



A Message from University of Kentucky
PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO

Dear Campus Community,

Our world has been disrupted in ways most could never have imagined. For many, it is a challenge to cope through the day, much less dream about tomorrow.

We are caught in the chaotic currents of two pandemics — one that poisons our lungs and spirit, another our hearts and minds. Yet, we must work with purpose and urgency to defeat both COVID-19 and racism. As Kentucky's university, we cannot afford to think only about surviving. We must commit ourselves to thriving — to boldly acting now so that we meet our promise tomorrow. We must position UK for the future — with the goal of ensuring that one day COVID-19 is a page in a history book and racial injustice seems as ancient and antithetical to who we are as slavery.

To reach the potential that I know is within our grasp, the minds and voices of UK's leadership team must better represent our strategic imperatives. They also must better reflect our increasingly diverse world — not as symbols of our intent, but as partners who drive our progress. Today, I am announcing a major reorganization of our senior administration that energizes three strategic imperatives:

- Putting students and their success at the center of all we do.
- Constructing a bigger table for decision-making with people and resources to get the job done.
- Creating more accountability around the plans we make and more transparency on how we measure our progress.

The impact will be much more than a redrawing of our organizational chart. It will chart our organization's path to greater excellence, diversity, impact and success.

Expanded Budget Authority and Responsibility for the Office for Institutional Diversity (OID)

Overnight, we are increasing OID's budget of \$3.1 million to \$19.3 million with the addition of a number of programs and initiatives that reflect its central position in our mission. Specifically, we are moving to OID:

- The Parker Scholarship program with \$14 million annually that many students of color and first-generation students apply for and receive.

- The Faculty Diversity Fund of about \$2.75 million, as well as new funds for staff and faculty diversity and recruitment, to target and aggressively recruit more faculty and staff of color and help them succeed.
- The Office of Community Engagement, which currently reports to the Office of University Relations, to expand and strengthen relationships with communities of color and other stakeholders in Lexington and the region.

Further, we will launch a national search in the coming weeks 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. He will continue in that senior position after we select a new vice president for institutional diversity.

Student Success

I am creating the position of vice president for student success. We need engagement with students that focuses solely and squarely on their success — from the time they are recruited, to when they enroll, and through graduation. Dr. Kirsten Turner, currently associate provost for academic and student affairs, will assume the position of vice president for student success, reporting 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. Further, as part of an effort to align the mission of student success with critical functions that support it, the Center for Academic Resources and Enrichment Services, Student Support Services and the office of LGBTQ Resources, will report to the vice president for student success, rather than the vice president for institutional diversity.
- Some critical academic units — the registrar’s office, the Gaines Center for the Humanities and the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence — will remain with the Office of the Provost. Undergraduate Research will move from SAL to the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- These collective moves will align academic excellence, as represented by the colleges and specialized academic programs, under the provost. Units that support student success — from recruitment, to the preparedness of our students, to graduation — will be part of the portfolio of the vice president for student success.

Our Historic Mission of Service

I am creating the position of vice president for land-grant engagement. The land-grant mission — the idea of service — is part of our DNA. It is as much a part of our identity as the name of the state we bear. An important part of successfully confronting the challenges we face today, I believe, can be found in translating the ethos of extension services found in our College of Agriculture, Food and Environment into programs and initiatives throughout our campus. Such a focus in a time of anxiety about the future will help us anchor our aspirations to our historical land-grant roots. Dr. Nancy Cox, dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, will take on the additional role of vice president for land-grant engagement, reporting directly to me, while continuing her academic leadership role and reporting to the provost.

Accountability and Transparency

Accountability and transparency cannot simply be slogans. They must be inherent and clearly expressed in every facet of our operations. With that goal in mind, I am creating the position of chief accountability officer and audit executive, which will serve as a direct report to me. Joe Reed, currently our chief auditor, will move along with the division he oversees from the Office of the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, into this new role. This move sends a powerful signal that such transparency and accountability will be expected throughout our institution.

As part of this restructuring, I have asked the executive vice president for finance and administration to take on some additional responsibilities in the areas of communication and government relations. The Office of University Relations will now report there. I also am eliminating the position of chief of staff in the Office of the President, spreading out that authority among those who will directly report to me. This new presidential cabinet is more diverse and more representative of our strategic imperatives, even as it only increases the overall number of direct reports to me by one position. This executive cabinet will meet every two weeks, and I will meet one-on-one with each of these direct reports on a regularly scheduled basis to ensure we are making progress on the strategic imperatives I have outlined.

Our Mission ... Our Future

Thanks to you and your remarkable efforts in recent years, we have laid a foundation for the future:

- For the first time in our history, more than 31,000 students enrolled at UK this fall.
- Our retention rate — the percent of students successfully completing their first year and returning for their second — reached a record 86.4 percent, nearly 5 percentage points higher than only four years ago.
- UK HealthCare has more than doubled annual hospital discharges to more than 40,000 in less than 15 years through partnerships that extend advanced care to more people in need in Kentucky.
- Our research enterprise has grown to about \$430 million annually with an intense focus on the challenges and needs facing our Commonwealth — cancer; heart disease; diabetes and obesity; neurologic disease and injury; opioid disorders; our energy future; and now, racial and economic disparities.
- With eight straight Top-30 finishes in the Directors Cup — which measures overall college athletics teams' excellence — and 16 straight semesters in which the department has posted a cumulative 3.0 grade point average, UK Athletics is standing out in what's most important: preparing young men and women to lead lives of meaning and purpose.

It should not be overlooked that our story is one of remarkable progress, rivaled by few institutions like ours in the country. Few academic medical centers have grown as much in recent years and perhaps none has had such a focus on expanding life-saving care to more people in need as UK HealthCare has done. Our research enterprise has significantly increased its funded work by specifically, intentionally and strategically applying intellectual capacity to the greatest challenges confronting our Commonwealth. Our student and faculty artists have appeared on national and world stages, making spirits soar, and UK authors have continued to remind us of Jesse Stuart's words that if the United States in this moment of so much uncertainty can be called a body then Kentucky, in both moments of profound joy and deepest tragedy and sorrow, must

surely be its heart.

Most universities have improved retention and graduation rates, either by getting smaller or more elite. We have intentionally done the opposite. We have grown our student body, based more of our financial aid on need and opened our doors even wider to more Kentuckians and a more inclusive student body. Some 25 percent of our Kentucky students come from households where the median family income is approximately \$20,000 annually. These students are bright and capable. We help provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity, to ignite their passions and to change their trajectory — not only of their lives, but that of communities and generations to come.

Now, though, we must quicken our pace. A health pandemic has disrupted the way we conduct our essential mission like perhaps nothing before it. A racial pandemic has brought into shocking and stark relief an unsettling truth — that systemic injustice and inequality stymie progress and thwart the potential of too many people who are painfully polarized rather than united by our shared humanity. Extending our mission is more important now **because** of these pandemics confronting our campus and the world we serve. That means more healing, more discovery and more interventions that help more students in need reach their potential as part of creating a more just world. We must be the engine that helps our state create a skilled and sustainable workforce that will not only survive this pandemic, but those that inevitably follow.

It is important — but not enough — to simply meet the moment. We must accelerate our progress, even in the midst of this uncertain moment. And doing that will take all of us, working together as a community to achieve our shared goal — a brighter future for the Commonwealth and all those we serve.

Eli Capilouto
President