

NOVEMBER

COLLEGE MONTHLY



Sometimes, ordinary life can be a challenge on its own. Combine that with the stress of classes or work, a worldwide pandemic, and tomorrow's general election, and some of us may be feeling the impact. Taking care of our mental health is always important and requires regular attention.

Both empathy and compassion for those around us are critical in these times. In our college family, we focus on building an inclusive environment for faculty, students, and staff. Nothing less is tolerated. We must watch out for one another.

Recently, a student shared about their mental health journey and left me with a powerful thought: it doesn't matter if you are a tenured professor or a freshman in your first year of classes; mental health is not to be taken for granted.

The student that reached out had tried to take their own life. They have support and have worked incredibly hard to move forward, and I appreciate their willingness to share their story. Mental health is as important as physical health. Talking about mental health should not be stigmatized, but a normal part of life. If you feel depressed, anxious, or just don't understand your emotions, reach out and get help. That is what this student ultimately did, and this is their encouragement:

"I am grateful now to be alive and living the somewhat stressful life of a (graduate student) ... Remember, you are loved, you are worthy, and you don't know how your life will turn out ... until you live it."

Stress is a normal part of life, but if stress results in feelings of hopelessness and difficulty carrying out typical daily responsibilities, it is time to reach out. There is support available on our campus and in our communities.

For those who work closely with students, you play a crucial and positive role in identifying and referring students who may be experiencing difficulties. The [UK Counseling Center](#) can

provide services to students, as well as help faculty and staff who have concerns about a student.

Additional student resources can be found [here](#). The [Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching](#) also has resources for faculty. Associate Dean for Instruction Carmen Agouridis is in discussions with Student and Academic Life, Counseling Center, and Campus Wellness about options to improve students' resources in CAFE.

Our families, neighbors, and friends may also be struggling with all the stressors of life. For employees, help is available through UK Human Resources at [Work+Life Connections](#).

To help producers and their families better deal with stressful events, researchers in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the College of Nursing have joined other scientists from across the South to develop resources.

The researchers will analyze currently available mental health resources in Kentucky and determine what programming needs exist in the state in terms of farmer/producer stress and mental health. They will craft an action plan for Kentucky and help draft one for the country's entire southern region, which includes 13 states and two U.S. territories. To find statewide resources, visit the [Kentucky Division of Behavioral Health](#).

Stress and mental health issues can take a heavy toll on individuals, families, and communities. As we move toward the end of an unprecedented semester and what will surely be a unique holiday season, let's remember to watch out for ourselves and each other.

Dean Nancy Cox

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Cultivating Inclusion Series

The 2020 Cultivating Inclusion Series serves to provide an informal, safe environment for faculty, staff, and students to engage in conversations related to diversity and inclusion while fostering an appreciation of inclusivity. These events are from noon to 1 p.m. via Zoom. [Register here.](#)

- **November 5 - Stamped from the Beginning Book Discussion:** An open discussion regarding topics of race, racism, its influence on higher education, and how we can champion change in the spaces we occupy. Registration contains information for receiving your book!
- **December 3 - Moving from Kindness to Antiracist:** Join the Office of Diversity and Dr. Melissa Stein, associate professor for gender and women's studies, as we navigate the conversation of antiracism and the implications it has on our college community.

Fostering Community and Belonging: November 16 - noon to 1 p.m. Registration is open to CAFE faculty and can be completed here: <http://bit.ly/communityuky>. Studies across the disciplines indicate a positive correlation between a shared sense of community and student success. In this workshop, we will consider what it means to be in community with others in an academic setting, and we will explore the benefits of fostering a sense of belonging through classroom community building and intentional pedagogical choices. Attendees will gain insights and develop practical tools for establishing a welcoming classroom environment for all students.

All Reasonable Efforts Webinar for Extension Professionals: November 24 – 9-10:30 a.m. This training is for Extension agents, specialists, and assistants. “All Reasonable Efforts” consist of a series of approaches that are required of Extension staff to solicit the participation of underrepresented and/or underserved groups. This approach aims to include steps that are used in addition to affirmative action procedures and are required when programs do not meet balanced participation requirements. The purpose of this training is to provide an overview of “All Reasonable Efforts” and how to properly document these efforts. Register through KERS at the following link: <https://kers.ca.uky.edu/core/reporting/training/51207>

Unconscious Bias Training for new Extension professionals: December 3 – 10 a.m. to noon - Unconscious bias refers to the automatic stereotypes or attitudes we hold about groups or people. These biases can be held for or against those most like us and most different from us. The training works to incorporate this understanding of unconscious bias to foster an environment where each one of us feels a sense of belonging and empowerment as we ready ourselves for the global community of tomorrow. Register in KERS at the following link: <https://kers.ca.uky.edu/core/reporting/training/51205>

Staff Appreciation Day

December 11, 2020

The 2020 College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Staff Appreciation Day will be Friday, Dec. 11. Join us virtually for the Outstanding Staff Awards, an address from Dean Nancy Cox, and live music. All virtual portions will be broadcast live on Zoom starting at 11 am. Zoom information will be sent prior to the event.

Oh, and we can't forget the food! On-campus staff, please register by November 20 at the following link: <https://acsg.ca.uky.edu/webapps/staffapr/StaffLogin.asp>. Be sure to select the meal of your choice and one of the three convenient pickup locations. **You must pre-register for a meal. No extras will be ordered.**

Off-campus units may place lunch orders through a local eatery of their choice. More details on this will be announced soon.

Timeline:

- 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. – Outstanding Staff Awards
- 12 p.m. – Address from Dean Cox
- 12:15-1 p.m. – Live Music by The Brown Brothers
- On-campus meal pickup locations open from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. only

Awards and honors

Brett Wolfe, agriculture extension specialist, Center for Crop Diversification, was the winner in the staff recognition category and the overall **Outstanding Staff Member of the Year** during the UK 2020 Outstanding Staff Awards program. **Jamie Dunn**, assistant dean for advising and student support, was also a finalist in this



category, and Chef **Bob Perry**, Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition, was a finalist in the faculty recognition category.



Jennifer Bridge, Meade County family and consumer sciences extension agent, received the **National Distinguished Service Award** from Epsilon Sigma Phi, an organization dedicated to extension professionals.

The [Southeast Kentucky Downtown Revitalization Project](#), a program within UK's [Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky](#), recently won the "Place" category award, and the [Food Connection](#) won the "Place + Innovation" category award from the University Economic Development Association. The awards of excellence from the association were presented for "transforming their campuses into engines of economic prosperity through leading edge initiatives."

In the news

UK part of regional group working to reduce farmer stress

Unprecedented times have unleashed an enormous amount of new and unique stressors on American farm families. To help producers and their families better deal with stressful events, researchers in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and College of Nursing have joined other scientists from across the South to develop resources to help producers combat stress. Read more [here](#).



Photo by Jim Hudgins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Researchers show that native milkweed cultivars planted by the public can support monarch butterflies and bees in urban gardens

For the first time, CAFE entomologists Adam Baker, doctoral student, and Daniel Potter, professor, have studied how effectively native milkweed cultivars in small gardens are at attracting and supporting monarchs. Their results suggest that this can be a valuable additional food source for these butterflies. Read more [here](#).

Follow-up mRNA biomarker study will build on research into preventing catastrophic racehorse injuries

Researchers are working to learn more about changes happening at the cellular level that might indicate an injury is present before it becomes career- or life-ending. A recently completed study submitted for review shows it is possible to identify several early markers for horses at risk of catastrophic injury, possibly allowing for intervention before those injuries happen. A follow-up study will build on this initial work. Read more [here](#).

Virtual education brings Cooperative Extension into Kentucky homes

Cooperative Extension Service agents have used creative techniques and the internet to meet their clients wherever they are during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Whether it is in-person or online, it is important to me that I reach my clientele," said LaToya Drake, Barren County family and consumer sciences extension agent. "It made sense for me to take my programming online as soon as the pandemic struck." Read more [here](#).



Photo by Emily Matthews, Barren County SNAP-Ed assistant

Your Voice Matters

UK will be closed Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020
for the Presidential Election.

Protect yourself and others by wearing your mask
and maintaining physical distance while in line.



Spotlight

Derek Matthew Miller

*Academic Living Learning Success Coordinator
Center for Student Success*

We asked Derek 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 spending some time working in veterinary clinics, I received my bachelor's degree in animal health technology and my master's degree in human development and leadership at Murray State University. I also did an internship with the LGBT Programming Office. After completing my graduate degree, I relocated to UMass Amherst in western Massachusetts, serving in multiple roles, including instructor for education courses, curriculum development, behavioral and conduct case management, and residential education leadership. From there, I went to Sonoma State University in the San Francisco area serving as a residential area coordinator and staff chair for the inaugural Queer Faculty and Staff Association of SSU. I received a certificate in human resource management in spring 2020 before deciding to return to my home state. In August, I joined CAFE to officially become a Wildcat (my father is very proud). I am hoping to expand my knowledge and focus on sustainable urban agriculture as a form of holistic wellness practice and rehabilitation. I am also interested in the effects of agriculture on mental and emotional health and wellness.



residential area coordinator and staff chair for the inaugural Queer Faculty and Staff Association of SSU. I received a certificate in human resource management in spring 2020 before deciding to return to my home state. In August, I joined CAFE to officially become a Wildcat (my father is very proud). I am hoping to expand my knowledge and focus on sustainable urban agriculture as a form of holistic wellness practice and rehabilitation. I am also interested in the effects of agriculture on mental and emotional health and wellness.

What is your favorite thing about working in CAFE?

My favorite things about working in CAFE are the incredible people I am surrounded by. I feel as though each time I interact with my colleagues, I'm getting a free education. The collective wealth of applicable knowledge and near perfect alignment with personal values makes CAFE an ever-increasing fascinating and beneficial place to be.

What is one thing about yourself that might surprise people?

I've traveled to six different countries and lived in Boston and San Francisco. I am especially appreciative of the exposure to variance in regional industries and cultures within the U.S. and enjoy discussing them.

Calendar of Events

November 3

Election Day

November 5

Cultivating Inclusion Series

November 7

Kentucky Maple School

November 10

World Science Day

November 11

Helpful Links

[Giving](#)

[College Weekly for Faculty & Staff](#)

[College Weekly for Students](#)

[The Ambassador](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Veteran's Day

November 16

Fostering Community and Belonging

November 24

Last day of classes

November 26

Thanksgiving

December 1-4

Finals



[Read The Ambassador](#)

