



A Message from University of Kentucky

PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO



Dear Campus Community,

We are announcing today that UK's Confucius Institute (UKCI) will be closing, effective immediately. In short, we are exercising provisions that allow us to pull out of our contract as part of a necessary transition of China-related programming and initiatives to other parts of the institution.

There is growing and strong federal regulatory concern regarding Confucius Institutes. That is simply a facet of ongoing tensions between our two countries.

That concern reached an inflection point for UK recently as federal laws and policies — regarding the practical ability to receive federal funding for research grants from the Department of Defense (DOD) — have made continuing our UKCI unsustainable.

Nine UK colleges currently receive significant DOD research and academic funding, which we cannot jeopardize. That's some \$50 million in the last five years alone with nearly 50 active projects and another 50 in the proposal stage.

This closure, however, should in no way diminish the significant contributions the UKCI has made to our campus for more than a decade. Indeed, the Institute has provided an important link between Kentucky and China, teaching Chinese language and culture throughout the Commonwealth.

The work of UKCI has positively impacted hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians of all ages through its partnership with Chinese institutions, programs and educational initiatives.

Key among these is the support it has provided for UK faculty and students and in making Chinese culture accessible to all at UK. UKCI also has been the leader in providing Chinese language and culture learning in K-12 schools – schools in which such an opportunity had not existed – to enhance global awareness among Kentucky's schoolchildren.

As a leading research institution with a global reach, it is imperative that we continue

strategic relationships and partnerships around the globe, including with China. We remain committed to our engagement with our Chinese partners and exchanges.

Tremendous students and faculty come to UK from China, who undeniably contribute to our campus. Many of our students, faculty and staff study in and visit China as well, making indelible contributions to their educations and to scholarship.

Now, we must find new ways and new paths to continue important relationships.

To that end, over the next few months, we will work to implement a transition plan. We will use this period to examine these partnerships and programs to determine how best to move forward.

Academic freedom and the commitment to the unfettered pursuit of discovery and the answers to challenges cannot ever be compromised, even as we recognize that regulatory issues today compel us to find new ways to honor our values tomorrow.

We also must recognize that this decision, however necessary, occurs at a time when anti-Asian sentiment and, frankly, simply abhorrent behavior is on the rise. We must — and we do — stand by our colleagues and students from Asian countries. They are part of our community.

This decision with respect to our UKCI should deepen our commitment to our shared humanity and value for all life and all perspectives. At this place, everyone is welcome. Everyone belongs.

There are no exceptions. We must make that clear — now, more than ever.

We didn't make this decision lightly. Our international partnerships — now and in the future — are critical to who we are as an institution with global reach and aspirations. Yet, we cannot allow the crosscurrents of federal policy and geopolitics — important issues in their own right — to jeopardize our research and service efforts.

We will, even in this difficult moment, find a sustainable path forward.

Eli Capilouto
President