

## Charting Our Future

Oct. 24, 2015

Dear faculty, staff and students,

Over the past three days, our Board gathered for its annual [October retreat](#). It was an opportunity to consider and endorse our next strategic plan, and celebrate benchmark moments for the University of Kentucky. Paraphrasing Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers, the milestones have not been about buildings or who and where we are today; it's about tomorrow and our priorities to usher in a bright future for our students and the Commonwealth we serve.

On Thursday morning, surrounded by faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, our campus family was honored by the generosity of a successful and dedicated alumnus. We announced the largest, single private gift in the history of the institution: \$23 million from Tom and Jan Lewis, through the TW Lewis Family Foundation, to establish the future [Lewis Honors College](#).

The Lewis' transformative gift is an investment in you: our faculty who inspire student scholars; and our staff who support — in myriad ways — success across our campus. And it is an investment in — and profound commitment to — the promise of our students and future graduates who will positively impact the communities they touch.

In Tom Lewis' inspiring words, it will help our students "reach and maximize their potential."

On Friday, joined by Governor Steve Beshear, Senate President Stivers, Chairman of the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee Rick Rand, and Lexington Mayor Jim Gray we broke ground on a new [\\$265 million multidisciplinary research building](#). The facility will bring together a talented cadre of clinicians, basic science researchers, translational scholars, statisticians, behaviorists and scores of other experts to confront the complex questions of our day.

Beginning Thursday, our Board met to consider and endorse our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. They heard from the faculty and staff experts who will lead the implementation phase of the [Plan](#) that we shared with campus last May, as well as [national experts](#) who provided context for our Plan.

It was a data-rich conversation about the multifaceted mission of our University. The dialogue underscored commitment to our objectives and action steps; the specific ways we plan to measure progress; and the ambitious path we plan to forge for the future.

Following that dialogue, the board strongly endorsed five strategic objectives and the related strategies and metrics for our plan:

- [Undergraduate Student Success](#) - To be the University of choice for aspiring undergraduate students, within the Commonwealth and beyond, seeking a transformational education that promotes self-discovery, experiential learning, and life-long achievement.
- [Graduate Education](#) - Strengthen the quality and distinctiveness of our graduate programs to transform our students into accomplished scholars and professionals who contribute to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world through their research and discovery, creative endeavors, teaching, and service.

- [Diversity and Inclusivity](#) - Enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our University community through recruitment, promotion, and retention of an increasingly diverse population of faculty, administrators, staff, and students, and by implementing initiatives that provide rich diversity-related experiences for all, to help ensure their success in an interconnected world.
- [Research and Scholarship](#) - Expand our scholarship, creative endeavors, and research across the full range of disciplines to focus on the most important challenges of the Commonwealth, our nation, and the world.
- [Community Engagement](#) - Leverage leading-edge technology, scholarship, and research in innovative ways to advance the public good and to foster the development of citizen-scholars.

Also, the Board considered two additional pieces of business on Saturday that are essential to the continued facility transformation of our campus. The Board voted to initiate the “design phase” of the renovation of UK’s College of Law, and received information on our proposal to advocate to the next governor and the General Assembly for the development of a [“bond pool”](#) that will help revitalize the academic core of our campus. The “pool” is a new strategy that will allow us to address critical infrastructure needs in the academic core — the portion of campus bound by Rose Street, Washington Avenue, S. Limestone Street, and Avenue of Champions. We can therefore begin to restore the most historic portions of our campus where many of our faculty and staff work and create, and where large numbers of our students learn and develop their intellectual capacity.

We were able to celebrate these milestones because of the members of our community, past and present. I want to extend the appreciation of the entire Wildcat family to the faculty and staff chairs and volunteers who led the strategic plan process, as well as the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters who contributed meaningful feedback during town hall forums and other opportunities for input. Because of you, we have a plan that will extend and enhance our work over the next several years.

We are emboldened by our shared progress, but it will take a collective effort by the entire UK family as we write the next great chapter in the history of the University of Kentucky. I share the faith of our partners in progress, our donors, and our advocates. I believe in your extraordinary intellect and capacity to carry forward on our vision for this place and mission as Kentucky’s flagship and land grant research university.

Sincerely,

Eli Capilouto  
President