

A Message from President Capilouto Regarding the Legislative Session  
January 8, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to campus. I hope you had a restful holiday and are looking forward, as I am, to the start of the new semester.

My primary focus this semester will be working intently to inform state legislators, policymakers, donors and other supporters regarding our University's funding and building needs, if we are to fulfill our promise to the Commonwealth. Our work has started. I was in Frankfort four times last week for various meetings and events.

Over the next few months, I plan – as much as possible – to meet with our policymakers and donors, making the case for a revitalization of our campus infrastructure and for investment in UK students, faculty and staff.

For example, last Thursday I was joined by Coach Calipari and a student leader, Stephen Bilas, in addressing more than 75 legislators in Frankfort at a lunch we hosted.

Our goal was to tell them in as compelling a way as possible about the tremendous work our faculty, students and staff are doing on behalf of Kentucky. I was honored to tell them about the work we do in health care, environmental science and technology, energy and food security research, among other areas.

I was proud to convey that we have made substantive changes to our undergraduate curriculum through innovations like UK Core and A&S Wired that are preparing our students for lives of leadership, meaning and purpose in a 21st century economy.

And, as importantly, we outlined the significant funding needs we have – as partners with the state – to maintain and enhance the education, research and service we render. We have to earn our way, I told our representatives. We'll match what they provide us - dollar for dollar for capital and infrastructure needs. In return, UK will be that shining beacon of excellence that lights the way forward.

In making an impassioned call for investment in academic facilities on campus, Coach Calipari put it this way to legislators: "We are the flagship. We can't do it alone. If this is your state university ... you want to be proud of it. They're your students. They're from your state. They're from your county ... I hope we look back over the next five years and look at our campus and you are proud."

You don't have to read beyond the daily headlines to know we continue to grapple with a struggling economy. The state's needs are many. The requests for funding are long. Our policymakers have difficult jobs, balancing a number of pressing priorities, from health care to all levels of education.

But I believe we have a strong case to make that investment in UK is a down-payment on a bright future for this state.

I want you to know that we are making that case every day in every way we can imagine. Over the next few months, I will keep you up-to-date on our efforts as we move forward.

Thanks for your continued work and resolve and welcome back.

Eli Capilouto  
President