

JUNE/JULY

# COLLEGE MONTHLY



As both a land-grant and the state's flagship university, we have a compelling mandate to Kentucky's agricultural economy, which we term, the "agbioeconomy." Two different initiatives are tapping the potential for creating an ag tech infrastructure in Kentucky. They are both in beginning stages, but we see huge potential ahead.

In the first, UK alumna and agribusiness consultant Mary Shelman led The Lexington/Bluegrass Regional Food and AgTech Development group in assessing Kentucky's potential as an ag tech innovation hub. The team included key partners such as Lexington Mayor Linda

Gorton, Alltech CEO Mark Lyons and Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles. This partnership was initiated two years ago with a report issued in 2020. Mary Shelman was particularly suited for her leadership role, as a UK alum and a native of Elizabethtown.

The group's strategy is to align our state's strengths and assets with current and emerging trends in ag tech.

Five areas were identified where the region and state could have a significant impact:

- Ag of the Middle – Economically viable model for mid-scale farming and processing using scale-appropriate, sustainable technologies and business models.
- Resilient Regional Food Systems – Tech-enabled, scalable, sustainable and distributed production for local/regional markets.
- Food is Health – Scientifically backed, scalable, differentiated products and offerings that improve key health outcomes for consumers and overall health of the state.
- Futureproof Meat and Dairy – Differentiated production based on consumer insight, science and data-enabled systems to secure animal protein's future.
- Kentucky Traditions – Technologies that can be specifically applied to areas of traditional strength to create new products, improve economics and secure continued leadership.

In the second initiative, Associate Dean Bob Houtz has recently been tapped to lead efforts to

support the state's expanding controlled environment industry. This rapidly growing industry could transform horticulture in Kentucky, and Dr. Houtz has been asked to develop a strategic research plan for this area. Horticulture Chair Mark Williams is actively involved in support of this industry as well. With robust partners, such as Fresh Harvest and AppHarvest, there are many opportunities to secure research infrastructure and other resources to serve this emerging industry.

With the burgeoning controlled environment industry offering economic potential for underserved areas of Kentucky, our college has committed to leading multidisciplinary efforts related to research, commercialization, production and workforce preparedness.

Collaborations with government agencies and related industries are also a critical part of the plan, which will address not only the needs of large-scale producers, but also the smaller growers working to improve their farming enterprise. And this summer, there will be several 4-H programs in partnership with AppHarvest to learn about greenhouse crop production.

Initiatives such as these are exciting and fun for all involved. We may be helping to build a new signature industry for Kentucky. Regardless, we are serving an important new element of the agbioeconomy. It is part of our longstanding land-grant mission.

## Dean Nancy Cox

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### Awards/honors



**Surendranath Suman**, professor and meat scientist in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences, is among those awarded a 2021 University Research Professorship. The professorships were established by the UK Board of Trustees in 1976 to recognize outstanding research achievements. Each University Research Professor receives a one-year award of \$10,000 to be used to further their research, scholarship and creative endeavors.

**Larry Grabau**, professor in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, received the UK Global Impact Award for Distinguished Faculty Achievement in Education Abroad from the UK International Center. The award recognized Grabau for his dedication to expanding education abroad opportunities for students in CAFE. Over the years, he has developed and implemented transformative, faculty-led multidisciplinary experiences for students.

Additionally, during Grabau's time as associate dean for instruction, he successfully advocated for the creation of the "Dean's International Incentive Fund," which provides support for CAFE faculty to significantly increase the college's portfolio of faculty-led education

abroad opportunities.



**The Campus Kitchen** at the University of Kentucky in the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition received four awards at the 2021 Lead Blue: Student Organizations Celebration and Award Ceremony. The awards were: civic engagement, program of the year (over 50), student organization of the year and the Shane Carline and Annie Sit Inclusion award.

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## **A new look, purpose for former Ag North library**

With the departure of UK Libraries from Ag North, the Center for Student Success is renovating the N24 space. New furniture and decor will be installed this summer to create a more welcoming and functional space for students, staff and faculty. This will be a gathering space for students to socialize and learn together.

The Center for Student Success is also exploring ways for the area to become a venue for student club meetings, professional development events and more. Associate Dean for Instruction Carmen Agouridis is working with the UK offices of Student and Academic Life, Counseling Center and Campus Wellness about options within the former library to provide health and wellness resources.

## **Undergraduate research**

More than 100 undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment annually participate in research. In recognition of their work, seven of eight 2021 UK Sustainability Summer Research Fellowships are CAFE students, and 50 presentations at the Showcase of Undergraduate Research Scholars were from CAFE. Additionally, 19 undergraduate research grants were funded by the UK Office of Undergraduate Research and the CAFE Research Office. Students participating in meaningful research at the undergraduate level gain a perspective and competitive advantage that simply cannot be found elsewhere. Thanks to the many faculty who support our students in these projects.

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## CAFE travel series begins June 6

Transformative Travels: Exploring London chronicles the effect international travel had on three UK Department of Retailing and Tourism Management students who spent the spring 2019 semester studying abroad with Jason Swanson, UK associate professor. It will air beginning at 2:30 p.m. ET Sunday, June 6 on KET, with new episodes at the same time each of the following two Sundays. Learn more [here](#).

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## In the news

["We're here to help." UK teams with God's Pantry Food Bank to feed Breathitt County](#)

[COVID-19 pandemic revealed meat industry vulnerability; future looks better](#)

[Longstanding extension partnership provides county's most vulnerable with nutrition education](#)

[UK extension offices serving as community COVID-19 vaccination sites](#)

[Cattle markets more stable a year into COVID-19 pandemic](#)

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## Spotlight

### Kendriana Price

Assistant Director of Diversity  
CAFE Office of Diversity

We asked Kendriana 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?**



My passion is people, and it is this passion that has guided my career. After graduating from UK in 2013, I began my career as a 4-H agent in Christian County. It was in my role there and in Metro Nashville Public Schools that the gaps and inequities within communities and education were made very prevalent to me and ultimately propelled me to where I am now, the Office of Diversity.

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

My love and passion to serve anchors me in all that I do. Working in CAFE cultivates the space for my purpose to meet my passion and serve

both young adults and colleagues across the college and in the community. The support received within the college for the work of my team is the icing on the cake for being a member of the CAFE family.

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

Alongside my love of serving others, I have a love for adventure! Growing up in the military afforded me opportunities to experience different cultures and grow a love to try *almost* anything once. At the top of my current list of future adventures is skydiving and paddleboarding through a cave.

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## Calendar of Events

**June 1-30**

National Dairy Month

**June 5**

World Environment Day

**June 19**

Juneteenth

**June 20**

Father's Day

First Day of Summer

**June 28**

In-Person New Student Orientations begin

**July 4**

Independence Day

## Helpful Links

[Giving](#)

[College Weekly for Faculty & Staff](#)

[College Weekly for Students](#)

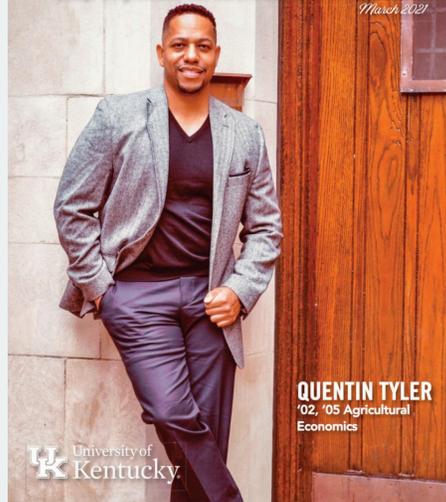
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# THE AMBASSADOR

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Alumni Association

March 2021



University of  
Kentucky

**QUENTIN TYLER**  
'02, '05 Agricultural  
Economics

[Read The Ambassador](#)

