

The partnership between the federal government–university research and arts is a foundational pillar of American innovation, economic competitiveness, and national security. Maintaining the strength of this partnership is vital to advancing the discoveries and creative achievements that will shape our future.

Yet the University of Louisville Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates recognize the profound impact that recent policies and legislation have on our ability to serve the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Navigating these shifts requires a unified approach that respects both the institutional mission and legislative mandates.

We believe that the most effective path forward is one of **partnership** of UofL’s President Bradley, Board of Trustees, and Faculty, Staff and Student Senates with the Kentucky General Assembly, Governor Beshear’s office and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), as well as with fellow Kentucky colleges and universities. The future of Kentucky’s talent pipeline, economic vitality, and social well-being depends on a robust, affordable, and high-quality higher education system, a shared goal that transcends ideological distinctions.

### **A Commitment to Shared Governance and Open Dialogue**

The University of Louisville Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates are committed to being an active, constructive partner in the University and State decision-making process for higher education. This partnership entails:

**Proactive Engagement:** We commit to providing data-driven insights and expert analysis to university leaders, legislators, and policymakers on the practical implications of proposed and enacted laws, ensuring that decisions are informed by the realities of academic operations, research competitiveness, and student success.

**Transparent Implementation:** As we uphold compliance with new requirements, we will maintain transparency with all stakeholders—our faculty, staff, students, and the public—regarding how these policies are being implemented while upholding our core mission of teaching, research, and service.

**Shared Accountability:** We welcome accountability for outcomes related to student success, affordability, and workforce alignment, as outlined in the Council on Postsecondary Education strategic agenda and UofL’s strategic plan. We ask that this accountability is reciprocal, recognizing the critical role of state investment and policy stability in achieving these ambitious shared goals.

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The University of Louisville Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates acknowledge the complexity of the current legislative environment, particularly measures related to institutional neutrality, viewpoint diversity, and proposals concerning performance evaluations.

### **Belonging and Wellbeing**

As constituent bodies serving in an advisory capacity, we aim to foster a campus climate where academic freedom, free expression, thought, and creativity are unequivocally protected, encouraging a vigorous, open exchange of ideas.

A sense of belonging is cultivated by ensuring that Kentucky's population sees our institution as a place of opportunity and acceptance, and by nurturing a campus climate where faculty and staff can be authentic, share their viewpoints, and feel secure in an environment that respects their lived experiences and invests in their long-term success. We also recognize that experiences of belonging and campus climate can vary across groups, and we remain committed to ensuring that all members of our community can fully participate in the University's academic, research, and service mission.

Furthermore, The University of Louisville has earned the *Opportunity Colleges and Universities Higher Access-Higher Earnings* classification from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education; we aim that all students see our institution as a place of acceptance. We align our efforts with the broader state goal of increasing educational attainment for all Kentuckians, recognizing that closing achievement gaps is essential for a prosperous Commonwealth.

### **Faculty and Staff Stability**

To uphold Kentucky's leadership in higher education, it is essential that proposed reforms reflect the institutional, field-specific knowledge and understanding of faculty and staff, and we believe it is critical that constituent voices be included in decision-making processes.

We advocate for collaborative solutions that protect academic excellence ensuring Kentucky universities remain competitive in recruiting and retaining world-class faculty whose expertise drives innovation, research funding, artistic creativity, and high-quality instruction. As constituent bodies serving in an advisory capacity, we seek to partner with administration in developing faculty and staff evaluation frameworks that are fair, equitable, and transparent. We also recognize that changes to evaluation or employment models may affect faculty and staff differently depending on appointment type, role expectations, and lived experience.

Legislation impacting faculty contracts such as proposals to reform tenure and performance review, necessitates careful consideration. We encourage thoughtful implementation that supports instructional continuity, retention, and academic quality. We recognize that sudden, unilateral changes to employment models can undermine the long-term stability and national reputation of our institutions, which are key assets for the state.

### **American Innovation and Global Competitiveness**

The partnership between the federal government-university research and arts is a foundational pillar of American innovation, economic competitiveness, and national security, and its weakening will have cascading negative effects that far outweigh any purported fiscal savings.

Reducing the investment in university research and development risks ceding to other nations America's long-held position as the world leader in science, technology, and the arts. Furthermore, insufficient federal and state funding may undermine the motivation of early-career researchers, which threatens the pipeline of future innovators that sustain U.S. leadership in medical, natural and social sciences, technology, and the creative and performing arts. Ensuring that federal and state grant processes remain free from ideological considerations supports the principle of academic freedom that universities uphold and creates the strongest possible environment for bold, high-impact research and creative work.

At the same time, visa and immigration uncertainties, coupled with an unwelcoming policy environment, are diminishing the nation's appeal to international students and future scholars. Foreign-born researchers, staff, and students may consider leaving the U.S. due to funding instability and restrictive immigration policies. Given the many past contributions made by international students and

scholars to American creativity and productivity, loss of comparable talent in the future may produce incalculable adverse impacts.

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### **Moving Forward Together**

The complex challenges facing higher education in Kentucky, from student success to workforce development, cannot be solved in isolation. Our work is strengthened when diverse faculty, staff, and student perspectives are included in decision-making, ensuring that policies support Kentucky's long-term educational and workforce goals. The University of Louisville Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates stand ready to deepen our partnerships with university and state leaders to ensure that every policy decision is a step toward a stronger, more educated, and more prosperous Kentucky. As constituent bodies, we encourage continued engagement with existing higher educational alliances dedicated to strategic resourcing and highest standards of academic, research quality. The American Council on Education (ACE), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), discipline-specific accrediting bodies, and faculty, staff and student organizations can provide substantial, coordinated, and discrete sources of expertise to address strategic environmental factors.

We believe that by working collaboratively, we can secure a more prosperous, productive future for our students, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the United States of America.