



WKU recognized at CPE Student Success Summit

WKU and SKYCTC received the Partnership for Transfer award during the **2024 Student Success Summit**, CPE's signature event that promotes innovative approaches to student success.

In the past two years, WKU and SKYCTC have worked with CPE and the National Association of System Heads (NASH) on a program to increase transfer rates for students who start at a community college.

"Working on the NIC (NASH Improvement Community) has resulted in a stronger partnership between WKU and SKYCTC that will result in more students successfully transferring," said Christopher Jensen, WKU's Assistant Vice President for Student Success. "Already we are seeing an increase in transfer numbers between the two partner schools."

Over the course of the past two academic years, transfer between the two institutions increased by 54% through strong collaboration and commitment to remove barriers for students.

"Our work is not only impacting transfer rates in the region, but nationally, as other institutions are using our findings to inform transfer practices," Jensen said.

Results of the work between WKU and SKYCTC have been featured in reports by **Inside Higher Ed** and the **U.S. Department of Education**.

More than 400 higher education professionals gathered for the Student Success Summit at WKU's Knicely Conference Center last month. The theme of this year's summit was Partnerships that Work, which focused on partnership development as a tool to advance student success.

WKU

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WKU Online bachelor's programs ranked among top in state, nation

U.S. News & World Report has ranked Western Kentucky University among the top 100 Best Online Bachelor's Programs in the nation – and No. 2 in Kentucky.

The 2024 rankings were determined based on each program's engagement, services and technology, faculty credentials and training, and expert opinion. According to the report, "U.S. News chose factors that weigh how these programs are being delivered and their effectiveness at awarding affordable degrees in a reasonable amount of time."

Dr. Robert Fischer, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, remarked that, "This ranking speaks directly to the quality of our courses and the expertise of our faculty. It reflects our commitment to providing an educational experience that is not only accessible but also enriching and comprehensive."

WKU Online programs have remained in the top 100 out of a list of over 300 for over three years in a row. WKU online courses are built to fit around busy schedules, giving learners the flexibility to earn a degree without putting life on hold. Online courses are taught by experienced faculty who also teach face-to-face courses, so online learners receive the same high-quality education as students who take courses on campus.

"Maintaining a position in the top 100 for three consecutive years is a testament to our award-winning student services and the hard work and dedication of our staff. It underscores our continuous efforts to provide an educational environment that supports and nurtures our students' success," said Dr. Marko Dumančić, Western Kentucky University Assistant Provost of Faculty Development and Student Success.

WKU's online undergraduate business program was ranked at #50 in the nation. Other achievements include the veteran's bachelor's program with a ranking of #52, veterans-MBA at #68, MBA at #107, and Grad Education at #108.

WKU offers over 80 online degree options, including certificate, bachelor's, and master's programs. All programs are regionally accredited.





WKU sustainability efforts earn international recognition

WKU's sustainability efforts continue to earn international recognition in the University of Indonesia GreenMetric World University Rankings.

In the overall 2023 rankings, WKU was recognized as the 664th World's Most Sustainable University out of 1,183 universities from 84 countries. WKU was one of 10 U.S. universities invited to participate.

The UI GreenMetric World University Rankings are based on three pillars — environmental, economic, and social value — incorporating indicators such as setting and infrastructure; energy and climate change; waste; water; transportation; education; and research.

WKU, which created its Office of Sustainability in 2008, has earned numerous national recognitions and certifications, including the International WELL Building Institute for Ogden College Hall, the Green Restaurant Association Certified Dining program, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings, AASHE STARS (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System), Tree Campus USA, U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools and more.

In addition to its participation in the UI GreenMetric rankings since 2019, WKU has been profiled in The Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges for 14 straight years.



WKU once again celebrates historic fall-to-spring retention successes

In what has become a familiar trend in recent years, Western Kentucky University students again returned to campus for the spring semester at record rates, President Timothy C. Caboni announced on Tuesday, February 13. Among the university's retention successes, 85.4% of all undergraduate degree seeking students who were enrolled in the fall returned for the spring semester, the highest percentage since the university began tracking this data in 2010.

“The retention of our students illustrates the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives in enhancing student engagement; expanding support services; and deepening connections with peers, faculty and staff,” President Caboni shared in his message to campus. “We strive to ensure that every student has access to the resources and support needed to succeed academically and across every area of university life.”

The university made gains in its fall-to-spring retention of underrepresented minority students. President Caboni shared that 83.9% of WKU's overall underrepresented minority population returned this spring, the highest percentage among this group since the 2010-2011 academic year.

Fall-to-spring retention of first-time, first-year students jumped to 91.6%, compared to 91.1% in spring 2023. This represents a 5.3 percentage point increase since the 2017-2018 academic year, and the highest returning percentage since the university began tracking this data in 2010.

Among low-income first-time, first-year students, 90% returned in the spring, an increase of nearly 5 percentage points since 2019. Additionally, 88.5% of first-time, first-year students who identify as the first in their family to attend college returned for the spring semester, a 2 percentage point increase among this group from last year and a 4.2 percentage point increase since 2019.

The university has renewed its focus on Living Learning Communities (LLCs) in recent years, and nearly a third of first-year students were involved in an LLC to start the 2023-2024 academic year. LLC participation directly affected fall-to-spring retention rates, with 94.8% of first-time, first-year LLC students returning for the spring semester, compared to 90.4% of first-time, first-year students who did not participate in an LLC.