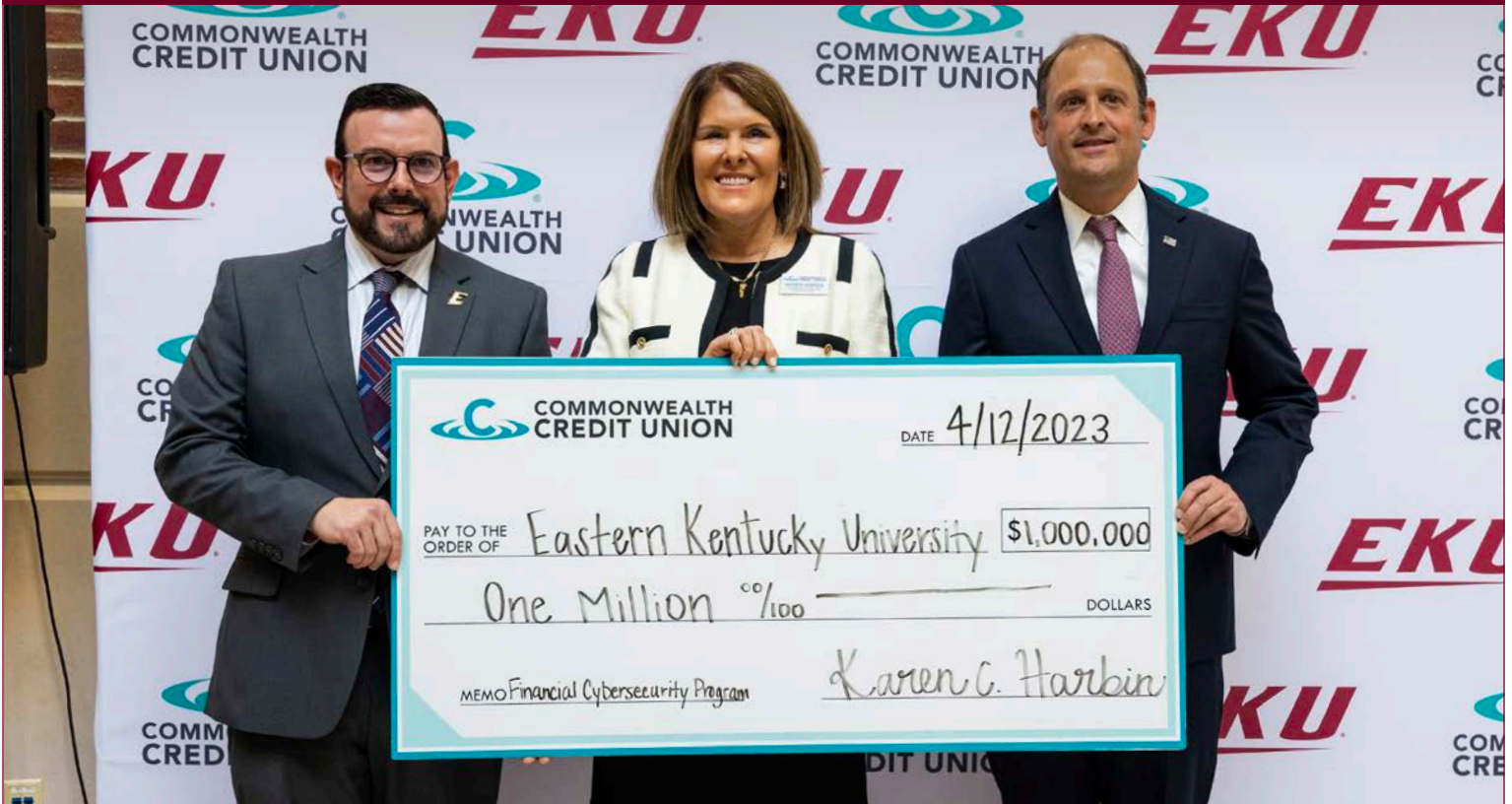




CPE REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University News for the Council on Postsecondary Education



COMMONWEALTH CREDIT UNION GIFTS \$1 MILLION TO SUPPORT BANKING AND FINANCE PROGRAMS AT EKU

Commonwealth Credit Union (CCU) and Eastern Kentucky University announced on April 12, an agreement of a \$1-million gift to support the Evans Banking and Financial Services program and the establishment of a new certificate program in Financial Technology and Cybercrime. In recognition of CCU's gift, the Learning Commons at Stratton Building will be renamed the Commonwealth Credit Union Learning Lounge.

The announcement was made in the EKU Business and Technology Center Atrium, where EKU President David McFaddin, U.S. Congressman Andy Barr and President/CEO of CCU Karen Harbin briefly spoke about the industry's need for education in financial technology and cybercrime.

EKU's new Financial Technology and Cybercrime certificate program focuses on solving vulnerabilities in the financial system, making it the first of its kind in the US.

"What an amazing achievement that EKU is unveiling the first certificate program of its kind in the nation for the future leaders in this sector. This is an important part of our financial ecosystem," said Congressman Barr. "Cybersecurity is currently one of the most important risks to our financial system. With this announcement today, EKU is setting itself apart in proving itself as a problem solving institution."

According to Ernst and Young, 72% of financial institution chief risk officers view cybersecurity as the top year-ahead risk. Additionally, the American Banker reported in 2022 that the United States only has enough cybersecurity workers to fill 68% of 168,000 unfulfilled banking cybersecurity positions.

EKU and CCU are committed to investing in educational programs that support the future and current workforce while expanding professional opportunities in financial services and cybersecurity. The new certificate program begins in Fall 2023.



EKU EARNS TOP THREE RANKING FOR MILITARY FRIENDLY® SCHOOLS

Reinforcing a tradition of excellence in veterans education, Eastern Kentucky University once again claimed the top three ranking in the Military Friendly® Schools 2023-24 ratings. ECU is the only university in Kentucky to achieve the Military Friendly® Schools' highest award designation of Top Ten status.

"EKU's veterans and military service members are fundamental to our campus community," said ECU President Dr. David McFaddin. "We are incredibly proud to be named among the top three Military Friendly® Schools for another year in a row. We continue to invest in excellence for our student veterans and their families to ensure they have support, facilities and programming to achieve success in their academic and career goals."

ECU is home to over 1,700 veterans, active duty service members, Reserve/National Guard members and military spouses and children, as of Fall 2022. The Office of Military and Veteran Affairs (OMVA) provides dedicated services and programming from pre-admission to graduation and beyond for military and veteran students and their families.

EKU ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF EKU BOOKSMART TO ALL STUDENTS

Eastern Kentucky University announced the expansion of its ECU BookSmart program during the university's fourth annual Giving Day on Wednesday, April 19. Since Fall of 2021, ECU BookSmart has provided undergraduate students with free textbooks.

Beginning Fall 2023, the program will be expanded to an additional 2,260 graduate and doctoral students online and on campus. ECU will become the first public university to offer free textbooks to all degree-seeking students.

According to the College Board, the average undergraduate student spends more than \$1,200 on books and materials over the course of a year. ECU BookSmart was created as a way to provide students with an additional level of financial support in their education and lower the overall cost of attendance. Based on the College Board estimate of textbook costs, to-date, ECU students will have saved a combined \$25 million through ECU BookSmart. Furthermore, the savings represent a 9.7% decrease in students' cost of attendance. With the expansion of the program, the cumulative student savings will total over \$43 million since the start of ECU BookSmart through the 2023-24 academic year.

ECU BookSmart, in partnership with Barnes & Noble, works as a textbook rental program. After registering for courses, books are gathered, packaged and shipped to students free of cost through ECU's Barnes & Noble Bookstore. Students also have the option to pick up their books on campus. Once the semester is over, students return their books to the ECU Bookstore or can purchase their textbooks at a discounted price.

Fall-to-spring retention rates have increased since the implementation of ECU BookSmart with a 4.7% increase for all freshmen. There has been a 2.4% increase in overall enrollment since 2021.

"The BookSmart program is excellent for all students. It allows students to save a significant amount of money," said junior music education major, Adriana Steele. "Before the BookSmart program, I spent \$400 on books in my first semester. I remember hoping I had enough aid to get a book voucher. I can't personally afford to pay out-of-pocket to rent or buy my books, but now I no longer have to worry about that."

