and lived experience and ensuring that each student feels emotionally safe, celebrated, respected and a part of the Big Blue Nation.

And yet, we cannot achieve a students-first ethos unless we simultaneously enhance the institution's support for faculty and staff. For our faculty and staff cannot serve our students first, if they themselves are not healthy, supported and well.

Tactic A. Define a students-first ethos, create a data-driven model for what it means to “put students first” and develop faculty and staff training and toolkits to support such an ethos.

Tactic B. Assess and enhance our rewards and accountability systems for faculty and staff to support students inside and outside the classroom through a students-first ethos.

Tactic C. Close the preparation gaps that students from multiple backgrounds bring from previous educational experiences at the undergraduate, graduate and professional degree seeking levels.

Tactic D. Further develop a culture of belonging for each student.

Metric 1: Applicable data from industry standard surveys (for example, National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE] data, International Student Barometer (ISB) - I Graduate Data).

Metric 2: Applicable data from undergraduate surveys (for example, FYSQ, Graduating Senior, etc.).

Metric 3: Retention and graduation rates, closing preparation gaps, time to degree.

Taking Care of Our People

We are Kentucky's institution. That means our people are both those who comprise this special community and those who we serve as we aspire to advance Kentucky through education, research, service and care. That has always been our mission and in recent years we've expanded that idea to provide health care to every corner of the state, while investing more in the compensation and support of our community.

Progress of note includes:

- UK HealthCare now treats more than 40,000 patients each year, up from less than 20,000 only 15 years ago.

- The UK HealthCare system has been named the top hospital in the state six years in a row and multiple specialty areas have been ranked nationally. Our Markey Cancer Center has been a Top 50 center, according to US News & World Report, for three straight years.
- Strategic alliances have expanded the web of care across the state to communities that traditionally lacked access to advanced, subspecialty procedures.
- On our campus, compensation has been increased for our employees eight out of the last 10 years, unprecedented investments in people and talent.
- Particular focus has been made on employees at the lower end of the institution's wage scale. Four times in the last six years, starting wages have been increased, leading the region.
- The university has repeatedly been named a **Great College to Work For**, reflecting a commitment to a rewarding work-life environment.

Advancing Kentucky means ensuring a healthy Kentucky in all the aspects of the word health – economically, physically, socially and in terms of well-being. In an era of significantly constrained resources, our university must also continue to be innovative and resourceful in finding ways to invest in, and support, our community members so they can continue the work of advancing our state.

Narrative Basis:

Leading a healthier Kentucky will require bold steps in addressing every facet of our campus and our Commonwealth. We do this first as a UK community focused on the holistic well-being of our people, ensuring each person has the choice of resources to determine what is right for them, in an environment designed to allow for the ease of making the healthy decision. We recognize the opportunity for a person to find meaning and purpose in their work and the effect of this work on each person's well-being. For our students, staff and faculty, each will have the opportunity to discover meaningful growth as they develop towards their future work and careers. Advancing the health of the Commonwealth rests on not only our outreach to care for people to both prevent and cure illness, but also to contribute considerably to the training and development of Kentucky's workforce and progress. The health of the Commonwealth and the health of the University of Kentucky are bound together, only in our ability to lead in resourcing and growing our well-being collectively will we truly be "taking care of our people."

Key Objectives, Tactics and Metrics:

Objective 1: Create the highest levels of holistic wellness for faculty, staff and students by developing a unique and comprehensive integrated structure to support working and learning environments to flourish and thrive.

Tactic A. Organize and align activities and programs in holistic well-being (physical, emotional, financial and/or spiritual).

Metric 1: Number and quality of well-being activities across the campus and/or community partnerships.

Metric 2: Level of satisfaction/engagement with office of wellness; UK @ Work/Work-Life engagement surveys.

Tactic B. Advance current continuous quality improvement evidence-based practices/programs to build resilience, reduce mental health stigma and improve overall well-being (physical, emotional, financial and/or spiritual).

Metric 1: Number and percentage of practice/programs disseminated and utilized (after determining base and monitoring number).

Tactic C. Assess incentives and opportunities to promote physical, emotional, financial and/or spiritual well-being.

Metric 1: Number and percentage of colleges/units activity.

Metric 2: Number and percentage of colleges/units that earn incentive awards.

Metric 3: Number and percentage of staff and faculty supervisors/administrators that completed training for supporting/advancing holistic wellness activities for working/learning environments.

Objective 2: Generate a transformational culture and environment where students, faculty and staff are enabled and inspired to flourish and thrive by experiencing meaning and engagement in work and learning.

Tactic A. Develop and create opportunities for personal and professional growth of students, faculty and staff, which support them to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Metric 1: UK@Work Survey applicable results.

Metric 2: Great College to Work For recognition; applicable survey results.

Metric 3: NSSE applicable results.

Tactic B. Be proactive and intentional in enhancing equitable pay, benefits, policies and practices that foster positive work and life integration, supporting a diverse workforce of today and the future.

Metric 1: UK@Work Survey applicable results.

Metric 2: Great College to Work For recognition; applicable survey results.

Tactic C. Implement best practices and strategies to enhance a sense of belonging, inclusivity and understanding of place in UK.

Metric 1: UK@Work Survey applicable results.

Metric 2: Great College to Work For recognition; applicable survey results.

Metric 3: NSSE applicable results.

Objective 3: Create a healthier Kentucky for a more diverse and better prepared workforce for tomorrow.

Tactic A. Capitalizing on our academic medical center, build a multi-college team to focus on defining a Commonwealth-wide partnership targeted on a healthier Kentucky, through enhancing the comprehensive health care workforce pipeline for UK and beyond.

Metric 1: Creation of the team with key goals.

Metric 2: Creation of short and long-term plan for disease prevention that includes increased health education and nutrition programs.

Metric 3: Partnership with the state to bring additional health care funding and health care to underserved areas of the state in alignment with UK HealthCare's Strategic Plan.

Tactic B. Expand partnerships with health care providers, public health professionals, extension offices and other partners who are committed to understanding and working on disease prevention and better health outcomes. Efforts should be made to enhance the understanding of disease progression and increase participation in disease prevention and treatment.

Metric 1: Collaboration with the Kentucky Health Collaborative, other statewide entities and institutions and UK health care colleges to create an alliance focused on disease prevention and screening.

Metric 2: Increased disease screening in targeted areas of the Commonwealth.

Inspiring Ingenuity

In 2018, UK designated six Research Priority Areas. It was a clarion call to build on existing research excellence and amplify funding potential in areas where our state has the most demonstrated need — cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, neuroscience, substance use disorders and energy. This linkage between expertise and need has accelerated the university's ascent as a premier research institution and has further embedded in us the ethos of service so identified with land-grant universities.

A few milestones include:

- In FY 2017, those priority areas accounted for more than \$150 million in funded research. That's \$150 million in research targeted at some of the state's most intractable challenges.
- Two years ago, UK received the single largest grant in its history, a three-year, \$87 million award from the National Institutes of Health. The goal: reduce opioid-related deaths by 40 percent in 16 Kentucky counties. The HEALing Communities Study involves 20 researchers across nine colleges on campus, a hallmark of work at UK where discoveries and solutions increasingly happen at the intersection and overlapping of disciplines.
- Overall, research awards jumped nine percent — FY 2019 to FY 2020 — from \$429 million to \$468 million, placing UK among the top research institutions in the country.

- A seventh priority area was added last year — the UNITE initiative — a five-year, \$10 million investment to elevate impactful research on racial equity, working in partnership with Kentucky's communities of color.
- As a way to advance social work education accessibility, since 2019, the College of Social Work has launched online BASW, MSW and DSW programs. For the online programs, from fall 2019 to fall 2021, online student enrollment increased 1,354%.
- Over the last decade, our faculty were recipients of a National Book Award, were named state Poet Laureates and published probing works of fiction and accounts of pivotal moments in World War II that continue to shape our politics and culture.

Moving forward, this spirit of ingenuity should be part of everything that we do. Undergraduates should have the chance for research and co-curricular experiences early in their academic careers. Ingenuity can — and should — extend to how we advise students and help them explore different academic paths. It should engage students, alumni and businesses in different modalities of learning and offer opportunities for life-long building of skills and competencies.

Narrative Basis:

Higher education is the vehicle to inspire ingenuity. Higher education at the land-grant, flagship Research 1 institution of the Commonwealth of Kentucky has the dedication, means and opportunity to inspire ingenuity not just in our students, but in the lives of Kentucky citizens and the global community beyond through our research and service missions. We must be intentional about creating effective pathways from campus into public venues for our research, teaching, innovation and creative work. To inspire ingenuity, using available resources, we must be strategic, innovative and use one of our strongest UK attributes — the ability to work collaboratively to address complex challenges. In our educational and research mission, we must use convergent approaches that deliberate on problem formulation, use a systems-level perspective and employ flexible but persistent problem-solving skills that become the framework to inspire ingenuity in our students, faculty and staff. The following objectives, tactics and metrics are put forth to inspire ingenuity.

Key Objectives, Tactics and Metrics:

Objective 1: Build upon our strengths in research and creative work to address a broader range of national and global challenges, the solutions to which will attract prosperity and well-being to Kentucky and its citizens.

Tactic A. Build upon the university's signature research priority areas and accomplishments into new domains of research excellence and impact.

Tactic B. Prioritize disciplinary and interdisciplinary research that helps communities of all types achieve their full socioeconomic potential and increases the quality of life for individuals within them.

Tactic C. Translate impact from the university to the public domain through basic, clinical and community research, industry outreach, economic development, commercialization and public policy frameworks that leverage the Cooperative Extension Services to drive the creation of wealth, well-being and equity.

Metric 1: Research and development (R&D) awards and expenditures across UK and within strategic key areas of research.

Metric 2: Increase in diversity and number of community-based research partners and projects.

Metric 3: Amounts of disclosures, patents, license revenue and start-ups.

Metric 4: Number and nature of extension-type program offerings and diversity in participation.

Objective 2: Advance a culture of innovation in research and creative work that integrates disciplines and/or fields of study to address local, national and international challenges.

Tactic A. Incentivize innovation and commercialization of research, international research and educational partnerships and invest and reinvest in innovation infrastructure.

Tactic B. Create novel training and career development programming, including extension-related programming, that supports life-long learning, global awareness and career advancement for practicing professionals.

Tactic C. Support programming and platforms for research and creative expression that engages a broader cross section of the campus, accelerates career development and catalyzes transdisciplinary research and educational initiatives.

Metric 1: Number of first-time research awards, scholarship metrics, patent disclosures, patents, inventions licensed, startups opened, total license revenue.

Metric 2: Advancement of research careers through the academic ranks (for active PIs: number at each rank, R&D expenditures, scholarly outputs, trainees, research honors/awards, professional societies, patents).

Metric 3: Number of awarded complex grants, training grants, career research grants.

Metric 4: Number of nationally recognized educational programs and number of new certificate and degree programs.

Objective 3: Promote an agile research and creativity ecosystem that supports impactful, self-sustaining and efficient research addressing present and future challenges facing our local, national and global communities.

Tactic A. Assess and restructure as needed the research support systems to increase effectiveness in an increasingly dynamic and competitive funding environment.

Tactic B. Adopt a more forward-facing posture and enhance our ability to anticipate and compete for funding opportunities.

Tactic C. Seek and develop opportunities to partner in novel ways with educational programs, UK HealthCare and other health systems, Kentucky businesses, Kentucky government and Kentucky communities to solve research challenges for mutual benefit.

Metric 1: Number, size and type of research awards and honors.

Metric 2: Amount of R&D awards and expenditures toward state and federal funding opportunities.

Metric 3: Economic impact of research in Kentucky.

Objective 4: Through a faculty and staff driven process, extend the idea of academic and service excellence to include new training programs and new modes of professional preparation to better serve local, national and global workforce needs.

Tactic A. Develop and implement new educational programming that attracts and prepares a broader range of students for professional preparation at the university.

Tactic B. Create academic programming that develops critical thinking skills; awareness of global issues and means to address them; increases depth and perspective on emerging research and emerging technologies; promotes effective communication for rising researchers; and enhances decision-making and ethics for careers in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and technology.

Tactic C. Blend workplace experience, research or creative experience, service experience, or international experience into the curriculum of every student.

Tactic D. Produce accessible, modular educational programming and associated credentials to professional development, career advancement and career change.

Metric 1: Number of students having relevant research or work experience within a discipline or major.

Metric 2: Number of students pursuing international research or learning experiences.

Metric 3: Number of new and innovative nationally recognized training programs.

Ensuring Greater Trust, Transparency and Accountability

Building trust depends upon a sense of transparency with all of an institution's vested stakeholders and publics and a willingness to be held accountable for both success and shortcomings.

A selection of recent communication efforts to build trust are listed below:

- As a global pandemic dominated our world for much of the last 18 months, UK endeavored to reach out more — and more often — with information that would connect the community and update it on both progress and challenges.
- An online dashboard, updated multiple times a week, provided detailed information for the community and larger public about virus incidence levels, isolation capacity and metrics.

- More than 200 community messages about COVID and the institution’s diversity efforts were disseminated to the campus over the last year — a stepped up effort designed to keep the campus connected when so many had to work and learn remotely.
- An increase in bi-directional meetings with elected campus leaders among faculty, staff and students allowed UK to gather input and feedback on critical challenges facing the university.

At the same time, transparency and accountability depend upon not simply one-way or top-down communication. Communication must engage people in dialogue and demonstrate to our stakeholders a commitment to shared governance, based on shared values. UK must extend and expand these efforts around transparency as a way of ensuring accountability to all vested stakeholders and publics. Every unit and every individual on our campus shares responsibility for greater transparency and accountability — from cybersecurity efforts to integrity in research, from minimizing the occurrence of potential conflicts of interest to even greater compliance with standards of ethics and care. All of us share in that responsibility. All of us share in this commitment. It will take all of us, working in partnership, to make it easier to understand these expectations and to live up to them.

Narrative Basis:

As Kentucky’s land-grant and flagship university, we have a heightened responsibility to ensure trust — as a core value of our community — and to increase accountability and transparency for everyone who cares about, and invests in, this place. As community members who care about ethics, when we accepted positions at the University of Kentucky, we understood that the people of Kentucky and its partners placed their trust in us. They also gained the right to hold us accountable in meeting the university’s goals with integrity and a commitment to transparency. Indeed, the university has enacted multiple highly successful policies in Research, Education, Service and Extension, which speak to our commitments around trust, transparency and accountability at every level. Further enhancing and sustaining this culture requires:

- Clear two-way communication with all stakeholders, internally and externally, that allows those audiences most critical to UK to have knowledge of what our standards are and to hold us accountable in meeting them.
- A steadfast commitment to articulating and then aligning principles with strategic objectives, budgets and governance structures and regulations.
- An expanded effort to train current and emerging leaders and support all personnel so that they can help sustain a transparent and accountable culture throughout the institution.
- An enhanced commitment to understanding of, and compliance with, university standards and policies and the multiple governmental compliance requirements we uphold.

Key Objectives, Tactics and Metrics:

Objective 1: To ensure a more nimble and flexible institution that can change when necessary or in the midst of challenges, assess language and application of university guidance and policies to better structure and define roles with respect to the bedrock principle of shared governance among faculty, students, staff and administrators. Members of our community must adhere to these policies while honoring the importance of cooperation in effective decision-making in the competitive, modern environment of knowledge delivery.

Tactic A. Enhance the existing process for the examination and revision of GRs and ARs to ensure greater transparency, equity and accountability among all the components of our shared governance structure.

Metric 1: Annual report to campus on progress of GR and AR review and revision.

Tactic B. Revise other official documents (e.g., Faculty Handbooks, Senate Rules, Human Resources policies, Business Procedures Manual) as needed for congruence with GRs and ARs.

Metric 1: Increased employee knowledge (evidenced by reduced number of requests for clarification) regarding policies related to transparency, trust and accountability at all levels.

Objective 2: Empower effective decision-making at administrative, unit, departmental and college levels by utilizing resource-based approaches. Through these greater flexibilities, administrative departments, colleges and units can be held more accountable for generating revenues and managing expenses in a transparent fashion necessary to support the university's mission in alignment with the Strategic Plan and institutional values.

Tactic A. Implement an integrated and transparent budgeting system that links revenues to productivity and quality and assigns costs according to use of resources toward university objectives utilizing procedures that reflect the university's values.

Metric 1: Number of budget feedback sessions.

Objective 3: Strengthen and expand orientation and training across all levels to promote compliance with university standards and processes through programs grounded in UK's institutional values, goals and objectives.

Tactic A. Continue momentum from Finance and Administration Training Transformation Initiative to continuously inventory, assess, develop and improve training across all areas to instill greater understanding and support of standards and process. This tactic will be achieved by tracking inventories of training programs annually, identifying gaps, new opportunities and programs that should be offered and those that should be required. Remove programs no longer deemed effective or necessary.

Metric 1: Completion rates of required training and of voluntary improvement programs.

Tactic B. Thoroughly educate all current and emerging executive leaders on standards and processes, creating additional *required executive training programs* in key areas. Inventory all current UK executive compliance and training programs (offered in-house and through external vendors); identify gaps in programming to create new programs.

Metric 1: Pre- and post-test assessments on training participants on knowledge of standards and processes and understanding of UK's values, goals and objectives.

Tactic C. Build upon existing structures that support and encourage collaborative work across units aimed at promoting transparency and accountability at all levels. Encourage those with expertise at all levels to share knowledge (through workshops and written materials) regarding structures, processes and tactics that contribute to success. This tactic will be achieved through knowledge sharing and/or creation of web-based training (WBT).

Metric 1: Number of small topic-centric ongoing work groups created across units led by "best practice" leaders in key topic areas with the assistance of key compliance personnel. Assess participant comfort with and knowledge of key areas.

Objective 4: Develop programs and approaches to engaging, resonant communication with both internal and external audiences.

Tactic A. Both campus-wide surveys, as well as focus group meetings with vested publics, such as alumni and community groups and selected faculty, staff and students, will be performed annually around issues and initiatives related to trust and transparency.

Metric 1: Open rates and click-through rates of survey

Tactic B. Publish annual report on UKNow regarding trust and transparency initiatives that includes a link allowing for substantive feedback.

Metric 1: Open rates for annual report, housed on transparency website for initiative.

Bringing Together Many People, One Community

UK has embraced its calling as Kentucky's university by strengthening its commitment, not only to diversity, but to sustaining communities that care deeply about equity and a sense of belonging for everyone.

In our reckoning with questions of race and racism and the systems and structures that perpetuate inequality, UK has initiated a multi-year, campus-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity (DEI) effort, encompassing representation from across campus.

To that end, the university has never been more diverse, as noted in the milestones below:

- Among public flagship institutions, few universities have a higher percentage of people of color on their campuses than the populations of their states. UK is one of them.

- We are, in fact, more diverse than at any time in our history, with students from more than 100 countries and more than 10 percent of our student population coming from a community of color.
- Four-year and six-year graduation rates for Black and African-American students have increased by 16 and 14 percentage points, respectively, over approximately the last 10 years.
- The university also stepped up to confront the other pandemic afflicting our country in 2020 — a reckoning over questions of race and racism and the systems and structures that perpetuate inequality and inequities.

A massive DEI effort, encompassing representation from across the campus, was initiated. More than a dozen projects, involving some 500 community members, worked throughout the year on issues aligned with the institution's values.

- The institution established a DEI Public Art Fund focused on curating and promoting diverse and inclusive art in capital projects.
- UK embarked upon a new campus plan to incentivize more diverse representation in faculty, staff and administrative ranks.
- Added a seventh Research Priority Area related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity (UNited In True racial Equality) as part of a greater institutional focus on questions of systemic and structural racism and its impacts. Between FY 15 and FY 20, there has been an annual compound growth rate of 16.6 percent in awarded grants and contracts in the DEI area.
- The institution has tapped a highly regarded expert in the local community to be its first supplier diversity manager as part of a long-term effort to bolster and strengthen ties to minority-owned businesses and vendors.
- UK announced the establishment of the Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies — a multidisciplinary program that will highlight UK's growing research around issues of race and racism.

Creating a culture of belonging for all is not a discrete project. It is an ongoing process, sustained by people committed to being a place where everyone feels as though they belong.

This is not only a response to injustice. It is a commitment to changing culture. That is our task now.

Narrative Basis:

As the land-grant institution of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, UK leads the state in ways more expansive than at its founding as an agricultural and mechanical college in the 19th century. The ideal of advancing the citizenry through education, hard work and innovation remains at the core, yet global and societal changes affect people in even the most rural parts of the state. With one of the most diverse workforces and student bodies in the state, UK provides a microcosm of how a group of diverse people (race, sex, sexual identity, sexual orientation, religion, creed, nationality, cultural background, disability, small town or urban community culture and first-generation context) can evolve in such a way as to bring DEI and positive change to its community and to society at large.

Through its key areas of education, research, health care, arts, culture and economic development, UK will provide both a real-world example and a working framework for moving Kentucky forward in its challenges for today and for tomorrow. Part of that framework must

include the original “extension” of knowledge to all 120 counties, through the effective utilization of UK’s Cooperative Extension Service and through the Office of Institutional Diversity (OID).

As an act of civic engagement and by utilizing such considerable institutional resources as the UK Office of Business Engagement and the Coldstream Research Campus, the university can be a catalyst for growth, workforce stability, worker success and free-market competitiveness for diverse communities and businesses.

We have the opportunity to expand the meaning of the land-grant idea of *commonwealth* by using our extension service as a conduit to go out and give but also to *listen*. We can also exhibit *on campus*, our commonality — those things that unite us in a democracy and as a global community. Our unity is our diversity — our mission to be all-inclusive.

Key Objectives, Tactics and Metrics:

Objective 1: To broadly demonstrate and communicate the diversity of the UK campus to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and to the global community as a means to create more interaction and involvement between campus and communities on DEI matters.

Tactic A. Develop more college-level DEI initiatives leveraging UK Cooperative Extension Service to enable statewide impact, including the location of more extension title series faculty across campus and communities.

Tactic B. Showcase/educate about UK HealthCare’s efforts to access all communities, while the University continues to prepare providers who are representative of the citizens they serve.

Metric 1: Annual report detailing community-engagement and communication on DEI matters.

Metric 2: Annual report on number and location of extension title positions and use therein for DEI efforts.

Objective 2: To recruit and retain diverse populations (students, faculty, staff) within all units on campus.

Tactic A. (Employees). Develop a commitment to a clear recruitment strategy for recruiting and retaining a more diverse campus workforce. And then track and report DEI recruitment strategy for university and units (annually).

Tactic B. (Faculty, staff, students, alumni). Develop and implement a campaign soliciting help from our diverse community — qualitative one-on-one interviews (students, faculty, staff, alumni) about our challenges and successes — personal narrative about their UK experience and bringing new ideas to the table. Utilize as recruitment collateral.

Tactic C. (Students). Continue and enhance tracking and reporting of DEI recruitment strategies (including international students) for the university and units (annually) to ensure the success and matriculation of these students, leading to a more diverse student body.

Metric 1: Annual documentation of DEI community demographics with trend data reporting for the university and colleges (all faculty, staff and student [undergraduate, graduate and professional] enrollment and matriculation).

Metric 2: Annual report from all colleges on new/evolving recruitment/retention strategies, including financial resources dedicated and used. Digital/Hyperlink report on one-on-one interview campaign (how many people see them and how are they used for recruitment).

Metric 3: Annual report on the College Productivity Model (CPM) metric for faculty diversity.

Objective 3: To create greater and direct partnerships between the university and communities throughout the Commonwealth on DEI-related matters.

Tactic A. Make use of our Commonwealth history and current diversity to discover our commonality.

Tactic B. Use community- and industry-sponsored projects to promote inclusivity. Make DEI an integrated component of all sponsored partnerships.

Tactic C. Invite our diverse community partners to engage with search committees in the recruitment of faculty to UK.

Metric 1: Number of sponsored events, different locales and number of people engaged, reported to the OID.

Metric 2: Report of DEI impacts (university and college level) in research and creative scholarship involving Commonwealth communities.

Objective 4: To model and provide a hospitable, safe and inclusive environment acknowledging our past and creating opportunities for the free and open exchange of ideas to all people of the Commonwealth, the United States and the world.

Tactic A. Demonstrate, educate and promote successful approaches to responsible speech: create a public and transparent framework for engaging in respectful and civil dialogue about controversial topics.

Tactic B. Create topical forums (monthly, bimonthly) around relevant DEI issues — that show rather than tell — inviting community-based facilitators and alumni who represent our diverse population, both on campus and within communities across the Commonwealth.

Tactic C. Make clear our welcome to all of campus through designated, safe spaces for all religious worship activity and mental health counselors specifically trained to assist people from historically oppressed or neglected groups (e.g., LGBTQIA+, first generation, Indigenous populations, immigrants, refugees, Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI), etc.).

Metric 1: Identification and inventory of designated spaces (including a land acknowledgement statement), feedback and publications from topical forums, collected and analyzed.

Metric 2: Annual documentation of guidelines and public discourse on responsible speech, including related new items on UK Work-Life survey.