KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
SPECIAL-CALLED BUSINESS MEETING

June 30, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m. ET
Virtual Meeting - livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/@KentuckyCPE

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

II. Proposed Action Items

III. Closed session pursuant to KRS 61.810(1)(c) to discuss pending litigation related to the agency

IV. Adjournment

TITLE: Revision to Kentucky's Statewide Strategic Agenda for Postsecondary Education

DESCRIPTION: Staff recommend the Council approve the proposed revisions to the statewide strategic agenda to comply with the passage of House Bill 4 (2025).

STAFF CONTACTS: Travis Powell, Executive Vice President & General Counsel
Melissa Young, Senior Fellow

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The statewide strategic agenda, developed in 2022 and revised in 2024, is the state's strategic plan for public postsecondary education until 2030. The agenda made several references to efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at public institutions, including the annual DEI plan that determined eligibility for new academic programs.

LIST OF PROPOSED 2025 REVISIONS

A list of proposed revisions follows. The most substantive change is the removal of equity as a cross-cutting priority. Unlike the other five priority areas (affordability, transitions, success, talent and value), equity had no related objectives, strategies or metrics, which meant only the narrative section was removed. Additionally, specific references to historically underrepresented minority students were removed throughout. The agenda now references underrepresented students, defined as first-generation, low-income and adult students, which mirrors categories in the performance funding distribution model. Graphics highlighting performance gaps between majority and minority populations (pages 8 and 17) were replaced.

- **Cover:** Removed Equity badge

- **Inside Cover:** added "for all" to the end of the vision statement to emphasize commitment to diversity ["…affordable, high-quality postsecondary programs for all."]

- **Page 3, para. 3:** changed "invite ~~non-traditional and historically excluded individuals~~ onto our campuses" to "invite individuals underrepresented in higher education onto our campuses"

- **Page 3, para. 4:** changed "A critical focus of Higher Education Matters is creating ~~equitable higher education opportunities~~ for all Kentuckians" to "A critical focus of Higher Education Matters is ensuring higher education is within the reach of all Kentuckians."

- **Page 3, para. 5:** changed "Revisions in 2024" to "Revisions in 2024 and 2025;" added to the list of revisions "changes to comply with the passage of House Bill 4 in 2025."

- **Page 3, final sentence:** changed "together we can navigate the path toward a more ~~equitable and~~ educated, prosperous Commonwealth."

- **Page 4, para. 6:** changed "This agenda is Kentucky's plan to create a more inclusive, innovative higher education system that serves students of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs" to "This agenda is Kentucky's plan to create a more effective, innovative higher education system."

- **Page 4, para. 7:** removed "this agenda identifies the strategic priorities that will focus our efforts over the next decade, ~~with equity as a cross-cutting priority~~."

- **Page 4, para. 8:** added "This strategic agenda will be reviewed and revised every three years or more often, if necessary."

- **Page 7, para. 3:** updated "At 55.1% in 2022" to "At 56.2% in 2023"

- **Page 7, para. 4:** updated to "The state's current short-term credential attainment rate is 16.7%, of which 11.8% are certificates and 4.9% are industry certifications."

- **Page 7, para. 8:** changed "There are significant disparities in educational attainment linked to race and ethnicity that must be addressed, especially since the state's population is growing more diverse. The percentage of adults with an associate degree or higher in 2022 was 30.3% for Black Kentuckians and 29.8% for Hispanic Kentuckians, compared to 40.1% for White Kentuckians. These gaps must be closed." to "There are significant disparities in educational attainment among subpopulations that must be closed."

- **Page 8:** updated attainment line graph to include 2023 data

- **Page 8:** replaced graphic on attainment rate gaps with graphic showing educational attainment by credential level

- **Page 9:** removed equity badge

- **Pages 10 & 11:** Removed

- **Transitions Narrative, Para. 5, p. 15:** changed "CPE will work with campuses to increase recruitment ~~of individuals historically excluded or underrepresented in higher education~~, including working-age adults balancing careers and families" to "CPE will work with campuses to increase recruitment of traditional-age students, as well as working-age adults balancing careers and families."

- **Transitions, Objective 4, Strategy 4a:** changed "Enhance college recruitment strategies through partnerships with postsecondary institutions and other stakeholders, with attention to ~~underrepresented~~, first-generation, adult and low-income students, as well as traditional students." (mirroring performance funding categories)

- **Page 17:** removed rates for Hispanic and Black students from the immediate college-going rate graphic.

- **Page 18:** removed second paragraph [~~"However, while institutions are narrowing completion gaps at a historic pace, more progress is needed to close them. The six-year graduation rate of minority students currently stands at 45.9%, while the three-year minority graduation rate is 31.8%."~~]

- **Objective 5, strategy 5c, p. 20:** revised to "Work with campuses and other state and national partners to close opportunity and success gaps for ~~historically underserved students~~ first-generation, adult and low-income students ~~from low-income backgrounds~~."

- **Page 26, para. 5:** changed "Over a 30-year career, bachelor's degree graduates in Kentucky make about ~~$1 million~~ $1.2 million more than high school graduates…"

Affordability

Talent

Success

Transitions

Value

HIGHER EDUCATION *Matters*

A Statewide Strategic Agenda for Kentucky Postsecondary Education

2022-2030

Revised 2025

KENTUCKY'S PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM

VISION

Kentucky will be a national leader in building a strong, sustainable and equitable economy through increased educational attainment and affordable, high-quality postsecondary programs for all.

MISSION

Kentucky's postsecondary education system drives innovation, enhances public health and well-being, breaks cycles of generational poverty and improves quality of life by preparing students to be lifelong learners and excel in a diverse, knowledge-based economy.

VALUES

- **Access, engagement & belonging**
- **Transparency & accountability**
- **Comprehensive student support**
- **Institutional collaboration**

- **Quality & excellence**
- **Affordability & accessibility**
- **Innovation**
- **Business & community partnerships**

In accordance with Kentucky Revised Statute 164.020, we are pleased to present "Higher Education Matters: A Statewide Strategic Agenda for Kentucky Postsecondary Education, 2022-2030."

This agenda advances a bold vision for increased economic growth and vitality in the Commonwealth through improvements in the education and skill levels of our workforce. It establishes strategic priorities to drive higher education innovation and improvement, and key performance indicators to monitor progress toward an ambitious educational attainment goal - for 60% of working-age Kentuckians to have a high-quality postsecondary credential by the year 2030.

The previous iteration of this agenda, "Stronger by Degrees," promoted high-impact practices that enabled us to reimagine developmental education and infuse workplace essential skills into select degree programs. "Higher Education Matters" will accelerate the adoption of high-impact practices that further improve teaching and learning, ensure the quality and relevancy of postsecondary credentials and invite individuals underrepresented in higher education onto our campuses in greater numbers.

A critical focus of "Higher Education Matters" is ensuring higher education is within the reach of all Kentuckians. We must ensure everyone has access to life-changing postsecondary credentials, as well as the academic, social and emotional supports to succeed. Doing so is both an economic and moral imperative.

This strategic agenda provides a framework that is fixed enough to provide focus and stability, yet flexible enough to respond to changing conditions. Revisions in 2024 and 2025 include new key performance indicators to monitor college affordability and return on investment; adjustments to some objectives and strategies to better reflect statewide priorities; and changes to comply with the passage of House Bill 4 in 2025.

This plan was not created in a vacuum. It relies on the contributions of many constituencies and committees. I would be remiss if I did not thank the hundreds of individuals - including CPE board members, higher education leaders, faculty members, students, K-12 educators, legislators, employers and partners - who provided valuable insight and direction throughout the development and revision process.

This is not CPE's strategic plan; this agenda belongs to each and every one of us. Kentucky will rise or fall based on our collective, united efforts to enable all residents to reach their highest potential. We have a lot of ground to cover, but together we can navigate the path toward a more educated, prosperous Commonwealth.

> " *Kentucky will rise or fall based on our collective, united efforts to enable all residents to reach their highest potential.*

INTRODUCTION
Higher Education Matters

Restoring Higher Education's Value Proposition

This strategic agenda for Kentucky postsecondary education is built on a simple, enduring premise: higher education matters to our state and its people.

Higher education empowers individuals to reach their highest potential and achieve personal and professional fulfillment. It improves collective health and well-being, advances knowledge and discovery, ignites innovation and fuels our economy.

Research studies enumerate its benefits to individuals and society. On average, college graduates earn more money, have lower rates of unemployment, enjoy better health, live longer and are more active citizens and volunteers. States with high levels of educational attainment - like Massachusetts, Colorado and Washington - generate higher tax revenues, create more jobs, spend more money in local economies and devote fewer resources to disease, addiction and incarceration.

Despite these findings, the value of college has become a matter of debate. Media stories portray recent college graduates as underemployed and overburdened with debt. These voices have undermined the public's faith in higher education at a time when a college credential is more important than ever. By the year 2031, 72% of all U.S. jobs will require some postsecondary education or training, according to the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University. In Kentucky, that percentage is 63%.

We must restore the value proposition to higher education. Kentucky's future prosperity and quality of life depend on it.

We must restore the value proposition to higher education.

Developing the Agenda

This agenda is Kentucky's plan to create a more efficient, responsive and innovative higher education system. It reaffirms our goal for 60% of Kentucky adults to have a postsecondary credential by the year 2030, and builds on unprecedented gains in degree production over the last decade.

It responds to the suggestions and concerns of hundreds of Kentuckians - higher education faculty and administrators, K-12 educators, board members, legislators, employers and others - who worked with us on its development. Based on trend analysis, research and stakeholder feedback, this agenda identifies the strategic priorities that will focus our efforts over the next decade. They are: affordability, transitions, success, talent and value.

A Framework for Accountability

This agenda includes common objectives that will guide system-wide progress. The statewide strategies will be led by CPE, in conjunction with its partners. Public institutions will implement campus-level strategies to advance this agenda. The strategic agenda will be reviewed and revised every three years or more often, if necessary.

CPE and campuses will set numeric targets for key performance indicators, which also will be updated on a three-year cycle. Additional contextual metrics will help us monitor progress and adjust strategies as needed, but targets will not be set.

Kentucky's higher education institutions will pursue these objectives, strategies and targets as one system, united by common challenges and enhanced by individual strengths.

Higher education strengthens the economy, creates wealth, reduces inequality, breaks cycles of generational poverty, improves health and well-being and preserves democracy.

60% of Kentucky's working-age adults (ages 25-64) will have a high-quality postsecondary credential by the year 2030.

KY's 60x30 Goal
Our North Star

Progress Toward the Goal

In ancient times, sailors used the North Star as a navigational guide due to its fixed position in the sky. Today, the North Star has come to symbolize any guiding principle or purpose. During prosperity or adversity, it is a steadfast point on which we set our sights.

For Kentucky's postsecondary system, the 60x30 goal is our North Star. The previous strategic agenda, "Stronger by Degrees," established this educational attainment goal back in 2016. With its adoption, Kentucky joined 45 other states and the Lumina Foundation in efforts to raise the education and skill levels of our workforce to meet current and future demands for talent.

Kentucky has made phenomenal progress toward the goal. Between 2010 and 2020, Kentucky's improvement in educational attainment ranked fifth among states, according to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. At 56.2% in 2023, Kentucky's attainment rate is fast approaching the national average.

Much of this progress is due to increases in short-term credentials, which include certificates and industry certifications. The state's current short-term credential attainment rate is 16.7%, of which 11.8% are certificates and 4.9% are industry certifications.

Statewide Challenges

However, Kentucky is facing some strong headwinds in the decade to come, which threaten to blow us off course. These include:

From 2010 to 2020, KY's progress in educational attainment ranked 5th in the nation.

- A declining number of high school graduates. Overall, Kentucky's high school graduate cohort size is expected to fall by 3% from 2022 to 2035. Decreases will be much larger in rural areas, which will disproportionately affect enrollment at some comprehensive universities and community and technical colleges. Campuses must increase participation among working-age adults and out-of-state students to maintain current enrollment levels.

- Falling adult enrollments. Undergraduate enrollment among adults 25 and older has fallen more than 40% over the last decade. Kentucky will need aggressive recruitment efforts and redesigned programs and supports to attract adults returning to college or enrolling for the first time.

- Unequal rates of attainment. There are significant disparities in educational attainment among subpopulations that must be closed.

Looking Ahead

CPE will provide more detailed projections to monitor progress toward the 60% attainment goal, and focus on raising the education and skills levels of our current workforce.
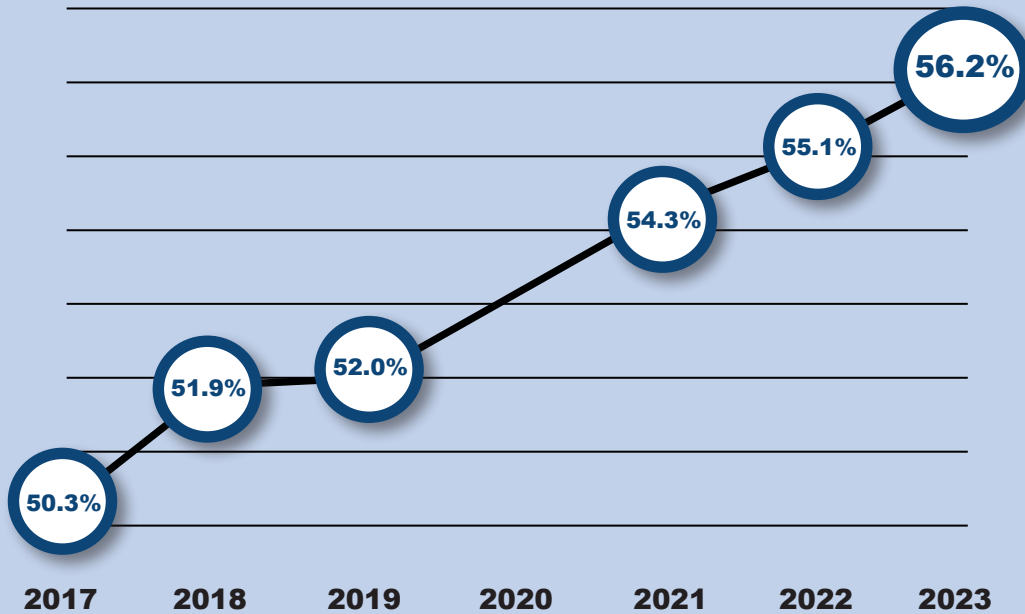
KENTUCKY'S ATTAINMENT GOAL
60% with a postsecondary credential

KY is making progress toward the 60% goal

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
50.3%	51.9%	52.0%		54.3%	55.1%	56.2%

Percentage of Kentuckians (25-64) with a short-term certificate or higher. 2020 data are not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

KY attainment by credential level

Certificate	Associate	Bachelor's	Graduate
16.7%	9.9%	18.2%	11.5%

Percentage of Kentuckians (ages 25-64) with postsecondary credentials in 2023.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Building on previous agendas, "Higher Education Matters" is a blueprint for accelerating change and improvement in Kentucky's public postsecondary system. The strategic priorities identified in this plan represent our primary issues and top concerns as we face head-on the demographic, economic and technological forces reshaping higher education in Kentucky.

Affordability

Value

Success

Transitions

Talent

AFFORDABILITY
A Strategic Priority

Statewide Challenges

Over the last two decades, federal and state disinvestment in public higher education has shifted the majority of college costs to students and their families. In the past, the state of Kentucky subsidized about two-thirds of postsecondary operational costs, with tuition and fees accounting for one-third. Now, this situation is reversed, with one-third of costs supported by state appropriations and two-thirds borne by students.

Consequently, increases in college costs have become a serious burden for many Kentucky families. While the cost of living has steadily increased, real wages have remained flat. Declining amounts of college savings mean student borrowing is at an all-time high. As of 2024, student loan borrowers in the U.S. collectively owed over $1.7 trillion in federal and private loans, exceeding auto and credit card debt.

At a time when postsecondary education and training are essential to long-term economic security, college is becoming financially inaccessible to our most vulnerable populations. If left unchecked, declines in college access will lead to greater income inequality, making it all but impossible for everyday Kentuckians to get ahead.

Responding to rising concerns from students, parents and elected officials, the Council has elevated college affordability to one of five strategic priorities our public postsecondary system will pursue over the next eight years.

Federal & state disinvestment in public higher education has shifted costs to students.

Systemwide Responses

To this end, the state's higher education system will build on the success achieved over the last decade to increase college access and affordability.

We will work with elected leaders to increase state funding for postsecondary education and student financial aid, so rising costs are not passed on to students.

We will work to limit increases in tuition and fees, while exploring collaborative purchasing agreements, open educational resources and other efficiency measures to keep ancillary costs in check.

We will work in partnership with P-12 educators, advisors, counselors and other stakeholders to help incoming students understand the complexities of college pricing, and the role of grants, scholarships and responsible borrowing in managing costs. The published cost of attendance stops many students and families in their tracks. Providing greater transparency around out-of-pocket costs will ensure sticker shock does not prevent students from applying.

We also will focus on decreasing the time it takes to earn a credential, since additional semesters mean additional cost. Early postsecondary opportunities and improved advising are strategies that can help students graduate on time.

Kentucky will ensure postsecondary education is affordable for all Kentuckians.

AFFORDABILITY
Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

1. Reduce financial barriers to college enrollment and completion.

1a. Work with campuses, state leaders and other stakeholders to increase access to grants and scholarships for low- and middle-income students.

1b. Moderate increases in tuition and mandatory fees at Kentucky's public colleges and universities.

1c. Work with campuses to reduce unmet financial need and student loan debt among undergraduate students.

1d. Monitor the financial health of Kentucky public institutions and their ability to adequately discount costs for students.

2. Improve the public's understanding of the true cost of college and how to pay for it.

2a. Provide informational resources, financial literacy and advising strategies for counselors, teachers and community partners on paying for college.

2b. Coordinate and support efforts to educate Kentuckians about changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and increase the number of individuals who complete the application.

2c. Establish state-level networks for high school counselors and other college access professionals to share effective practices, build expertise and develop common outreach and messaging for Kentucky students.

Key Performance Indicators

First-time, In-state Student Unmet Need (State- and Campus-Level): The total cost of attendance (tuition, fees, room and board, transportation, textbooks and other costs) for an academic year minus Student Aid Index or SAI (formerly Expected Family Contribution or EFC) and all financial aid, excluding loans.

Debt at Graduation (Contextual Metric): The sum of loans taken from the year of first enrollment to the highest undergraduate credential earned.

COLLEGE IN KENTUCKY
May Cost Less Than You Think

The actual cost of college is less than advertised.

The total estimated cost of college, including tuition, room, board, fees and other expenses

The actual out-of-pocket cost of college once federal, state and institutional grants and scholarships are factored in

	Sticker Price	Net Price
2-Yr. Public	$12,550	$5,567
4-Yr. Public	$24,629	$12,985

This chart reflects median annual amounts for in-state, undergraduate students at Kentucky public institutions. For median amounts by institution, visit KY Students' Right to Know at https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/KSRTK

What a typical KY undergraduate owes at graduation:

Graduate of a public community and technical college

Graduate of a public university

$4,138

$18,674

Amounts reflect median loan balances for undergraduate students who completed a credential in 2022-23, including students with zero debt. When students with no debt are excluded, these medians rise to $13,644 at a public community and technical college and $33,317 at a public university. Source: Council on Postsecondary Education. "Undergraduate Student Debt Levels in Kentucky," April 2024.

Kentucky will ensure more students transition to college prepared to succeed.

TRANSITIONS
A Strategic Priority

Statewide Challenges

Over the decade, the U.S. saw little movement in the percentage of high school seniors enrolling directly in college. Kentucky, on the other hand, experienced a rather steep decline in its college-going rate, falling from nearly 60% in 2015 to 53.3% in 2022.

Systemwide Responses

There are actions higher education can take to help more high school graduates successfully transition to postsecondary programs. We can provide extra and earlier guidance to students and remove tripwires that cause individuals to stumble on the path to college, particularly if they are first-generation or historically underserved by postsecondary institutions. We can simplify bureaucratic and onerous admission processes, for instance, and help demystify financial aid applications like the FAFSA.

The rise of early college experiences in high school show tremendous promise. Dual credit/enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and similar programs allow students to earn college credit while still in high school, giving them a jump-start on postsecondary education. The challenge is to expand access to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds and ability levels, and ensure credits count toward degree requirements and not just as electives.

It is unrealistic to expect high school guidance counselors to help every student navigate the maze of college admission requirements and decisions. With its partners, CPE will advocate for dedicated college coaches and advisors in middle and secondary schools, and create resources that walk students and their parents step-by-step through the planning and application process.

The rise of early college experiences in high school show tremendous promise.

Colleges and universities also must do their part to enroll and retain students through those critical first months. CPE will work with campuses to increase recruitment of traditional-age students, as well as working-age adults balancing careers and families. We will streamline and digitize admission processes and materials to the greatest extent possible. Predictive analytics can help pinpoint at-risk students and better target intervention strategies.

Such actions will go a long way toward creating smoother educational transitions, from cradle to career.

3. Increase students' readiness to enter postsecondary education.

3a. Expand access to high-quality, early postsecondary opportunities.

3b. Develop digital resources to help students explore career interests and college options.

3c. Partner with public P-12 schools, adult education programs and postsecondary institutions to provide outreach to students to help them prepare and plan for college.

4. Increase college-going rates and enrollment in postsecondary education.

4a. Enhance college recruitment strategies through partnerships with postsecondary institutions and other stakeholders, with attention to first-generation, adult and low-income students, as well as traditional-age students.

4b. Work with education providers to streamline and simplify postsecondary admission processes.

Key Performance Indicators

Undergraduate Enrollment (State- & Campus-Level): Total unduplicated number of students who enroll in an undergraduate program in an academic year, either full-time or part-time.
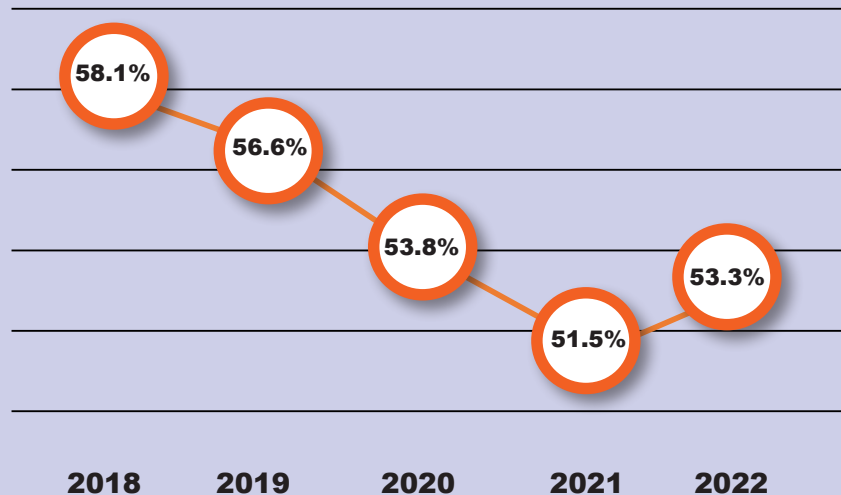
Immediate College-Going Rate (State-Level): Percent of recent Kentucky high school graduates who attend any in-state or out-of-state postsecondary institution in the summer, fall or spring following high school graduation.

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Kentucky must increase its immediate college-going rate.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
58.1%	56.6%	53.8%	51.5%	53.3%

Percentage of KY high school students who enroll directly in an in-state or out-of-state public or private college the fall or spring following graduation.

Source: KY Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)

These statewide initiatives will help.

- A federal grant program administered by CPE
- Provides early college awareness & readiness
- Serves thousands of K-12 and college students in low-income schools across Kentucky
- Teaches students how to plan, apply and pay for college
- Follows students from middle school through their first year of college
- Offers mentoring and support

Commonwealth Education Continuum

- Collaboration of CPE, KDE, KHEAA and the Education & Workforce Development Cabinet
- Recommendations for increased early college experiences
- Strategies for improved college & career readiness
- Diversification of teaching & advising corps

SUCCESS
A Strategic Priority

Statewide Successes & Challenges

Kentucky's colleges and universities made impressive gains in retention and completion over the last decade. The six-year graduation rate rose from 48.9% to 59.9% at public universities, while the three-year graduation rate at KCTCS jumped from 23.4% to 41.2%.

Increasing degree production is an overriding concern of this agenda, but we are not prioritizing quantity over quality. High-quality credentials equip students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world that demands critical thinking, ingenuity, flexibility and teamwork. From certificates to doctorates, we must ensure students master the content, skills and mindsets necessary for future career success and personal fulfillment. The challenge is producing quality credentials at a pace commensurate with our overarching attainment goal.

Sytemwide Responses

In the years ahead, Kentucky higher education will double down on the widespread adoption of high-impact practices that research has proven to be effective. CPE launched the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative, a one-of-a-kind center dedicated to the advancement of innovative strategies and best practices. This entity will increase our capacity to engage and unite campuses in more sustained, comprehensive improvement efforts.

The system will not prioritize the quantity of credentials over quality.

We will continue to improve transfer from two-year to four-year institutions by helping students and practitioners understand how credits apply to specific degree programs across the state. We will promote credit for prior learning and accelerated programs to make our institutions friendlier for working-age adults, an underserved market that is critical to creating a more competitive workforce and reaching our 60x30 goal.

Just as technology is revolutionizing the way we work, it is also transforming teaching and learning. Artificial intelligence, global online collaborations and personalized learning software are only the beginning. Combined with face-to-face instruction, technology can accelerate and deepen learning in profound ways. But we cannot harness these powerful tools if educators lack training and resources, or if broadband access is not universally accessible and affordable.

Finally, we intend to make internships, apprenticeships, service and other forms of work-based learning the rule rather than the exception. Students should be able to connect classroom learning to the world of work, and articulate these connections to employers. More robust employer partnerships will increase the relevance and responsiveness of academic programs and ensure students are able to secure meaningful employment in their field of study.

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Kentucky will ensure more students earn high-quality degrees and credentials.

5. Increase persistence in and timely completion of postsecondary programs.

5a. Share, implement and evaluate emerging, promising and proven practices supporting student success and college completion.

5b. Identify and promote efforts to ensure "on-time" program completion.

5c. Work with campuses and other state and national partners to close opportunity and success gaps for first-generation, adult and low-income students.

5d. Work with education providers to limit barriers to enrollment and completion for students balancing the competing demands of work, life, family and school.

6. Maximize transfer of academic and experiential credit.

6a. Work with campuses to reduce barriers that prevent the seamless transfer of credit.

6b. Promote transfer opportunities and program pathways.

6c. Encourage credit for prior learning and competency-based instruction.

7. Ensure academic offerings are high-quality, relevant and inclusive.

7a. Work with campuses to ensure the essential competencies and outcomes outlined in the Kentucky Graduate Profile are embedded in undergraduate programs.

7b. Enhance the relevance, inclusivity and quality of academic offerings through improvements in program review and approval processes.

Key Performance Indicators

Undergraduate Degrees and Credentials (State- & Campus-Level): Total degrees and credentials awarded by public universities and KCTCS institutions.

Graduation Rate (State- & Campus-Level): The percent of first-time, full-time credential-seeking students receiving a bachelor's degree within 6 years at public universities, or an associate degree or credential within 3 years at KCTCS from their starting institution.

2-Year to 4-Year Transfer (Sector-Level): Percent of first-time, full-time credential-seeking students entering KCTCS in the fall who transfer to any in-state, 4-year public institution within 3 years of entry.

Retention Rate (State- and Campus-Level): Percent of first-time, credential-seeking students enrolled in the summer or fall who return to the same institution the following fall.
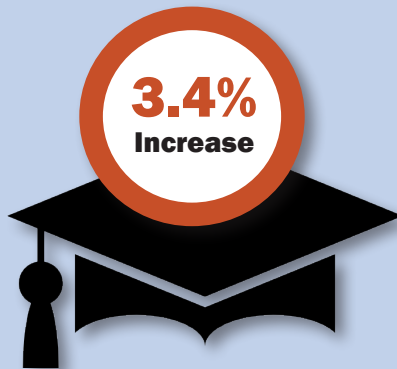
ACCELERATING SUCCESS
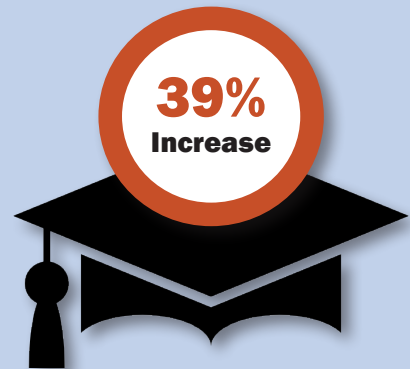## Building on a Decade of Credential Growth

Undergraduate Credential Growth Over the Last Decade:

27% Increase

In Certificates, Diplomas & Associate Degrees Awarded by KCTCS

3.4% Increase

In Bachelor's Degrees Awarded by Public Universities

39% Increase

In Graduate Degrees Awarded by Public Universities

The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative

To accelerate meaningful transformation around student success, CPE launched the KYSSC, a first-of-its-kind statewide program supporting greater degree completion and successful career transitions. KYSCC offers its higher education partners the following resources and assistance:

Professional Development
Virtual and online assistance based on campus priorities.

Communities of Practice
Collaboration and resource sharing around common challenges and opportunities.

Resource & Knowledge Hub
An interactive, online platform for faculty and practitioners to share experiences and resources.

Technical Assistance
Guidance from national organizations and thought leaders on issues and challenges.

Change Leadership Institute
A forum for faculty, staff, and administrators to build capacity for growth and innovation.

https://kystudentsuccess.org

Kentucky will increase talent and innovation to support our communities, employers and economy.

TALENT
A Strategic Priority

Statewide Challenges

A primary purpose of postsecondary education is to produce adaptive, highly skilled workers to fuel the economy. As noted by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, nearly three out of four jobs in the U.S. will demand postsecondary experience by the year 2031.

A 2021 report by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce estimates that the state has 90,000 to 100,000 job openings in any given month, and 65% to 85% of these vacancies require training, credentialing or degrees beyond high school. Data from the Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) program show that only 30% of the state's jobs require a high school diploma or less, corroborating this finding.

At 57.9%, Kentucky currently has one of the lowest workforce participation rates in the nation. Poor health, substance use disorders and childcare shortages are partly to blame, but the lack of requisite skills and credentials, especially in Appalachian counties, is a large and growing part of the problem. The lack of active, skilled workers limits Kentucky's economic growth and expansion, increases spending on public assistance programs and reduces state tax revenues.

65% to 85% of Kentucky job openings require training beyond high school.

Systemwide Responses

Kentucky must expand postsecondary access to undereducated, working-age adults to fill critical work shortages in healthcare, STEM fields, early childhood development and other high-demand areas. Work-based education opportunities, tuition assistance and public-private partnerships can put adults to work while they gain valuable credentials that move them up the career ladder.

Endless debates pitting technical training against liberal arts education miss the larger point: today's graduates need both. We must ensure liberal arts graduates gain technical and vocational proficiencies, just as students pursuing technical and vocational credentials gain exposure to the humanities and liberal arts.

Besides talent production, higher education institutions drive economic development through basic and applied research and business services. Innovations originating in laboratories are driven to the marketplace, spawning new companies and creating products and processes that improve our lives. To maximize economic development, these efforts should be aligned with the state's emerging and existing industries.

Finally, Kentucky's postsecondary system will continue its mission of regional stewardship by working with community partners to exchange knowledge and expertise for the mutual benefit of the Commonwealth.

TALENT
Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

8. Improve postsecondary education's responsiveness to and alignment with current and projected workforce demands.

8a. Engage post-traditional learners, veterans, justice-involved individuals and others in programs designed to fill critical workplace shortages.

8b. Work with colleges and universities to strengthen campus-based career advising and development.

8c. Facilitate meaningful partnerships among employers, community partners and education providers to improve the career outcomes of postsecondary programs and strengthen Kentucky's workforce and economy.

9. Guide investments in research, training and scholarships to support innovation and growth.

9a. Identify high-growth, high-demand and high-wage industries by region and target postsecondary programs for increased enrollment in those areas.

9b. Encourage targeted research, the development of signature academic programs and expanded community engagement supporting Kentucky's high-need workforce areas.

9c. Work with the General Assembly and other policy makers to alleviate barriers to workforce participation.

Key Performance Indicators

Graduate and Professional Degrees (State- & Campus-Level): Total number of graduate/professional degrees awarded in an academic year.

Statewide Educational Attainment Goal (State-Level): Percent of Kentuckians ages 25-64 with a postsecondary credential (certificate or higher).
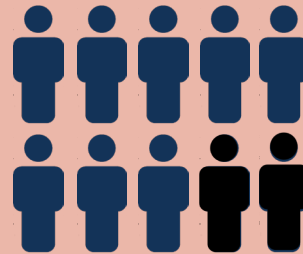
WORK-READY GRADUATES
Producing Talent for Kentucky Employers

HELP WANTED

Only **48%** of Kentuckians have skills training beyond high school, which **65%-85%** of jobs require.

Source: KY Chamber of Commerce, "20 Years in the Making: Kentucky's Worforce Crisis." September 2021.

8 out of 10

Kentucky businesses have trouble finding workers with the right skills.

Source: 2017 study conducted by Talent Pipeline Management, a statewide initiative of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Kentucky Graduate Profile

- Communicate effectively
- Think critically to solve problems
- Apply quantitative reasoning skills
- Interact effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
- Engage in civic life to improve society
- Adapt to change while leading & supporting others
- Exhibit professionalism on the job
- Collaborate & work in teams
- Apply learning to chosen career
- Use information for decison making

In partnership with Kentucky campuses, CPE identified 10 essential skills that employers expect in college graduates. CPE is working with campuses to integrate these competencies into their curricular and co-curricular offerings.

VALUE
A Strategic Priority

The Perceived Value of College

Increasingly, Americans are questioning the value of higher education. The extent of this skepticism varies according to socioeconomic status, political party affiliation, geographic region and other factors.

When Gallup first polled Americans about their faith in higher education in 2015, 57% had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in higher education, while 10% had little or no confidence. By 2024, these percentages were nearly evenly divided, with 36% reporting a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in higher education, and 32% reporting little or no confidence.

The Actual Value of College

Unfortunately, negative beliefs about the value of college are based more on feeling than fact. College's return on investment in strict financial terms depends on how much you paid for your degree and the marketability of your chosen field. Some students reap greater financial rewards than others. But to promote the belief that college is no longer a wise investment is a grave disservice to parents and students everywhere. While a college credential does not guarantee economic security, the lack of a credential most certainly limits earning potential and perpetuates generational poverty in our communities.

In September 2021, CPE released a study showing that among Kentucky's high school class of 2011, postsecondary graduates were earning substantially more money than high school graduates by 2019, despite fewer years of full-time work. The typical community college or

university graduate recouped their higher education investment in about three to five years, depending on the credential earned.

Over a 30-year career, bachelor's degree graduates in Kentucky make about $1.2 million more than high school graduates, while those with associate degrees make nearly half a million more.

Systemwide Responses

The Council on Postsecondary Education regularly disseminates communications and public awareness materials to counteract negative opinions about the value of college. We educate students about the benefits of a college credential, and inform policy makers about how higher education increases tax revenue, decreases unemployment and public assistance expenditures, improves health outcomes and produces a myriad of benefits that can't easily be quantified, like increased volunteerism and voting.

Workers with bachelor's degrees make $1.2M more than high school graduates over a lifetime.

Part of this effort is helping Kentuckians understand that college is not only a four-year, residential undergraduate degree. There are a multitude of college options in our state, many technical in nature, that allow students to pursue careers in the skilled trades, ranging from short-term certificates to applied associate degrees.

It is our hope that increasing higher education's value proposition will lead to greater investment from both the General Assembly and the private sector. More profoundly, it will restore our belief in higher education's ability to put Americans on a path to future prosperity and fulfillment.

Kentucky will improve public understanding that postsecondary education is key to greater opportunity and economic growth.

VALUE
Objectives, Strategies & KPIs

10. Increase the public's belief in the transformative power of postsecondary education.

10a. Implement communications strategies that articulate what postsecondary education is (i.e., it includes short-term technical training, certifications and degrees) and why it's critically important to individuals and the Commonwealth.

10b. Leverage partnerships with campuses, state agencies and national partners to amplify messages about postsecondary education's value and return on investment.

11. Build support for greater investment in postsecondary education.

11a. Communicate the benefits of higher education and the need for increased state and federal support.

11b. Seek funding from foundations and other external sources to support Strategic Agenda priorities.

Contextual Performance Indicators

State General Fund Appropriations (State-Level): Percent change in net general fund appropriations for full-time equivalent students, excluding state financial aid or state monies for debt service.

Economic Mobility (State-Level): Percent of low-income students who are earning salaries in the top 50 percent of Kentucky wages within three years of graduation.

HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS
College-Educated Citizens Build a Better Kentucky

College Benefits Individuals & Society

Earnings
College graduates earn more and are less likely to rely on public assistance.

Health
College graduates are more likely to be insured, exercise and enjoy better health.

Civic Responsibility
College graduates are more likely to vote, donate to charity and be civically engaged.

Literacy
College graduates are more likely to read to their children and be supportive of their education overall.

Employment
College graduates are more likely to find jobs and stay employed, even in a down economy.

Economy
The state gains more from college graduates through higher earnings and less dependence on public assistance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPE thanks the following individuals for their contributions to this Strategic Agenda in 2022:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all 2022 focus group participants:

Focus Groups On Issues

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- College Affordability
- Transitioning from Postsecondary Education to the Workforce
- Engaging the Adult Learner
- Stronger Partnerships between P-12 and Postsecondary Education

## 2022 Focus Groups with Standing Committees

- **Student Advisory Group:** Eyouel Mehonnen, EKU; Aaron Nethery, MuSU; Abigail Stewart, UofL; Gregory Wieland, NKU; Emily Wiley, MoSU; Noah Young, UofL

- **Chief Business Officers:** Elizabeth Baker, UK; Buddy Combs, KCTCS; Jackie Dudley, MuSU; Mary Fister-Tucker, MoSU; Wendell Followell, KCTCS; Rick Graycerek, UofL; Ryan Green, EKU; Mike Hales, NKU; Brendan LeHane, KCTCS; Teresa Lindgren, MoSU; Shannon Means, UK

- **Chief Academic Officers:** Scott Cook, MCC; Laurie Couch, MoSU; Lori Gonzalez, UofL; Rob Hale, WKU; Larry Holloway, UK; Ashley Ireland, MuSU; Abdou Ndoye, NKU; Robert Pervine, MuSU; Jerry Pogatshnik, EKU; Greg Russell, MoSU; Beverly Schneller, KSU; Cheryl Stevens, WKU; Tim Todd, MuSU; Reneau Waggoner, HCC; Jennifer Wies, EKU; Beth Wiley, UofL; Kris Williams, KCTCS; Sara Ziegler, EKU

- **CPE Executive Leadership Team:** Melissa Bell, Amanda Ellis, Jennifer Fraker, Lee Nimocks, Bill Payne, Travis Powell, Rick Smith, Aaron Thompson

- **CPE Senior Leadership Team:** Bruce Brooks, Leslie Brown, Ilona Burdette, Cody Davidson, Wayne Fielder, Jevonda Keith, Sarah Levy, Stephanie Mayberry, Shaun McKiernan, Travis Muncie, Dawn Offutt, Sue Patrick, Missy Ross, Kim Welch, Melissa Young

Thanks to the following groups who assisted with the Strategic Agenda 2024 revision:

- **CPE Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee**: Kellie Ellis, Meredith Figg, Karyn Hoover, LaDonna Rogers, Kevin Weaver

- **Campus Representatives:** Bethany Miller, EKU; Wendy Dixie, KSU; Jill Ratliff, MoSU; Dedrick Brooks, Renee Fister, and Alyssa Spencer, MuSu; Holly Chason and Amy Ishmael, NKU; Todd Brann, Angie Martin and Chris Thuringer, UK; Robert Goldstein and Becky Patterson, UofL; Tuesdi Helbig and Jessica Spears, WKU; Alicia Crouch, Alan Lawson and Steve Popple, KCTCS

- **CPE Internal Work Group:** Tony Bartley, Melissa Bell, Adam Blevins, Bruce Brooks, Shelia Brothers, Leslie Brown, Beth Ann Collins, Sterling Crayton, Amanda Ellis, Heather Faesy, Gabrielle Gayheart, Leah Halliday, Robin Hebert, Mitzi Holland, Mary Jackson, Ryan Kaffenberger, Chris Ledford, Lily Massa-McKinley, Michaela Mineer, Blake Nantz, Laura Negron, Lee Nimocks, Kelli Norman, Dawn Offut, Bill Payne, Jessica Romious, Missy Ross, Leslie Sizemore, Janna Vice, Trinity Walsh, Kim Welch, Carl Wilson, Melissa Young

KENTUCKY CAMPUSES
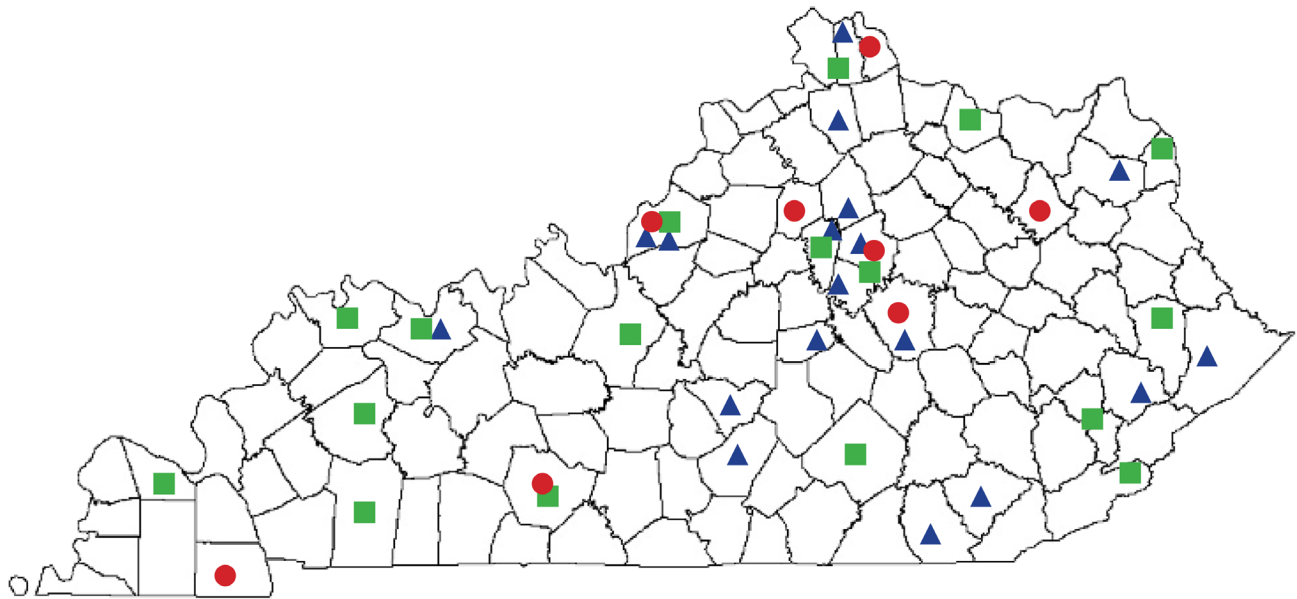
● Public Universities

Eastern Kentucky University
Kentucky State University
Morehead State University
Murray State University
Northern Kentucky University
University of Kentucky
University of Louisville
Western Kentucky University

■ Kentucky Community & Technical College System

Ashland Community & Technical College
Big Sandy Community & Technical College
Bluegrass Community & Technical College
Elizabethtown Community & Technical College
Gateway Community & Technical College
Hazard Community & Technical College
Henderson Community College
Hopkinsville Community College
Jefferson Community & Technical College
Madisonville Community College
Maysville Community & Technical College
Owensboro Community & Technical College
Somerset Community College
Southcentral Kentucky Community & Technical College
Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College
West Kentucky Community & Technical College
KCTCS System Office Headquarters

▲ Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities

Alice Lloyd College
Asbury University
Bellarmine University
Berea College
Brescia University
Campbellsville University
Centre College

Georgetown College
Kentucky Christian University
Kentucky Wesleyan College
Lindsey Wilson College
Midway University
Spalding University
Thomas More University

Transylvania University
Union Commonwealth University
University of Pikeville
University of the Cumberlands

CPE
Higher Education Matters

TITLE: Revision to New Academic Program Approval Policy

DESCRIPTION: Staff recommend the Council approve the proposed revisions to the New Academic Program Approval Policy.

STAFF CONTACTS: Travis Powell, Executive Vice President & General Counsel
Melissa Bell, Vice President, Academic Excellence
Sheila Brothers, Senior Director, Academic Excellence

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Council is the approving body for academic programs at Kentucky's public institutions. KRS 164.020(15) empowers the Council to define and approve the offering of all technical, certificate, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees at public postsecondary institutions. It also mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational-technical and occupational nature. This statutory duty is operationalized through the Council's New Academic Program Approval Policy, which was last updated in September 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with HB 4 (2025), Council staff recommend the following revisions to the New Academic Program approval policy:

- Added sentence in the "History" section that details the legislative changes
- Minor revisions to ensure the applicable legislative language was reflected
- Addition/deletion of relevant legislation and definitions

The policy with tracked changes has been included as reference.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In response to the SJR 170 (2024) study and SB 77 (2025), the Council has been working with campus representatives to substantially revise the policy to include an approval process for doctoral programs at comprehensive universities. Council staff expect to have this work completed over the summer and will present those updates for Council approval at the September meetings.

New Academic Program Approval

Approved by the Council:

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

Approval of New Academic Programs: Policy and Procedures

History

Prior to the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997, institutions notified the Council's predecessor, the Council on Higher Education (CHE), semi-annually of new programs under development. The institution then submitted a program proposal and a two-page executive summary after the proposal had completed all institutional approvals. Staff performed the preliminary review; a Programs Committee made up of CHE members reviewed the proposals; and the full CHE acted upon the staff and Programs Committee recommendations.

In November 1997, the newly formed Council on Postsecondary Education (the Council) directed staff to review academic program policies. Until the new policies were established, staff considered a new academic program only if it documented an immediate, critical need.

- The Council streamlined its academic policies at its September 1998 meeting by directing staff to develop new procedures that "enable institutions to respond quickly to changing market demands and place primary responsibility for quality assurance with institutional governing boards, within broad system-wide guidelines that address statewide needs and protect consumer interests."

- As a first step in streamlining, in April 1999 the Council delegated to the Kentucky Community and Technical College (KCTCS) board of regents program approval authority for new certificate, diploma, associate in arts, associate in science, associate in applied science, and associate in applied technology degree programs at the KCTCS institutions. This delegation was reaffirmed in November 2000.

- At the November 1999 meeting, the Council delegated its approval authority for new academic programs within designated program bands to each institution's governing board while retaining approval authority for first professional programs; engineering programs at the comprehensive institutions and engineering programs at the doctoral level at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville; teacher and school personnel preparation programs; health-related programs above the baccalaureate level; associate degree programs at public universities; and other programs falling outside each institution's negotiated program band. Proposals for new academic programs within an institution's program band were subject to a six-week public review by the chief academic officers of Kentucky's public institutions, the president of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities, and others. If there were no significant problems with the proposal, the institution was allowed to complete its internal process of program approval and subsequently implement the program without full Council approval.

The policy was significantly revised at the September 2011 Council meeting. Definitions were aligned to those of the U.S. Department of Education, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The program bands were eliminated, a notification of intent process was developed, and the program approval criteria were more closely aligned with that of the review of existing academic programs.

Between 2011 and 2016, there were revisions to IPEDS and SACSCOC definitions. In addition, both CPE staff and institutional representatives identified areas of the policy and processes that needed further clarification or alteration. CPE staff worked with institutional representatives to update the policy and procedures accordingly. In 2017, the policy was revised. The highlights of the updated policy included:

1) A streamlined process for certificates that are not considered substantive changes by SACSCOC.
2) A curricular review in the pre-proposal stages rather than in the full proposal stage.
3) A shorter review period to help institutions better respond to student and workforce demands.
4) A time limit on the submission of pre-proposals and full proposals to help the process progress smoothly and efficiently.
5) A more explicit connection between the academic program approval policy and the review of existing academic programs policy by requiring complete submission of the previous year's program reviews before any new programs can be proposed.

This 2020 policy revision further streamlines the process and aligns the process more closely with the information required by SACSCOC.

In June 2025 the policy was again revised to comply with legislation prohibiting approval of programs for which the primary purpose is to indoctrinate participants with a discriminatory concept.

Related Legislation

Numerous statutes and administrative regulations define the role of the Council as well as institutional authority in the area of academic programming.

- KRS 164.003 goals for achievement by 2020, including a seamless, integrated system of postsecondary education strategically planned and adequately funded to enhance economic development and quality of life.

- KRS 164.020(15) empowers the Council to define and approve the offering of all technical, certificate, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degree at public postsecondary institutions. It also mandates that the Council expedite

the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational-technical and occupational nature.

- KRS 164.020(16) authorizes the Council to eliminate, in its discretion, existing programs or make any changes in existing academic programs at the state's postsecondary educational institutions, taking into consideration (a) consistency with the institution's mission and the strategic agenda; (b) alignment with the priorities in the strategic implementation plan for achieving the strategic agenda;(c) elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs within and among institutions; and (d) efforts to create cooperative programs with other institutions through traditional means, or by use of distance learning technology and electronic resources, to achieve effective and efficient program delivery; and (e) eliminate any program that includes a requirement for a course or training of which the primary purpose is to indoctrinate participants with a discriminatory concept.

- KRS164.020(15)(a) restricts the Council from approving a new degree, certificate, or diploma program that includes a requirement for a course or training of which the primary purpose is to indoctrinate participants with a discriminatory concept. "Indoctrinate" means to imbue or attempt to imbue another individual with an opinion, point of view, or principle without consideration of any alternative opinion, point of view, or principle. "Discriminatory concept" means a concept that justifies or promotes differential treatment or benefits conferred to individuals on the basis of religion, race, sex, color, or national origin, unless the differential treatment or benefit is:
   o Excluded from a diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative under an exclusion set forth in subsection (7)(b) of KRS 164.2894; or
   o Established or required by law, including but not limited to differential treatment or benefits on the basis of citizenship status.

- KRS 164.125 allows the University of Kentucky, upon Council approval, to provide associate, baccalaureate, masters, and specialist programs. It also allows joint doctoral programs in cooperation with other public postsecondary institutions in the state; doctoral and postdoctoral programs; and professional instruction including law, medicine, dentistry, education, architecture, engineering, and social professions.

- KRS 164.295 allows comprehensive universities to provide, upon Council approval, associate and baccalaureate programs as well as master's-degree programs in education, business, and the arts and sciences. It also allows for specialist degrees and programs beyond the master's-degree level to meet the requirements for teachers, school leaders, and other certified personnel. It also allows for advanced practice doctorates. Comprehensive universities may also provide programs of a community college nature as provided in KRS 164.580.

- KRS 164.2951 encourages public postsecondary institutions to limit the credit-hour requirements to 60 credit hours for associate of science or associate of arts degree

programs and to 120 credit hours for bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree programs, except in situations in which the quality and content of the program would be negatively impacted or if required by external accreditor in order to meet specific program standards.

- KRS 164.296 states that no public postsecondary institution shall offer any new program of a vocational-technical occupational nature below the associate degree level without the review of KCTCS board of regents and Council approval. The KCTCS board of regents, with Council approval, may contract with public postsecondary institutions for the operation of specific programs and projects.

- KRS 164.580 allows KCTCS, upon Council approval, to offer associate degree programs. Technical colleges, through their faculty and accrediting procedures, may develop degree programs that shall be considered for approval by the board of regents and the Council.

- KRS 164.815 allows the University of Louisville, upon Council approval, to provide associate and baccalaureate degree programs of instruction, master's-degree programs, specialist degrees above the master's-degree level, doctoral degree programs and joint doctoral programs in cooperation with other public institutions of higher education, and professional degree programs including medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, and social professions.

- 13 KAR 2:110 outlines the criteria and conditions upon which an advanced practice doctorate may be approved at comprehensive universities.

- 13 KAR 2:060 establishes the process for equal opportunity goal setting, measurement of progress, and attainment of a temporary waiver. It is related to KRS 164.020(19).

Policy Fundamentals

- An institution may not submit a proposal unless it has submitted all academic program reviews for the preceding academic year, per the Review of Existing Academic Programs Policy.

- Institutions should recommend the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code of the proposed program after careful consideration. CPE will review the recommendation and finalize the CIP code with the requesting institution.

- After a program is approved by the Council, an institution has up to three years to implement the program. If the program has not been implemented within this timeframe, it must undergo the new program approval process.

Deleted: <#>An institution may not submit a proposal unless it has achieved automatic eligibility status or has obtained the appropriate waiver under 13 KAR 2:060.¶
¶

- If institutions advertise or publish in institutional catalogs a new academic program prior to approval by the Council, the qualifier "pending Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education approval" must be included until approval is received.

- After a program has been approved and entered into the program inventory, it is the institution's responsibility to ensure that all information is correct and current. Institutional staff will update program information in the Kentucky Postsecondary Education System (KPEDS) Program Inventory module.

- The Council reserves the right to create special program approval processes for programs that require extraordinary consideration, such as responding to legislative requirements and administrative regulations.

- The Council is the approving body for academic programs. An institution should follow it internal processes and gain approval from its local governing board before the proposal is submitted for approval to the Council.

- Items that do not require new program approval:
  - Inclusion of new degree designations within an existing degree level.
  - Implementation of significant changes to the program provided the CIP code remains unchanged.

Merged and Separated Programs

If two academic programs are combined into one program, the combined program will be considered a new academic program and must follow the policy and procedures related to new academic programs only if it requires a new CIP code to describe accurately the discipline of the combined program.

If an existing academic program is separated into two or more academic programs, at least one of the separated programs is considered a new academic program and must follow the policy and procedures related to new academic programs. The other program will not be considered a new academic program if the existing CIP code remains the best disciplinary descriptor of the program.

Collaborative and Joint Programs

If any partner institution does not currently offer the academic program, that institution must undergo the new academic program approval process and must provide a "Memorandum of Understanding" that clearly outlines program responsibilities and fiscal arrangements among participating institutions.

If two or more institutions create a collaborative or joint program with academic programs that are already offered at each institution, then the program does not need to undergo the new academic program process at either institution. The institutions should notify the Council of the

arrangement and provide a copy of the "Memorandum of Understanding" through the KPEDS Program Inventory module.

Suspended and Closed Programs
If a program has been suspended for fewer than five years, an institution may reinstate the program through the program inventory system.

After a program has been suspended for five years, it will be considered closed, and this status will be updated automatically in the program inventory.

If a program has been closed and an institution wants to reopen the program, an institution must complete the new program approval process.

Program Approval Process for KCTCS Institutions
This section outlines the process for approving new diploma, certificate, and associate degree programs for KCTCS institutions.

New Diploma and Certificate Programs
The institution will complete a New Diploma/Certificate Form through KPEDS. Programs will be approved upon receipt of the completed form.

Associate Degree Programs of a Vocational-Technical-Occupational Nature (i.e. AAS)
KCTCS will post a proposal to online program approval system. Institutions and Council staff will have 30 days to respond to the proposal.
- *If no issues are identified with the proposal*, the program will be approved by Council staff and reported as an information item at the next Council meeting.
- *If issues are identified with the proposal*, the institution will address those via the online program approval system, and the review period will be extended. Once the issues are resolved, the program will be approved by Council staff and reported as an information item at the next Council meeting. If concerns cannot be fully resolved, the Council staff will inform KCTCS that it should not proceed with its internal process of program approval.

New Transfer-Oriented Associate Degree Programs (i.e. AA, AS, AFA)
KCTCS will post a proposal to the online program approval system. Institutions and Council staff will have 30 days to respond to the proposal.
- *If no issues are identified with the proposal*, the program will be approved by Council staff and reported as an information item at the next Council meeting.
- *If issues are identified with the proposal*, the institution will address those via the online program approval system, and the review period will be extended. Once the issues are resolved, the program will be approved by Council staff and reported as an information item at the next Council meeting. If the concerns cannot be fully resolved, the Council

staff will inform KCTCS that it should not proceed with its internal process of program approval.

Program Approval Process for Universities

This section outlines the approval process for all diploma, certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs at each public university.

New Diploma and Certificate Programs

The institution will complete a New Diploma/Certificate Form through KPEDS. Programs will be approved upon receipt of the completed form.

- KRS 164.296 states that no public postsecondary institution shall offer any new program of a vocational-technical occupational nature below the associate degree level without the review of KCTCS board of regents and Council approval. After review of KCTCS board of regents, the institution will complete a New Diploma/Certificate Form through KPEDS.

All Degree Programs (Excluding Advanced Practice Doctorates at Comprehensive Universities)

The institution will post to the online Notification of Intent system. The notification will then be shared with the chief academic officers at the other public institutions.

- For associate degree programs, the program will only move forward if KCTCS determines, within 30 days of notification, that a community and technical college(s) in the proposing institution's area of geographic responsibility (1) does not have an interest in creating a similar program and (2) does not have the ability to implement the program in a more cost-efficient and effective manner.

If no issues are identified, the institution will then post a proposal to the online program approval system within one year. Institutions and Council staff will have 30 days to respond to the proposal.
- *If no issues are identified with the proposal*, the program will be sent to the Council for approval.
- *If issues are identified with the proposal*, the institution will address those via the online program approval system, and the review period will be extended. Once the issues are resolved, the program will be sent to the Council for approval. If concerns cannot be fully resolved, the Council staff will inform the institution that it should not proceed with its internal process of program approval.

Advanced Practice Doctorates Programs at Comprehensive Universities

The process for approval of Advanced Practice Doctorate Programs is outlined in 13 KAR 2:110.

TITLE:	Revision to Statewide Academic Program Review Policy
DESCRIPTION:	Staff recommend the Council approve the proposed revisions to the Statewide Academic Program Review Policy.
STAFF CONTACTS:	Travis Powell, Executive Vice President & General Counsel Melissa Bell, Vice President, Academic Excellence Sheila Brothers, Senior Director, Academic Excellence

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Council has the authority to review academic programs after they are implemented. Under KRS 164.020(16), the Council has the authority to eliminate or modify existing programs using the criteria of consistency with institutional mission, alignment with the statewide strategy agenda, elimination of unnecessary duplication, and the creation of collaborative programs. This statutory duty is operationalized through two Council policies – the Statewide University Program Review Policy, which was last revised in June 2021, and the KCTCS Program Review Policy , which was approved in January 2023.

Due to recently approved legislation, the Statewide University Program Review Policy must be revised. The KCTCS Program Review Policy does not require any edits.

RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with HB 4 (2025), Council staff recommend the following revisions to the statewide policy:

- Added sentence in the "History" section that details the legislative changes
- Added paragraph describing KRS 164.020(16).

The policy with tracked changes has been included as reference.

Statewide Academic Program Review Policy

Approved by the Council: _____

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

Statewide Academic Program Review:
Policy and Framework

The statewide academic program review process is a key responsibility of state coordinating boards like the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE). The process ensures that academic programs are consistent with state priorities and that public resources are used efficiently for the greater good of the Commonwealth.

History of Kentucky Statewide Academic Program Review

The Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997 created CPE and outlined the criteria for program review in statute.

More specifically, KRS 164.020 (16) outlines four criteria for statewide academic program review to determine:
- Consistency with the institution's mission;
- Alignment with the state's strategic postsecondary agenda and implementation plan.
- Elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs within and among institutions.
- Efforts to create cooperative programs with other institutions through traditional means, or by use of distance learning technology and electronic resources, to achieve effective and efficient program delivery.

Statewide program review has taken several forms since the inception of CPE but each process has focused on continuous improvement as well as the operationalization of statutory criteria.

In November 1999, CPE passed a series of guidelines related to academic programs that streamlined the process of reviewing programs and recognized the need for institutional flexibility within the new postsecondary structures of the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997. The Council's Guidelines for Review of Academic Program Productivity established degree production thresholds to identify programs for review. The Council conducted four rounds of program productivity review under these streamlined policies. At its January 30, 2006, meeting, the Council amended its Guidelines for Review of Academic Program Productivity to specify a four-year review cycle, and several more rounds of statewide review were conducted.

The statewide program review policy was revised again in 2011, with an implementation date of the 2013-14 academic year. The policy revisions were made in light of best practices, better coordination among state and institutional practices, and an improved connection between academic program approval and review of existing academic programs. CPE conducted five rounds of program reviews under this iteration of the policy.

After several iterations of policy development and numerous rounds of program review, CPE decided to do a one-time comprehensive analysis of academic programs in the state. In 2019, CPE contracted with Gray Associates to work with universities to review all baccalaureate programs. Gray Associates assisted Council staff to create a methodology that provides campuses with consistent, detailed information to help guide decisions about program needs and improvement. The marginal financial contribution and more than 50 metrics related to student demand, employment, and competition were calculated for each program. Campus representatives participated in facilitated workshops to review these data and analyze each baccalaureate program. CPE also used this data analysis to operationalize unnecessary duplication and identify programs that met the criteria.

In June 2025, the policy was updated to reflect the Council's responsibility to eliminate programs with a primary purpose of indoctrinating participants with a discriminatory concept.

Academic Program Review Process

The program review policy incorporates elements of the comprehensive data analysis with a greater focus on program alignment with the statewide strategic agenda.

The process consists of three major components:
- Annual reports summarizing institutional review efforts;
- Statewide data analysis focused on efficiency criteria; and
- Efforts to scale up implementation of the statewide postsecondary education strategic agenda.

As part of the program review process, KRS 164.020(16) authorizes the Council to eliminate, in its discretion, existing programs or make any changes in existing academic programs at the public state's postsecondary educational institutions, taking into consideration (a) consistency with the institution's mission and the strategic agenda; (b) alignment with the priorities in the strategic implementation plan for achieving the strategic agenda; (c) elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs within and among institutions; and (d) efforts to create cooperative programs with other institutions through traditional means, or by use of distance learning technology and electronic resources, to achieve effective and efficient program delivery; and (e) eliminate any program that includes a requirement for a course or training of which the primary purpose is to indoctrinate participants with a discriminatory concept.

Institutional Annual Reports
Institutions will be required to submit an annual report by July 15th that:
- Summarizes the institutional program review process for the previous academic year, with a special emphasis on the data analyses conducted as well as summaries of meetings of university faculty, committee, or administration where data and processes were discussed;
- Highlights the programmatic decisions made during the previous academic year, with an accompanying rationale for the decision that summarizes all data sources and any supplementary information used to arrive at the stated conclusion; and
- Discusses the plans for institutional program review for the upcoming year.

CPE staff will evaluate these reports and work with institutions if any information is missing or any questions arise. Staff will provide a summary report to the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee as well as the full Council.

Statewide Data Analysis

CPE staff will analyze data across institutions each spring semester to determine which programs continue to meet the following criteria for unnecessary duplication:
- Multiple programs in the same CIP code;
- Low and declining enrollment;
- Low new student demand;
- Low market demand; and
- Low or negative contribution margins.

Using this operationalized definition of unnecessary duplication, CPE staff will identify potential collaborative opportunities and work with institutions to identify other potential efficiencies. Staff will provide a summary report to the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee and the full Council.

Statewide Strategic Agenda

The strategic agenda highlights priority areas to focus statewide discussions and strategies to accomplish our postsecondary goals. To facilitate implementation of the strategic agenda, each year CPE staff will focus on one or more of the priorities to:
- Understand existing policies and practices at institutions related to the priority;
- Identify obstacles to full implementation of initiatives related to the priority;
- Provide professional development opportunities related to the priority; and
- Evaluate campus plans to create, implement, or expand initiatives related to the priority.

Staff will provide regular updates on this process to the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee. In addition, staff will provide an annual report highlighting all these efforts to the full Council.

Summary

Statewide academic program review efforts will continue to monitor the efficiency of the statewide academic program portfolio while expanding the focus on the implementation of high-priority initiatives identified by the statewide postsecondary education agenda.

CPE staff will continue to update the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee and submit an annual report to the committee with information about the three major elements of the statewide program review process – institutional annual reports, statewide data analysis and implementation of initiatives related to the statewide agenda.

KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

TITLE:	Revision of name and charge of the Committee on Equal Opportunities
DESCRIPTION:	Staff recommend the Council approve the proposed changes to the current Committee on Equal Opportunities
STAFF CONTACTS:	Travis Powell, Executive Vice President & General Counsel Dawn Offutt, Executive Director, Student Access

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1981, the Governor designated the Council as the state agency to develop, implement, and monitor a statewide higher education desegregation plan. In 1987, by Executive Order (EO 87-971), then Governor Martha Layne Collins abolished the Desegregation Plan Implementation Committee and established the Council's Committee on Equal Opportunities, which would oversee implementation of institutional compliance of KRS 164.020(9) and 13 KAR 2:060 in meeting its goals towards its diversity, equity and inclusion.

In its current form, this Committee meets quarterly and has a membership of both members of the Council as well as citizen members from around the state.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee met on June 23, 2025, and support the following proposed revisions to the committee:

- Rename the committee to the "Committee on Educational Opportunities"
- Establish the committee's main objectives as to:
  - Oversee institutional practices and supports for all students, especially those from low-income households, students with disabilities, adult learners and first-generation students.
  - Monitor educational attainment trends for those populations and provide recommendations to the Council that support advancement of the statewide strategic agenda for postsecondary education.

If approved by the Council, staff will formalize the changes for review at the next meeting.

TITLE: Removal of Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommend the Council discontinue the Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process to comply with provisions of HB 4 (2025).

STAFF CONTACTS: Travis Powell, Executive Vice President and General Counsel
Dawn Offutt, Executive Director, Student Access

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In alignment with the Council's Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Council adopted a voluntary cultural competency credential certification process for institutions effective July 1, 2021. The process was designed to encourage micro-credentials to be offered at institutions that provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to increase their effectiveness in relating across cultural differences and prepares them for life in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments. As part of their plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion, institutions were required to implement initiatives designed to increase the cultural competence of students, faculty, and staff and this program supported institutions in fulfilling this requirement. The prior approved process is attached for reference.

REQUESTED ACTION AND RATIONALE

HB 4, adopted in the 2025 Regular Sessions of the Kentucky General Assembly, eliminated KRS 164.020(19) and 13 KAR 2:060, which incorporated the Council's diversity, equity, and inclusion policy by reference. With the elimination of this policy and the potential that the cultural competency credential certification process could violate provisions of HB 4 that prohibit initiatives that promote differential treatment or consideration based on religion, race, sex, color, or national origin, staff recommends that the Council discontinue this program.

Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Unit

Approved by Council: June 25, 2021

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Introduction

The Kentucky Public Postsecondary Education Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (the Policy) states that in order to live and thrive on a diverse campus and in an increasingly diverse world, students, faculty, and staff must become culturally competent. Cultural competency provides individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to increase their effectiveness in relating across cultural differences and prepares them for life in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments. As part of their plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion, institutions must implement initiatives designed to increase the cultural competence of students, faculty, and staff. The Policy identifies the creation of a cultural competency certificate program as one of the strategies an institution can implement in order to meet this goal.

Background

In an effort to assist institutions in meeting this goal and to create a consistent statewide standard for competency and excellence in cultural competence, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (the Council) has created a process to certify that cultural competency microcredentials at individual institutions address certain student learning outcomes. Institutions may utilize this process to increase the cultural competence of their campus community and their graduates as they enter the workforce.

The Council created a cultural competency certification workgroup consisting of faculty and staff representatives from both four-year and two-year institutions across the state. The workgroup identified the minimum competencies, associated module topics and learning objectives that comprise the content for the certification.

The competencies, module topics, and learning objectives are supported by the A4 Model for Cultural Competence, which forms the underpinnings for the Council's comprehensive framework for cultural competence. The framework's mission is that students, faculty, staff, administrators, and Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions and communities will recognize their own responsibility to lead in a global society that promotes equity and justice.

Council's Role

In support of institutional efforts to meet the goals outlined in the Policy, the Council shall certify a micro-credential in cultural competence for institutions who recognize the benefits of a culturally competent campus, want to increase the effectiveness of their faculty and staff in relating across cultural differences and want to prepare students for life in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments.

Microcredential Definition

For the purposes of this process, micro-credentials for students are defined as "institutional acknowledgements of academic, evidenced-based competencies that result in essential skills (e.g., responsible conduct of research, public speaking, financial literacy, leadership, etc.) and may be part of college coursework, but may or may not be directly awarded university, college, department, and program credit." Micro-credentials may identify accomplishments in the non-credit offerings of the institution and complement classes, certificates, and degrees, but do not

replace them. These credentials are essential because they can showcase performance, demonstrate skills, or translate academic competencies into terms that non-academic employers are familiar with and value. Micro-credentials can also be a value-add for faculty and staff. For this group, micro-credentials are defined as "short, competency-based recognitions that demonstrate mastery in a particular area."

A micro-credential allows a faculty or staff member to receive recognition after completing requirements from professional development.

Credential Certification Process

The Council has created a process for certifying credentials in cultural competency at institutions who wish to align with statewide standards and award micro-credentials to faculty, staff, and students in recognition of completing the program. The Council supports the efforts of the institutions to increase the cultural competence of those in their campus community who wish to become more aware of their own cultural worldview; obtain knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and gain the ability to interact with those from other cultures. The benefits incurred on institutions through credential certification are as follows:

Neutral and independent third party verification
Beginning in 2016, CPE's Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has touted the benefits of cultural competence and its role in preparing students for living and working in an increasingly diverse world. It sets a goal for institutions to work toward producing culturally competent students, faculty, and staff. CPE's focus and work in this area has been recognized statewide and nationally and its certification of the credential will carry substantial weight in academia and other workplaces. As described in more detail below, the CPE's verification process will include an independent review team of experts and approval by one of CPE's strategic committees.

Consistency, Currency, and Portability
Obtaining a cultural competency credential certified by CPE will indicate to undergraduate and graduate admissions officers and employers that recipients have obtained a common set of competencies in cultural competence understood and agreed to statewide. This will add an additional layer of currency beyond that which is already provided by the conferring institution. The standards required for certification are consistently communicated and promoted by CPE through multiple mediums and in numerous venues. Certified credentials will also be promoted by CPE in the same manner and with a master list of certified programs to be prominently displayed on the CPE website. This will allow recipients to communicate their receipt of the credential in educational venues and in the workplace and have more confidence that the significance of that credential is better understood.

Positioning Kentucky as Leader in Cultural Competence
As CPE continues to promote and educate on the value of cultural competence and its credential certification program, and as more credentials become certified, Kentucky will soon be seen nationally as a leader in this area. More and more each day business and industry are making diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority. Students across the Commonwealth and across the nation are seeking more knowledge in these areas and want to live and learn in diverse environments where equity and inclusion are of utmost importance. A Kentucky cultural

competency credential certification process widely participated in by institutions across the state demonstrates not only the state's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, but an understanding actually how to put that commitment into practice.

Credential Curriculum Framework: A4 Model for Cultural Competence

For institutions who wish to have their cultural competency micro-credential certified by the Council, they must demonstrate its alignment with the A4 Model for Cultural Competence.

The A4 Model for Cultural Competence is a framework designed to provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to increase their effectiveness in relating across cultural differences in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments. Each phase in the framework offers

Mission: Students, faculty, staff, administrators, and Kentucky's public post-secondary institutions and communities will recognize their own responsibility to lead in a global society that promotes equity and justice.

1) A learning objective, which describes the on-going, long-term goal of the phase;
2) Competencies which describe what the individual should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the phase
3) Module topics that describe which aspects of cultural competence should be addressed within the phase.
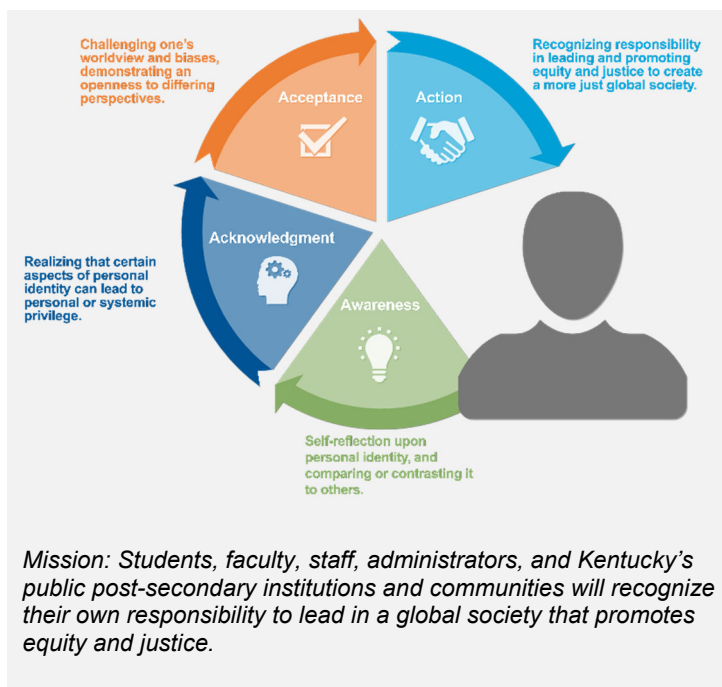
Framework Components

1. **Awareness (A1)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will develop a better understanding of who they are, become more aware of human diversity and demonstrate a respect for the dignity of others.

   Competencies:

   - To define and differentiate key terms related to diversity
   - To increase self-awareness by defining one's own identity and comparing/contrasting one's identity with others

   Module Topics shall include, at a minimum:

   - Defining Social Categories of Identity and Diversity
     - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- o Race, Ethnicity & Nationality
- o Generational Diversity
- o Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation (e.g., LGBTQIA+ including Homophobia, Transphobia, Heteronormativity)
- Exploring one's cultural identification by creating a capacity to be self-reflective

2. **Acknowledgment (A2)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels and consider how they may have or have not been affected by those dynamics.

Competencies:

- To discuss how our identities impact those with whom we interact
- To define intersectionality and explore how identities are influenced by several cultural categories
- To explore the concept of privilege and acknowledge our individual privileges

Module Topics shall include, at a minimum:

- Privilege
- Oppression
- Intersectionality of Identity - A discussion of the impact that belonging to multiple cultural groups has on privilege and oppression

3. **Acceptance (A3)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will demonstrate a continual openness to ideas, beliefs, and practices that challenge their own worldview and moves them to embrace a broader perspective.

Competencies:

- To identify one's personal biases and how they shape one's worldview
- To explore the concept of microaggressions and how they can impact members of different cultural groups
- To explore opposing views that challenge one's assumptions and beliefs (e.g., demographics, religion, politics, etc.)

Module Topics shall, at a minimum, include:

- Implicit and explicit bias
- Micro-aggressions

4. **Action (A4)** – Learning Objective: Through on-going self-reflection, individuals will be able to communicate in ways that indicate an acceptance of and appreciation for

individuals different from themselves and recognize their own responsibility in leading and promoting equity and justice in a global society.

Competencies:

- To authentically express one's individual experiences that honors self without condemning others
- To effectively communicate within and across cultures to foster and sustain open dialogue and navigate difficult conversations
- To develop a plan that integrates awareness, acknowledgment and acceptance into a model of action that identifies next steps for leading and promoting justice in a global society.

Module Topics shall include, at a minimum:

- Antiracism
  - Individual Level - the act of opposing racism in all forms - both in our society, other people, and even the racism that exists within yourself and in the ways you may perpetuate racism with your behaviors.
  - Organizational/Structural Level - the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is shared equitably.
- Allyship, Advocacy, Accompliceship
  - A discussion of the concepts of allyship, advocacy, and accompliceship as mechanisms for those with a privileged status to work in solidarity with a marginalized individual or group of people to eliminate the systemic oppression that grants them greater power and privilege.
- Courageous Conversations
  - A discussion of strategies for effectively communicating across differences by using authentic dialogue in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

Credential Requirements

Institutions who wish to have their micro-credential certified by CPE must develop a process for awarding credit or recognition. Credit and/or recognition must consider the following:

- A micro-credential awarded to students must be the equivalent of at least 6 credit hours. Institutions can develop two micro-credentials, which include the learning objectives from the A4 model as follows:
  - The components of the first micro-credential would encompass the content found in the Awareness and Acknowledgement phases of the A4 model and would provide enough content to receive credit (6 hours). The program must be accessible for all students and would be prerequisite for Acceptance and Action.
  - The components of the second micro-credential would encompass the content found in the Acceptance and Action phases and would provide enough content to receive 6 hours of credit. This additional coursework would be optional and would occur after meeting the prerequisite.

- A micro-credential awarded to faculty/staff must be a minimum of eight professional development hours and include the learning objectives from all for four phases of the A4 models. Institutions may develop their own professional development for faculty/staff, or they may take advantage of one of the implementation methods offered by the Council.

Credential Certification Process

Institutions who wish to have their cultural competency micro-credential recognized by the Council as a certified Kentucky Cultural Competency Credential must submit a proposal using the CPE Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process. Cultural competency credentials must align with the A4 Model for Cultural Competence and describe how participants will demonstrate the competencies in the framework in order to receive approval.

Proposals must include the following:

- Institutional Information – This section will include the name of the institution, point of contact, contributing departments, proposed implementation date and a statement of support from the president.
- Body of the Proposal – The section will include a description of the following:
    - An overview of the program, a description of the target audience (e.g., faculty, staff, students, etc.)
    - A description of implementation method and the timeline (e.g., total time required to complete the certification; equivalent to at least 6 credit hours for students and eight professional development hours for faculty/staff)
    - A course outline and description of how the course aligns with the competencies in the A4 model
    - A description of the tasks required of the participant (e.g., workshops, writing assignments, learning plans, quizzes, peer review, etc.)
    - A description of assessments (what participants need to do to demonstrate competency in a particular area), and faculty/staff associated with implementation
    - A description of how the micro-credential will be awarded and ultimately displayed by the recipient
- Budget – This section will include a description of budget implications and resources needed for implementing this program.

Upon receipt, the Cultural Competency Advisory Council, consisting of faculty and staff representatives from Kentucky's two- and four-year public institutions, will review the proposal materials and provide feedback on compliance with the standards and requirements outlined herein within ten (10) working days. Proposal review shall be an interactive process and feedback may include recommendations for proposal modifications. Once the advisory council determines that a program meets the outlined requirements, staff will make a recommendation to the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee (ASI) that the credential be certified as a Kentucky cultural competency credential.

The ASI will take action on the credential certification at its next scheduled meeting.