

**Council on Postsecondary Education  
Quality and Accountability Policy Group  
May 23, 2008**

**Regional Stewardship Program Regional Grants:  
Kentucky State University, Murray State University, and  
Western Kentucky University**

**ACTION:** The staff recommends that the Council approve regional grant proposals from Kentucky State University, Murray State University, and Western Kentucky University and that FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10 regional grant money be conditional upon successful implementation of regional stewardship infrastructure plans and adequate progress on regional grant proposals.

The 2006 General Assembly authorized \$4.8 million over the biennium for the Regional Stewardship Program for the state's six comprehensive universities. In July 2007, the Council approved guidelines for accessing and using program funds.

- Infrastructure funds support the development and maintenance of organizational structures, personnel, information systems, and community relationships necessary to sustain stewardship activities.
- Regional grant funds support comprehensive university efforts to build intellectual capacity in targeted priority areas.
- Stewardship initiative funds support specific public engagement activities at the universities that improve economic prosperity, quality of life, and civic participation in the region or state.

All universities have received \$400,000 over the biennium to implement the infrastructure plans (see Attachments A through F) that were approved by the Council in late 2006 and early 2007. Northern Kentucky University, because of its pioneering work with the Vision 2015 efforts in its region, already has received its \$300,000 regional grant and was awarded \$200,000 in stewardship initiative money for two projects: (1) technology assistance to schools, businesses, and government and (2) a series of summer youth programs focusing on technology, science, and world cultures.

According to Council guidelines, regional grant funds are to be used to recruit and retain full-time faculty or professional staff in areas of strategic benefit to the area of geographic responsibility or the state, as identified in an institution's strategic plan for regional stewardship and its regional grant proposal, and as endorsed by a region's stewardship advisory committee.

Appropriate uses for these funds include start-up costs, salaries, benefits, travel, and other professional expenses as permitted by university policy for new faculty or professional staff positions in targeted priority areas. It is anticipated that the addition of newly hired faculty or staff within a given Council-approved priority area will result in reduced departmental teaching loads and increased release time, so that participating faculty will have more time to engage in regional stewardship activities.

To qualify for \$300,000 in regional grant funds, universities must submit and the Council must approve: (1) a strategic plan produced in collaboration with and approved by an institution's regional advisory committee, which identifies regional needs, opportunities, and stewardship priorities (see Attachments G-H); and (2) a proposal that identifies targeted areas of impact at the university to support priorities identified in the plan, including a proposed budget for faculty and staff salaries and operating expenses in those areas (see Attachments I-K).

## **Kentucky State University**

Through its regional advisory committee, Kentucky State University identified priorities in the areas of innovative economy, livable communities, social inclusion, and collaborative governance. In order to address these priority areas, KSU proposes that regional grant funds be used to hire a full-time coordinator for a new Center for Engaged Learning, Workforce, and Community Development; two half-time positions for the new Institute in Mathematics, Science, and Technology; and four graduate assistants to work with the Office of Regional Stewardship and the Center for Engaged Learning, Workforce, and Community Development.

1. Center for Engaged Learning, Workforce, and Community Development. Regional grant funds will be used to hire a full-time coordinator. The work of the center will focus on economic development, education and engaged learning, livable communities, and collaborative governance. As part of this new center, KSU will:
  - Establish a Workforce Development Technical Assistance Institute to assist businesses in addressing the skill levels of their employees and to help businesses to apply for American Council on Education College Credit Recommendation Service, which deals with transferring organizational training into college-bearing credits.
  - Increase engaged learning and internship experiences for students.
  - Encourage the creation of networks of community leaders, educators, elected officials, business owners, and service providers to facilitate entrepreneurship education and create business incubators.
  - Provide seminars and public forums focused on the advantages of using a collaborative, regional approach to development.
  - Create an interdisciplinary institute to build on STEM area programs.

2. Education and Engaged Learning. In order to increase educational levels in the region, KSU plans to:
  - Develop a pilot partnership with regional school districts to help prepare students for college, including offering site-based AP classes upon request.
  - Develop an Institute on Teaching and Learning to identify teachers and students in need of academic support and to create teams to assist local schools with increasing student performance.
3. Livable Communities. To improve the livability of the region's communities, the university will:
  - Maximize its existing environmental education initiatives through the schools.
  - Develop a graduate program in environmental education.
4. Collaborative Governance. To address the needs of the governmental sector, KSU plans to:
  - Create more structured leadership development courses, workshops, and programs for students.
  - Provide professional development for staff of nonprofit organizations.

## **Murray State University**

While the regional advisory committee identified four major priorities (educational attainment, job creation, collaborative partnerships, and quality of life), the committee decided to focus the university's regional grant funds on educational attainment to make a major impact in that area. Regional grant funding will be used to hire a coordinator for the Center for Educational Leadership Training, for salaries and expenses for faculty and graduate assistants to conduct cultural diversity events, and to hire a Project Lead The Way coordinator and two community liaisons focused on workforce development.

1. Develop a Center for Educational Leadership Training. In order to raise public school academic performance, the university will focus on education leadership development. As part of this effort, Murray State University will:
  - Host a regional leadership academy in conjunction with the West Kentucky Educational Co-op.
  - Develop a master's degree in educational leadership.
  - Create a volunteer mentor program that matches retired superintendents and principals with existing personnel.
2. Provide opportunities for lifelong learning. In order to enhance learning opportunities in the region, the university will:
  - Develop a cultural diversity awareness series to showcase regional and national artists and explore ways to promote cultural diversity.

3. Encourage students to pursue STEM education. In order to address the need for teachers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and increase interest in the STEM field, MuSU will:
  - Hire an outreach coordinator to direct Project Lead The Way.
  - Develop a mentoring program that allows university students to work with seventh and eighth grade students after school and during the summer.
4. Improve workforce skills. The university will take the lead in creating partnerships between business and educational institutions. As part of this process:
  - Two community liaisons will focus on ways to utilize university faculty and staff expertise to address the needs of the region's employers, including business and industry, public schools, community colleges, and community agencies.

## **Western Kentucky University**

Through the regional planning process, Western Kentucky University and its regional advisory committee identified four priorities: nurturing communities, education, health care, and economic development. WKU proposes to use its regional grant money to support three major initiatives to address these priorities. The university will hire a nurse practitioner for WKU's Institute for Rural Health Development and Research Mobile Health and Wellness Unit. The university will hire two full-time counselors dedicated to meeting the needs of adult students. It will use remaining funds to create an engaged department grant fund to allow for faculty release time to focus on engagement work in the region.

1. WKU Institute for Rural Health Development and Research Mobile Health and Wellness Unit. In order to enhance the institute's services, the university will hire a nurse practitioner to:
  - Develop an adult immunization program (against influenza and pneumonia).
  - Screen and provide treatment options for individuals with diabetes, elevated cholesterol, and high blood pressure.
  - Develop lifestyle programs tied to diabetes management, heart disease prevention and maintenance, diet and exercise, and smoking cessation.
  - Assist adults to determine eligibility for various programs and services and provide assistance with completion of required forms.
2. Adult Learner Counselors. Two new counselors will help assimilate adult learners into the campus and help them connect students to the offices and services they need. These counselors will:
  - Serve as the primary point of contact for adult students and potential adult learners.
  - Help current and potential adult learners with problems and questions.
  - Work flexible hours to ensure services are accessible to working adults.
  - Travel to WKU regional campuses to provide on-site assistance and consultation.
  - Work with academic units to develop new programming for adult learners.

- Provide information to adult learners about the various program delivery modes available (e.g., face-to-face, online, and correspondence) and advise as to appropriate processes to best meet individual goals.
3. Engaged Department Grants. In order to stimulate engagement efforts and address regional needs, funds will be used for faculty release time to participate in specific projects identified by community partners.
- The staff of the ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships will conduct two workshops per semester for faculty, staff, and students to introduce the purpose, guidelines, and support structure for these grants.
  - ALIVE Center staff will conduct two workshops per semester for community partners to explain the concept of these grants.
  - An official designation of WKU ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships Fellow will be created for faculty and staff who exhibit exceptional efforts toward collaboratively addressing regional needs.
  - The ALIVE Center will publish biannual reports that highlight campus-community partnerships.

## **Accountability**

As part of House Bill 380 of the 2006 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, the legislature requires an annual accountability report on the Regional Stewardship Program. The Council staff, working with university representatives, has developed guidelines for progress reports. In addition, all regional stewardship funds are made available through a memorandum of agreement that clearly outlines the goals that must be met to ensure continued funding.

In order to ensure accountability, future regional grant funds will depend on successful implementation of the infrastructure plans submitted by the universities, as well as adequate progress on activities outlined in these regional grant proposals.