

## Thank You

Mr. Chairman and members of our Board of Trustees,

We are known in higher education for using many words to explain the inordinately complex and deeply challenging.

In an important sense, though, I need only two to describe how I feel about this last year and to summarize what must be said in the midst of a time like no other:

*Thank you.*

Thank you to you, as a board, for your steadfast support of this special place and for the work we do together. You selflessly lead, provide counsel and offer support to an institution—this university—that means so much to so many in the Commonwealth. You love this place and that is made manifest in so many ways through what you do as individuals and as a board.

And thank you, especially and continually, to a community—a community of students, scholars and staff who have faced more adversity and anxiety, change and challenge, in the span of a few months than most of us face over years or lifetimes.

Almost without fail, our people and our community have met each moment and exceeded expectations. They have done so with the sense of grace and grit that defines this place and has marked us so distinctively for more than 155 years as the University of, for and with Kentucky.

Yet, I know, too, that our people are tired.

They are stretched and stressed, anxious and worried. In a period of months, they have been asked to do more and to be more in ways that extend far beyond what anyone would describe as fair.

They balance work and life, childcare and community responsibilities, and they know that we are now in the middle of disruption that does not have a clear end in sight. They are concerned about their health and that of their loved ones near and far, some of whom live in their homes, and others whom—because of a virus that attacks indiscriminately—they cannot readily reach out and touch.

They fret about their students and the work they do in research labs, hospital clinics, on farms and in community centers across the Commonwealth and around the world.

Their families depend upon them as does a Commonwealth that calls on them now.

They have always answered.

Our students, too, have stood up and demonstrated, time and again, how special they are and why, ultimately, we should still believe in a future that will be brighter than our past and better than our present.

Many of them did not get to graduate from high school or a college program in the traditional sense of the word. Now, they are asked to come here and rebuild community, while physically distancing, wearing masks and undergoing continual testing, tracking and tracing.

And they are asked to do all of these things without a roadmap or template. This generation already has witnessed a global economic meltdown that disrupted communities and dislocated and unsettled families and ways of life.

Now, in a sense, they are being asked to take and pass tests without clear answers.

It is completely new territory being navigated in the midst of terribly turbulent waters. Yet, they are helping us, in profoundly difficult ways, to build a new community.

They have been called, too. And they have answered.

Thank you.

It seems so inadequate. But it is what we have to underscore how we feel about you and a community that endures and is durably built to handle today's trials and those that we know will follow.

### **Evaluating Our Progress in the Midst of Uncertainty**

Today, if we know one thing, it is that there are simply more unknowns than knowns.

In the middle of our spring semester, our world was pummeled by a pandemic that infects our lungs. We were forced to pivot, in a matter of weeks, sending students home and transitioning all of our courses to online and remote formats.

A telehealth program we were working on, which would ordinarily take months to plan and implement, was established in weeks. We closed and transitioned research labs and programs. We delayed elective surgeries and built a field hospital to ensure that our region had the critical care capacity we feared we would need.

And we began to prepare for what we would later learn would be a semester and school year like no other in our history.

One pandemic was quickly followed by another that, over the course of a fractious history, has infected far too many hearts and minds. We were stung by the realization that systemic and systematic racism inhabits and infects still too much of our world. We are not immune from its reach, and we have a particular responsibility to lead and find answers for its cure.

We can no longer be satisfied with slow and steady progress on ancient and stubborn issues. We have made progress, but there is much more to do.

It is against that backdrop that I am compelled to offer a different self-evaluation this year. In the pages that follow, I provide some of the traditional markers of progress and challenges—goals

that were made and met; and those that we aspire to meet but still have much work to do to fulfill.

Yet, an evaluation that doesn't recognize how our world, in so many ways, was turned on its head six months ago would be incomplete and miss so much about this unprecedented moment as well as an uncharted future that will necessarily force us to rethink old assumptions and habits.

It is in that context that I offer the following guide to our last year:

- A description of our efforts in response to the onset of the coronavirus and our plans to re-open this fall, which were an incredible marshalling of capacity and effort.
- Our initial efforts at understanding how to attack and address systemic racism and our planning around diversity, equity and inclusivity—a comprehensive plan that is similar in size and scope to how we have responded to COVID-19.
- A summary of our undeniable progress on the priorities established in our five-year strategic plan, which runs its course this year, as well as those areas critical to who we are but in which we have not improved enough.
- Achievements in critical areas—from national recognitions to our ongoing philanthropic efforts—that underscore our mission of education, research, service and care.
- A brief look at our future—what must we do, with our people always as our foundation and guiding light—to remain the University of, for and with Kentucky.

### **A Global Pandemic, a Quick Pivot and a Community Response**

Several months ago, as we began to understand the scope of the challenges presented by COVID-19, we immediately moved into action, activating our Emergency Operations Center and calling upon our team of public health and infectious disease experts.

A few highlights of that response include:

- We established the principles that would guide us through this crisis and began the process of building a modern public health infrastructure.
- We quickly pivoted to fully online course delivery following Spring Break, a momentous lift from our faculty who transitioned their curriculum to new modalities on short notice.
- Staff members from across our campus mobilized to support our students' academic, financial and emotional needs—a commitment that is perhaps best reflected through a single number: 30,000. Staff members made 30,000 phone calls, reaching out to all of our students to check in during this time of uncertainty and anxiety.
- We mailed Wi-Fi hotspots and iPads to students with connectivity issues.

- We expanded the platforms in our Counseling Center and through Work + Life Connections to provide virtual mental health support services to our students and employees.
- Staff members in our International Center worked around the clock to ensure each of our students participating in an education abroad program was able to return safely and expeditiously to the United States.

As we planned our operations for the Fall 2020 semester, again, we called upon our most precious resource—our people and their ideas—to create the best possible plan to resume in-person coursework, while maintaining our top priority of ensuring the health and safety of our campus community.

- More than 500 people across 19 workstreams worked collaboratively and cohesively to create our Playbook for Reinvented Operations. Our Screening, Testing and Tracing to Accelerate Restart (START) team provided expert guidance to ensure we could make it as easy as possible to be safe on our campus.
- In June, UK researchers across many disciplines quickly mobilized to form UK's COVID-19 Unified Research Experts (CURE) Alliance team, addressing COVID-19's medical challenges and beyond—including the development of new personal protective equipment (PPE) materials, the design of testing and diagnostic equipment and a deeper examination of the wider societal, economic and legal implications of the pandemic.
- We stood up what is now a more than 50-person Health Corps team of contact tracers, wellness connectors and academic coordinators who, seven days a week, provide instructions and support to members of our community who have been infected by or exposed to the virus.
- Because we know our students may experience heightened anxiety and stress during this time, and because we recognize the importance of mental health as much as physical health and safety, our Health Corps and our Counseling Center have provided additional services tailored to each student to ensure their holistic well-being.
- We converted residence halls to isolation facilities and coordinated services such as meal delivery, academic support and wellness support, among others, for students in isolation.
- We installed new technology in our classrooms to allow for remote learning, when necessary.
- We reconfigured our spaces in our residence halls, dining facilities, learning areas and recreational spaces to allow for physical distancing. We erected campus canopies, hammock gardens and other spaces to facilitate gathering and community-building in a safe way.

The fall semester began with our modern public health infrastructure adapting in real time to the challenges we faced.

- In August, as the semester began, we implemented an aggressive and comprehensive baseline testing operation. We required all students who physically came to campus—more than 25,000—to receive an initial COVID-19 test. This baseline data drove a retesting regimen among subpopulations of students for whom the data indicated a higher risk of infection.
- In September, we began publishing a new COVID-19 dashboard—a more comprehensive, daily look at the status of our campus. These data, updated daily, provide a transparent, objective overview of the current campus impact by including the number of active cases, recovered cases, number of students in isolation, number of tests conducted and the percentage of community members completing their required daily attestation.
- We offered free COVID-19 testing for employees and community members at two testing sites in Lexington, while extending ongoing, free on-campus testing for students throughout the remainder of the semester.
- We began wastewater testing, an effective tool to identify early signs of exposure to viruses.
- On September 14, Ambassador Deborah Birx, the national coronavirus response coordinator, visited our campus and engaged with senior leadership in an in-depth dialogue around our health and safety efforts. The ambassador lauded our comprehensive, data-driven efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- Following the ambassador’s visit, and upon recommendations she discussed with our START team, we commenced a random testing regimen among our student population. Again, we emphasized to our community that data and science have driven, and will continue to drive, all of our decisions regarding the health and safety of our community.
- In October, we released a mid-term report, reflecting our progress halfway through the semester where in-person instruction would be conducted. The report underscored that the numbers of new cases and the seven-day averages of cases were declining as well as the percentage of our isolation capacity being utilized.
- Accordingly, all along the way, we monitored a variety of factors that impacted our operational status:
  1. Supply of PPE.
  2. The number of critical care beds in UK HealthCare to serve both campus and community.
  3. Prevalence of the virus.
  4. The capacity for daily screening and ongoing contact tracing.
  5. The capacity for isolation and quarantining.
  6. The ability to provide a robust residential experience on our campus.
  7. Guidance from local, state and federal health and public policy officials.

Even as we have faced challenges, I remain gratified by the way our community has come together.

In a collective and collaborative effort, we are continuing our work and our mission, all guided by a commitment to do what is necessary to keep each other safe and healthy. We have on our side a world-class academic medical center and a team of leading medical and public health experts who have, from the beginning, guided our efforts. We also are a community that has proven time and again that, in times of adversity or challenge, we step up.

### **Planning for an Uncertain Budget in the Time of COVID-19**

As the world has witnessed the economic fragility associated with COVID-19, our university, too, has had to confront budget uncertainties.

Facing more than a \$70 million shortfall for the new fiscal year, starting July 1, we took several measures to protect our people and our mission. We did not implement budgeted reductions in force, we placed fewer employees on administrative no-pay than originally planned and we invested more in our graduate students, who do so much to support the teaching and research missions of our campus.

Now, at the request of Governor Andy Beshear, we are preparing plans examining how an 8 percent budget reduction for FY 20-2021 would impact our operations. That could mean as much as a \$21 million reduction in our budget this year alone.

The context for this request is an estimated state budget shortfall this fiscal year of between about \$240 million and \$500 million, with the prospect for another round of federal relief funds uncertain at this time.

There is no way to sugarcoat the negative impact a reduction of that size would have on our institution. However, any reductions we may have to make will not include critical investments we have announced in recent months, including:

- The millions in investments we are making toward our diversity, equity and inclusivity efforts generally and those more specifically we are making toward research around racial disparities and inequities, the seed money for the Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies and additional dollars to assist in hiring a more diverse faculty.
- Resources promised to graduate students for stipends and increasing investments in support services for them.
- The freeze on health premiums this year for our people and our commitment to raise starting wages at UK, beginning this fiscal year, from \$10.40 to \$12.50.

We will keep these promises. They are investments in our people and reflect who we want to be as a community. However, on top of the substantial resources spent on our response to COVID-19 thus far, there would be no way to paper over the pain we would experience if these reductions are enacted.

As we have before, we will be guided by our principles of ensuring our commitment to our mission of education, research, health care and service. We have used several million dollars from a contingency fund to help us address issues such as these, in addition to using those

revenues to help with the cap we placed on tuition and mandatory fees and our COVID-19 response.

While we understand the state must prepare for the worst-case scenario when so much is still so uncertain, we will prepare, too, as we have throughout this pandemic, to act in the best interests of our community, always placing the health, safety and well-being of our campus community first.

### **Our Next Steps in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Right now, we may be physically separated more than ever before in our lifetimes. But we cannot be isolated. What happens in places that seem remote and physically distant are tragically real and relevant for so many of our colleagues and community members.

The university's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Implementation Plan is a comprehensive effort to change our campus culture, while also acknowledging our own imperfect history.

With urgency, and a sense of grace, we will navigate challenging issues with a 21-member leadership team, comprising students, faculty and staff from more than 10 colleges and several units. In addition, a 10-member workgroup has been established, and is meeting multiple times a week, to help facilitate the collective work of this cultural change. From there, we have built out project-based work teams, the first of which is focusing on responsible speech and programming efforts.

I am also pleased the university is moving forward with a variety of important initiatives that speak to our research capacity to address the issue of systemic racism in ways that will unequivocally demonstrate that Black lives matter.

- As one of our research priority areas, The UNITED In racial Equity (UNITE) Research Initiative will seek to tackle racial disparities and inequity across broad areas, ranging from health to the historical foundations of systemic racism. We are backing this initiative with a \$10 million investment over the next five years.
- Our Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies, based in our College of Arts and Sciences, will establish research clusters across the campus and promote UK's growing research and scholarship on topics of importance in African history and African American history, issues such as slavery and the quest for freedom, racial discrimination and violence, and the long struggle for civil rights.
- The University of Kentucky College of Education and the NAACP, the nation's largest and most preeminent civil rights organization, are launching a groundbreaking education and research initiative focused on educational equity, civil rights and social justice. This initiative marks the first time the NAACP has partnered with university-based scholars in the field of education to address racial inequities.
- We also recently announced a commitment to anti-racism training this fall, starting with our senior administration.

As the work of our implementation plan unfolds, we will continue do to our part—to care and to demonstrate that care—through our willingness to take this journey together.

### **Elevating Diversity, Achieving Our Strategic Mission**

In our efforts to change our campus culture and build a more equitable community for all, we must ensure that our leadership reflects this commitment within the context of our missions of education, research, service and care.

I recently announced a major reorganization of our senior administration that energizes our commitment to put students at the center of all we do, in addition to constructing a bigger table for decision-making and creating more accountability in measuring progress. The changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increasing the Office for Institutional Diversity’s (OID) budget of \$3.1 million to \$19.3 million, including the transition of the Parker Scholarship program, the Faculty Diversity Fund and the Office of Community Engagement.
- Launching a national search for a permanent vice president for institutional diversity. Dr. George Wright will continue to fill this critical position in an interim capacity and add to his portfolio the permanent position of senior adviser to me.
- Creating the position of vice president for student success, which has been filled by Dr. Kirsten Turner, previously the associate provost for academic and student affairs, who will report directly to me. This new unit will contain many of the functions currently in the Office of Student and Academic Life (SAL) and will, significantly, add Enrollment Management.
- Aligning all student support efforts under one organization and all areas of academic excellence under the provost. That alignment will empower the Office of the Provost to focus more attention on our core curriculum—those classes that all UK students take in areas that emphasize communication, creativity and critical analysis—as well as our upcoming reaccreditation.
- Creating the position of vice president for land-grant engagement, which has been filled by Dr. Nancy Cox, who also serves as dean for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.
- Creating the position of chief accountability officer and audit executive, which has been filled by Joe Reed, who was previously our chief auditor.
- Eliminating the position of chief of staff in the Office of the President, spreading out that authority among those who directly report to me.

I believe these changes will chart our organization’s path to greater excellence, diversity, impact and success, and I am eager to write a new page in the next chapter of our institution alongside these colleagues and partners in progress.



## **Our Progress, Our Promise: The Challenges That Remain**

On those things most important to our fundamental mission—success among all students, research and health care that promises to heal and help our state, service that touches every corner and community of the Commonwealth—we have made steady and, in so many ways, sustained and remarkable strides.

Consider only a few hallmarks of progress:

- In the last five years, we have increased by nearly 15 percent the number of bachelor's degrees awarded.
- UK is responsible for 62% of the total statewide growth in bachelor's degrees awarded over the past five years.
- UK is responsible for all of the total statewide growth in bachelor's degrees awarded over the past five years for Black or African American students when compared to the other Kentucky schools combined.
- UK is responsible for all of the total statewide growth in bachelor's degrees awarded over the past five years for Low Income students when compared to the other KY schools combined.
- The Second Fall Retention rate has grown by almost 5 absolute percentage points over the past five years, based on preliminary data, as we have lowered levels of unmet financial need among our students and we continue to increase our Bachelor-Degree production for the state workforce.
- We now conduct about \$430 million annually in research and so much of it—like our nearly \$90 million HEAL grant—is focused on the issues that confront our state in the most dire terms: opioid use, cancer, heart disease and other maladies of the mind, heart and spirit.
- Annual outpatient visits at UK HealthCare have grown at a compounded rate in less than a decade by more than 100 percent.
- Together, as a community, we have constructed some \$2.6 billion worth of projects in the last decade alone.

In the performance funding model, backed by each university in Kentucky and adopted by policy-makers more than two years ago, the University of Kentucky has consistently met or exceeded the standards established in nearly every measurement of progress—from student success to degrees awarded, particularly in fields so in demand in our state, such as engineering, science and health care.

Yet, it must be said that we are not satisfied. Our strategic plan—2015-2020—set even more ambitious goals, ones we knew at the time would in many cases be aspirational, if not long stretches of our capacity today.

The appendix at the end of this document provides numerical details of both our promise and the work and gaps that remain.

We know, for example, that while we have made historic increases in retention and graduation rates, there is still more to do to be among the very best institutions in the country.

We also know that while we are recruiting, retaining and graduating more students of color than at any time in our history—and more than any other in our state—unacceptable gaps in progress toward retention and graduation remain.

Some of that has to do with providing the right scaffolding and support for students; some of it speaks to the community of acceptance and belonging for everyone that we are striving to build. Whatever the cause, or source of concern, we are committed to eliminating gaps and creating a community where all students have equal opportunities to succeed and reach their potential.

### **National Recognition**

Each year, I am reminded that a university, at its core, is made of two things: people and ideas.

They are fundamental to our mission. And, this year, our people again have created an environment that has been recognized nationally by ModernThink and reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education. For the third consecutive year, we have been named a “Great College to Work For,” and, in 2020, UK has been recognized in eight of the 12 categories, giving us the special designation as an Honor Roll institution.

The following distinctions represent the most categories for which UK has ever been recognized:

- Collaborative governance
- Compensation and benefits
- Confidence in senior leadership
- Facilities, workspace and security
- Respect and appreciation
- Teaching environment
- Tenure clarity and process
- Work/life balance

This recognition is especially gratifying because it is based primarily on faculty and staff feedback about how they feel about the institution. More than anything, though, it reflects the environment that they have built and that they work to sustain each day.

Additionally, for the fourth consecutive year, the University of Kentucky has received INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine's highest honor—Diversity Champion. The oldest and largest diversity publication and website in higher education today, INSIGHT Into Diversity had already recognized UK recently with a 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award, also for the fourth year in a row.

The publication also recognizes selected institutions — those that rank in the top tier of HEED Award recipients—as Diversity Champions. These institutions exemplify an unyielding commitment to diversity and inclusion throughout their campus communities, across academic programs, and at the highest administrative levels. Diversity Champions are institutions that serve as role models and set the standard for thousands of other U.S. college campuses striving for inclusive excellence.

Further, Campus Pride Index, the premier LGBTQ national benchmarking tool for colleges and universities to create safer, more inclusive campus communities, has named UK one of 2020’s “Best of the Best” LGBTQ-friendly colleges and universities.

This recognition reflects the determination and compassion of our people—as well as our unending commitment to making progress on behalf of those we serve.

### **Kentucky Can: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Campaign**

Two years ago, the university embarked on what would be the largest fundraising campaign in the history of the Commonwealth.

No one could have foreseen the challenges we would face in grappling with COVID-19, but our fundraising staff acted quickly to check in on friends of the university.

And, even as we face this global pandemic, as of July 31, 2020, we have raised \$1.45 billion of our \$2.1 billion goal to expand access to education and accelerate our efforts to solve the world’s most challenging health and economic issues. A testament to our tenacity and to the commitment of our donors is the fact that this past year we recorded \$207 million in gifts and commitments (even as we confronted the coronavirus pandemic), only \$5 million less than the previous record years.

Our campaign continues to focus on three key areas:

- Funding scholarships to ensure that more Kentuckians have access to a UK education and that they can graduate on time with reduced debt. Our highly successful and nationally heralded LEADS initiative in particular works to eliminate financial need as an impediment to attending and graduating from this institution.
- Investing in efforts to enhance and expand our research enterprise, empowering our leaders to discover solutions that will provide lasting impacts on communities locally and globally.
- Growing our endowment to more than \$2 billion to attract and retain leading scholars and continue to support development programs and initiatives that provide a foundation for the work of faculty, staff and students.

While we are not immune to the challenges we face today, we know that having the necessary resources to fulfill our missions of education, research, care and service is critically important in writing the next chapter of our university.

As we work to reach a historic milestone in new and reinvented ways, I remain inspired by our community of alumni and friends of this special place.

### **Remaining Firmly Fixed on the Future**

I am compelled to end where I began.

Thank you.

Nearly 10 years ago, I stood before so many of you, and an entire university community, and remarked that this place is a promise.

It is a promise to our students. It is a promise to our community of scholars and staff. It is a promise, above all, to the Commonwealth we were created to serve. We have a covenant with Kentucky, to educate, to serve, to conduct research and to heal.

We have a promise to keep: to be the source of hope, and the standard-bearer of progress for a state and for generations of students who come here and in whose potential the future of the world rests.

That covenant—that pact forged over the course of more than 155 years—has never been more important or vital than it is today or as it will be in the future.

Yet, to be successful for those we serve now and those still to come, we must think and act in new ways. While our mission will remain firmly fixed, many old assumptions will have to change.

As we begin a new strategic planning process, the question we will ask of you, as board members, and of our entire community, is this:

***What does the University of Kentucky have to do to meet our promises in a changing and dynamic future?***

The answer to that question is one we will have to find together. It will require your leadership, support and continual guidance. You will, as always, hold us accountable for setting goals and meeting expectations.

It will also require a community response and answer. We will have to plan differently than in the past to think about and answer that question as we set a course for what lies ahead.

Our people—students, scholars and staff—must still grapple with the shifting foundations of a world that has dramatically changed. Some things will never return.

We will have to find new approaches to teaching and course delivery. We will need to build even more and stronger systems of support for our students—in learning, mental health and wellness and in preparation for an economy that is dynamic and globally interdependent.

Before this past spring, for example, who understood what a contact tracer was or how you would utilize a daily screening application?

We will be asked to tackle the still seemingly intractable challenges of opioid use, cancer and heart disease and other maladies of the body and mind that are the source of despair for too many people and communities. But we will add to that list new challenges—pandemics today and those we have yet to even imagine or contemplate.

And we will do all this in the midst of a world that is more interdependent than ever before, yet more disconnected and disheartened, too. All too often we see the urge to point fingers, rather than extend hands, to sow seeds of discontent rather than plant gardens of understanding and reconciliation.

In effect, we are being asked to both renew and reinvent who we are and what we do simultaneously.

Fortunately, to this task we have a rich resource—our people; the people who make this place so special and so integral to our state and its future.

Yes, we will have to plan differently. At a time when people are tasked with so much, and drained of energy and time, we will have to find different ways to gather input and seek feedback. We will look to plan in ways that allow people to continue to focus the work we confront now, even as we ask them to contemplate a future that is, many days, so difficult to envision.

They will work hard as they always do, but we must find ways they can renew, recharge and take care of priorities at home and elsewhere.

We will call on them again.

And they will, as always, answer.

For that, I thank you. I thank them.

I remain heartened and renewed by a community that always answers one question affirmatively and unreservedly:

Did we care?

## Appendix

***Strategic Objective One:*** *Be the university of choice for aspiring undergraduate students within the Commonwealth and beyond, who are seeking a transformational education that promotes self-discovery, experiential learning and life-long achievement.*

Chart 1A:

Metric	Baseline	AY 2015-16	AY 2016-17	AY 2017-18	AY 2018-19	AY 2019-20	AY 2020-21 (Preliminary)	2020 Goal
<b>Retention Rates</b>								
First-Year	82.2%	82.7%	81.7%	83.3%	84.5%	85.0%	86.4%	90.0%
Second-Year	74.9%	74.9%	74.1%	74.3%	74.6%	75.5%	78.0%	85.5%
Third-Year	69.7%	70.1%	69.1%	68.4%	68.3%	69.0%	69.9%	82.0%
<b>Graduation Rates</b>								
Four-Year Graduation Rate	38.5%	40.4%	44.2%	45.0%	47.3%	51.1%	51.8%	53.0%
Six-Year Graduation Rate	60.2%	61.3%	63.6%	64.6%	65.8%	66.1%	66.0%	70.0%
<b>Six-Year Graduation Rate Gaps</b>								
Underrepresented Minorities	16.7%	23.5%	13.0%	15.2%	14.2%	12.0%	16.1%	9.8%
First-Generation	7.8%	14.1%	16.6%	18.2%	16.7%	16.1%	16.1%	8.0%
Pell Recipients	15.0%	19.1%	16.2%	19.6%	17.1%	15.7%	17.6%	8.0%

\*AY 2020-21 is preliminary

### *Retention, Graduation and Enrollment*

In this critical area, we established stretch goals as guideposts and, in some substantial ways, we are making progress. Still others will need – and are receiving – renewed and deepened attention as we move forward.

Students and families—even in a time of so much anxiety and uncertainty—are choosing UK because we place students and their success at the center of everything we do. In the fall 2020 semester, the University of Kentucky has reached historic levels of enrollment and retention, according to preliminary figures. These data reflect our growing academic reputation as a place where students – from all backgrounds – succeed at high levels.

Additionally, this fall, more than 31,000 students enrolled at UK for the first time in the institution’s history, a nearly 2% increase over last year. Also, preliminary first-year retention is at 86.4%, nearly 1.5 percentage points higher than last academic year and about 5 percentage points higher than in just fall 2016.

Retention rates have increased steadily for five years, a number that signals the momentum of graduation rates, the most significant indicator of student success.

Although we have not reached our goal in retention and graduation, we have made undeniable progress toward becoming one of the leading institutions in the country.

We also have made progress toward becoming a more diverse and inclusive campus. Yet, we know, in particular, that in retaining and graduating underrepresented student population we still have much work to do as evidenced in these numbers. And in the final analysis, these numbers – more than metrics and measurements -- are about altering the life trajectory of our students as we prepare them to lead lives of meaning and purpose.

### *Prioritizing Student Wellness*

It has never been more necessary to prioritize wellness among our students, especially for those who may be coming to a college campus for the first time.

This year, we invested approximately \$500,000 in additional funds to support student wellness. These investments will support two additional clinicians in the UK Counseling Center, two additional consultants in the UK Disability Resource Center, a case manager to serve the institution's Center for Support and Intervention (formerly named the Community of Concern), two academic coaches and a variety of additional programs to promote wellness and mental health for students.

We continue to emphasize to our students that mental and emotional well-being is as central to one's success as physical wellness.

### *High-quality, Affordable College Experience*

Building upon our commitment to access and affordability, all while prioritizing the health and safety of our community, this semester we implemented a cap on tuition and mandatory fees for full-time undergraduate students, irrespective of course modality.

Understanding that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives of our students and their families, the university distributed more than \$8.9 million from the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act to more than 6,000 students to reduce financial constraints.

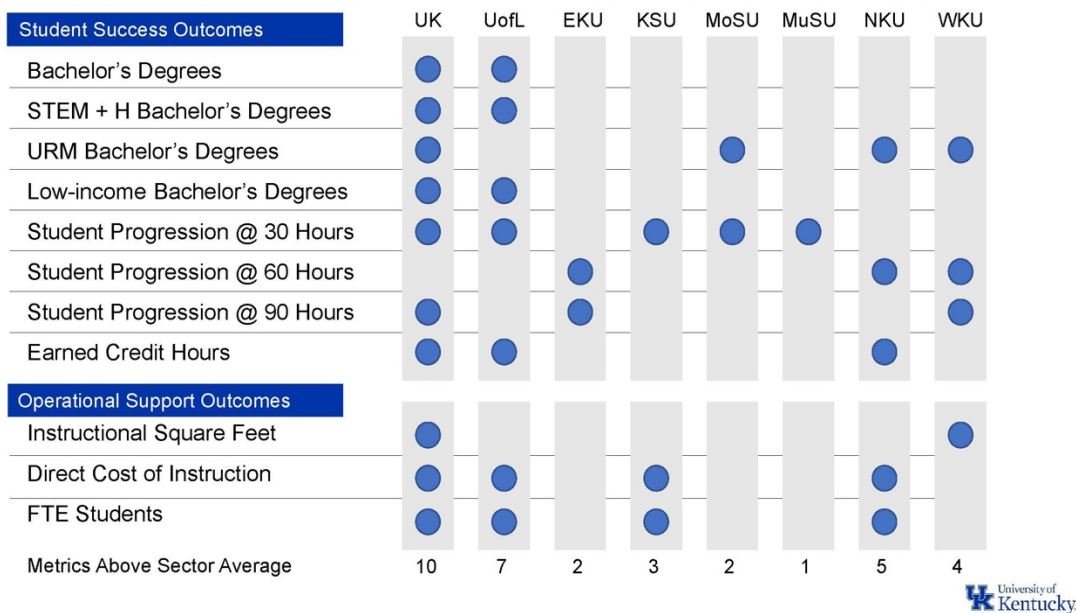
Still, despite these challenges, we are among the country's leaders—through programs like the UK LEADS (Leveraging Economic Affordability for Developing Success) program—in lowering the burden of the cost of education for more of our students. We continue to garner national attention for this innovative program.

### *Meeting the State's Higher Education Goals*

Chart 1B:

## PERFORMANCE FUNDING

Metrics Where Rates of Growth Exceeded Sector Average  
Between Fiscal Years 2019-20 and 2020-21



The state’s performance funding model represents Kentucky’s focus on undergraduate student success as a driver of workforce and economic development. While our strategic plan speaks to our broader goals and mission as a flagship and land grant research university, our success in achieving our strategic plan objectives has yielded positive performance – and additional funding – in the state’s funding model.

The University of Kentucky continued to perform well in the fourth year of the Commonwealth’s performance funding formula for higher education. UK outperformed its sister institutions in the state, achieving 10 of 11 goals outlined in the model.

The university has continually maintained its support for the model, which was developed over several years and represented a consensus among university presidents and the stakeholders identified by the Governor and General Assembly. The model’s ability to endure – an articulation of shared expectations for Kentucky’s public higher education community – allows us to better plan for our financial future.

***Strategic Objective Two: Strengthen the quality and distinctiveness of our graduate programs to transform our students into accomplished scholars and professionals who contribute to the Commonwealth, the nation and the world through their research and discovery, creative endeavors, teaching and service.***

Chart 2:



Metric	Baseline	AY 2015-16	AY 2016-17	AY 2017-18	AY 2018-19	AY 2019-20	AY 2020-21 (Preliminary)	2020 Goal
<b>Doctoral Program Selectivity</b>								
Percentage of doctoral applicants who receive offers of admission	25.0%	32.4%	29.4%	30.5%	29.9%	32.8%	Not yet available	22.0%
<b>Graduate Degrees Awarded</b>								
Master's, Education Specialist, and Doctoral degrees awarded	1,591	1,555	1,548	1,507	1,586	1,590	1,658	1,639
<b>Diversity of Graduate Student Enrollment</b>								
African American/Black	4.5%	4.6%	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%	5.2%	6.8%	7.7%
Hispanic/Latino	2.6%	2.4%	2.5%	2.9%	3.3%	3.9%	4.4%	2.7%

\*AY 2020-21 is preliminary

There is no doubt that graduate education over the past several years has changed in ways we could not have foreseen. However, our graduate education numbers underscore the distinctive educational experience we provide for our students to embark on deep analysis and scholarship in their chosen fields.

This year, we saw overall graduate degrees awarded increase by 4.3%, from 1,590 students in AY 2018-19 to 1,658 in AY 2019-20. Additionally, overall graduate and professional enrollment increased from 7,166 in AY 2019-2020 to 7,727 in AY 2021-21, an increase of 7.8%. We also saw notable increases in the enrollment of African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino graduate students.

Our continuing efforts to build upon our graduate programs include the search for a new associate provost for graduate and professional education and dean of the Graduate School, which commenced in the fall 2020 semester. The additional role of associate provost formalizes the position as the chief advisor to the provost on all matters related to graduate and professional education. Further, the associate provost for graduate and professional education will have a formal “dotted-line” relationship to the vice president for research to facilitate better coordination of resources and policies for graduate student research.

***Strategic Objective Three: Enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our university community through recruitment, promotion and retention of an increasingly diverse population of faculty, administrators, staff and students, and by implementing initiatives that provide rich diversity-related experiences for all to help ensure their success in an interconnected world.***

Chart 3:

Metric	Baseline	AY 2015-16	AY 2016-17	AY 2017-18	AY 2018-19	AY 2019-20	AY 2020-21 (Preliminary)	2020 Goal
<b>Enrollment of Underrepresented Minorities</b>								
Undergraduate	14.7%	15.3%	16.1%	16.6%	16.5%	16.5%	16.9%	16.2%
Graduate	8.4%	8.9%	10.5%	9.4%	10.2%	11.1%	12.7%	11.8%
<b>Graduation Rate for Underrepresented Minorities</b>								
Bachelor's	45.2%	40.7%	52.4%	51.9%	54.2%	56.0%	52.9%	60.2%
Master's	70.9%	64.9%	61.8%	67.4%	67.0%			78.0%
Doctoral	45.5%	47.1%	38.5%	63.6%	53.8%			68.0%
<b>Employment of Faculty</b>								
Women	37.1%	38.0%	38.9%	39.1%	40.1%	41.5%	42.0%	48.2%
African American/Black	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%	3.9%	4.0%	6.9%
Hispanic/Latino	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.7%	4.2%
<b>Employment of Executives</b>								
Women	48.9%	46.8%	47.4%	47.8%	47.6%	49.0%	51.5%	50.0%
African American/Black	3.5%	4.0%	4.6%	4.5%	4.8%	5.1%	4.7%	7.9%
Hispanic/Latino	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	1.0%	0.8%	6.1%
<b>Employment of Professional Staff</b>								
African American/Black	4.3%	4.6%	4.3%	4.6%	4.7%	4.8%	5.1%	5.1%
Hispanic/Latino	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%
*AY 2020-21 is preliminary								

We know that simply recognizing our diversity efforts is not enough in continuing to nurture an environment of acceptance and belonging. We must use our resources to actively build a culture of inclusivity and equity, which starts with building a student population more reflective of our society and the world.

Among our undergraduate and graduate/professional students, we are proud to report that our enrollment numbers have exceeded the strategic plan targets. Additionally, more Black/African American students are earning their bachelor's degrees at UK than at any other university in Kentucky. While the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to Black/African American students has increased from 196 in AY 2011-12 to 355 in AY 2019-20, the total number of degrees awarded to underrepresented minority students at all levels this past year was 1,014, increasing from 409 in AY 2011-12.

Recognizing the need to build upon this momentum, the university will continue to nurture a diverse community where all people feel a sense of belonging. This aspiration is at the core of our DEI efforts, described in more detail in the following section.

***Strategic Objective Four:*** *Expand our scholarship, creative endeavors and research across the full range of disciplines to focus on the most important challenges of the Commonwealth, our nation and the world.*

Chart 4:

Metric	Baseline	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	2020 Goal
<b>Total R&amp;D Expenditures</b>							
Higher Education R&D Survey: Total Research Expenditures	\$328.2 M	\$331.7 M	\$349.7 M	\$378.4 M	\$393.0 M	\$410.6 M	\$364 M
Higher Education R&D Survey: Federal Research Expenditures	\$142.3 M	\$146.5 M	\$154.6 M	\$171.3 M	\$171.7 M	\$192.9 M	\$159 M
<b>Research Impact</b>							
Proportion of publications cited in the top 50% of discipline	51.1%	n/a	51.1%	52.0%	52.1%	51.3%	n/a
<b>Space</b>							
R&D Expenditures \$/square foot	\$191	\$197	\$209	\$209	\$209	\$244	\$300
<b>Licenses</b>							
Exclusive Licenses	100	101	105	106	130	132	177
License Income	\$3.3 M	\$1.0 M	\$6.5 M	\$2.4 M	\$2.4 M	\$2.3 M	\$3.5 M

Our efforts in research have perhaps never been more critical to our institution, the community and the world as we face unprecedented challenges associated not only with COVID-19 and racial injustice and health equity, but also with our historic areas of focus such a cancer, heart disease, opioid use disorder and our country’s energy future, among others.

This last year, extramural grants and contracts rose an additional 3% beyond a record-breaking 25% increase from the year prior. Since FY 2013-14, extramural grants and contracts awarded to support research by our very own faculty, staff and students, have increased from \$259.3 million to \$429.2 million (FY 2019-20), representing a 66.5% increase. This represents an annual growth rate of 9% in awarded projects.

Notably, grant award funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), impacting our academic medical center and UK HealthCare, has increased from \$72 million in FY 2013-14 to \$163.7 million in FY 2019-20, representing a 2.3-fold increase. This includes comprehensive grant mechanisms that are aimed at reducing opioid overdose deaths across Kentucky (NIH HEAL), our National Cancer Center designation that impacts cancer research and clinical care, a Center for Translational Science Award (CTSA) that supports the infrastructure for translational research and the Alzheimer’s Disease Center in its 35th year as a vibrant research center.

We remain among only 18 institutions in the country that hold a trifecta of federal research grants for cancer, aging and translational science.

***Strategic Objective Five: Leverage leading-edge technology, scholarship and research in innovative ways to advance the public good and foster the development of citizen-scholars.***

Chart 5:

Metric	Baseline	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2020 Goal
<b>Unified reporting structure for tracking engagement and outreach</b>						
Reporting structures disbursed among colleges and units	25+	3	3	3	3	1
<b>Faculty and staff developing expertise to deliver quality community engagement and outreach</b>						
Faculty teaching community-based courses	13.3%	14.9%	15.3%	13.5%	12.2%	25.8%
Staff teaching	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%			3.3%
<b>Opportunities for students to participate in a community engagement experience</b>						
Community engagement courses	329	331	337	332	330	429
<b>Partnerships between University and community stakeholders</b>						
Identified partnerships	100	7,082	<i>Under development</i>			

Technology has become a crucial pillar in our efforts across the university, as institutions are relying more heavily on innovation to keep students, staff and faculty connected. 2020 marks the second year that all first-year, first-time students received an iPad Air, Apple Keyboard and Apple Pencil, increasing accessibility and empowering our students to connect, collaborate and change the way stories are told.

As a result of our Smart Campus Initiative, the university also has partnered with Gen.G, a global esports organization, to find creative ways to engage our students in a new and growing industry. Recently, Gen.G announced a \$1 million commitment to develop the next generation of leaders in gaming and to support diverse students who are interested in gaming, esports, entrepreneurship, journalism or content creation—a rapidly growing industry.

Additionally, the university launched the UK Economic Development Collaborative (EDC) to help strategize our efforts in economic development with respect to talent, innovation, place and partnership. The EDC serves as an important tool in executing UK's strategies for economic engagement, ultimately aiding in the success of our institution as a community partner.