Putting Students First (SF)

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 embodied that imperative. One of the most compelling ways we manifest that commitment is how we support students — all of them 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 and co-curricular journeys.

Consider a few milestones:

- UK's first-to-second-year undergraduate retention rate in the fall 2020 cohort is 86%, according to preliminary figures, up more than 4% since the fall 2015 cohort alone.
- Similarly, six-year undergraduate 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% since the fall 2010 cohort alone, preliminary figures show.
- UK's preliminary four-year undergraduate graduation rate is 53.9% for the fall 2017 cohort, up more than 20% since the fall 2008 cohort.
- Since the launch of the UK Online initiative in 2018, UK's number of fully online programs has grown by 137.8%. Since summer 2019, the number of online degrees awarded has grown by 110.8%, although much of that growth has been focused in a few key programs, rather than across the enterprise.
- The institution created a nationally recognized scholarship program — UK LEADS — that specifically addresses unmet financial need — one of the largest barriers to student success. Using big data in new and more targeted ways, UK 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) reported that the University of Kentucky is the only institution in the state to have increased its enrollment over the last eight years.
- UK 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 four-year medical campuses in two communities — Northern Kentucky and Bowling Green — as part of an effort to educate and place more needed primary care and specialty physicians throughout the state. And, in direct

response to social and mental 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 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 and Initial Tactics:

Objective 1 (SF1): Enhance and engage in a student-first ethos that inclusively embraces all students (e.g., full-time, part-time, transfer, non-traditional, international, etc.) utilizing an equity mindedness lens.

Initial Tactics to Meet SF1

- o Define a student-first ethos, create a data-informed model for what it means to "put students first" and develop, with their input, faculty and staff training and toolkits to support such an ethos.

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

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

- o Further develop a culture of belonging and support for all students, faculty and staff.

Objective 2 (SF2): Expand on the existing foundation of a focused, intentional, purpose-driven curricular and co/extra-curricular experience with state-wide and global relevance, led and fostered by faculty and staff excellence.

Initial Tactics to Meet SF2

- o Through a faculty-driven process, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the undergraduate UK Core curriculum to ensure we continue to offer a curriculum that prepares students for a life of meaning and purpose – academically, personally and professionally.

- o Further define and assure core skills and competencies necessary for student success in both their chosen career paths and as citizens, such as critical thinking and communications, and provide students the tools to communicate the value of a holistic liberal arts education.

- o Through a faculty-driven process, and in conjunction with the ongoing processes of most academic units and accrediting bodies, assess undergraduate majors, graduate and professional programs and certificates to ensure they provide relevant and current discipline-specific and transferable skills and knowledge.

- o Expand access to and participation in high-impact practices within and beyond the traditional classroom, while maintaining academic and programmatic rigor and accreditation requirements.

- o Through faculty-driven processes, expand in person and online curricular offerings that are relevant to the Commonwealth's economic and societal needs leveraging our niche as a comprehensive campus for cross-college and unit opportunities to develop transdisciplinary programs/majors/certificates at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels.

- o Increase focus on the practice of teaching by expanding opportunities and incentives for faculty professional development to foster purpose-driven, research-based innovative teaching.

Objective 3 (SF3): Further utilize the distinctive attribute of an academic medical center and full range of academic colleges and offerings to further develop efforts to enhance 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."

Initial Tactics to Meet SF3

- o Continue and expand efforts to build supportive infrastructure and training for staff and faculty to allow for effective referral of students to appropriate campus resources.

- o Catalogue 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."

- o Build out an analytical and qualitative, inter-culturally informed, proactive case management approach around all student wellness, leveraging aggregated student data, existing campus expertise and lessons learned from Health Corps.

- o 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.

Objective 4 (SF4): Enhance our smart enrollment plan for the economic growth, workforce and societal development of the Commonwealth — in alignment with CPE's stated goals around educational attainment — that reflects the diverse, interdependent and complex world our students will enter.

Initial Tactics to Meet SF4

- o Build and implement a comprehensive, sustainable and detailed enrollment plan in key areas addressing the economic growth, workforce and societal needs in the Commonwealth, leveraging the strength of a comprehensive campus.

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

- o Leverage the core educational mission of producing well-educated students with critical thinking skills to demonstrate value in terms of workforce, economic and societal development.

Taking Care of Our People (OP)

We are Kentucky's institution. Our history as a land-grant university is rooted in service to the Commonwealth, and our campus finds new and creative ways to embrace our call to serve all people. 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 serve and 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.
- Cutting edge research in medicine and health related areas of focus have increased with a steep trajectory as evidenced by a doubling in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding over the last five years.
- Strategic alliances have expanded the web of care across the state to communities that traditionally lacked access to advanced, subspecialty procedures.
- The creation of the Vice President for Land-grant Engagement underscores our rootedness in and on behalf of Kentucky.
- A physical presence in all 120 Kentucky counties through the Cooperative Extension system allows our people to live, work and serve in communities across the state.
- Cooperative Extension and the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky completed a community-based needs assessment, garnering invaluable information about what Kentucky communities see as significant and pressing needs, including mental health, substance abuse and economic development.
- On our campus, compensation has been increased for our employees eight out of the last 10 years, unprecedented investments in people and talent.
- 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 every aspect 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.

<u>**Narrative Basis:**</u>

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 benefits, 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. 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 economic progress. This is what it means to be of, for and in community. 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 and Initial Tactics:

Objective 1 (OP1): Enhance the highest levels of holistic wellness for faculty, staff and students by expanding comprehensive, integrated structures to support working and learning environments where all may flourish and thrive.

Initial Tactics to Meet OP1

- o Organize and optimize activities and programs in holistic well-being (physical, emotional, financial and/or spiritual) and ensure that all have access to these offerings.

- o 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).

- o Assess communication strategies, incentives and opportunities to promote physical, emotional, financial and/or spiritual well-being.

Objective 2 (OP2): Advance further our 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.

Initial Tactics to Meet OP2

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

- o Be even more proactive and intentional in enhancing fair and equitable pay, benefits, policies, practices and tools, that foster positive work and life integration, supporting a diverse workforce of today and the future.

- o Further implement best practices and strategies to enhance a sense of belonging, inclusivity, and an understanding of place and the land-grant mission of UK (e.g., monthly onboarding session about the mission).

Objective 3 (OP3): Create a healthier Kentucky for a more diverse and better prepared workforce for tomorrow, in coordination with "Putting Students First" and "Inspiring Ingenuity" principles.

Initial Tactics to Meet OP3

- o Capitalizing on our academic medical center, build a multi-college team to focus on defining Commonwealth-wide partnerships, enhance the comprehensive health care workforce pipeline and leverage the strength of "cutting edge" medical and public health research.

- o Expand partnerships with health care providers, public health professionals, extension offices, state and local government and other partners who are committed to understanding and working on disease prevention and better health outcomes.

Objective 4 (OP4): Expand and enhance the land-grant engagement mission to include the entire campus community and leverage community-based resources to accelerate health, workforce and economic development across the Commonwealth.

Initial Tactics to Meet OP4

- o Capitalize on the community-based Cooperative Extension network to deepen the connection between the University of Kentucky with the communities we serve.

- o Integrate the land-grant mission with internal and external strategic partners to respond to community needs and enhanced community-based service.

- o Assess and enhance branding and communication about our land-grant mission.

Inspiring Ingenuity (II)

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. Underscoring the importance of equity, and to address historic and

systemic disparities based on race, the institution designated a seventh Research Priority Area in 2020.

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 four-year, $87 million award from the NIH. The goal: reduce opioid-related deaths by 40% in 16 Kentucky counties. The HEALing Communities Study involves more than 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.
- As referenced within the principle "Taking Care of Our People," research growth in medicine and health related areas of focus have increased with a steep trajectory as evidenced by a doubling in NIH funding over the last five years.
- The seventh priority area added last year — UNited In True Racial Equity (UNITE) — is a five-year, $10 million investment to elevate impactful research on racial equity, working in partnership with Kentucky's communities of color.
- Sustainability emerged as a major area of emphasis for the university with specific emission reduction goals, an increased emphasis on construction that met Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards and greater integration across campus (from UK Healthcare to Athletics) in approaches to environmentally sustainable practices.
- In 2019, the university launched the Smart Campus initiative. As part of this initiative, in partnership with Apple, every degree-seeking, first-time student receives an iPad and accessories to contribute to their learning and development.

Moving forward, this spirit of ingenuity should be part of everything 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 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 are put forth to inspire ingenuity.

Key Objectives and Initial Tactics:

Objective 1 (II1): Build upon our strengths in research and creative work to address a broader range of local, national and global challenges, the solutions to which will attract prosperity and well-being to Kentucky and its citizens.

Initial Tactics to Meet II1

- Build upon the university's signature Research Priority Areas and accomplishments by encouraging participation of faculty, staff and students within and between areas of existing strength.

- Create opportunities that seed new domains of innovative research and creative work.

- Improve workforce training by weaving opportunities for undergraduate research, collaborative externships and non-traditional student training into existing Research Priority Areas and new domains of research.

- 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.

- Translate research from the university to the public domain through industry outreach, economic development, commercialization and public policy frameworks.

Objective 2 (II2): Advance a culture of innovation in research, teaching and creative work that integrates disciplines and/or fields of study to address local, national and international challenges.

Initial Tactics to Meet II2

- Incentivize innovation and commercialization of research, international research and educational partnerships by investing in an innovation infrastructure.

- o Create novel training programs that support life-long learning, workplace culture and professionalism and career advancement for adult learners.

- o Utilize the extension system to improve connection between university innovation engines and the Commonwealth.

- o 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.

- o Through a faculty-driven process that balances expectations with accountability, incorporate innovation and entrepreneurial activities into promotion, appointment and tenure processes.

Objective 3 (II3): 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.

Initial Tactics to Meet II3

- o Assess and make needed changes to the research support systems to increase effectiveness and flexibility in an increasingly dynamic and competitive funding environment.

- o Using a coordinated approach, develop a campus plan for research facility renovation and growth that fosters innovation, collaboration and efficient space usage.

- o Adopt a more forward-facing posture that anticipates and increases competitiveness for funding opportunities.

- o Seek and develop novel partnerships between educational programs, healthcare systems, businesses, governments and communities to promote the workforce of Kentucky and beyond.

Ensuring Greater Trust, Transparency and Accountability (TTA)

Building trust depends upon a sense of transparency among all 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 DEI 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 this 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 education, research, 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 and Initial Tactics:

Objective 1 (TTA1): To ensure a more responsive institution that can timely adapt when necessary or during 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.

Initial Tactics to Meet TTA1

- In collaboration with relevant shared governance entities examine and potentially revise Governing Regulations (GRs) and Administrative Regulations (ARs) to ensure greater transparency, equity and accountability among all the components of our shared governance structure.

- Collaboratively revise other official documents as needed for congruence with the pertinent GRs and ARs.

Objective 2 (TTA2): Empower effective decision-making at administrative, unit, departmental and college levels by utilizing resource-based budgeting approaches in a transparent fashion necessary to support the university's mission in alignment with the Strategic Plan and institutional values.

Initial Tactic to Meet TTA2

- Implement an integrated and transparent budgeting system that links resources to productivity and effectiveness in achieving university objectives and incorporates a budget forecasting method that ensures alignment with university values.

Objective 3 (TTA3): 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.

Initial Tactics to Meet TTA3

- Continue momentum from Finance and Administration Specialized Training (FAST) Initiative to continuously inventory, assess, develop and improve training across all areas to instill greater understanding and support of standards and process.

- o Implement a comprehensive program to educate all current and emerging executive leaders on standards and processes, creating additional required executive training programs in key areas.

- o Inventory all current UK executive compliance and training programs (offered in-house and through external vendors); identify gaps in programming to create new programs.

- o Build upon existing structures that support and encourage collaborative work across units aimed at promoting transparency and accountability at all levels and encourage those with expertise at all levels to share knowledge (through workshops and written materials) regarding structures, processes and tactics that contribute to success.

Objective 4 (TTA4): Develop additional programs and approaches to engaging, resonant communication with both internal and external audiences.

Initial Tactics to Meet TTA4

- o Conduct campus-wide surveys periodically to obtain feedback from all university stakeholders regarding progress toward the university's strategic initiatives, as well as university's programs and activities. Publish the results.

- o Conduct focus group meetings as needed with vested publics to obtain insight and perspectives on issues and initiatives important to university stakeholders and groups and report back to the university community.

- o Regularly report to the university and stakeholders on the progress that is being made toward achieving all the elements of the Strategic Plan, as well as any obstacles to their achievement.

- o Create a central and compelling repository online for progress and developments related to Strategic Plan measurements as well as other institutional changes at the college and unit level that support the UK-PURPOSE Plan.

Bringing Together Many People, One Community (MPOC)

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.

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 15% 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%, 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 the systems and structures that perpetuate inequality and deepen divisions, whether based on race or identity, perspective or background.

In our reckoning with these issues, UK initiated a multi-year, campus-wide DEI effort. More than a dozen projects, involving some 500 community members, worked throughout 2020-2021 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 DEI (UNITE) as part of a greater institutional focus on questions of systemic and structural racism and its impacts. Between FY 2015 and FY 2020, there has been an annual compound growth rate of 16.6% 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 the considerable institutional resources such 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 can expand the meaning of the land-grant idea of *commonwealth* by using our extension service as a conduit not only to go out and give but also to *listen* and to *learn*. 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 and Initial Tactics:

Objective 1 (MPOC1): Further recruit and retain diverse populations (students, faculty, staff) within all units on campus.

Initial Tactics to Meet MPOC1

- o Develop and promote a clear strategy for recruiting and retaining a more diverse campus workforce by tracking and reporting DEI data and recruitment strategy for university and units (annually).

- o More intentionally solicit help from our diverse community – regarding their views of our challenges and successes – to inform improvements in the university's recruitment and retention strategy.

- o Continue and enhance tracking and reporting of all DEI data, recruitment and retention 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.

Objective 2 (MPOC2): To create greater and direct partnerships between the university and communities throughout the Commonwealth on DEI-related matters.

Initial Tactics to Meet MPOC2

- o Critically engage with our partners to identify our commonalities and to explore historical structures/systems of inequality in the Commonwealth – with a goal of identifying, improving and implementing inclusive and equitable collaborative practices.

- o Research and implement best-practice DEI projects within the community and in industry to improve inclusivity within the university and beyond.

- o Create an official framework that encourages our diverse community partners to participate in the recruitment of UK faculty.

Objective 3 (MPOC3): 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.

Initial Tactics to Meet MPOC3

- o Demonstrate, educate and promote successful approaches to responsible speech by creating a public and transparent framework for engaging in respectful and civil dialogue about controversial topics.

- o Create and promote topical, campus-wide forums about DEI issues on a regular basis, inviting community-based facilitators from both alumni and our community partners.

- o Support inclusive teaching and pedagogy to model classrooms that are welcoming and vibrant and that build upon research-based best practices in facilitating difficult conversations

Objective 4 (MPOC4): To broadly demonstrate and communicate the value of diversity of the UK campus to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and to the global community to create more interaction and involvement between campus and communities on DEI matters.

Initial Tactics to Meet MPOC4

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

- Showcase/educate about UK HealthCare's efforts to access all communities and its continuing efforts to recruit and train health care providers who are representative of the citizens they serve.