Stronger by Degrees: A Plan to Create a More Educated and Prosperous Kentucky

The Priorities:

Encourage more people to take advantage of postsecondary opportunities

**Opportunity**

Kentucky will be stronger by ensuring postsecondary education is broadly accessible to all residents, students have the support and resources they need to pursue postsecondary opportunities, and all students enter postsecondary education prepared for credit-bearing work.

**Objective 1.** Improve the diversity and inclusiveness of Kentucky’s campuses through the statewide diversity planning process and related initiatives.

Strategy 1.1. Increase cultural competence among students, staff and other postsecondary professionals so that everyone is welcomed, valued, supported, and accommodated.

Strategy 1.2. Promote inclusive excellence, which is the process of integrating diversity efforts into the core elements of an institution, including academic priorities, campus leadership, day-to-day operations, decision making, and organizational culture.

Strategy 1.3. Implement the new Kentucky Public Postsecondary Education Policy for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the associated degree eligibility process.

Strategy 1.4. Increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority students, faculty, and staff.

**Objective 2.** Partner with Kentucky’s P-12 system to increase the number of students ready to enter a postsecondary degree or certification program.

Strategy 2.1. Work with KDE, KHEAA, GEAR UP, the Kentucky College Coaches program, higher education representatives, and other partners to expand and improve advising resources for high school students and families.

Strategy 2.2. Work with teacher preparation programs and key partners to increase the diversity and effectiveness of P-12 educators and school leaders and to provide high-quality professional development opportunities.

Strategy 2.3. Secure another round of federal funding to support Kentucky’s GEAR UP program.

Strategy 2.4. Work with KDE to ensure more students have access to high quality Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and early college experiences.

Strategy 2.5. Fully implement the Dual Credit Policy for Public and Participating Postsecondary Institutions and Secondary Schools to provide all eligible high school students with at least three college-level courses in general education and three career and technical education courses in a career pathway.

Strategy 2.6. Increase access to transitional courses, summer bridge programming, and other intervention strategies for high school and adult students who are not on track to be college-ready.

Strategy 2.7. Encourage the development of career pathways in high schools and the use of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) by postsecondary advisors to encourage and assess students’ career interests and academic strengths.

Strategy 2.8. Partner with Advance KY, Project Lead the Way, and other similar programs to improve academic instruction and interest in STEM disciplines in high school.

**Objective 3.** Increase participation in postsecondary education, particularly among traditionally underserved populations.

Strategy 3.1. Work with GEAR UP KY, KDE, KHEAA, educational providers, community-based organizations and other statewide partners to improve college and career awareness through outreach initiatives.

Strategy 3.2. Expand the availability of flexible, affordable, competency-based postsecondary programs, as well as strategies like employer partnerships and Project Graduate, to support working-age adults in the pursuit of job-enhancing postsecondary credentials.

Strategy 3.3. Support efforts to improve postsecondary access, workforce readiness, and the technology infrastructure of rural Kentucky.

Strategy 3.4. Coordinate a statewide communications strategy to raise awareness of the value and affordability of a postsecondary degree.

Strategy 3.5. Expand collaborative models like the University Center of the Mountains to help provide postsecondary programs and academic support in underserved areas of the state.

**Objective 4.** Improve the education and skill levels of Kentucky Adult Education students to prepare them for careers and/or postsecondary education.

Strategy 4.1. Attract, retain, and prepare highly effective adult educators.

Strategy 4.2. Strengthen partnerships with business and industry, workforce partner agencies, institutions of higher education, and other organizations that lead to increased student enrollment and engagement in adult education programs.

Strategy 4.3. Increase the number of Kentucky Adult Education students advancing to postsecondary education and the workforce through proven strategies including Accelerating Opportunity, workforce preparation, integrated education and training, and integrated English literacy and civics.

**Objective 5.** Expand financial access to postsecondary education.

Strategy 5.1. Maintain college affordability by advocating for sufficient state operating and financial aid support and moderating tuition increases.

Strategy 5.2. Increase the number fo students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Strategy 5.3. Improve the financial literacy of students and families and provide effective advising regarding the cost of college, student debt and loan repayment options.

Strategy 5.4. Simplify college cost calculators and provide more standard language and definitions across the state to make the true cost of college more transparent.

Strategy 5.5. Evaluate current state-mandated tuition waivers and associated costs and assess whether they are helping our neediest students.

Increase degree and certificate completion, fill workforce shortages, and guide more graduates to a career path

**Success**

Kentucky will be stronger by ensuring that many more individuals complete a postsecondary degree or credential, and that they graduate with the skills and abilities to be productive, engaged citizens.

**Objective 6.** Increase persistence and timely completion for all students at all levels, particularly for low-income and underrepresented minority students.

Strategy 6.1. Improve student advising by focusing on effective, research-based practices that have been shown to increase retention and graduation.

Strategy 6.2. Redesign the delivery of developmental education to reduce its duration and cost. This may include increasing access to co-requisite models of developmental education, shortening the sequence of required courses, or implementing other practices that have been shown to increase student success.

Strategy 6.3. Share, implement, and evaluate high-impact educational practices that accelerate persistence and completion.

Strategy 6.4. Promote greater collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs professionals to facilitate student success and share effective practices.

Strategy 6.5. Expand strategies like “15 to Finish” that encourage students to finish on time and at a lower cost.

Strategy 6.6. Implement a new funding model with an outcomes-based component to reward institutions for increases in completion and other key metrics.

**Objective 7.** Increase the number of KCTCS students who complete career-oriented certificates and associate degree programs and successfully transfer to four-year institutions.

Strategy 7.1. Support KCTCS’s role as a high-quality, low-cost provider of postsecondary education, technical training, and transfer opportunities, and as a key point of access for students with multiple developmental education needs.

Strategy 7.2. Increase 2-year to 4-year transfer by providing more degree pathways, completer (2+2) programs, and transfer advising.

Strategy 7.3. Implement reverse transfer programs where academic credits for coursework completed at a four-year college or university are transferred back to a community college to satisfy associate degree requirements.

Strategy 7.4. Encourage concurrent enrollment, advising, and completion programs between KCTCS campuses and universities to streamline transfer opportunities and ensure more timely degree completion.

**Objective 8.** Promote academic excellence through improvements in teaching and learning.

Strategy 8.1. Promote the use of authentic assessments to evaluate student learning and provide data to inform pedagogy, assignment design, and curriculum review.

Strategy 8.2. Provide more pedagogical training and professional development opportunities for faculty members to strengthen learning and improve student success.

Strategy 8.3. Promote academic quality and continuous improvement of programs and instruction through the implementation of the statewide Review of Existing Programs policy and similar measures.

Strategy 8.4. Prepare Kentucky postsecondary students for 21st century challenges by strengthening essential learning outcomes as articulated in the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ LEAP initiative (Liberal Education and America’s Promise).

Strategy 8.5. Recognize the established strengths of institutions and encourage a differentiated postsecondary system in which institutions operate together as complementary parts of a whole.

Create economic growth and development and make our state more prosperous

**Impact**

Kentucky will be stronger by training a globally competitive, entrepreneurial workforce; educating an engaged, informed citizenry; improving the health and well-being of families; and producing new research and discoveries that fuel job creation and economic growth.

**Objective 9.** Improve the career readiness and employability of postsecondary education graduates.

Strategy 9.1. Make career development a state and institutional priority and a key strategy for student success. Improve career development through earlier advising efforts, clearly articulated career pathways, degree maps, tools that match skills to jobs and students with employers, and entrepreneurship training.

Strategy 9.2. Survey higher education alumni and Kentucky employers to assess the career readiness of Kentucky graduates and identify needed skills and competencies for current and future employment opportunities.

Strategy 9.3. Work with the employer community, foundations, and state agencies to provide "work and learn" opportunities, including experiential or project-based learning, co-ops, internships, externships, and clinical experiences.

Strategy 9.4. Promote regular, meaningful employer involvement in the development and evaluation of postsecondary programs that are relevant to their business/industry.

Strategy 9.5. Identify current and emerging workforce demands, entrepreneurial business opportunities, and stackable credentials that can lead to additional education/training.

Strategy 9.6. Advance Kentucky’s STEM and health agendas through ongoing leadership, advocacy, and collaboration.

**Objective 10.** Increase basic, applied, and translational research to create new knowledge, accelerate innovation, and promote economic growth.

Strategy 10.1. Improve public awareness of the value of basic and applied research and the impact of this work on Kentucky’s economic and community competitiveness.

Strategy 10.2. Expand commercialization and technology transfer, and promote collaborative research efforts among universities to leverage faculty expertise.

Strategy 10.3. Advocate for funding for research and innovation through the Endowment Match Trust Fund (Bucks for Brains) or other similar funding approaches.

Strategy 10.4. Increase opportunities for undergraduate students to conduct or assist in research.

Strategy 10.5. Foster a more innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial culture within the postsecondary community.

**Objective 11.** Expand regional partnerships, outreach and public service that improve the health and quality of life of Kentucky communities.

Strategy 11.1. Support postsecondary education’s efforts to enhance the health of Kentucky citizens through regional outreach activities, extension services, and academic and professional healthcare programs.

Strategy 11.2. Strengthen communication and planning between higher education and regional/community leaders to identify priorities and challenges and align resources and programs to address them.