

JULY

# COLLEGE MONTHLY



With President Capilouto's recent announcement of the intention to return to in-person classes on August 17 for the fall semester, herein is a brief update on the college's planning process. To the extent possible as dictated by the health of the campus, space constraints from social distancing and student learning objectives, courses are expected to be delivered predominantly face-to-face. Safety and compliance with health guidelines drive our decisions. Planning for the fall semester is detailed and logistically complex, and depends on the best efforts of a lot of people, centered on our faculty's dedication to this "reinvented normal." As always, our planning is done in dedication to the role of science as a hallmark of this college.

The college is working on our reopening plan with central administration in real time to finalize the fall schedule. We have learned that

students and faculty value face to face interaction and we want to provide that as much as possible for everyone. However, there are hurdles we face in part because of limited classroom space.

Associate deans Carmen Agouridis and Orlando Chambers are finalizing classroom space and our capacity to use classrooms and other CAFE spaces for instruction in accordance with social distancing guidelines. Technology needs for classrooms are also being factored into the planning process. Carmen, Orlando and their team members, Jamie Dunn and Avery Watkins, are doing heroic work to assure the best classroom environments.

As we work through our plans, we are looking at many scenarios from classes being in person, online or in some hybrid delivery method. We have polled faculty about their preferences to teach remotely versus in person and how to provide the best educational experience for our students. We are reviewing travel protocols as we determine transportation needs to our farms and forest for instructional purposes.

Under UK's reopening plan, wearing masks will be required unless alone in a room, while eating, drinking or exercising or when it interferes with required classroom activities. Cleaning supplies, PPEs and signage needs are all being reviewed. Hand sanitizer and cleaning supply starter kits are also being prepared for office areas, not individual offices. Cleaning supplies will be available in classrooms as well.

Associate Dean Bob Houtz is working with chairs and researchers as we continue to reopen labs to important work solving today's and tomorrow's challenges. Associate Dean Laura Stephenson and her Extension administrative team continue to provide important services to the state while also working to ensure county offices are abiding by health protocols.

The university has announced that employees will begin to return to campus in a phased approach in mid-to-late July. We anticipate that many CAFE staff members will continue to work remotely, or in some hybrid fashion, just as they have so successfully done these past few months.

We will also be issuing procedures for reimbursing travel. That is particularly important for our extension personnel, who have done their own heroic work serving our clientele through health outreach, emergency management and support of the agriculture and food economy.

Thanks to those of you who have been helping draft our reopening plans. As we develop our plans, information to assist students, faculty and staff will be available at the college's reopening and coronavirus website along with a link to the university's planning process. We will continue to provide updates [here](#) as we move forward.

Likewise, the college Emergency Operations Group coordinated by Tim West, who is campus liaison, and led by Andrea Higdon, Emergency Management System Director, continues to identify and resolve operational issues and communicate information as it becomes available. Thanks to the following additional folks for placing coronavirus planning as an essential priority: Dustin Adams, Carmen Agouridis, Sydney Beidleman, Susan Campbell, Orlando Chambers, Lisa Collins, Chris Crumrine, Roberta Dwyer, Kim Henken, Le Anne Herzog, Bob Houtz, Brian Lee, Laura Skillman, and Laura Stephenson.

Land-grant universities were created not only to adapt to change but to lead change. Our college community has certainly distinguished itself once again for strength, resiliency, and kindness.

## Dean Nancy Cox

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### Awards and Honors

#### CAFE Office of Diversity wins award

The CAFE [Office of Diversity](#) recently received the University of Kentucky Office for Institutional Diversity's 2020 Inclusive Excellence Recognition Award for a college, department or unit. Congratulations to Assistant Dean Mia Farrell and her team. The Inclusive Excellence Recognition winners exemplify the characteristics of building awareness and understanding in the name of diversity and inclusion; creating leadership opportunities; sponsoring or actively promoting programs, initiatives or projects in the area of diversity and inclusion; and collaborating with others in sponsorship, development and implementation of projects or programs in the area of diversity and inclusion.

The Office of Diversity has created and been part of efforts to ensure our college community

is equipped to curate a culture of intolerance for racism while building up our diversity, inclusivity, and justice efforts.

These include recent collaborative conversations with 4-H members and trainings held with the Cooperative Extension Service by Mia Farrell, CAFE assistant dean for diversity and CAFE alumnus Quentin Tyler, associate dean and director for diversity, equity and inclusion at Michigan State University College of Agriculture & Natural Resources. These trainings focused on racial equity and building allies. Additionally, UK MANRRS held a “Mind your MANRRS” open dialogue with current students and alumni members focused on racial tension in the country.

The Office of Diversity is working with departments to implement measures to create a safe space as well as develop professional development opportunities to continue the conversation and create action-oriented faculty, staff, and students.



### **DeBolt named a UK Research Professor**

Seth DeBolt, professor, Department of Horticulture, has been named a recipient of the 2020-21 University Research Professorships.

The University Research Professors Program recognizes excellence across the full spectrum of research, scholarship and creative endeavors within each college that nominates a faculty member.

College leadership developed criteria for excellence in research and scholarly activity within their area of expertise and then nominated faculty who excelled at these criteria. The UK Board of Trustees approved the University Research Professorships for the 2020-21 academic year last month.



### Three UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment students receive USDA predoctoral fellowships

Three CAFE graduate students have received predoctoral fellowships from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Through the fellowship, Allyssa Kilanowski, Tim Shull and Staci McGill receive funds from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to pursue a research project of their choice.

The predoctoral fellowship program helps to develop new scientists and professionals to enter research, education and/or extension fields in the food and agricultural sciences within the private sector, government or academia.

### Equine undergraduate program awarded employability certification

The [equine science and management](#) undergraduate degree program was recently awarded an Essential Employability Qualities certification by QA Commons, a national nonprofit organization focused on preparing college students for the challenges they will face in the workforce. UK's equine program is one of only 13 programs certified nationally and the only equine-focused program.

Programs are EEQ certified through a comprehensive and integrated framework of criteria that includes graduate preparation; career services integration; employer engagement; student and alumni engagement; and public display of career information. The eight identified Essential Employability Qualities are communication, thinking and problem-solving, inquiry, collaboration, adaptability, principles and ethics, responsibility and professionalism and learning. Learn more [here](#).



### UK dairy scientist earns national recognition

Donna Amaral-Phillips, extension professor in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences. Recently received the American Dairy Science Association 2020 DeLaval Dairy Extension Award.

The DeLaval Dairy Extension Award was created to recognize outstanding achievements in dairy extension. The award recognizes the winner's valuable and noteworthy contributions to the dairy industry through extension in the broad areas of production, manufacturing, marketing and youth work. The recipient must be active in dairy extension when nominated, have at least 10 years of work with an educational or public institution and have been a member of ADSA for at least five successive years.

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## College Event Space/Room Reservations

With UK's announcement that classes will resume on campus August 17, questions are arising about securing space for meetings/events. It is expected that this will shift many events that support the student experience, as well as regular and recurring in-person meetings. Please be patient and understand that no adjustments to reservations or new reservations will be accepted until implementation plans are finalized. The college's events [page](#) will keep you updated, and a member of the events team will contact those with existing reservations once the plan is in place.

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“Branching Out,” a new podcast series from the college premiered July 1 and will feature ways the college is making a positive impact on the world. Produced and hosted by Brian Volland, agricultural communications specialist, the podcast features guests with a unique connection to the college including successful alumni, extension agents and stakeholders.

The first podcast featured Lane Warmbrod, a 2016 UK agricultural and medical biotechnology graduate, who works as an analyst and research associate at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security in Baltimore, Maryland. Warmbrod has been on the front lines consulting with the World Health Organization concerning COVID-19.

New podcasts will be released on the first and third Wednesday of the month. “Branching Out” can be found at iTunes or Apple podcasts or directly from the college’s homepage at <http://www.ca.uky.edu/podcasts>.

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## Staff appreciation day and outstanding staff award nominations

While the traditional staff appreciation day and outstanding staff awards program held in conjunction with Roundup will not take place this fall, the college plans to honor staff in a combination of virtual and in-person experiences. Watch for more details in August, but take time now to nominate someone for an award. Nomination forms can be found [here](#). You can learn more about the awards and see past award winners [here](#).

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## UK Staff Senate members

Congratulations to CAFE members who were newly elected or re-elected to the UK Staff Senate: Diana Doggett, Bob Perry, Covetta Ramey, Tymory Stanton, and Elijah Wilson. These members’ terms began July 1 and they join current CAFE staff senators Jennifer Bridge, Lyndell Harned, Carl Harper, Rachel Noble, Andy Rideout and Laura Sidwell.

The university’s Staff Senate represents the interests of staff in order to strengthen relationships at UK and foster a climate that promotes and empowers all university employees and students to participate in the decision-making process.



[Check out the updated CAFE student \(academics\) website](#)

## In the news

### UK Helps Teens Develop Life Skills With 'Adulting 101'

More than 560 youth have registered for Adulting 101, a new online life skills course for teenagers offered by the college this summer. For eight weeks, participants will learn and apply a variety of workable advice from CAFE educators and Cooperative Extension specialists. The course covers topics such as cooking and nutrition, financial management, online safety, roommate etiquette and more. Learn more [here](#).



### CAFE leads national team studying pandemic's effect on local food systems

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Services Division is partnering with the University of Kentucky, Colorado State University and Penn State University on a \$1 million cooperative research agreement to conduct a national study on the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on local

food systems.

CAFE's Lilian Brislen and Tim Woods will partner with the USDA to lead the team of researchers. Also included in the study are 16 trade association partner organizations from around the country that represent various sectors of the food industry. Learn more [here](#).

### UK's Heart2Heart campaign expands to agriculture

The Heart2Heart campaign started earlier this year through a partnership between UK colleges of Nursing and Agriculture, Food and Environment to allow the public to write letters of appreciation to health care workers who are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has now been expanded to show support to individuals who work in the agriculture sector as they are crucial in maintaining America's food supply, play an integral part in local economics and have faced challenges during the pandemic. Kentuckians can write letters of appreciation to producers and share how they have been impacted by farmers and the reasons why they love agriculture on social media. Learn more [here](#).



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## Spotlight

### Ling Yuan

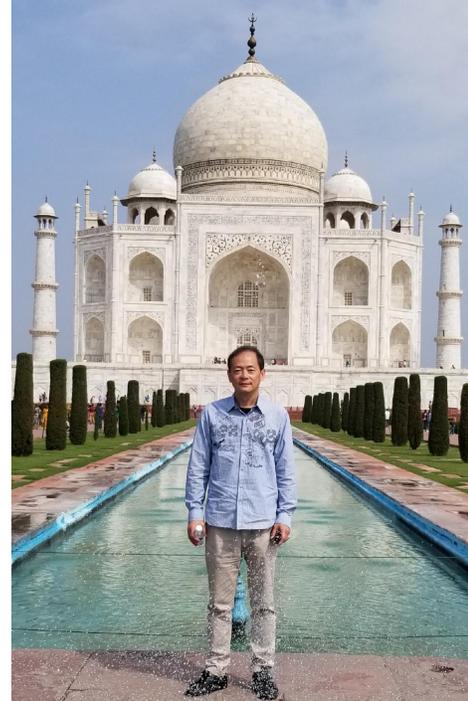
Professor, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences  
Executive Director, Kentucky Tobacco Research and Development Center

We asked Ling to share a little about his passions, his career path and what led him to us.

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

After receiving a bachelor's degree in China, I went to the University of Texas, Austin, for graduate school, followed by postdoctoral training at the University of California, San Francisco. I then worked 10 years in the biotechnology industry, as a scientist and manager

at Calgene (later part of Monsanto) and Maxygen, which was focused on directed evolution (the co-founder was awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry). Working at two pioneering biotechnology companies provided me with a training ground for scientific innovation and management. In 2003, I left the industry to join UK as a faculty member because I felt it was time for a change. At UK, I not only enjoy working with students, but I have also been able to build a research program on mechanistic understanding of plant gene transcription. I am passionate about these two things, but they were unavailable to me outside a university setting.



### **What is your favorite thing about working in CAFE?**

I have the best colleagues. They are easy to work with and fun to talk to, so I can sometimes get away from my own ignorance and mistakes. The professional support from my colleagues allows me to manage KTRDC while keeping my own active research program. At KTRDC, we have a group of approximately 50 people who enjoy working together. The four annual potlucks are a blast, and, I truly believe, the best in the college!

### **What is one thing about yourself that might surprise people?**

I have had a fulfilling career as a biologist; however, many people may not know that I was an accidental biologist. Growing up in China during the cultural revolution, I never took a regular biology class until I started college. My choice of a biology major was based on a suggestion from my father and my guess that I would have a better chance to get into college. In my case, serendipity rewards the unprepared. Moreover, I did not want to be a professor until after working 10 years in the industry. Today, I know becoming a professor is the best thing that has happened to me.

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## Calendar of Events

**July 7**

[CAFE Conversations](#)

**July 21, 28**

UK Corn, Soybean and Tobacco Field Day

**Thursdays**

UK CSA Farm Stand; pre-order required

**All month**

Heart2Heart #KentuckyLovesAg Campaign

## Helpful Links

[Giving](#)

[College Weekly for Faculty & Staff](#)

[College Weekly for Students](#)

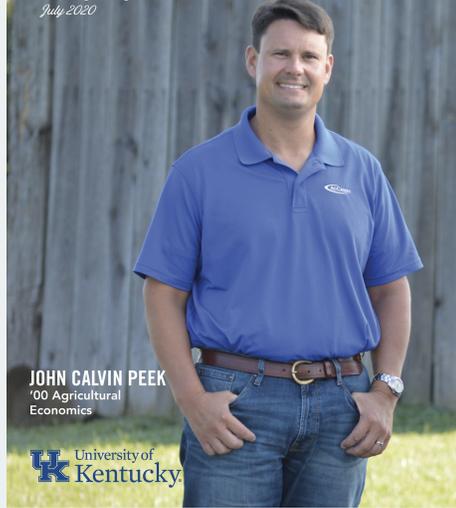
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# THE AMBASSADOR

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Alumni Association  
*July 2020*



**JOHN CALVIN PEEK**  
'00 Agricultural  
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