

## MEETING MINUTES

*Draft for Approval by the Council on January 19, 2024*

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Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Meeting Type: Business Meeting  
Date: November 17, 2023  
Time: 1:00 p.m. ET  
Location: Kentucky State University, Cooperative Extension Building, Rm 238AB

### WELCOME REMARKS

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The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education met in a work session on Friday, November 17, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. ET. The meeting occurred in room 238AB of the Cooperative Extension Building at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Kentucky. Chair Madison Silvert presided.

### ATTENDANCE

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Council Members attendance:

- In Person: Jacob Brown, Jennifer Collins, Meredith Figg, Chloe Marstillier, LaDonna Rogers, Madison Silvert, and KDE Commissioner Robin Kinney.
- By teleconference: Muhammad Babar, Kellie Ellis, Faith Kemper, Elaine Walker, Kevin Weaver.
- Did not attend: CB Akins, Eric Farris, Karyn Hoover, and Connie Smith.

CPE President Aaron Thompson served as Secretary of the board, per the CPE Bylaws. Ms. Heather Faesy, CPE's board liaison, served as recorder of the meeting minutes.

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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The minutes of the September 19, 2023, meetings, were approved as presented.

### CPE PRESIDENT REPORT

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President Aaron Thompson provided his written report in the board materials. He provided additional comments on several items including recent legislative meetings happening in preparation of the 2024 session, his recent trip to Washington D.C. and the meetings that occurred on FAFSA and Kentucky's P-20 work, and 5<sup>th</sup> annual Higher EDquity Symposium that occurred on Nov 13-14, 2023.

## KY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSIONER REPORT

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KDE Interim Commissioner Robin Kinney introduced herself to the Council and provided an update on the Commissioner search process.

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF SJR 98 STUDY

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At their November 17 work session, the Council reviewed the findings and recommendations that resulted from the study directed by Senate Joint Resolution 98. The study directed CPE to complete a comprehensive study of Kentucky postsecondary education in the following areas:

1. The structure of higher education governance in the Commonwealth, including recommendations on potential changes needed to the state's postsecondary governance structure that would be essential to meet identified needs and result in improved delivery of postsecondary educational services to students.
2. The potential impact and feasibility of establishing a regional, residential, four-year public university in southeastern Kentucky.
3. The feasibility and potential programmatic and fiscal impacts of having KCTCS continue to be responsible for technical education programs but transferring responsibility for traditional academic subjects to the regional universities.

Chair Silvert thanked the CPE staff for their work on this project and asked Ms. Lee Nimocks, CPE's Vice President and Chief of Staff, and Ms. Lisa Joseph, Director at Ernst & Young, to present the final recommendations.

In regards to study area 1, CPE staff endorsed the option to keep the current governance structure but with better execution in some areas and changes to some statutory responsibilities to strengthen state-level oversight and coordination. Specifically, consideration should be given to:

1. Implementing a process for CPE to actively monitor and regularly report to the General Assembly and Governor on the financial health of the state's public colleges and universities.
2. Strengthening CPE's engagement/role in state financial aid policy and program decisions to help ensure a balanced and aligned approach to higher education financing and college affordability.
3. Providing greater investment in state-level higher education incentive funds – in addition to direct appropriations to campuses – to foster innovation, incentivize collaboration, and respond quickly to regional needs.
4. Strengthening the review and approval of non-degree academic programs by CPE, including short-term certificates, as well as more routinely reviewing and terminating programs of limited relevance and quality.

5. Expanding CPE's board training responsibilities and requiring greater involvement from CPE during the recruitment and review process for candidates for postsecondary governing and advisory boards.
6. Requiring that the CPE president (or a representative) be consulted during presidential evaluations for the state's public universities and the KCTCS system and serve as a voting member on presidential search committees.

In regards to study area 2, CPE's analysis points to the need for improved access to targeted bachelor's level programs in the Southeast region due to the high level of economic and educational need. However, staff does not recommend any of the three options identified during the study (brand new university, satellite campus of a comprehensive university, or acquiring a private university). Staff did state that the expansion of Hazard Community and Technical College into a stand-alone college/university offering both technical programs and targeted bachelor's programs, is a promising model for the region. However, staff cannot provide an unqualified recommendation without greater stakeholder engagement, further analysis of the benefits and risks, and a deeper understanding of student demand. CPE staff also endorsed a more visible and impactful University Center of the Mountains, perhaps in tandem with the expansion of Hazard Community and Technical College. While staff support an increased four-year presence in Southeast Kentucky, it does so with the following strong caveat: without a comprehensive economic and workforce development strategy, a new university will not yield the desired results for the region.

In regards to study area 3, CPE staff do not endorse dissolving KCTCS and transferring the system's academic offerings to the comprehensive universities, without a deeper evaluation and much broader stakeholder engagement. As the gateway into postsecondary education and training for many Kentuckians, KCTCS holds a significant mission within the higher education landscape in the Commonwealth in the areas of access, workforce training, and transfer programming. Before considering the step of dismantling the KCTCS system and moving its academic programs to the state's public comprehensive universities, a deeper analysis is required to assess the impact on Kentucky students, campuses and the Commonwealth. Additionally, it was stated that comprehensive strategies must be developed to manage the many potential risks, and substantial and sustained involvement from key stakeholders will be critical in making this important decision.

MOTION: Ms. Collins moved the Council direct CPE staff to submit a final report to the legislature by December 1, 2023, as requested by Senate Joint Resolution 98 (2023) that is consistent with the presented staff recommendations which are based on the following:

- The CPE staff recommendations are based upon extensive research and stakeholder feedback.
- The CPE recommendations demonstrate changes that are in the best interest of the Commonwealth's public universities and community colleges.
- The CPE staff recommendations present an outcomes-based approach for each question presented by the legislature that the Council believes will provide the best

educational outcomes with the least disruptions and with the best benefits for the associated costs.

Mr. Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **ACADEMIC AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COMMITTEE – REPORT & ACTION ITEMS**

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Committee Chair Karyn Hoover presented the report and recommendations made by the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee, which met on October 23, 2023.

The Committee reviewed the following information topics at the meeting:

- Received an annual update on the work of the Commonwealth Education Continuum (CEC). Over the last year, the CEC has continued to seek stakeholder input and use data to address barriers and identify ways to increase transition to postsecondary education. Due to the work of the CEC and leadership of CPE, the agency also received a grant from Education Strategies Group for the Launch program.
- Received an overview of the CLIMB Health initiative and how its work will be conducted over the next year. CLIMB Health, which was funded by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, establishes career ladders in mental and behavioral health for individuals with lived experience in addiction recovery. It promotes higher education led opportunities for workforce re-entry and encourages healing for the Kentucky communities most affected by the effects of drug abuse and addiction.
- Discussed the new partnership with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to ensure basic student needs are met, thus allowing them to persist through graduation. This is being done by establishing “kynectors” at each of the KCTCS colleges and Kentucky universities, which are CHFS employees who provide benefit eligibility screening, application assistance, and referrals to community-based organizations for basic needs support.
- Received the preliminary enrollment data for the fall of 2023, which showed impressive year-to-date growth in undergraduate enrollment at public institutions. Total undergraduate enrollment at 4-year publics increased 3.1% and KCTCS enrollment was up 3.6% overall and experienced a 14.9% increase in dual credit enrollment.

Ms. Hoover also presented two new academic programs from the University of Kentucky that were reviewed and endorsed by the Committee for approval.

- Bachelor of Arts in Sports Leadership (CIP 31.0508)
- Bachelor of Science in Statistics and Data Science (CIP 27.0501)

MOTION: The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee’s recommendation of approval of the two new academic programs served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE – REPORT AND ACTION ITEMS**

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Committee Chair Eric Farris presented the report and recommendations made by the Finance Committee, which met on October 27, 2023. The Committee reviewed the following information topics at the meeting:

- Received an update from Dr. Larry Ferguson, interim president of KCTCS, on the results of a study conducted by Huron Consulting Group who performed an assessment of the KCTC system's physical resources, programs, and administrative support structures to identify opportunities to improve business operations, cross-campus collaboration, and overall efficiency in alignment with the system's strategic plan.
- Received the preliminary results of CPE's latest study on student graduate debt levels and how Kentucky's efforts around tuition caps, improving financial literacy, and increasing grant aid have impacted those levels. The study investigated debt trends over the past five academic years among graduates of Kentucky's public institutions.

Mr. Farris also presented five interim capital projects requests from KCTCS that were reviewed and endorsed by the Committee for approval:

- Big Sandy CTC - Pikeville Nursing Renovation - \$1,500,000
- Southcentral CTC - Franklin Simpson Center Roof Replacement - \$1,200,000
- Southcentral CTC - Signage - \$1,200,000
- Owensboro CTC - Mobile Healthcare Labs - \$2,000,000
- Bluegrass CTC - Property Acquisition - \$4,000,000

MOTION: The Finance Committee's recommendation of approval of the action items served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – REPORT & ACTION ITEMS**

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Chair Silvert presented the report and recommendations made by the Executive Committee which met the morning of November 17, 2023. The Committee received a briefing from Moss Adams, the firm contracted with Kentucky State University to provide an independent monitoring of its progress toward completing its Management Improvement Plan objectives and other requirements of HB 250 (2022), that included KSU's progress toward the identified objectives, their methodology for review, and their achievements to date.

Chair Silvert also presented the following action items that were reviewed and endorsed by the Committee for approval:

- Proposed Committee meeting dates of September 9, 2024 and November 11, 2024, and proposed Council meeting dates of September 16-17, 2024 and November 21-22, 2024.
- Revision to KSU's management improvement plan to allow the reallocation of \$100,000 in incentive funding for a mental health related deliverable completed in FY 2023 to be used for interim assistance in financial aid processing.

MOTION: The Executive Committee's recommendation of approval of the action items served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

### **COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES - REPORT**

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Committee Chair Elaine Walker presented the report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities, which met on October 23, 2023. The Committee reviewed the following topics at the meeting:

- Received updates from Bluegrass Community and Technical College on their work in the areas of opportunity, success, and impact.
- Reviewed and approved performance improvement plans from the three institutions who did not meet the minimum required score during the last review cycle: Big Sandy Community & Technical College, Henderson Community College, and Kentucky State University.
- Reviewed and approved strategy revisions from Kentucky State University.

No additional action was necessary from the Council on any of the topics.

### **CAMPUS GOOD NEWS REPORTS**

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Reports from the institutions were provided in the agenda materials. Chair Silvert provided highlights on stories in the reports from Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, the University of Louisville, and KCTCS.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

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Chair Silvert made the following committee appointments:

- 2023-24 Nominating Committee: Kevin Weaver, who will serve as Chair, LaDonna Rogers, and Jennifer Collins.
- KET board for a four-year term that ends November 30, 2027:
  - Karyn Hoover to represent the University of Kentucky

- Kevin Weaver to represent the state universities.
- Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund Steering Committee, serving a one-year term beginning March 1, 2024:
  - Council Member LaDonna Rogers, who will serve as Chair
  - Cliff Maesaka from the CEOc Chairman's Circle
  - JP Hamm from Kentucky Hospital Association
  - Michael Muscarella from Baptist Health Paducah
  - Beth Brinly representing the KY Education and Labor Cabinet
  - Vestena Robbins and Beth Shafer from the KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services
  - Amy Mitchell Cowley from UK's College of Medicine
  - Kelli Selvage from KCTCS
  - Mason Dyer, representing the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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The Council adjourned the business meeting at 3:15 p.m. ET.