

**University of Kentucky
Strategic Plan
2015-2020**

TRANSFORMING TOMORROW

"There is no vaccination against ignorance, but there is us. There is this university. And we still have heavy doors to open, unmet obligations to the land and its people. There are still leadership opportunities to advance the Commonwealth, this nation, and our world towards fulfilling its potential, towards meeting its lofty promises ... Let men and women come here as seeds, let us invest in them until they form sufficient roots and leaves to obtain their own food. Let them grow from here not just trees, but a fruit-bearing, deeply-rooted forest."

-Frank X Walker (UK Associate Professor and 2014 Kentucky Poet Laureate). From "Seedtime in the Commonwealth," written for the University of Kentucky's 150th anniversary.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The poet, Frank X. Walker, reminds us: "There is us." There is this University.

Through the education we provide, the creative research we conduct, and the care and service we render, we are the University *for* Kentucky. We are the institution our Commonwealth has charged with confronting the most profound of challenges -- in education, economic development, health care, and cultural and societal advance.

It has been our mission for more than 150 years.

Now, as represented in the pages of this strategic plan, we are being tasked with reimagining what is possible for our University, our state and our world over the next decade and beyond. To this task, we bring a vision: to be one of the handful of truly outstanding residential public research campuses in the United States.

Informing that vision is a deep sense of service, along with our distinctive position as both the Commonwealth's flagship and land-grant institution. That combination of attributes has led to the development of a University with unusual range and expertise.

Today, for example, the University of Kentucky is one of only eight universities in the country with the full range of undergraduate, graduate, professional, and medical programs on one contiguous campus. UK, moreover, is currently one of only 22 public institutions with a trifecta of federal designations of excellence: for aging, in cancer and in translational science.

Our breadth is reinforced by strong linkages that exist among graduate education, academic research, and a vibrant clinical medical enterprise that increasingly provides access to advanced subspecialty care for those most in need across the state and region.

In areas of creative scholarship, we have been home or educational proving ground for Nobel Laureates and the National Book Award winner, as well as state poet laureates and winners of the Pulitzer Prize. Our faculty members across disciplines are working in faith communities to improve cancer-screening rates. They are using the latest computational science technology to unlock the treasures of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Paris. They are providing their skills to improve drinking water in Central and South America.

However, those are more than mere numbers or a litany of accomplishments. In an increasingly complex, diverse and interdependent world, it matters that a place exists where world-class poets and writers conduct their labors minutes away from nationally renowned scholars and researchers in cancer and energy, opera and psychology.

We know that the most exciting possibilities for tomorrow most often occur today at the intersection of disciplines -- that nexus of ideas where discovery, whether at the cellular or community levels, is most likely to be created. Combined with our commitment to service and engagement, we also have the potential to quickly take transformative discovery and knowledge from labs and classrooms and put them into communities, where in places of partnership, change can happen.

At the same time, we never forget that our first priority is — and always will be — the development of our students, the young men and women who come here with bright and

uncompromising potential and whom we expect to leave here ready to lead lives of leadership, meaning, and purpose.

Once here, those students — alongside our faculty and staff — are living or working in a physical environment undergoing a transformation like no other in American public higher education. In less than five years, more than \$1.8 billion of new construction has begun on the UK campus. The vast majority of this investment is the result of private fund-raising efforts, public-private partnerships, and the support of University athletics that have accelerated the pace of progress.

This physical transformation — combined with our traditional mission of service, discovery, and teaching — has given us momentum and a renewed sense of purpose. We have a growing regional and national brand, bolstered by an outstanding academic medical center and an athletics program that stirs passions and loyalty across the country.

In recent years, that brand has been further strengthened by our position as a magnet for the some of the most academically qualified students in the Commonwealth and, increasingly, the region and country. In the last four years alone, 395 National Merit, National Achievement, and National Hispanic Scholars have enrolled at UK, placing the institution among the top 10 of public universities nationwide

The University *for* Kentucky, we remain our Commonwealth's indispensable institution. And, now, we are committed like never before to transforming lives through teaching and learning, care, creativity, and discovery.

Against this backdrop, the University of Kentucky's strategic plan -- closely connected to and working in concert with a long-range strategic plan being implemented by UK HealthCare -- charts the institution's path to progress over the next several years. It does so by:

- Articulating a vision for the University, its people, and its long-term growth as an outstanding public research institution with a deep connection and sense of service to the Commonwealth.
- Enumerating strategic objectives in five key areas that clearly delineate priorities for investment and growth:
 - Undergraduate Student Success
 - Graduate Education
 - Diversity and Inclusivity
 - Research and Scholarly Work
 - Community Engagement
- Framing key strategic initiatives and action steps that describe how progress will be judged and measured within each objective

We acknowledge that we do not live or operate in easy times. There is no easy time. There is only our time. And, as this strategic plan makes clear in the pages that follow, it is a time of great promise for this University. To be sure, the questions and challenges loom large. But this plan — the product of thoughtful work by dedicated UK students, faculty, and staff — seeks to provide ambitious but achievable answers for those questions in ways that help us fulfill our promise to those we serve. In short, we are seeking to chart a path for how we plan to be the University *for* Kentucky for today's generation and those who will follow.

2. OUR VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC VISION

As Kentucky's indispensable institution, we transform the lives of our students and advance the Commonwealth we serve – and beyond – through our teaching and learning, diversity and inclusion, discovery, research and creativity, promotion of health, and deep community engagement.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Undergraduate Student Success

To be the University of choice for aspiring undergraduate students within the Commonwealth and beyond, seeking a transformational education that promotes self-discovery, experiential learning, and life-long achievement.

Graduate Education

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.

Diversity and Inclusivity

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.

Research and Scholarship

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.

Outreach and Community Engagement

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

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS**

To be the University of choice for aspiring undergraduate students within the Commonwealth and beyond, seeking a transformational education that promotes self-discovery, experiential learning, and life-long achievement.

We will make strategic investments in faculty recruitment, retention, and development, and in approaches that support innovative teaching and learning. In addition, we will advance student success through programs that provide high-quality curricular and co-curricular opportunities. UK will consistently produce outstanding graduates who complete their degrees in a timely manner, think creatively, communicate effectively, and are able to contribute as leaders to a diverse, global society.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Strategic Initiative 1: Enhance the success of our increasingly diverse student body and help ensure timely degree completion and career planning through high-impact, student-centered support systems.

Action Step 1: Enhance the college readiness of all entering students (both first-time and transfer) by developing a comprehensive readiness assessment plan and by expanding summer preparatory programs, strengthening partnerships with high schools and community colleges, and applying innovative online/distance-learning approaches.

Action Step 2: Implement comprehensive first-year and second-year experience programs designed to deliver on our commitment to student success.

Action Step 3: Provide integrated advising for both degree completion and career planning to maximize students' success, both during their college experience and in beginning their career.

Action Step 4: Expand both college and centralized services to students, including health wellness and awareness, to meet the demands of continuing enrollment growth.

Action Step 5: Define and communicate clear pathways and provide course offerings that enable students to graduate in four years.

Action Step 6: Align institutional scholarship and financial aid awards and promote financial wellness education to minimize students' unmet financial need and improve financial health.

Strategic Initiative 2: Enhance students' learning and their preparation for contributing to a rapidly changing world as leaders and scholars through the provision of new and innovative curricular offerings and state-of-the art teaching.

Action Step 1: Building on the innovative UK Core Curriculum, expand current course offerings and introduce new courses that incorporate cultural competency, collaborative

learning, problem-solving, creative thinking, and team building to enhance students' skills and help prepare them for an ever-changing workplace.

Action Step 2: Building on the foundation of existing programs and on UK's strengths, identify and develop new undergraduate programs (including certificates, dual degrees, multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary offerings) that broaden student preparation and prepare students to be leaders and scholars in a diverse, global society.

Action Step 3: Implement incentive programs and a reward structure for faculty and staff to identify, implement, and assess leading-edge teaching practices with particular emphasis on reducing achievement gaps.

Action Step 4: Pursue gifts and endowments for creating a group of magnet faculty — comprised of highly visible, high-value, high-impact scholars — who will be dedicated to undergraduate teaching.

Action Step 5: Invest in state-of-the-art classroom facilities and equipment that support active learning, distance learning, new pedagogy, and other leading-edge teaching/learning practices.

Action Step 6: Develop and expand support services to assist faculty and staff to continuously strengthen their teaching effectiveness through encouraging innovation, experimentation, and ongoing evaluation of new approaches.

Strategic Initiative 3: Enrich students' undergraduate education through transformational experiences of self-discovery and learning.

Action Step 1: Integrate high-impact practices such as undergraduate research, education abroad, service learning, and experiential learning programs throughout academic curricula and majors.

Action Step 2: Expand signature programs of undergraduate excellence (such as Honors, the Gaines Center for the Humanities, and the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence) to provide an enhanced learning experience for more students.

Action Step 3: Integrate curricular and co-curricular activities designed to promote student engagement, diversity, and retention by strategically investing in living-learning programs.

Action Step 4: Enhance student engagement in curricular and co-curricular programs that promote civic engagement and leadership development.

Metrics

Metric	Definition	Baseline	2020 Target
Retention Rates	First-Year	82.7% (2014 cohort)	90%
	Second-Year	74.8% (2013 cohort)	85.5%
	Third-Year	69.5% (2012 cohort)	82%
Graduation Rates	Four-Year	38.5% (2010 cohort)	53%
	Six-Year	60.2% (2008 cohort)	70%
Six-Year Graduation Gap for select groups (decrease)	Under-represented minorities	16.7% (2008 cohort)	9.8%
	First-generation	15.2% (2009 cohort)	8%
	Pell recipients	15.4% (2008 cohort)	8%

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: **GRADUATE EDUCATION**

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.

We recognize that the scope of professional opportunities for our graduate students is changing in fundamental ways. So, too, is our approach to graduate education, with a close examination of course offerings, as well as graduate students' teaching and research responsibilities throughout their degree programs. In addition, we are targeting financial support for graduate education in ways that will increase selectivity and expand and enhance programs that leverage UK's existing and emerging areas of strength in research and creative work.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Strategic Initiative 1: Recruit and retain outstanding graduate students from all backgrounds.

Action Step 1: Establish competitive compensation and financial aid packages for recruiting graduate students from the United States and abroad.

Action Step 2: Develop and implement a plan to improve climate, inclusion, and diversity in graduate education, in coordination with institutional diversity and inclusivity efforts.

Action Step 3: Implement a comprehensive marketing and communication plan that emphasizes UK's distinctive strengths, to compete successfully for high-performing domestic and international students from diverse backgrounds.

Strategic Initiative 2: Invest in graduate programs that have distinctive synergy with UK's research priorities and/or whose graduate students demonstrate excellence at the national or global levels.

Action Step 1: Allocate centrally funded fellowships, assistantships, and tuition scholarships to enhance the recruitment success of high-performing programs.

Action Step 2: Create financial incentives and streamline mechanisms to create and grow graduate programs in UK's areas of distinction that address Kentucky's and the world's greatest challenges.

Action Step 3: Track the long-term success and contributions of graduates, and use this information to assist in evaluating programs and prioritizing resource allocations.

Action Step 4: Implement a model to guide graduate program growth relative to undergraduate enrollment, market demand, and external research funding as well as program quality.

Strategic Initiative 3: Elevate the quality and richness of the graduate student experience and increase the national competitiveness of UK's graduate programs.

Action Step 1: Enhance the professional development of graduate students through curricular and co-curricular enrichment, mentoring, and programming to improve their leadership, management, and communication skills.

Action Step 2: Provide graduate students with the appropriate balance of research, teaching, engagement, and/or experience in creative activity that will enhance timely degree completion and long-term career success.

Action Step 3: Provide comprehensive career planning and placement services to graduate students choosing career paths in academics, industry, government, non-profit organizations, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Metrics

Metric	Definition	Baseline	2020 Target
Doctoral program selectivity	Percentage of doctoral applicants who receive offers of admission	32.9%	22%
Graduate degrees awarded	Master's, Education Specialist, and Doctoral degrees awarded	1,490	1,639 (10% increase)
Diversity of graduate students, per CPE enrollment goals	African American/Black	5.6%	7.7%
	Hispanic/Latino	2.4%	2.7%

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

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.

We will achieve this objective by working collaboratively to create an environment where all of our students, faculty, and staff live or work in an environment of openness and acceptance, and in which people of all backgrounds, identities, and perspectives can feel secure and welcome.

We are committed to providing an enriching UK experience for *all* students, faculty, and staff by actively exploring and adopting new initiatives that will expand both the diversity and inclusivity of our campus community.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Strategic Initiative 1: Foster a diverse community of engaged students.

Action Step 1: Recruit, retain, and graduate an increasingly diverse student population, and create an inclusive environment that supports these objectives.

Action Step 2: Implement formal and informal curricular and co-curricular programs that promote discussions and activities about diversity and inclusivity, thus empowering all our students.

Action Step 3: Integrate cross-unit services to support, retain, and promote degree completion for students from diverse backgrounds.

Action Step 4: Implement an equity dashboard at UK to help campus leaders encourage and monitor diversity and inclusion progress.

Strategic Initiative 2: Improve Workforce Diversity and Inclusion.

Action Step 1: Provide formal inclusiveness and diversity professional development for all faculty, staff, managers, and supervisors, including training on explicit (conscious) and implicit (unconscious) bias and training on how to structurally create inclusive working and learning environments.

Action Step 2: Increase diversity in number, proportion and retention in all workforce position categories including faculty, where representation is less than proportionate, to create a more inclusive work environment.

Strategic initiative 3: Engage diverse worldviews and perspectives by increasing awareness of diversity and by communications across campus that address these issues.

Action Step 1: Increase the number of campus/community engagement and service activities that involve our community partners to strengthen cultural awareness and competence.

Action Step 2: Ensure that faculty, staff, and students attend to multiple methods of communication (e.g., languages other than English, sign language) in interacting with campus/community partners.

Action Step 3: Promote global opportunities and ensure strong support systems for students, faculty, and staff studying and serving outside their home countries.

Action Step 4: Increase student opportunities to explore international perspectives across the curriculum and the co-curriculum.

Action Step 5: Promote sustainability of diversity and inclusivity efforts through aligning and integrating diversity and inclusion education, training, and communication with the Office for Institutional Diversity, to track initiatives and outcomes.

Metrics

Metric	Definition	Baseline	2020 Target
Enrollment percentage of under-represented undergraduate and graduate students	Undergraduates	11.6%	12.9%
	Graduates	7.2%	11.8%
Graduation rate for under-represented students	Undergraduates (6-year cohort)	45.2%	60.2%
	Master's (3-year cohort)	71.0%	76.0%
	Doctoral (7-year cohort)	48.0%	53.0%
Faculty	Females	37.1%	48.2%
	African American/Black	3.4%	6.9%
	Hispanic/Latino	2.8%	4.2%
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	Female	48.9%	50.0%
	African American/Black	3.5%	7.9%
Professional	Hispanic/Latino	0.5%	6.1%
	African American/Black	4.3%	5.1%
	Hispanic/Latino	1.1%	1.5%

6. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

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.

Continuing our commitment of the past 150 years, we will pursue multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary efforts that address challenges and disparities of our citizens and enrich their lives. Strategic support and investment will be directed toward scholarship that capitalizes on our strengths and emerging areas of growth.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Strategic Initiative 1: Invest in UK's existing strengths and areas of growth in selected focus areas that benefit and enrich the lives of the citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond.

Action Step 1: Systematically identify UK's existing and emerging areas of strength in research and creative endeavors that are nationally and internationally competitive, and strategically allocate central resources to support them.

Action Step 2: Provide pilot project funds to support growth of interdisciplinary projects that cross traditional boundaries.

Action Step 3: Provide recurring funds to support grant programs for research, scholarship, and creative works in areas of excellence that are not traditionally amenable to external funding.

Action Step 4: Leverage problem-oriented centers and institutes as focal points for interdisciplinary research teams in areas of strength and growth.

Action Step 5: Strengthen connections between the research mission and graduate and undergraduate research by engaging in joint planning with faculty, the Provost's office, and UK's Graduate School.

Strategic Initiative 2: Recruit and retain outstanding faculty, staff and students who support our research and scholarship across the range of disciplines at the University.

Action Step 1: Recruit and retain additional world-class scholars and research teams (including staff and students) to support identified areas of existing and growing strengths.

Action Step 2: Create new endowed faculty chairs, professorships, and fellowships to recruit and retain meritorious faculty, to enable competitive faculty, and to promote diversity among the faculty in all areas of research and scholarship.

Action Step 3: Establish new awards, develop new incentive programs, and facilitate mentorship programs at the college, center, and University levels to foster and reward excellence and innovation in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors.

Strategic initiative 3: Improve the quality of the research infrastructure across campus.

Action Step 1: Augment and increase access to the systems that support excellence in research and creative endeavors.

Action Step 2: Implement a plan for more efficient use of space that considers performance metrics in space allocation.

Action Step 3: Provide state-of-the-art core support facilities and high-end equipment, and improve current research space to enhance research capabilities.

Action Step 4: Pursue gifts and endowments in support of the research mission.

Strategic Initiative 4: Strengthen engagement efforts and translation of research and creative work for the benefit of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the nation and the world.

Action Step 1: Promote the development of innovation, intellectual property, and technology transfer by encouraging and supporting broader participation in intellectual property development across the UK community.

Action Step 2: Intensify engagement efforts to translate findings from our research to the community, and increase community participation in research and creative work.

Metrics

Metric	Definition	Baseline	2020 Target
Total R&D expenditures, by source	NSF 2013 Total Research Expenditures	\$340 million	\$364 million
	NSF 2013 Federal Research Expenditures	\$150 million	\$175 million
Ranking of Doctoral Programs	Doctoral program ranking, by discipline	6 doctoral programs within top quartile	Ranking within top quartile by discipline
Space (\$/square foot), funding according to source (grants, endowments)	\$/square foot weighted by age and renovation status	To be defined as part of rate negotiation (12/15)	20% increase of space that reaches \$300/square foot metric (new research laboratory space) factored for type of research
License growth and income generation	Licenses	100 (2014 data)	177 (10% CAGR)
	License Income	\$3.3 million	\$3.5 million (1% CAGR)

7. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: **OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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

Technology has allowed us to greatly expand how we connect with community partners, near and far. Our efforts are based in the disciplinary strengths of our 16 colleges and centers, the libraries, our network of extension offices, and in the creative and innovative interdisciplinary work of our students and staff in Student Affairs and other interdisciplinary academic units that are both curricular and co-curricular.

Our service extends across the breadth of our land-grant institution – from evolving Extension Service efforts that touch every county of the Commonwealth to high-tech, high-touch healing that is expanding access to quality, complex care. UK faculty, staff, students and alumni are engaged in their local communities, the Commonwealth, and abroad. We must accelerate our efforts to enrich and improve lives in all of the communities in which we engage. Also, we must use what we learn from those we serve to inform and augment learning and research at UK.

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

Strategic Initiative 1: Renew our institutional commitment to promote the public good through the sustainable application of our expertise and resources to meet challenges and disparities associated with social, economic, environmental, educational, and health issues.

Action Step 1: Invest in the implementation of an institutional model to define, support and incentivize community engagement in all its forms – civic engagement, service learning, and Cooperative Extension, among others.

Action Step 2: Employ leading-edge technologies to expand and extend our community partnerships in health, education, agriculture, the arts, and economic development.

Action Step 3: In partnership with local, state, and global communities, identify emerging issues, challenges and community assets and aspirations that are viewed as most important by our community partners and focus UK's resources on meeting these challenges.

Action Step 4: Build a mutually-beneficial network of community, corporate, and University partners that facilitates a broad range of inclusive and accessible enrichment opportunities, to advance key economic development initiatives of our Commonwealth.

Action Step 5: Foster and sustain a comprehensive and multi-dimensional partnership among campus and community stakeholders in the communities in which we are located, based on meaningful and sustainable dialogue.

Action Step 6: Streamline our outreach, extension, and engagement approaches for sharing UK's research discoveries, scholarly and creative work in health, business, agriculture, education, the arts, and community vitality to improve the quality of life for citizens of the Commonwealth.

Action Step 7: Strategically and intentionally connect campus units with community partners, and track the success and impact of these partnerships for communities, faculty, staff, and students.

Strategic Initiative 2: Deepen student learning through community engagement.

Action Step 1: Provide every student the opportunity to participate in a community engagement experience through academic coursework, clinical outreach services, service-learning, internships, education abroad, research, co-curricular experiences, or cooperative extension services.

Action Step 2: Develop faculty and staff expertise to deliver quality community engagement and outreach, service-learning courses, and co-curricular experiences that will utilize current best practices and be culturally competent, measurable and sustainable.

Metrics

Metric	Definition	Baseline	2020 Target
Database tracking engagement and outreach	Databases dispersed among colleges and units	25+	1
Faculty and staff developing expertise to deliver quality community engagement and outreach	Faculty teaching community-based courses	15%	20%
	Staff teaching community-based courses	TBD	TBD
Opportunities for students to participate in a community-engagement experience	Undergraduate community engagement courses	200	300
Partnerships between university and community stakeholders	Partnerships among colleges and units	100+	150

8. CONCLUSION: **TRANSFORMING TOMORROW**

Like no other place in this Commonwealth, our University helps chart the course for what is to come for those we educate, for our state, and for thousands and thousands of lives. Our vision is to be a leader in preparing students at all levels to contribute in meaningful ways to their communities and to our world. But also profoundly important is a longstanding covenant we have with the people of the Commonwealth. Our charge is to change the future of the Commonwealth for the better — its health, its education, its economy, its way of life.

We know that in changing Kentucky, we help change our world.

To that end, this plan offers a clear articulation of a vision for the future. It outlines strategies and objectives, specific opportunities, and ways to measure our progress. In so doing, it frames some of the choices we will collectively make as an institution — for those we educate, for those we help and heal, and for those who will be touched tomorrow by research and discovery that is only the glint of an idea today.

This plan, then, confronts us anew with a challenge of singular importance: What will we add to the collective chorus that will inform and embolden the University *for* Kentucky in the next 150 years?

With the harmony of diverse voices and perspectives, but in the cadence of a common voice, this strategic plan seeks to provide an answer, guided as we have been for 150 years by the values and dreams of those who built this special place, and for the dreams of those who will follow.

As Frank X. Walker reminds us, there is us. There is this University.