

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 March 28, 2024.

PRESENTER: Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President

We are nearing the end of a busy legislative session. At yesterday's work session, Travis Powell updated members on the key legislative developments CPE has been tracking. These include the budget bill, DEI legislation, a research endowment bill, a resolution calling on CPE to do additional study on the southeastern university issue, a resolution calling on CPE to evaluate the feasibility of new programs at the comprehensive universities, a bill related to KCTCS that builds on some of the findings in last year's SJR 98 study, among many other items. I'd like to thank Travis Powell for stepping in as legislative liaison following Jennifer Fraker's departure earlier this year, as well as Leslie Sizemore and Amanda Ellis, who have spent many hours representing CPE at the Capitol.

Below are additional updates from the first quarter of 2024.

Betty and David Jones, Sr. Legacy Award: I was honored to receive the Betty and David Jones, Sr. Legacy Award from Simmons College of Kentucky during the Transform Louisville breakfast and provide the keynote address. The award is made to an individual who has provided passion, vision, counsel and support to help elevate Simmons College.

The Great Admissions Redesign Challenge: Lumina Foundation selected CPE as one of seven winners out of more than 70 applications to The Great Admissions Redesign, a competition to revolutionize the admissions process and increase accessibility to higher education for all students. The \$150,000 grant awarded to CPE will facilitate a collaborative, student-centered, design-thinking continuous improvement approach to address long-standing barriers and untapped potential in admissions and financial aid processes. It also will provide CPE with an opportunity to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to improve the admissions process.

Student Success Summit awards: CPE and the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) recognized six organizations for their work in improving student success at the 2024 Student Success Summit in Bowling Green. Recipients included Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College, Western Kentucky University, Bluegrass Community and

Technical College, James Graham Brown Foundation, the Kentucky Office of Adult Education and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

CPE events: The beginning of the year is off to a fast start, with many upcoming events.

- CPE hosted the 2024 Student Success Summit on Feb. 26-27 at Western Kentucky University. More than 400 higher education professionals gathered for the conference to discuss key issues facing the Commonwealth, including ways to support financially vulnerable students, using AI to improve transfer, and more.
- The 2024 CLIMB-Health Convening will take place May 14 at The Campbell House in Lexington. Guest speakers include Eric Friedlander (secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services), Katie Marks (commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities), Dr. Ryan Quarles (president of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System) and myself.
- The 2024 Pedagogicon will take place May 15-17 at Eastern Kentucky University. Stephen M.R. Covey will provide the keynote on May 15 at the ECU Center for the Arts.

Personal note: Congratulations and appreciation are in order for Sarah Levy. After serving as executive director of postsecondary licensing, Sarah accepted a position at the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) as senior director for policy and regulatory affairs. We wish Sarah the best and thank her for her contributions at CPE since 2008.

CPE MEDIA REPORT

CPE staff has consistently spread the higher education matters message through media appearances and speaking engagements. Below are highlights from January, February, and part of March.

Agency-wide speaking engagements: CPE staff presented or moderated panels on at least 34 occasions since November. Some highlights include:

- I was a panelist on a webinar titled “Why Mental Health & Wellness? Why Now?” hosted by The Jed Foundation and SHEEO. Joining me were panelists from The State University of New York, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Ohio State University Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service. I discussed some of the innovative practices Kentucky implemented during the pandemic, the agency’s partnership with The Jed Foundation, and how mental health relates to student success.
- I also was a panelist during a Kentucky Chamber of Commerce event on the state of higher education. I was joined by Dr. Ryan Quarles, president of KCTCS, and Mason Dyer, president of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities.

- Carl Wilson, senior fellow for healthcare workforce initiatives, spoke about the Career Ladders in Mental & Behavioral Health initiative at the Kentucky Hospital Association PsyCD Forum. Wilson provided an overview of the program during the private forum.
- Dr. Melissa Bell, vice president of academic affairs, provided remarks at the annual Posters-at-the-Capitol event at the Rotunda. Dr. Bell talked about the importance of undergraduate research, some of the roles of CPE and why higher education matters.

Agency-wide media appearances: CPE staff fielded 18 media requests for information or comment from January through March, as well as 27 appearances in print, digital or broadcast media. Some highlights include:

- I was a guest on *Connections* with Renee Shaw, where I discussed the legislative session and Kentucky's gains in higher education.
- The Kentucky Advising Academy was recognized for its work on holistic advising in a case study by Education Strategy Group.
- CPE was featured in a news story by *The Lane Report* highlighting the importance of enrollment growth to Kentucky's workforce. I discussed Kentucky's enrollment gains on Gov. Andy Beshear's Team Kentucky update, which resulted in several positive news stories.
- CPE and the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative were featured by *Inside Higher Ed* in a story about the Lumina Foundation grant titled The Great Admissions Redesign Challenge. Dr. Thompson and Dr. Lilly Massa-McKinley spoke with the publication.
- Dr. Leslie Sizemore, associate vice president of workforce and economic initiatives, appeared on *WSAZ* in Huntington, West Virginia to discuss why higher education matters and the agency's 60x30 goal.
- I was featured in a story by the *Lexington Herald-Leader* as a person of influence in Frankfort. The story was part of a series highlighting the most influential people at the Capitol.
- Travis Powell, vice president and general counsel, joined several panelists with a variety of perspectives on *Kentucky Tonight* to discuss CPE's definition of and approaches to DEI.