

**TITLE:** Report from CPE President, Aaron Thompson

**DESCRIPTION:** President Thompson will highlight specific initiatives during his report to the Council. This written report serves as his official report for April 16, 2021.

**PRESENTER:** Aaron Thompson, CPE President

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**New Board Members** – I'd like to take a moment to recognize the newest members of the Council on Postsecondary Education.

- **Madison Silvert**, Owensboro (term: 2021-2025, replacing Donna Moore) - Mr. Silvert is President of The Malcolm Bryant Corporation, a community-oriented and full-service real estate development firm. Prior to this, he served four years as President and seven years as Executive Vice President of the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation. Silvert earned a bachelor's degree in Economics from Centre College and a juris doctorate from the UL Brandeis School of Law.
- **Doris Thomas**, Smiths Grove (term: 2021-2026, replacing Ben Brandstetter) - Ms. Thomas recently retired from her position as Vice President of Development and Community Outreach for Med Center Health, a six hospital healthcare system with approximately 40 other health-related entities. She received a bachelor's degree in speech communication and a master's degree in corporate communication, both from Western Kentucky University.
- **Karyn Hoover**, Jamestown (term: 2021-2026, replacing Kim Halbauer) - Karyn Hoover of Jamestown recently retired after 27 years as an elementary education teacher in the Russell County school district. Among teaching grade levels preschool through second grade, she focused her efforts on closing achievement gaps, mentoring new teachers and building relationships with students and their families. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Eastern Kentucky University and completed a 5th year degree at Western Kentucky University. Mrs. Hoover is an active member of the Kentucky Education

Association and she serves as Encourager Team Leader for Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery program that supports adults in finding a purpose in life and overcoming ongoing challenges.

**Legislative Update** – I'm happy to report that in the recently concluded legislative session, \$17.3 million in new monies were allocated to performance funding, which represents a 2% increase in state operating funds for the system, the first substantial increase for colleges and universities since the Great Recession. The budget bill (HB 192) also included \$22.3 million for comprehensive universities and KCTCS to help offset pension costs, and a little over \$1 million in recurring funding for KSU to satisfy their federal land grant matching requirements. Additionally, legislators passed SB 135, which made common-sense updates to the performance-based distribution model recommended by CPE's work group, and HB 8, which gave institutions more financial certainty around pension costs. Our legislative liaison, Greg Rush, will provide additional comments regarding passed legislation during the meeting.

**Strategic Agenda Update** – CPE staff is continuing work on the next strategic agenda for Kentucky higher education. Last week, CPE held five virtual focus groups to elicit feedback from leading policy experts on several key issues:

- April 6: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
College Affordability
- April 8: Transitioning from Postsecondary Education to the Workplace
- April 9: Engaging Adult Learners  
P-12 and Postsecondary Partnerships

Stefanie Ashley of ECU's Facilitation Center led the sessions. Participants discussed both opportunities and barriers that could help and hinder the achievement of our long-term goals, as well as strategies to advance our work. The facilitator has met with each campus president individually, and will be meeting with several of CPE's standing committees in the upcoming weeks. We will be preparing summaries of the sessions and placing them in the SA OnBoard Resource Folder for those who would like to review them.

**Commonwealth Education Continuum** – The CEC met at the end of March and formed three workgroups, which, over the next nine months, will develop recommendations to help improve Kentucky's education and workforce pipeline. The Early Postsecondary Opportunities Workgroup met on April 12, the Educator Workforce and Diversity Workgroup met on April 14, and the Successful Transition to

Postsecondary Workgroup meets later today (April 16) at 2:00 p.m. CPE is leading this work, along with KDE and the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet.

**Kentucky Adult Promise Funding** – CPE was awarded \$50,000 by the State Higher Education Executive Officers to extend its marketing campaign for the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship. The ads, featuring B. Stille from the Kentucky-based group Nappy Roots, will air on digital radio and social media sites through the end of the fiscal year thanks to this grant. As of February, the campaign has generated over 4,000 leads, 656 of which (16%) have applied for admission at a participating campus, and 167 of which (4%) have enrolled. Additionally, 1,056 prospective students initiated web chats and 500 called the hotline for information and advice.

**Summer Bridge Program Funding** – CPE is offering campuses grants of up to \$100,000 for summer “bridge” programs that prepare students for college and help them return for a second year. CPE plans to distribute \$1.5 million in grants before the end of June. The money is part of the second round of funding from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund, known as GEER II, which aims to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Funds for GEER II were available through the federal CARES Act.

**New Cohort of ALDI Professionals** – CPE selected 19 promising minority higher education professionals to participate in the Academic Leadership Development Institute. This year’s cohort includes 7 professionals from Kentucky four-year institutions and 12 from KCTCS campuses. They were nominated for the year-long program based on their leadership ability, interest in career advancement and dedication to higher education.

**Speaking Events** – I continue to meet with national and statewide organizations to talk about higher education issues and trends. Below is a list of my major speaking events since the last Council meeting:

- February 23 – Guest Speaker at the monthly meeting of SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region) in Manchester, Kentucky.
- February 24 - Speaker at an event sponsored by the Kentucky Academy of Science on building equity in science education.
- February 25 – Discussant for a webinar series sponsored by SHEEO, “Public Investment in Higher Education: Research, Strategies, and Policy Implications.”
- February 26 – Speaker at the annual Kentucky Higher Education Student Rally (held virtually).

- February 26 – Keynote speaker for University of Louisville’s "Pathways to Leadership Symposium," a series of professional development webinars for faculty of color.
- March 8 – Delivered cultural competency train-the-trainer session for the Kentucky State Police.
- March 11 – Panelist for “What 2021 Holds for Education Policy,” a session for the SXSW EDU virtual conference.
- March 11 – Panelist for a presentation to the Henderson County Chamber of Commerce on the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce’s report of its racial inequality task force.
- March 15 – Guest on “The 120 Rundown,” a Facebook Live series sponsored by the education and public employees advocacy group KY 120 United.
- March 17 – Panelist for Hazard Community and Technical College’s event, “Racism is a Learned Behavior: Why Can’t We Unlearn It?”
- March 19 - Keynote speaker for KCTCS’s virtual spring conference for faculty and staff, “Surviving in a Virtual World.”
- March 19 – Panelist for NKU’s Campus Conversation
- March 31- April 2 – Keynote speaker for “The Path Forward,” a virtual conference hosted by CPE and GEAR UP KY, which attracted over 400 higher education professionals.
- April 1 – Speaker at the Paducah Chamber of Commerce’s annual breakfast
- April 12 – Speaker at College 101, sponsored by the Bracktown Baptist Church
- April 14 – Keynote speaker for the annual conference of the Kentucky Association of Blacks in Higher Education
- April 17 – Panelist for a virtual symposium hosted by The Kentucky Collaborative for Anti-Racist Teaching