



KCTCS

Quarterly Report

TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS
KCTCS PRESIDENT DR. RYAN QUARLES
DECEMBER 2024

A MESSAGE

FROM DR. RYAN QUARLES

It has been a busy and productive quarter. I continue to be proud of the commitment of our KCTCS family to the success of our students, our work on SJR 179, and our dedication to a productive and impactful future for our system. We will present our response to SJR 179 to the Interim Joint Committee on Education on December 10 and prepare to advance it through the 2025 session. While we've focused on drafting our response to this joint resolution, our colleges and system office have continued to carry out other significant efforts to serve our Commonwealth.

We also received the results from our forensic audit at the end of October, marking a significant milestone in my presidency and my quest to improve and advance our system. The audit found no fraud or criminal behavior but called for the improvement of internal policies and procedures and additional staff training.

Enrollment continues to rise. At the close of November, fall enrollment is up 7% from the same time last year and spring enrollment is up 16% compared to last spring. That is a result of the tireless work of our colleges and something we should all be proud of. We also continue to serve all Kentuckians, regardless of their background. Over the past five years, KCTCS has awarded 4,460 GEDs to incarcerated individuals. When we say education for all, we really mean it.



We've continued to build partnerships across the state. This quarter, we signed two transfer agreements — with the University of Louisville and with Indiana Wesleyan University — to provide more seamless transfer opportunities for KCTCS students. We know everyone's educational journey doesn't look the same, and we want to ensure each student gets the opportunity to pursue their educational goals. We also reenforced our efforts to track our quality workforce partnerships, establishing new reporting mechanisms to connect companies with students.

As we turn toward 2025 and with the research lift of SJR 179 behind us, we will begin focusing on potential impacts of the enrollment cliff and on a comprehensive enrollment strategy. We are also in the process of developing our advocacy efforts and legislative agenda for 2025, which will be shared with the Board soon.

We still have work to do, and I am excited for the year ahead.

The information contained in this report provides a summary of my activities and initiatives related to the three pillars of the 2022-2026 KCTCS Strategic Plan from October through December 2024.

Sincerely,



Dr. Ryan Quarles
KCTCS PRESIDENT





LEARNER SUCCESS

President's Vision

Put students first.

Goals

- ✓ Increase partnerships with four-year colleges and universities to improve transfer education pathways for KCTCS students in order to help KCTCS support academic and career success of students across the state.
- Build community relationships and the potential for donors to provide more robust financial solutions for students.
- Re-envision what advancement and fundraising means for KCTCS and outline a plan to restructure in order to increase resources to help students.
- ✓ Travel to the campuses of all 16 colleges and meet with all college presidents to gain a better understanding of programs offered, what is available on campuses, and to meet students.
- ✓ Counter federal delays with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with a quick and significant response to provide students with communications, financial estimations, and application and enrollment assistance.

Turning inmates into students: KCTCS awards 4,460 GEDs over 5 years

KCTCS facilitated the award of 4,460 incarcerated individuals from 2020-2024. And during the same period, enrollments in the GED prep classes, taught by the colleges' adult education instructors, grew to 14,441.

"When we say KCTCS is education for all, that's exactly what we mean. Supporting those who lack a high school diploma is a key priority for our state and workforce," said KCTCS President Ryan Quarles, who was recently appointed to the Governor's Council of Second Chance Employers. "Everyone benefits if these individuals reenter our communities and the workforce with a credential that will help them build better lives for themselves and their families."

Fourteen KCTCS colleges are service providers for Kentucky Adult Education, the state agency that administers the GED program. Classes are held at county jails and prisons.

KCTCS enrollment continues to increase

At the end of November, enrollment for the spring 2025 semester is up 16% from the same semester last year. While it is still early and these numbers could fluctuate significantly as we approach the start of classes, this data is very encouraging.

For students that are new to KCTCS, we are seeing an increase of 20.2% for credential-seeking students, 26.0% for workforce/non-degree students, and 31.9% for high school students. Overall, new enrollment at KCTCS is up 24.0% compared to Spring 2024.

We also see enrollment increases across the board in programs that align with Kentucky's targeted industry sectors including advanced manufacturing (headcount increase of 12.3%), business and IT services (headcount increase of 9.1%), construction (headcount increase of 28.9%), healthcare (headcount increase of 17.3%), and transportation and logistics (headcount increase of 5.1%).

Overall tuition and fee revenue at KCTCS is up nearly \$2.5 million, or 4.2%.





KCTCS partners with UofL to create new pathways for transfer students to earn degrees

More students across Kentucky can easily transfer to UofL and earn their degree with help from an expanded agreement with the Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges System. Through the new agreement, UofL — who already partners with Jefferson Community and Technical College and Elizabethtown Community and Technical College — is working with all 16 KCTCS colleges across the Commonwealth to help students complete their general education requirements before they transfer. The university is also offering scholarships and providing additional financial aid and advising programming to help transfer students hit the ground running when they get to UofL. This includes the merit-based UofL KCTCS Scholarship, which awards \$1,000-\$3,000 to KCTCS students with a 3.25 cumulative GPA and 40 or more credit hours.

Additionally, KCTCS and UofL are also building corporate partnerships so transfer students can gain beneficial experience and easier entry into the workforce after earning their degree. The goal is to help students find their unique path to a job they succeed in, while filling the workforce needs of the community. UofL Health, Ford, Amazon and Charter are just a few of the corporate partners who have worked with KCTCS and UofL to help students in Louisville and across the state.

KCTCS, Indiana Wesleyan University partner for seamless transfer to bachelor's degrees

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System and Indiana Wesleyan University have signed a new transfer agreement that will help more KCTCS graduates earn a bachelor's degree. By combining the strengths and resources of both institutions, KCTCS and IWU aim to make a bachelor's degree more accessible and attainable for students desiring to earn their degree at a reputable institution online.

Through this partnership, students will begin their academic journey at a KCTCS college of their choice, where they will complete their associate degree. Credits earned during the associate degree program will transfer seamlessly to IWU online where KCTCS graduates will receive a 15% tuition discount for most four-year degree programs. Graduates requiring RN-BSN courses will receive a \$250 preferred credit hour rate.

IWU intends to create a seamless transfer experience by providing community, support and flexibility so students can comfortably complete their degrees at an accelerated pace.





||. EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

President's Vision

Grow and facilitate community partnerships.

Goals

- ✓ Build relationships with workforce and municipality partners including the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet to identify employment pathways for KCTCS students.
- ✓ Develop a statewide workforce plan.



KCTCS celebrates Manufacturing Month with more grads, TRAINS funding to directly support industry sector

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System celebrated Manufacturing Month during October in recognition of students, alumni, faculty, and the many business partners contributing to the state's manufacturing growth.

As one of Kentucky's five targeted industry sectors, advanced manufacturing is growing in popularity at KCTCS whose graduates are helping provide the skilled talent vital to the workforce that powers the rapidly growing sector.

Across the system last year, the colleges graduated more than twice as many advanced manufacturing graduates than they did in 2016-2017. Since that time, nearly 16,000 students have earned advanced manufacturing credentials and degrees.

Last year, the top three programs in the sector were welding technology with 1,942 graduates, followed by industrial maintenance technology with 937 graduates, and engineering and electronics technology with 350 graduates.

In addition to educating the future manufacturing workforce, KCTCS' Workforce Solutions prioritizes state needs by investing in manufacturing companies through the state-funded TRAINS program. Last year, the system invested \$3.7 million in 156 manufacturing companies and provided customized solutions to 247 companies.

TRAINS has been shown to offset the cost of training for companies by up to 75%.

KCTCS, KWIB host statewide workforce plan feedback session

In October, KCTCS partnered with our friends at the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board to hold a discussion with our external stakeholders from across the state on SJR 179. We reviewed the components of the statewide workforce plan and received a lot of helpful input. That feedback was incorporated into the final SJR 179 response. We have included this statewide workforce plan in our SJR 179 response, which outlines the role KCTCS can play in Kentucky's overall workforce efforts.

KCTCS commits to tracking quality partnerships

Systemwide, KCTCS faculty and staff remain committed to tracking our quality partnerships. We have established new reporting mechanisms that allow colleges to more efficiently identify opportunities to work with companies to support students. We currently have 3,150 unique active partnerships with Kentucky businesses.

KCTCS serves as core workforce partners on two Kentucky NSF grants

KCTCS is serving as the core workforce partner in two Kentucky-based National Science Foundation Engine Program grants designed to improve and innovate Kentucky's manufacturing sector. Both the Game Change grant and the KY-AME grant received invitations to submit a full proposal this February which competitively positions Kentucky to potentially secure a \$160 million-dollar economic growth grant. KCTCS would provide workforce training for future employees.



Statewide SWATT initiative and KCTCS continue to work toward unified workforce efforts

On December 4-5, KCTCS and our Statewide Workforce and Talent Team partners invited 250 workforce practitioners to Central Bank Center for our first SWATT Convening. In addition to KCTCS, other SWATT members include the Kentucky Economic Development Cabinet, Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Chamber, and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. The SWATT framework helps reduce redundancy and duplication of efforts across the state and improves the intake of companies who are choosing the commonwealth either to locate, to expand, or to stay here. This effort positions KCTCS as a leader and advocate in designing a unified business service approach to support companies with their talent attraction, retention, and development needs.



|||. ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

President's Vision

Build responsible organizational and business practices.

Goals

- Complete current audits including the KCTCS internal audit, forensic audit, and the audit of the Kentucky Fire Commission.
- Cure all state audit findings for KCTCS.
- Cure all audit findings for the Kentucky Fire Commission and clarify the roles between our partner organizations.
- Complete an organization-wide restructuring across KCTCS to reduce redundancies and improve efficiencies.
- Build out System Office Cabinet in order to provide more experts and voices at the table for organization-wide strategic decision-making.

Two key and final Cabinet positions filled

The KCTCS president's cabinet is complete with the hire of two key roles this quarter. Jessica Stigall joins KCTCS as General Counsel beginning December 16. She comes most recently from Morehead State University where she is serving as General Counsel. She previously worked in partnership with KCTCS as part of our outside counsel team at Sturgill, Turner, Barker & Moloney in Lexington. She is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University and the Salmon P. Chase College of Law in Highland Heights, Kentucky.

Chris Crumrine joined our team at the beginning of December as Chief External Affairs Officer. Chris comes to KCTCS most recently from the University of Kentucky where he has worked in the president's office as deputy chief of staff as well as serving as director of state and federal relations and as senior director for external affairs and engagement for the UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.



President's Vision

Promote aggressive advocacy.

Goals

- Develop and implement an official Advocacy Policy for KCTCS employees.
- Build relationships with key legislators who will advocate for KCTCS in the Kentucky Legislature and with Kentucky's representatives in Congress for their support at the federal level.
- Establish Advocacy Days during the annual session of the Kentucky Legislature where KCTCS leadership, faculty, and students can meet with state legislators about the important work of KCTCS.
- Develop a legislative agenda for the 2025 session of the Kentucky General Assembly that addresses the evolving needs of KCTCS and the required resources to support the SJR 179 action plan.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with the Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education.





Presidents meet with Kentucky leaders in Washington, D.C.

In November, Dr. Quarles was joined by Hazard Community and Technical College President Dr. Jennifer Lindon, Big Sandy Community and Technical College Interim President Dr. Todd Brand, and Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Interim President Dr. Patsy Jackson for an advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. The presidents met with several members of Kentucky's delegation including Senators McConnell and Paul and Representatives Guthrie, McGarvey, Massie, and Rogers. We had a lot of positive things to share about KCTCS. Also of note, we have submitted the automotive task force grant application to the Department of Labor. KCTCS is developing its legislative agenda for 2025.



Dr. Quarles talks state workforce needs with Kentucky's elected officials

In November, Dr. Quarles was invited by the Kentucky Chamber to moderate a workforce panel as part of the chamber's 2025 Legislative Preview Conference. He was joined on this panel by members of the Kentucky General Assembly including Sen. Cassie Armstrong Chambers, Rep. Samara Heavrin, Rep. Matthew Koch, and Sen. Stephen West. The conversation addressed workforce challenges in removing barriers to work including in the areas of childcare, K-12 education, higher education, housing, military hiring, substance use disorder, and more. The group discussed legislative priorities and the importance of collaboration from all stakeholders to make improvements to the state's workforce.



Dr. Quarles joins CPE President and state Commissioner of Education for workforce discussion

Dr. Quarles joined CPE President Dr. Aaron Thompson and Kentucky Commissioner of Education Dr. Robbie Fletcher at the Northern Kentucky Education Council's Ignite Institute Fall Convening in October. The panel held a productive discussion about the future of education and workforce development in northern Kentucky and across the state. Dr. Quarles emphasized KCTCS' commitment to aligning academic offerings with the state's targeted industry sectors and to the constant review of all academic and training offerings to ensure continued alignment with Kentucky's workforce needs. He also stressed the importance of partnerships between Kentucky's industry partners and KCTCS and efforts like SWATT that encourage collaboration toward common goals and success.

Dr. Quarles emphasizes the KCTCS mission of serving all Kentuckians to state Education Committee

In November, KCTCS followed its peer public higher education institutions in testifying on the topic of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to the Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Education. The post-secondary institutions were asked to answer a series of questions about resources utilized toward DEI and how each college and university was serving individuals in underrepresented populations. Dr. Quarles emphasized the unique role KCTCS plays in providing post-secondary credentials in Kentucky. As the state's only open-access institution, KCTCS prioritizes serving all Kentuckians, regardless of their background and providing them the opportunity for affordable, accessible education that will better their career prospects and potentially have a positive impact on future generations of their families. He shared information about KCTCS' wraparound services that are applied across the system at scale and the need for resources to continue to meet each student where they are to ensure their success.

President's Vision

Focus on the Future: SJR 179

Goals

- ✓ Establish a collaborative process for addressing the components of SJR 179 that includes college presidents, faculty and staff representatives from the colleges and System Office, and KCTCS stakeholders.
- ✓ Develop a researched and informed response to SJR 179 that creates a roadmap for a visionary and student-focused future for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.
- Establish an Enrollment Task Force to address the enrollment cliff and begin plans to address the impacts of this event.





SJR 179 Progress Report

At the close of the 2024 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, our state leaders passed SJR 179, which asks KCTCS to examine nearly all facets of the system including our accreditation and geographic footprint, our governing board, our funding model, our academic programs and student pathways, and our policies and procedures. We're tasked with taking a step back, evaluating ourselves, and building an action plan that ensures we are aligned with what Kentucky needs. This is our opportunity to build our own roadmap for the future of KCTCS.

The system has done a great job serving Kentucky's students, contributing to the state workforce, and promoting economic growth over the past two-and-a-half decades, but the state's economy and targeted industries have changed over time and SJR 179 presents KCTCS with a unique opportunity for realignment and reenvisioning.

After eight months and over 8,000 hours of work, KCTCS has provided a draft response with recommendations to the Board of Regents. These recommendations follow more than six months of research by our SJR 179 Work Teams, input from our staff and faculty, a feedback forum with our workforce and industry partners, contributions from the Council on Postsecondary Education, and input from this Board. We submit this draft for approval by the KCTCS Board of Regents.

Once approved, we will present our recommendations in response to SJR 179 to the Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Education on December 10.





THE 16 COLLEGES OF KCTCS

are united in our commitment to making life better
for our students, communities and the citizens of Kentucky.

Ashland Community & Technical College
Big Sandy Community and Technical College
Bluegrass Community & Technical College
Elizabethtown Community & Technical College
Gateway Community & Technical College
Hazard Community & Technical College
Henderson Community College
Hopkinsville Community College
Jefferson Community & Technical College
Madisonville Community College
Maysville Community & Technical College
Owensboro Community & Technical College
Somerset Community College
Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College
Southeast Kentucky Community & Technical College
West Kentucky Community & Technical College

KCTCS is an equal educational and employment opportunity institution.