

JANUARY

COLLEGE MONTHLY



As we begin the new year, we want to highlight the broad scope of research we conduct within the college and the many collaborations we have with outside partners. In the note below Bob Houtz, associate dean for research, shares some of our recent multidisciplinary efforts and his thoughts on our research efforts.

Dean Nancy Cox



Research plays a critical role in every aspect of a land-grant institution. Every year our scientists work hard to not only design and conduct research but to find funding for their work and then to release their findings for the greater good of the Commonwealth.

CAFE researchers are successful in securing millions of dollars annually in funding for their critical work. Four of the most recent awards are through the UK Igniting Research Collaboration pilot projects. The goal behind these awards is to foster increased interdisciplinary collaborations, leveraging the depth of the university's expertise to tackle important problems in Kentucky.

This year's IRC projects in the college address issues of rural community health, tourism, diversity and inclusion in higher education leadership and a pipeline for discovery of novel solvents. The projects are:

- Growing Health: Fostering Rural Community Health with Hospital-based Fresh Food Hubs – Krista Jacobsen/CAFE Department of Horticulture; Jing Li/College of Medicine; Lilian Brislen and Mark A. Williams/CAFE Department of Horticulture; Mark V. Williams/College of Medicine
- Taking Your Next Vacation from Home: Motivations and Impacts of Using Live-streaming Tourism – Pei Zhang/CAFE Department of Retailing and Tourism Management; Mengtian Jiang/College of Communications and Information
- Stimulating Higher Education Leadership Progression – an Institutional Framework for Black, Indigenous and People of Color – Jaleesa Wells/College of Fine Arts; Vanessa

Jackson/CAFE Department of Retailing and Tourism Management; Cheryl Matias; College of Arts & Sciences; DeMaris Hill/College of Education

- Simulation: Deep Learning Experiment Pipeline for Discovery of Novel Deep Eutectic Solvents – Qing Shao/College of Engineering; Jian Shi/CAFE Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering; Jin Chen/College of Medicine

Collaborations are not new to our college. In fact, they date back to our formation. The Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station collaborates with farmers, commodity organizations, industry partners, communities, and fellow scientists within the college and across the world.

The Agricultural Experiment Station has been providing research results to farmers and state residents for more than 130 years, impacting lives and improving our economy. With our dedicated scientists and research assistants, we will continue to design and execute the experiments that provide answers for future generations and bring new knowledge to light. Our research is demonstrating how we can take what is "Wildly Possible" and make it a reality!

Bob Houtz

Associate Dean for Research

CAFE Outstanding Staff awards named for Lisa Collins



The Outstanding Staff Awards, created in 1997 by Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society, the CAFE Alumni Association and the Dean's Office, have been renamed in honor of Lisa Collins, former assistant dean for academic administration. Collins retired from UK in 2018 but continues to serve the college in a post-retirement capacity. The honor was announced in December at the virtual awards presentation.

Awards and honors



Wayne Sanderson, Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, is a recipient of one of six **2021 UK Alumni Association Great Teacher Awards**. The Great Teacher Award, started in 1961, is the longest-running UK award recognizing teaching. Educators are student-nominated for this honor.

Julie Plasencia, Department of Dietetics and



Human Nutrition, received the Latinos and Hispanics in Dietetics and Nutrition Distinguished Trinko Service Award. This award is LAHIDAN's highest recognition, honoring members who have made outstanding contributions to LAHIDAN, the dietetics profession and the health of the population.

2020 CAFE Dr. Lisa P. Collins Outstanding Staff Awards



Office and Clerical

Stephanie Gamblin, administrative support associate, UKREC

Kristen Guinn, senior administrative services assistant, Agricultural Economics



Office and Clerical- County Extension Offices

Pamela Renner, 4-H program assistant, Henry County



Executive/Administrative

Christy Cassaday, extension specialist, Horticulture

Meg Steinman, serology section head, UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory



Service/Maintenance/Skilled Crafts and Farm Management

Jason Conn, auto mechanic III, Fleet Services



Technical and Paraprofessional

Karen Pulliam, IS tech support specialist II, Agricultural Economics

Jeanne Hartman, senior laboratory technician, Plant and Soil Sciences

Kwongson Son, research analyst, Animal and Food Sciences

Service Awards

This year, the college is recognizing 289 staff who have reached a service milestone. Recipients were given the opportunity to select from a variety of awards, including options for pins, charms and products from the RCARS Wood Utilization Center. Over the next few weeks, those awards are being distributed along with individual certificates and letters from Dean Cox recognizing their hard work and dedication to the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

Area Extension Directors Announced

The new year brings the implementation of Extension's new administrative structure with the hiring of 12 area extension directors. The structure is designed to increase mentoring for Extension field staff, support broad-based programming, enhance accountability and strengthen engagement with local leadership. The 12 area extension directors will provide county-focused supervision and oversight, each serving two of Extension's 24 new areas. The list of directors and more information about the administrative structure can be found [here](#).

In the news



Despite COVID-19, Ky. agricultural receipts hold steady to 2019 levels

Agricultural economists from UK CAFE are projecting 2020 farm cash receipts to be \$5.5 billion, equaling 2019 receipts. The economists estimate that net farm income will likely exceed the \$2.2 billion Kentucky producers earned in 2019. Read more [here](#).

Family health conditions inspire UK grad to return, launch career in dietetics

Pam Thaxton attended UK over a decade ago but left early, later resuming her studies and earning two bachelor's degrees in biology and chemistry at a nearby university. But it was an encounter with a dietitian years later that changed her career path and ignited her interest. Read more [here](#).

Plant reproduction finding could lead to more reliable crop production

Understanding the mechanisms behind successful plant reproduction can lead to more reliable crop production and higher yields. In a recent study, an international group of scientists led by CAFE researchers identified signaling and motor proteins that help reproduction occur in flowering plants. Read more [here](#).



Farmer-researcher partnerships are backbone of agricultural advances

Agriculture is advancing in fields across Kentucky thanks to farmers willing to take the time and share their land for research. CAFE scientists engage with an extensive network of producers in all disciplines. The partnerships do not form overnight but over the course of numerous meetings, developing personal relationships and building mutual trust and respect. Read more [here](#).

Spotlight

Lola Adedokun

*Senior Extension Specialist for Program Evaluation
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension (Nutrition Education Program)*

We asked Lola to share a little about her passions, her career path and what led her to us.

Tell us about your background and what led you to your current role at UK?

I am originally from Nigeria. My family moved to Lexington in December 2014 because my husband accepted a faculty position in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. I joined CAFE in November 2015 after a brief stint at UK Center for Health Services Research. I am currently a program evaluation specialist for the Nutrition Education Program. My work involves conducting qualitative and quantitative research studies to examine the extent to which education and social interventions achieve their expected outcomes. I also employ statistical tools to understand the processes and conditions under which interventions are successful. Prior to coming to



Lexington, my family lived in West Lafayette, Ind., for about ten years—I went to graduate school at Purdue University and later worked there as an evaluation specialist for a STEM education research center.

What is your favorite thing about working in CAFE?

The people I work with. My NEP colleagues are not only fun to work with, but they also care deeply about translating and disseminating nutrition and obesity prevention research and best practices to promote positive nutrition-related behavior changes among Kentuckians.

What is one thing about yourself that might surprise people?

I really love to sing, but I don't play any musical instrument. I never learned to play any musical instrument.

Calendar of Events

January 5, 8

Winter Wheat Meeting

January 12

Winter Event - Virtual

January 18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 21

CSA Voucher sign-ups begin

January 25

First Day of Classes

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