



A Message from University of Kentucky
PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO

Members of our University Community,

The start of a new semester brings the promise of new possibilities — for learning, for discovery, and for collaborating to build a community where all of us know we belong.

Our highest priority is the safety, wellness, and well-being of every member of our community.

In the last several years, we have made significant progress, investing millions of dollars on technologies and equipment to enhance safety on campus. We have reorganized student support services and merged key departments to create a more intentional unit — Student and Academic Life — with a sole focus on the success and well-being of our students. And, as we've constructed new facilities, we've done so with a focus not only on structural security, but also on healthier food options and expanded access to wellness and fitness facilities, such as the new Alumni Gym in the Gatton Student Center.

Still, the tragedies and challenges we absorb every semester remind us that safety, wellness, and well-being are continuous journeys we must thoughtfully take together.

We are taking more steps to further strengthen a community of belonging. It starts with approaching wellness holistically, ensuring that physical safety, emotional well-being, and mental health are sustained; and basic needs, such as food insecurity, are met.

- We believe reports last semester of sexual assaults in residence halls indicate more students are willing to come forward when they have been victimized. Increased training, and greater awareness, regarding the importance of coming forward will decrease the debilitating stigma too often associated with these acts of violence. But awareness is not enough. UK Police is working with our Offices of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity and Student and Academic Life to form a specialized unit within the Police Department focused on addressing interpersonal violence. The fact that these incidents last semester were not connected does not diminish the importance of aggressive investigation, discipline, and prosecution.
- UK's Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity investigates allegations of the University's sexual misconduct policy, which you can read [here](#). UK Police investigates incidents in which criminal prosecution is warranted. You can go to this

site to learn more about these issues and about resources we provide to victims and our campus community:<https://www.uky.edu/eo/resources>.

- In the area of mental health, a committee of faculty and mental health experts, created last year and co-chaired by College of Public Health Dean Donna Arnett and Associate General Counsel/Director of Risk Management for UK HealthCare Margaret Pisacano, is examining best practices across the country and developing a set of recommendations to further strengthen mental health services and support in the long-term. At the same time, a group in Student and Academic Life is focused on immediate strategies. We will be investing more than \$500,000 for two additional clinicians in the UK Counseling Center, two additional consultants in our Disability Resource Center, and a new case manager for our Community of Concern (in the Dean of Students Office), which supports members of our community in crisis. We also are adding two academic coaches, who will work with students who experience academic anxiety. And we will be extending service hours at a number of student wellness-related offices.
- We recently hired a Basic Needs Coordinator and created a basic needs website that will make information about the services we provide more accessible. You can read more about these efforts, and access the new site, here: <https://uknow.uky.edu/student-and-academic-life/students-need-have-someone-turn-uk-hires-1st-basic-needs-coordinator>.

We will update the Board of Trustees on all of these efforts at their February meeting. Prior to that, we will talk with students across the campus about how we create and sustain this more holistic and connected approach to wellness on our campus. This dialogue is a continuation of discussions already ongoing among administrators, staff, and faculty, who work in these spaces, and with student leaders who have been determined partners.

The commitment across our community to open and candid dialogue that leads to comprehensive and proven approaches is critical.

Thank you for the role you play in being a place that values everyone.

Eli Capilouto
President

David Blackwell
Provost

Kirsten Turner
Associate Provost for
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