



A Message from University of Kentucky
PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO

Dear Campus Community,

Fundamental to our mission as Kentucky's university is research. Along with teaching, service and care, it is how we help and heal communities across our Commonwealth. It's our way of saying and demonstrating that we can and we must always harness the energies, intellect and talent of a faculty and staff toward the goal of creating a healthier, more equitable and just world.

That sense of mission and purpose has never been more important than now. We face twin pandemics — one, a virus that poisons bodies; another that poisons hearts and minds.

We must meet this moment to defeat both.

I am pleased today to announce to our campus two 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.

The first is the proposed creation of the *UNITed In racial Equity (UNITE) Research Initiative.* As one of our Research Priority Areas — one of now seven such research programs across the campus — the university will be investing \$10 million over the next five years in research that tackles racial disparities and inequity across broad areas, ranging from health to the historical foundations of systemic racism.

Designation as a Research Priority Area means these issues have the highest priority of our campus — now and into the future.

Systemic racism over generations has inarguably impacted health and life expectancy, economic and financial standing, the educational attainment and success of Black people and persons of color over centuries. What we bring to the table is a world-class research institution with scholars and scientists who can work between and among disciplines to find answers to the most intractable of problems and what is fundamentally the issue that has simultaneously shaped and scarred a nation.

You can read more about this exciting proposal here: <https://uknow.uky.edu/research/uk-creating-multimillion-dollar-research-initiative-around-racial-disparity-inequity>.

The second initiative is a proposal to move forward with the Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies — a multidisciplinary program that will highlight UK's growing research around issues of race and racism. Housed in our outstanding African American and Africana

Studies Program, this institute would 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. We will be working with faculty leaders on approvals for this important effort as well. To help facilitate its success, the university will make an initial \$250,000 investment as seed money to leverage additional investment to help the institute move forward with a critical series of initiatives.

You can read more about this exciting and vital effort here: <https://uknow.uky.edu/campus-news/capilouto-aaas-faculty-announce-commonwealth-institute-black-studies>.

Importantly, these efforts are part of our larger initiative around Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity. We have been working on this Research Priority Area — UNITE — and the Commonwealth Institute for a number of weeks. They will augment and advance the work of hundreds of community members across our campus, who will be tackling the multifaceted and deeply rooted problems and questions associated with systemic racism that we know exists in our institution and across our world.

I am proud to be at a place, and in a community, that steps up to protect and respect each other. We are doing our part. We are making a difference.

We are working, as we always do, to meet the moment.

Thank you for being such a community.

Eli