



WKU confers 2,832 degrees during 193rd Commencement

Western Kentucky University's Class of 2023 celebrated the completion of an educational journey disrupted by a global pandemic.

"The last four years provided your class a life-changing opportunity to show us all that you can't be stopped," President Timothy C. Caboni said during WKU's 193rd Commencement at Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium.

"Your commitment to purpose, your determination of spirit and your limitless resilience have served you exceptionally well," he said, referring to the pandemic that unfolded during the Class of 2023's freshman year.

"Though it may not yet be clear to you today, rest assured that this experience strengthened you in extraordinary ways and will serve you well in the years to come.

"You proved your ability to pivot and to overcome regardless of the obstacles before you. Never forget how to overcome. Never forget that you did overcome. Never forget that you can always overcome," President Caboni said.

WKU conferred degrees and certificates to 2,832 spring and summer 2023 graduates — 77 associate, 1,890 bachelor's, 518 master's, 58 doctoral and 12 specialist degrees, and 176 undergraduate certificates and 101 graduate certificates.

Graduating senior Cole Bornefeld of Hendersonville, Tennessee, who has served as Student Government Association President and Student Regent this year, congratulated the Class of 2023 for working hard, overcoming challenges and persevering to reach this milestone.

"As you leave this campus and venture into the next chapter of your lives, remember to embrace change, stay true to your values, and pursue passions with vigor," Bornefeld said. "Take risks, make mistakes, learn from them, and never give up on your dreams. I have no doubt that the Class of 2023 will make a positive impact on the world, just as you have done during your time here at Western Kentucky University."



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WKU unveils plans for new building to house Gordon Ford College of Business

Western Kentucky University unveiled plans for a new state-of-the-art building to house the Gordon Ford College of Business.

The 113,000-square-foot building will transform undergraduate and graduate business education in the region and fulfill an important component of WKU's 2021-2031 Campus Master Plan.

"As we continue our important work of transforming lives and elevating our communities through education, we remain committed to ensuring our facilities promote the exchange of ideas, foster innovation and provide resources that enable our students to excel in their chosen disciplines," President Timothy C. Caboni said.

The Collegiate Georgian-style facility will be built on the site formerly occupied by Tate Page Hall. "This innovative building celebrates the nearly 150-year history of business education in our region, while also marking an exciting new chapter for our beloved university," President Caboni said.

The project is made possible by the Kentucky General Assembly. As part of House Bill 1, in April 2022 legislators approved funding for a new Gordon Ford College of Business, providing \$74.4 million from the state under the 2022-24 budget.

The new Gordon Ford College of Business building will have a modern, flexible, open-space interior that supports active learning, academic innovation, curriculum enhancement, and a strong community. The spaces will more uniformly serve the needs of students, elevate the teaching and research of the faculty and staff, and support GFCB's ongoing enrollment growth.

The project is scheduled to break ground this summer and be completed in the fall of 2025. View the latest renderings at www.wku.edu/businesscollege.

WKU wins Hearst photojournalism competition for 7th straight year



WKU's School of Media has won the Hearst Intercollegiate Photojournalism Competition for the seventh straight year and the 29th time in the past 34 years, and three WKU students earned awards in Hearst photojournalism and writing competitions.

WKU had the highest accumulated student points in the two photo competitions of the **2022-2023 Hearst Journalism Awards Program** and will receive a \$10,000 award. The other top 10 photojournalism finishers were University of Iowa, University of Oregon, Michigan State University, Ohio University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Florida, Pennsylvania State University, Elon University, and University of Montana.

Often called "The Pulitzers of college journalism," the Hearst Journalism Awards Program, now in its 63rd year, includes two photojournalism, five writing, one audio, two television, and four multimedia competitions offering up to \$700,000 in scholarships, matching grants and stipends; 105 member universities of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication with accredited undergraduate journalism programs are eligible to participate in the Hearst competitions.

In the Hearst Overall Intercollegiate Competition, WKU's School of Media has finished in the top five nationally for 13 consecutive years and has placed in the top eight for 29 straight years with four overall championships in 2000, 2001, 2005 and 2018.

In 2021-2022, WKU finished fourth in the overall competition, won the Intercollegiate Photojournalism Competition and placed second in the Intercollegiate Multimedia Competition.

WKU students have won 15 Hearst individual national championships since 1985 — photojournalism in 1987, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1996, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2016; multimedia in 2015; writing in 1985; and radio news in 2006.

The Hearst program added multimedia in 2010; WKU has won the multimedia championship eight times.

Two WKU Restaurant Group locations upgraded to 3 Star Green Certification®

Western Kentucky University's Fresh Food Company and Hilltopper Hub have achieved 3 Star Certified Green Restaurant® status from the Green Restaurant Association.

The organization noted that WKU's three Green Restaurants -- Fresh Food Company, Hilltopper Hub and Chick-fil-A -- have implemented comprehensive composting and recycling programs to divert 90% of their waste from landfills, decreasing their waste on average by 90,000 pounds a year.

The three WKU Restaurant Group facilities have taken more than 80 environmental steps and earned over 500 GreenPoints™ in environmental categories, including Energy, Water, Waste, Reusables & Disposables, Chemicals & Pollution, Food, and Building & Furnishing.

"The WKU Restaurant Group is committed to showcasing our commitment to sustainability," said Alex Meredith, Sustainability Coordinator for WKU Restaurant Group. "We are excited about this recognition and will continue to explore other sustainable initiatives that will allow us to continue to support the university's sustainability goals."

Hilltopper Hub, which became WKU's second Green Restaurant in June 2021, implemented 56 environmental steps and achieved 201.58 GreenPoints™ to earn the recertification upgrade. Hilltopper Hub is located in Hilltopper Hall.

Fresh Food Company, which became WKU's first Green Restaurant in January 2020, implemented 46 environmental steps and achieved 187.2 GreenPoints™ to earn the recertification upgrade. Fresh Food Company is located in the Downing Student Union.

"Green Dining Certification documents our holistic commitment to sustainability, accounting for food sourcing, food preparation, waste generation, education and outreach, and more, particularly when considering we improved our certification level by two tiers between our first and second evaluation periods," said Dr. Leslie North, WKU's Director of Sustainability. "Collectively, the green dining practices we have committed to as part of this certification position our campus community to make informed choices about their food, health, and the environment. In essence, as cliché as it may sound, we aren't just serving food; we are serving a sustainable future. I am so grateful for the commitment of our Aramark team to sustainability, proud of the meaningful projects we've been able to do together, and excited for what we will do next. I truly believe partnerships make everything possible, and this incredible certification achievement is yet another demonstrated example of that."

To achieve Green Restaurant certification, a facility must earn a specific number of points across multiple categories, including water use, energy use, and food sourcing.

North said the certification process covers areas such as using locally sourced food, using Energy Star appliances, offering education programs for staff to minimize waste in food preparation, using composting and recycling waste diversion practices, not using non-biodegradable polystyrene foam products, minimizing chemical use, pollution reduction and diversifying food options to meet a variety of cultural, dietary and religious needs.

