

TITLE: CPE President Report

DESCRIPTION: President Thompson will highlight specific initiatives during his report to the Council. This written report serves as his official report for April 17, 2025.

STAFF CONTACT: Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President

SHEEO Basic Needs Academy: Kentucky was one of seven states—along with Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Minnesota, and New York—selected to participate in a three-year initiative developed by SHEEO in partnership with the ECMC Foundation. The Basic Needs Academy supports state teams seeking to expand their capacity to integrate basic needs information into state postsecondary data systems. Each team will receive a \$60,000 sub-grant and will have access to coaches and content experts from the Coleridge Initiative, The Hope Center and WestEd's Data Integration Support Center throughout the project.

CPE Wins Opioid Abatement Grant: CPE is receiving a grant for \$488,676 from Kentucky's Opioid Abatement Commission to work with postsecondary institutions to provide trauma-informed recovery support services to adult learners impacted by opioid use disorder and co-occurring mental health challenges. The program will begin on July 1 and run for 12 months.

GEAR UP KY Institute for a College-Going Culture: The final GEAR UP institute in the current grant cycle was held April 16 at the Campbell House in Lexington, Kentucky. The theme was "Passing the Torch: Sustaining Student Success," and students, participating schools/districts, partnering postsecondary institutions and GEAR UP Kentucky staff were recognized for their accomplishments over the past seven years.

DCBS Training Program: CPE has agreed to facilitate a two-year transition process for the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) staff training program from ECU to a new training consortium comprised of Morehead State, NKU and Brescia University. This is a significant undertaking. DCBS has 5,000+ employees with training needs, with over 400 courses provided. CPE's Workforce and Economic Development unit is leading this work and is assembling a five to seven-member transition team to ensure program quality, while modernizing coursework.

Futuriti Website: Since launching the Futuriti website, which focused on college and career exploration, 13,500 individual visitors have accessed the site. The YouTube promotional video has been watched over 16,200 times, and Futuriti posts on X have received about 5,245

impressions. CPE staff also have presented Futuriti demos to more than 40 groups and organizations.

Dr. Thompson's National Speaking Engagements: On March 27, I was fortunate to serve on a panel moderated by *Inside Higher Education's* editor-in-chief, Sara Custer, about how improvements to student transfer and credit mobility can generate a stronger financial return for institutions. On April 2, I participated in a plenary panel at a national convening on postsecondary attainment in Washington D.C. My session focused on ways we can redefine the value of higher education for prospective students and policymakers.

Staff Recognitions: CPE staff members continue to gain state and national recognition for their good work.

- **Missy Ross, Kim Welch, and Laura Negron** of GEAR UP Kentucky served as presenters for multiple sessions at NCCEP's National GEAR UP Academy, which occurred online February 3-6. The National GEAR UP Academy works to improve the skills, knowledge, and practices of GEAR UP leaders, practitioners, and partners.
- **Ilona Burdette and Enid Wohlstein** of the Kentucky Virtual Library represented CPE at the annual Kentucky Public Library Association conference in Lexington on February 21. Enid presented a session entitled, "Support Your Early Learners: KYVL Resources for Homework or Homeschool," and Ilona was part of a presentation called "Connecting Communities: Sharing Your Collections Through the Kentucky Digital Library."
- **Amanda Ellis** and I led a Kentucky team at a Hunt Institute-sponsored gathering in Arizona focused on the impact of teacher retention and recruitment across the education continuum. Representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education, the Education and Labor Cabinet and a university college of education also attended.
- The Kentucky Advising Academy, directed by **Mitzi Holland**, was featured in an article on the Education Strategy Group's (ESG) website. The piece singled out Kentucky's Postsecondary Advising Framework as a best practice for equipping advisors and counselors with tools to create a seamless advising system.
- **Kara Couch**, CPE Program Manager in Administrative Services, received the Values and Guiding Principles award given annually to the Kentucky public procurement professional who best exemplifies the values of the profession. The award is sponsored by the Kentucky Public Procurement Association.
- **Janna Vice**, CPE Senior Fellow, delivered remarks at the Posters at the Capitol event, where over 100 students from Kentucky's public institutions showcased their research for legislators. Janna spoke about how university research helps students master the ten essential skills of an undergraduate education, which are the foundation of the Kentucky Graduate Profile.

New CPE Staff Members: I'm pleased to welcome several new employees to CPE.

- **Devon Love** joined the Workforce and Economic Development team as an Associate. He comes to us from Sullivan University, where he worked as a career services advisor. Devon is enrolled in a doctoral program in educational leadership at the University of the Cumberlands, where he also earned a master's degree in organizational leadership. He earned a bachelor's degree from ECU.
- **Jessica Fletcher** joined the Student Access and Success team as a Program Director of Outreach and Partnerships. She most recently worked with KYSTATS, where she led the development of Futuriti. She also has worked at KDE, the Education and Labor Cabinet, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Prichard Committee. Jessica has a master's degree in public administration from Murray State University and a bachelor's degree in journalism from ECU.
- **Brent Floyd** joined the Finance Policy and Programs unit as a Senior Associate. Brent previously worked at the University of Kentucky as a business officer at the Martin and Patterson Schools. Brent has a Master of Public Administration from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Eastern Kentucky University.
- **Fallon Willoughby**, an employee of Southcentral Community and Technical College, joined the KYSSC Gateway Course Success team as a part-time Senior Fellow on March 20.

Legislative Update: It was a short but active session of the Kentucky General Assembly, which resulted in the passage of several bills impacting CPE or public postsecondary institutions. Regan Satterwhite, CPE's Director of Legislative Relations, will provide a brief update.

- **HB 4** (anti-DEI)
- **HB 193** (dual-credit scholarships)
- **HB 251** (education preparation program evaluations clean-up)
- **HB 263** (student teacher stipend program, direct payments to students)
- **HB 303** (Heroes to Healers)
- **HB 424** (employee review at postsecondary institutions)
- **SB 3** (NIL payments)
- **SB 77** (removes statutory prohibition of doctoral degrees at comprehensives)
- **SB 87** (CPE study on potential air traffic control safety programs)
- **SB 179** (nuclear energy development)
- **SR 237** (civics education report)