



CPE REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University News for the Council on Postsecondary Education



EKU LAUNCHES FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Eastern Kentucky University is exploring the possibility of a College of Osteopathic Medicine. As the School of Opportunity, ECU is committed to meeting the rising health care needs in the state by seeking to introduce a new and cost-effective medical education program in Kentucky.

The university is currently reviewing vendors to complete a feasibility study to analyze if a public College of Osteopathic Medicine is needed in the Commonwealth. At the same time, ECU is requesting approval from the Kentucky General Assembly to offer this type of degree program.

"The idea of ECU having a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program is one that was born out of the need for us to have more primary care physicians in Kentucky," said ECU President David McFaddin. "Our communities, our neighbors, our friends and our families deserve to have a qualified physician who is there to care for them when they're in their time of need. Being part of bringing those physicians who are Kentuckians back to our Kentucky communities to serve our neighbors and friends—there could be no higher calling."

Nearly all of the state's 120 counties contain facilities designated as health professional shortage areas for primary care. ECU anticipates that by offering a College of Osteopathic Medicine, the number of shortage areas throughout the Commonwealth may be reduced.

Lillian Jones, an ECU pre-med student from Barbourville, said a medical school closer to home would not only be convenient but would also help prepare her and other students for the unique challenges facing healthcare workers in the region. After completing her education, Jones' hope is to return to Barbourville to work, because she wants to serve the people of her community.

"I love the idea of giving comfort to familiar faces," Jones said. "Medicine is a calling. Having had medical scares of my own, it really made me consider going into medicine because you are able to comfort someone when they are in their most vulnerable state. It would be a challenging but greatly rewarding career."



EKU NAMED TO FORBES LIST OF AMERICA'S BEST EMPLOYERS

Eastern Kentucky University was named as one of the best employers in Kentucky in the Forbes fifth annual list of America's Best Employers by State. The university was among 49 employers across the Commonwealth recognized for worker satisfaction. EKU employs nearly 2,500 full- and part-time faculty and staff, making it one of the largest employers in the local community.

"We are committed to making EKU a great place to work and an Employer of Choice for the region. Our priority is serving the amazing people who serve this institution," said EKU President David McFaddin.

According to Forbes, 70,000 workers were anonymously surveyed at companies (minimum of 500 employees) across all 50 states. Participants were asked to evaluate their employer based on working conditions, diversity, compensation packages, the potential for development, company image and more.

EKU offers employees a range of insurance benefits and a generous tuition waiver. Additional perks include access to state-of-the-art campus facilities, the BlueMine Health Clinic, an employee wellness program and one of the most competitive leave schedules among public institutions in the Commonwealth.

In 2022, McFaddin signed a policy enacting parental leave for all eligible employees including maternity, paternity and adoption leave. EKU became one of the first higher education institutions in Kentucky to adopt a telework policy, offering hybrid and summer and winter flexible schedules.

"We're investing in our employees; we're supporting our employees; and we deeply value each and every member of our faculty and staff," said McFaddin.

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF TEACHING ON THE CAMPUS BEAUTIFUL

2024 is the sesquicentennial anniversary of Eastern Kentucky University—marking an impressive 150 years since the inception of higher education on the Richmond, Kentucky, campus. Since 1874, the Campus Beautiful has served the Commonwealth, preparing students to make a difference in their communities.

The first instance of higher education on the Richmond campus came on Sept. 22, 1874, when Central University was founded. Central University merged with Centre College in 1901, leaving behind the eight buildings that made up the campus.

In 1906, the Kentucky General Assembly established the Eastern Kentucky State Normal School—eventually becoming Eastern Kentucky University—and the old Central University campus was selected as the new home of the normal school, which would primarily train K-12 educators.

In 1922, the normal school became a four-year institution and was renamed Eastern Kentucky State Normal School and Teachers College, and in 1930, the Kentucky General Assembly removed "normal school" from the name. Eventually, the General Assembly also removed "Teachers" from the school's name and gave the college the ability to award nonprofessional degrees in 1948.

In 1966, Gov. Edward T. Breathitt signed a bill into law changing the name of Eastern Kentucky State College to Eastern Kentucky University and sanctioning the awarding of graduate degrees in fields other than education.

As of Fall 2023, EKU has an enrollment of approximately 15,000 students and offers 85 undergraduate, 34 master's, one specialist and four doctorate degrees in a variety of fields.

