

## MEETING MINUTES

*Draft for Approval by the Council on March 28, 2024*

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Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Meeting Type: Business Meeting  
Date: January 19, 2024  
Time: 10:00 a.m. ET  
Location: Virtual meeting via ZOOM webinar

### WELCOME REMARKS

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The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education met in a business meeting on Friday, January 19, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. ET. The meeting occurred virtually via ZOOM webinar. Vice Chair Eric Farris presided.

### ATTENDANCE

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Council Members' attendance:

- Attended: CB Akins, Jacob Brown, Jennifer Collins, Kellie Ellis, Eric Farris, Meredith Figg, Karyn Hoover, Faith Kemper, Chloe Marsteller, LaDonna Rogers, Elaine Walker, Kevin Weaver, Interim Commissioner Robin Kinney
- Did not attend: Muhammad Babar, Madison Silvert, Connie Smith

CPE President Aaron Thompson served as Secretary of the board, per the CPE Bylaws. Ms. Heather Faesy, CPE's board liaison, served as recorder of the meeting minutes.

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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The minutes of the November 17, 2023, meetings, were approved as presented.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE – REPORT AND ACTION ITEM

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Committee Chair Kevin Weaver presented the Nominating Committee Report. After seeking out nominations and expressions of interest, the Committee has unanimously agreed to re-elect Madison Silvert as Chair and Eric Farris as Vice Chair.

MOTION: The Nominating Committee's recommendation of approval served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **CPE PRESIDENT REPORT**

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President Aaron Thompson provided his written report in the board materials. He provided additional comments on Kentucky's recognition by the National Student Clearinghouse as being first in the nation for enrollment growth between fall 2022 and fall 2023; CPE's recognition in receiving the Stan Jones Award from Complete College America; and discussions taking place during the budget development process.

## **KY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSIONER REPORT**

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KDE Interim Commissioner Robin Kinney provided a verbal report that focused on the United We Learn initiative, the K-12 education technology system, and the success of Kentucky's Student Technology Leadership Program. She also provided an update on the Commissioner search process.

## **ACADEMIC AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COMMITTEE – REPORT & ACTION ITEMS**

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Committee Chair Karyn Hoover presented the report and recommendations made by the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee, which met on January 16, 2024.

The Committee reviewed the following information topics at the meeting:

- Review and approval of Morehead State University's Application for Kentucky Cultural Competency Credential Certification. Per the Kentucky Cultural Competency Credential Certification Process, the action serves as final and thus does not require further action by the full Council.
- Received an update on the four new AAS degree programs approved at KCTCS institutions between June and December 2023.
- Discussed the SJR 98 report recommendations to strengthen review and approval of non-degree academic programs and possible next steps.
- Received an update on the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Program and the report completed in November 2023 that highlighted its work and results.
- Learned about the work implemented from the passage of HB 200, which established the Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund, including the statutes and regulation that guide its work, the members of the steering committee, its funding priorities, and the 2024 implementation schedule.
- Received a briefing on the agenda and notable speakers for the 2024 Student Success Summit, taking place the end of February 2024.

Ms. Hoover also presented two new academic programs from Northern Kentucky University that were reviewed and endorsed by the Committee for approval.

- MBA, STEM MBA (CIP 52.1301)
- MAC, STEM Master of Accountancy (CIP 52.1399)

MOTION: The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee's recommendation of approval of the two new academic programs served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE – REPORT AND ACTION ITEMS**

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Committee Chair Eric Farris presented the report and recommendations made by the Finance Committee, which met on January 16, 2024. The Committee reviewed the following information topics at the meeting:

- Received an update on the development process and current status of the legislature's 2024-26 biennial budget.
- Received a briefing on the SHEEO report on assessing financial health and risk and how the Council is taking those recommendations to develop tools to assess institutional financial health and risk from market pressures. They also heard from representatives from the Ohio Department of Higher Education on the impact Ohio has experienced as a result of the agency's financial monitoring and oversight policies and procedures.

Mr. Farris also presented three interim capital projects requests that were reviewed and endorsed by the Committee for approval:

- Elizabethtown Community and Technical College – Expand the Science Building - \$3,500,000
- Kentucky State University – Blazer Library Renovations - \$1,700,000
- Kentucky State University – Carver Hall Modifications for Engineering Program - \$2,700,000

MOTION: The Finance Committee's recommendation of approval of the action items served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – REPORT & ACTION ITEMS**

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Chair Silvert presented the report and recommendations made by the Executive Committee, which met the morning of January 19, 2024. The Committee discussed potential changes to the Council bylaws and received an update from President Thompson on the conversations occurring in response to filings during the 2024 legislative session, as well as an upcoming restructuring of the agency.

Chair Silvert also presented the following action item that was reviewed and endorsed by the Committee for approval:

- Revision to KSU's management improvement plan to include the use of a standardized monthly reporting template and a revision to two management plan objectives (5.2.7 & 5.2.8) that would change the deliverables from monthly to quarterly.

MOTION: The Executive Committee's recommendation of approval of the action items served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

### **STATEWIDE INITIATIVES DECREASING DEBT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COMPLETERS AT KENTUCKY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

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Mr. Travis Muncie, Executive Director, and Dr. Chris Ledford, Associate Director, both from the Data and Advanced Analytics unit, presented the CPE study on graduate debt levels and how Kentucky's efforts around tuition caps, improving financial literacy, and increasing grant aid have impacted those levels. The study investigated debt trends over the past five academic years among graduates of Kentucky's public institutions. (Debt at graduation was defined as the total debt a student has taken on through the end of the academic year in which they earned their highest credential on record.)

The inaugural CPE report shows that average debt levels for undergraduate completers in Kentucky are declining across sectors and credential levels. Moderating debt loads of Kentucky college students has been a key focus of campuses across the state, as well as CPE and state leaders. Specifically, increases in financial aid, better financial counseling, and strengthening information resources, along with decreasing time to degree, are contributing to lower debt levels across sectors.

- Average debt for all public graduates (including those graduating with and without debt) dropped 32.7% between 2017-18 and 2022-23. The proportion of graduates with debt declined from 64.0% to 43.2%.
- At KCTCS, average undergraduate debt declined by 42.4% and 9.4% among students with debt only. The proportion of completers with debt declined from 63.1% to 30.3%.
- At four-year public universities, average undergraduate debt declined by 15.6% and 4.4% among students with debt. The proportion of completers with debt declined from 64.5% to 56.1%
- Declining patterns generally hold across demographic and academic subgroups across sectors. These will be discussed in greater detail during the presentation.

The full report will be released in the spring of 2024.

## **CAMPUS GOOD NEWS REPORTS**

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Reports from the institutions were provided in the agenda materials. Chair Silvert provided highlights in the reports from Murray State University, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Kentucky, and the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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The Council adjourned the business meeting at 11:10 a.m. ET.

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