

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by the Committee on May 20, 2026

Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
Meeting Type: AERO Advisory Committee Meeting
Date: March 18, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m. ET
Location: CPE Offices, 100 Airport Road, Frankfort, KY – Boardroom

WELCOME REMARKS

The AERO Advisory Committee held a business meeting on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. ET. The meeting occurred at the CPE offices in Frankfort and was livestreamed via ZOOM webinar. Chair Aaron Thompson presided.

ATTENDANCE

The following members attended the meeting in person: Lindsay Case, Lindsay Durbin, Lora Jones, Luke McCowan, Brad Schwandt, Brad Simms, and Aaron Thompson. The following members attended virtually: Marty Fryer, Todd Smith, and Curtis Wilson.

The following members did not attend: James Smith and David Springer

CPE President Aaron Thompson served as the chair, per the statute. Miles Feroli and Amanda Cooper served as recorders of the meeting minutes.

AERO ADVISORY COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members introduced themselves and their roles in the aerospace, aviation, and defense eco-system. Committee Chair President Thompson discussed importance of the committee and the role of CPE.

PURPOSE OF AERO ACT

Dr. Miles Feroli, Senior Associate, discussed the key areas of AERO, the formation and role of the AERO committee, and its key targets mandated by the legislation.

AERO will utilize a public private partnership model. Partners can be nonprofit, for profit, an airport or fortune 500 company. They just need to be in the business of aviation and/or defense. Industry partners can join the program, then reach out to us. Private companies will provide funds which we will match in the AERO Act through the KY General Assembly. Committee members will serve two-year terms, attend meetings, design criteria for partnership proposals, evaluate partnership proposals, and serve as aviation experts.

MOTION: Mr. Simms moved the committee approve the proposed bylaws. The motion was seconded by Brad Schwandt.

VOTE: The motion passed. Mr. Fryer did not participate.

OVERVIEW OF REGULATIONS

Ms. Cassie Trueblood Fields, Deputy General Counsel, provided brief overview of the statute and regulations related to KRS 164.7013.

REVIEW OF AERO IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Dr. Feroli discussed the AERO implementation plan. The plan focuses on key responsibilities for CPE and the AERO committee. The primary areas are setting criteria for proposal evaluation, approving any additional proposal application requirements set forth by the committee, and evaluating submitted proposals. It is anticipated that the criteria creation and approval will occur at the May 20, 2026, AERO meeting. Application period set to open June 1, 2026. Award period is set for August 25, 2026, pending funding approval.

Mr. Schwandt asked if multiple companies could join together to provide funds for equipment grants. Dr. Feroli affirmed that multi-partner contracts can be created. There was discussion around multi-partner contracts, TRAINS funding, and equipment donations to match funds.

At this time, President Thompson delegated chair duties to Lindsey Case, who served as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AERO DASHBOARD

Ms. Madalyn White, Senior Associate, introduced a draft of the AERO dashboard to the committee. It currently focuses on enrollment and graduation rates. There have been about 38,000 graduates in aviation, engineering, etc. over the last five years. There are several areas to be developed including an executive summary tab, partnership tab, workforce data tab, funding tab, and technical notes/glossary. CPE staff requested the committee submit requests for improvement and revision as needed to support their work on the committee.

DISCUSSION - AERO SCORING CRITERIA

Dr. Feroli walked through the drafted scoring criteria for the training scholarships and equipment grants. He asked the committee to review and have questions or concerns prepared for the May meeting. There was an additional discussion around contracts, competitive pricing, and compliance with state procurement laws.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Dr. Leslie Sizemore, Vice President of Workforce and Economic Initiatives, discussed the 2026 Legislative Session and the current status for potential funding from the legislature. Similarly, it was shared that legislation that would include public part 61 flight schools was in discussion to be added to proposed legislation but had not been done so to date.

FUTURE MEETINGS, QUESTIONS & CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Case stated the next meeting will take place on May 20, 2026, at the CPE offices in Frankfort.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.