



### A Message From Mason



Mason Dyer  
AIKCU President

While the last year has been challenging – particularly with the FAFSA debacle and some of the noise surrounding higher ed at the national level – Kentucky’s independent colleges remain focused on the future and being true to their respective missions. AIKCU members are committed to helping students develop the knowledge and skills required for satisfying careers and purposeful lives.

Based on very preliminary numbers for the Fall 2024 semester, we think about half of AIKCU’s members increased the size of their first-year class. However, others are feeling the negative impacts of the error-ridden rollout of the new FAFSA form.

Access is important to opportunity. About 40% of all AIKCU undergraduates are Pell Grant recipients (chart at right), and at many Kentucky independent colleges the percentage is even higher.

While we’re concerned about how FAFSA issues affected enrollment at these institutions, we’re more troubled about the potential long-term consequences for students who did not have the information they needed to attend their college of choice.

We’re grateful for our partners, including CPE, KHEAA, and our friends in the public sector, who have made FAFSA completion a priority. We must continue to encourage FAFSA completion to ensure that Kentuckians have access to the financial aid that makes college possible.

### AIKCU welcomes new presidents at Kentucky Wesleyan College, Spalding University, Union Commonwealth University

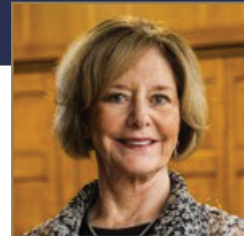
Three of Kentucky’s 18 independent colleges and universities have seen a change in leadership this summer due to retiring presidents. Dr. James Cousins succeeds Dr. Thomas Mitzel at Kentucky Wesleyan College, Dr. Joanne Berryman replaces Tori Murden McClure at Spalding University, and Dr. DJ Washington follows Dr. Marcia Hawkins at Union Commonwealth University.

AIKCU appreciates the retiring presidents for their many years of service, and we look forward to supporting the work of the new presidents.

#### New AIKCU Presidents



James Cousins  
President  
Kentucky Wesleyan College



Joanne Berryman  
Interim President  
Spalding University



DJ Washington  
Interim President  
Union Commonwealth University

#### Retiring AIKCU Presidents



Thomas Mitzel (ret.)  
President  
Kentucky Wesleyan College



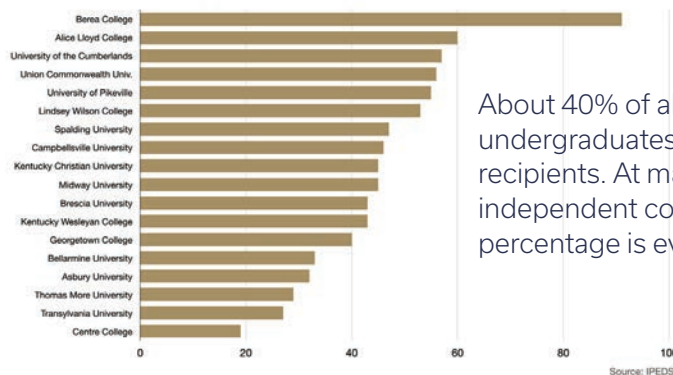
Tori Murden McClure (ret.)  
President  
Spalding University



Marcia Hawkins (ret.)  
President  
Union Commonwealth University

### AIKCU FAST FACTS: Students Receiving Pell Grants

Percent of FT entering students receiving Pell Grants at AIKCU institutions, 2022-23



About 40% of all AIKCU full-time undergraduates are Pell Grant recipients. At many of Kentucky’s independent colleges, that percentage is even higher.

## AIKCU President Dyer making connections statewide as part of Leadership Kentucky

AIKCU President Mason Dyer has been inducted into one of Kentucky's most influential leadership programs. As a member of the Leadership Kentucky Class of 2024, he has the opportunity to represent Kentucky's 18 independent colleges while interacting with peers in leadership positions throughout the state.

"Leadership Kentucky has opened doors by allowing me to build new relationships with leaders from across the commonwealth, several of whom are AIKCU alumni or otherwise good friends of our member colleges," Dyer said.

"It's also exposing me to issues and experiences in areas where I might not get to visit often in my daily work, but where our students come from and where our member institutions serve."

Leadership Kentucky announced in June the 52 members of its Class of 2024. Participants meet with many of Kentucky's current leaders and explore the state's unique communities and resources. They come away from the program having formed lifelong connections.

The program consists of seven, three-day sessions between June and December, where class members from the public and private sectors gather to gain insight on Kentucky's challenges and opportunities.



News release and photo from [leadershipky.org/news](http://leadershipky.org/news)

The program will bring the class across the state: Berea in June, Ashland in July, Hopkinsville and Fort Campbell in August, Louisville in September, Paducah and Eddyville in October, Central Kentucky and Frankfort in November, and Northern Kentucky in December.

The sessions cover a wide range of topics, including business and economic development, arts and tourism, natural resources and the environment, education, healthcare, social issues, agriculture, and government.

## SHARING IDEAS



Georgetown College President Rosemary Allen and Transylvania University President Brien Lewis met with AIKCU's advancement officers to share their experiences in a session titled "Crafting Connections: The Power of Narrative in Fundraising Success."

The AIKCU Affiliate Groups benefit from educational programs, legislative updates, and sharing best practices and trends. The groups meeting this fall/winter include:

- Advancement Officers Fall Meeting**  
Sept. 5, Georgetown College
- Business & HR Officers Joint Fall Meeting**  
Sept. 12, Asbury University
- Chief Academic Officers Fall Meeting**  
Oct. 11, Berea College
- Library Directors Fall Meeting**  
Oct. 11, Bellarmine University
- Admissions & Marcomms Officers Joint Fall Meeting**  
Oct. 30, Spalding University
- Campus Safety Officers Winter Meeting**  
Dec. 6, Centre College

Full calendar at [aikcu.org/Meetings](http://aikcu.org/Meetings)