

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 November 17, 2023.

PRESENTER: Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President

We're in a busy final stretch of another busy year at CPE as we prepare for the legislative session in January. Below are some highlighted updates as the year winds down.

Leadership changes among key partners: Some of CPE's key partners have seen leadership changes recently.

- KCTCS presidential search: I was part of the KCTCS search committee that selected Dr. Ryan Quarles, the outgoing Kentucky Commissioner of Agriculture, as its new president. Dr. Quarles earned degrees from Harvard and UK, as well as a doctorate in higher education administration from Vanderbilt.
- Kentucky Commissioner of Education: I appreciate the commitment to education, especially for those in Kentucky who are underrepresented and underserved, by former Kentucky Commissioner of Education Jason Glass. He stepped down in September for a new role as associate vice president of teaching and learning at Western Michigan University. Robin Fields Kinney is the new interim commissioner and has served in multiple roles at KDE, including a previous stint as interim commissioner.

Advocacy/legislative efforts: In October, Jennifer Fraker (our head of government relations) and I visited Washington, D.C. to advocate for education in Kentucky. We spent a lot of time advocating for our low-income students, through FAFSA simplification, expanded aid or support for higher education in general. We visited with SHEEO's Tom Harnisch, Rep. Guthrie, Rep. Comer, Rep. Barr, Rep. Rogers, Sen. Paul and Sen. McConnell. At the state level, we presented our legislative asks for the upcoming session to the budget committee.

CPE events: It's been a busy period for events at CPE.

- We're in the midst of GoVember, a multi-organization event that promotes college readiness for families and students. GoVember will feature a Facebook Live event that will provide a deeper understanding of what post-high school education options students have and more.
- In October, we hosted our inaugural Healthcare Workforce Collaboratory at the Lexington Griffin Gate Marriott. More than 200 campus and workforce representatives were present for a day of engaging conversations and opportunities for partnership.

Kentucky Senate President Sen. Robert Stivers, Rep. Ken Fleming and Secretary Eric Friedlander were our first-ever recipients of the Innovative Healthcare Leader awards for their impact on strengthening the healthcare workforce.

- More than 100 campus representatives and students participated in our Summer Bridge convening in Louisville in September. They spent the day learning how to improve summer bridge programs, which help students with transition into college.
- The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative at CPE hosted a Student Basic Needs Convening where more than 75 campus representatives learned from Laura Clark, a national expert on the psychological implications of childhood trauma on student success. Clark also discussed how to better serve low-income, adult and other non-traditional student populations.
- This week we finished our fifth Higher EDquity Symposium, where we focused on student success and workforce readiness of underserved and underrepresented populations. Eastern Kentucky University served as the location for the symposium.

Personal notes: As you can see, it's been an incredibly busy time. CPE staff have my sincere appreciation for coordinating these events and the other work they've produced. Nearly all units are working actively with our campuses and other sectors, which shows our effectiveness as an agency and as a body of thought leadership.

- Thanks and appreciation are also in order for Bruce Brooks, who previously served as my executive assistant and has transitioned to a new role in GEAR UP. Elizabeth Hack, who most recently served at KDE, is my new executive assistant. Please join me in celebrating Bruce and welcoming Elizabeth.
- Congratulations and appreciation are in order for Dr. Rick Smith. After two-and-a-half years with CPE working on workforce, economic development and external relations, Rick recently accepted a position as senior vice president and chief of staff at Simmons College of Kentucky in Louisville. We wish Rick the best and thank for his contributions.

CPE MEDIA REPORT

CPE staff have been busy serving as part of the choir for spreading the higher education matters message. Below are some highlights from September, October and part of November.

Agency-wide speaking engagements: CPE staff have presented or moderated panels on at least 23 occasions since September. Some highlights include:

- Dr. Aaron Thompson and Lee Nimocks, senior vice president and chief of staff, moderated a conversation with Lumina president Jamie Merisotis to launch CPE's Postsecondary Education Trusteeship webinar series.
- Dr. Rick Smith spoke to Leadership Kentucky's latest cohort about how encouraging education beyond college is crucial to the state's economy and workforce.

- Dr. Leslie Sizemore, assistant vice president of workforce initiatives, presented strategies for preparing students with disabilities for careers during the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's Inclusive Workforce Summit.
- Dr. Thompson, Dr. Sizemore and Carl Wilson, senior fellow of Healthcare Workforce Initiatives, presented and moderated panels at CPE's inaugural Healthcare Workforce Collaboratory.
- Mary Jackson, senior associate for external relations and economic partnerships, provided the keynote address for the Kentucky Association of Colleges and Employers.
- Dr. Thompson was featured on a national stage during the Launch Pathways event in Indianapolis, which later garnered national news coverage in Forbes for Kentucky's work on holistic advising.

Agency-wide media appearances: CPE staff fielded 12 media requests for information or comment from September through November, as well as eight appearances in print, digital or broadcast media. Some highlights include:

- Dr. Thompson was a panelist on KET's Kentucky Tonight "State of Higher Education" episode.
- Travis Powell, vice president and general counsel, spoke to WMKY in Morehead about the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action and its effects on Kentucky campuses.
- Missy Ross, associate director of communications and outreach for GEAR UP Kentucky, spoke to the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer about Go!vember and the opportunities it presents for prospective postsecondary students.
- A Forbes story mentioned the Kentucky Advising Academy and KYSTATS in a story about creating pathways to college and Kentucky's effort to provide holistic advising.
- Dr. Beth Collins, associate director of the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative, provided comment for a Somerset Community College news release about improving the transfer experience for Kentucky students.