



CPE REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University News for the Council on Postsecondary Education



EKU EASES TRANSITION FOR NEW AND RETURNING STUDENTS WITH ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Eastern Kentucky University is bustling with activities as faculty and staff welcomed the largest freshman class in several years and returning students to the Campus Beautiful for the 2023-24 academic year. Along with the excitement of the school year come challenges with managing a full course load, developing a social network and for many, being away from home for the first time. To help students adjust to college life, EKU provides free on-campus resources from tutoring to workshops to mental health counseling.

According to the American College Health Association, a study conducted in 2022 showed 77% of college students experienced moderate or severe psychological distress. Recognizing an increased need and desire for mental health services among college students, EKU is leveraging a collaborative effort between its Counseling Center, Psychology Clinic and Student Health Services to provide more support for students.

Last year, the Counseling Center and Psychology Clinic provided mental health services for more than 1,000 clients within the EKU community.

EKU's Counseling Center provides confidential psychotherapy, educational events, and individual, couple or group therapy sessions. Workshops can help students learn coping strategies, how to manage stress and how to increase focus. The Counseling Center has a relaxation room—open to anyone in the EKU community—equipped with massage chairs, Oculus systems for meditation and a library of mental health resources. The Counseling Center also operates an after-hours urgent support and crisis line for students 24/7.

Extended mental health services—such as therapy, testing, support groups, outreach and telepsychology—are also offered through EKU's Psychology Clinic. Additionally, EKU's Student Health Services has three psychiatric nurse practitioners on staff to help students who need mental health medication services. Both the Psychology Clinic and Student Health Services facilities have recently been renovated and updated.

Mental health services from the Counseling Center and Student Health Services are free to currently enrolled EKU students.



EKU RANKS AMONG 2024 BEST COLLEGES BY U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University was once again listed among the 2024 Best Colleges by U.S. News and World Report. EKU ranked in the following categories: Nursing, National Universities, Top Public Schools and Top Performers on Social Mobility.

EKU moved up 23 spots from last year in the Best Bachelor of Science in Nursing ranking, tying with California State University-San Bernardino at #183 for 2024. EKU's #184 ranking for Top Performers on Social Mobility places first among public institutions in Kentucky.

"Ranking first among Kentucky's public institutions for social mobility reinforces our commitment as a School of Opportunity. Helping students who, otherwise, might not be able to attend college, and then supporting them through graduation and beyond is what we do best at EKU," said EKU President David McFaddin.

EKU has experienced a nearly 30% increase in freshman enrollment since 2020 during a period of national enrollment decline. The university's enrollment is around 15,000 and retention is at an all-time high at nearly 80%. The U.S. News and World Report 2024 Best Colleges rankings add to a growing list of national accolades, including America's Best Employers by Forbes, the 2023 Transfer Honor Roll by Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and No. 3 ranking in the Military Friendly® Schools review.

EKU LAUNCHES \$1.5-MILLION SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT ECU MANCHESTER CAMPUS STUDENTS

Eastern Kentucky University launched a \$1.5-million fundraising initiative to establish a scholarship for students attending the ECU Manchester Regional Campus in Manchester, Kentucky. The fundraising goal, along with a \$100,000 gift from East Kentucky Power and its 16 Owner Member Cooperatives, was announced in September at the ECU Manchester Regional Campus.

In the 1980s, Clay County community leaders dreamed of what would become the ECU Manchester Regional Campus. There was a clear need in the community to provide a college education without requiring students to leave the region. This vision was realized in 2009 with a state-of-the-art facility and academic programming. The Manchester Campus Endowed Scholarship Fund is a continuation of that vision.

"Any business knows you must invest in your people to be successful. By the same token, a community has to invest in its people to experience a similar, successful outcome," said Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester, District 25. "I'm thrilled to be at this pivotal turning point for Manchester and the surrounding region, partnering with ECU and other businesses who value this community, the community I love, and remain committed to seeing flourish."

Dr. Aaron Thompson, president of the Council on Postsecondary Education, said, "People are willing to coalesce around us to create scholarships and processes for young people and not-so-young people to be educated here and stay here," said Thompson. "To become a part of that industry, that helps Clay County build itself out economically. If you can educate people here, businesses will come and then we are going to create a better economic output for the mountains."

The ECU Manchester Regional Campus has led to more than 7,000 students beginning their education at ECU—2,700 of those being first-generation college students. Academic offerings range from general education requirements to programs in high-demand fields such as K-12 education, healthcare and criminal justice.

