



Message from the Dean



In the strategic plan conducted by the college in 2015, one of the most important recommendations was the improvement of physical space and infrastructure for the college. Securing better infrastructure has been a driving goal for my deanship. With state and federal funding limitations, we have to be creative and seize opportunities.

One opportunity came with the funding by the General Assembly to the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, which in turn approved a key project for all of Kentucky, the Grain and Forage Center of Excellence. Renovation and construction are underway at the college's Research and Education Center in Princeton for the addition of the Grain and Forage Center of Excellence.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new facility was March 15 and we were honored to have many of our friends from around the state join us to celebrate this moment. We were joined by two key legislators who helped fund the center, Sen. Paul Hornback and former Rep. Tom McKee. We were also happy to have one who inspired our efforts, Don Halcomb. Together with Kentucky Farm Bureau, Kentucky Corn Growers, Kentucky Small Grain Growers, Kentucky Soybean Association, Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council and many other friends and donors, we

celebrated the groundbreaking. The weather was nearly perfect and the excitement and trust the farm community has for the college and for this new and expanded facility are both amazing and humbling.

This facility is the first large-scale, new construction project the college has undertaken since the Plant Science Building was built in 2002. The Plant Science Building and the new Grain and Forage Center of Excellence, while both wonderful facilities, are just bricks and mortar. It is the faculty and staff who call these buildings home that make them special. Our college has a research and extension team that is second to none in supporting crops and grazing animals.

We have made smaller improvements in other areas such as the Pirri teaching pavilion on the equine campus and the dairy comfort barn.

However, many of our facilities are in dire need of upgrades and replacement. The corner of Cooper Drive and Nicholasville Road is a busy intersection and a great place to show off our college. This area has long been our home, and we want to build it into a true showplace of learning and make it the face of the college.

We have detailed plans for renovating and expanding the Cooper House and surrounding area in what will be the first phase of a master plan to develop the ag campus. We are planning for new classrooms, a new butcher shop and a showcase for student-produced food. Progress will not happen overnight, but we will try every day to get closer to our goal.

As always, investments in new facilities come from people who see the real benefits for Kentucky's economy, quality of life or environmental sustainability. The Grain and Forage Center is being built because many have confidence in the programs there. This investment in the center will allow us to continue to serve and to provide impactful research, extension and instruction. We trust that we will find ways ways to further improve our classrooms, labs and other facilities. Our students, staff, faculty and the citizens of the commonwealth deserve no less.

News

Strategic Plan Update

The 2017 progress report highlights significant achievements across each of the six goal areas of the college's strategic plan and details plans for continued improvements. The [strategic plan website](#) is now updated and includes highlights of these accomplishments and access to the full 2017 report.

UK@Work 2017 survey

In 2015, the university conducted a UK@Work Survey designed to measure job satisfaction and employee engagement. The same survey was conducted in September 2017 and 54 percent of CAFE faculty and staff responded compared to 35 percent in

2015. In general, average scores across most employee engagement categories were higher for our college than UK overall and were higher for staff than for faculty. Units with at least 10 survey responses received unit-specific results.

Following the 2015 survey, the college administrative team, along with department chairs and unit directors, chose some survey responses to develop action plans for improvement. The college focus areas included improving facilities and the availability of equipment and resources, further development of our college culture and improved staffing for greater departmental support. The college achieved a 70 percent or greater favorable response rate on each focus item, and higher scores on the 2017 survey than in 2015 across most of these areas. The college results were positive in many ways and existing policies and initiatives that drove these results will continue.

We will use the latest survey results to plan and develop new initiatives and work strategically to continue improvements and increase our scores again on the 2019 UK@Work survey. Please visit the [CAFE UK@Work website](#) to access the full report of college-level results.

Extension update

Needs Assessment: The Needs Assessment Committee completed their work on March 27 with recommendations on the Needs Assessment process that are being reviewed by administration. After review, the process will be shared with county staff so they may begin planning and implementation. The goal is to begin the process July 1. We will share more details soon.

New fiscal website: [Extension Financial Operations](#) has released a new website that contains important fiscal information for county offices and Extension personnel. The website is designed to be a one-stop-shop for all fiscal compliance needs. Changes are still being made, and we welcome feedback. The site can be accessed through the CAFE Business Center [website](#).

Agent role responsibilities: County agents share different roles in each office to effectively manage staff, funds and other operations. While these roles have been loosely defined in the past, now Extension has standardized the roles, and agents' MJRs are being revised to incorporate the time and effort each takes. The county fiscal coordinator, bookkeeper, support staff coordinator and council coordinator role descriptions are available on the new [Extension Financial Operations website](#).

County Managers: Some counties will be posting county manager positions soon. These counties will pilot this position. The plan is to have positions posted in April with hiring by July 1. In-depth fiscal and management trainings, which will be required for all county managers, are being developed now.

New partnerships: Extension is welcoming new partnerships across campus and the state. [Read more about one partnership that will develop and deliver safety and health education, promotional programs and materials.](#)

In the News

These recent articles received widespread media interest.

- **[UK researchers to study pollinator food availability](#)** featuring Clare Rittschof, Entomology and Erin Haramoto, Plant and Soil Sciences.
- **[UK Hopes to Reap Money from Forest without Mining, Logging](#)** featuring Dean Nancy Cox and Jeff Stringer, Forestry and Natural Resources.
- **[Hanging effigy deters vultures from killing livestock](#)** featuring Matt Springer and Jonathan Matthews, Forestry and Natural Resources, and Brian Jeffiers, Johnson County extension agent for agriculture and natural resources.
- **[UK College of Ag to grow malaria-fighting plant as part of cooperative agreement with ArtemiFlow](#)** featuring Orlando Chambers and Ling Yuan, Kentucky Tobacco Research and Development Center.
- **[New guidelines on preventing and treating 'equine strep throat'](#)** featuring John Timoney, Veterinary Sciences.



Congratulations

David Kessler has moved into a new role within the college as the director of philanthropy for extension. In this role, David will work to expand philanthropic gifts dedicated to the Cooperative Extension Service. David brings more than 20 years of managerial, sales and marketing experience to the position. For the past six years, he has served as the extension agent for agriculture and natural resources in Marion County. He began his new position on March 26.

Ken Jones, director of Extension Program and Staff Development and Community and Leadership Development faculty member, has been selected to participate in the 2018 Bluegrass Higher Education Consortium – Academic Leadership Academy. The purpose of the ALA is to encourage young faculty to consider leadership career paths and to provide guidance in developing the skills for effective institutional leadership that ensure a sound and successful future for the institution.

Amanda Sears, Madison County Cooperative Extension agent for horticulture, has been selected for the SARE Fellowship Program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program and the National Association of County Agricultural Agents have collaborated to support the Sustainable Agriculture Fellows program, providing a two-year educational experience in sustainable agriculture for four stellar Extension employees.

Karen Rignall was chosen for one of only seven Whiting Foundation Public Engagement Fellowships nationwide. An assistant professor in the Department of Community and Leadership Development with a joint appointment in the Department of Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences, she will draw on her academic background as a cultural anthropologist and her prior work as a community development coordinator to share the stories of Eastern Kentucky residents with policymakers and other officials involved in land-use planning for the area.

Robert Paratley, who teaches in the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences degree program, received the UK Alumni Association 2018 Great Teacher Award. Paratley, who is curator of the UK Herbarium in the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, has co-lead an education abroad program in Costa Rica for NRES students since 2013. There, they focus on topical ecology, land use and related environmental issues.

Spotlight



Uneeda Bryant, assistant professor in the University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, shares why she's passionate about combining her love for veterinary science and teaching young children about careers in STEM.

Calendar of Events

April 6

[First Friday with Bill Best](#)

April 6

[Keeneland Spring Meet Begins](#)

April 12

[Color Me Spring Fashion Show - Goes Global](#)

April 14

[2018 Boot, Scoot & Boogie 5K](#)

April 19

[UK Field Day](#)

April 22

[Earth Day](#)

April 23-27

[Dead Week](#)

Helpful Links

[Giving](#)

[College Weekly for Faculty & Staff](#)

[College Weekly for Students](#)

[The Ag Magazine](#)

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April 27
Arbor Day

April 28
2nd Annual Call to the Post Derby Bash

April 26-29
Land Rover Kentucky 3-Day Event

April 30
Finals Week

