

KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION WORK SESSION, CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT & DINNER



June 20, 2024 – 2:00-7:30 p.m. CT

Western Kentucky University, Jody Richards Hall, Regents Room, 2nd floor

I. Work Session (2:00 p.m. CT)

- A. Welcome Remarks
- B. Strategic Discussion with Western Kentucky University2
- C. Strategic Discussion with Kentucky State University28
- D. 2023-24 Agency Review42

II. Campus Spotlight and Tour (4:15 p.m. CT)

Spotlight will begin in the Regents room, then guests will convene on a trolley for a driving tour around campus.

III. Reception and Dinner for Council and WKU Guests (5:30 p.m. CT)

WKU President's House, 1700 Chestnut St, Bowling Green, KY 42101



2022-30 STATEWIDE STRATEGIC AGENDA

INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE

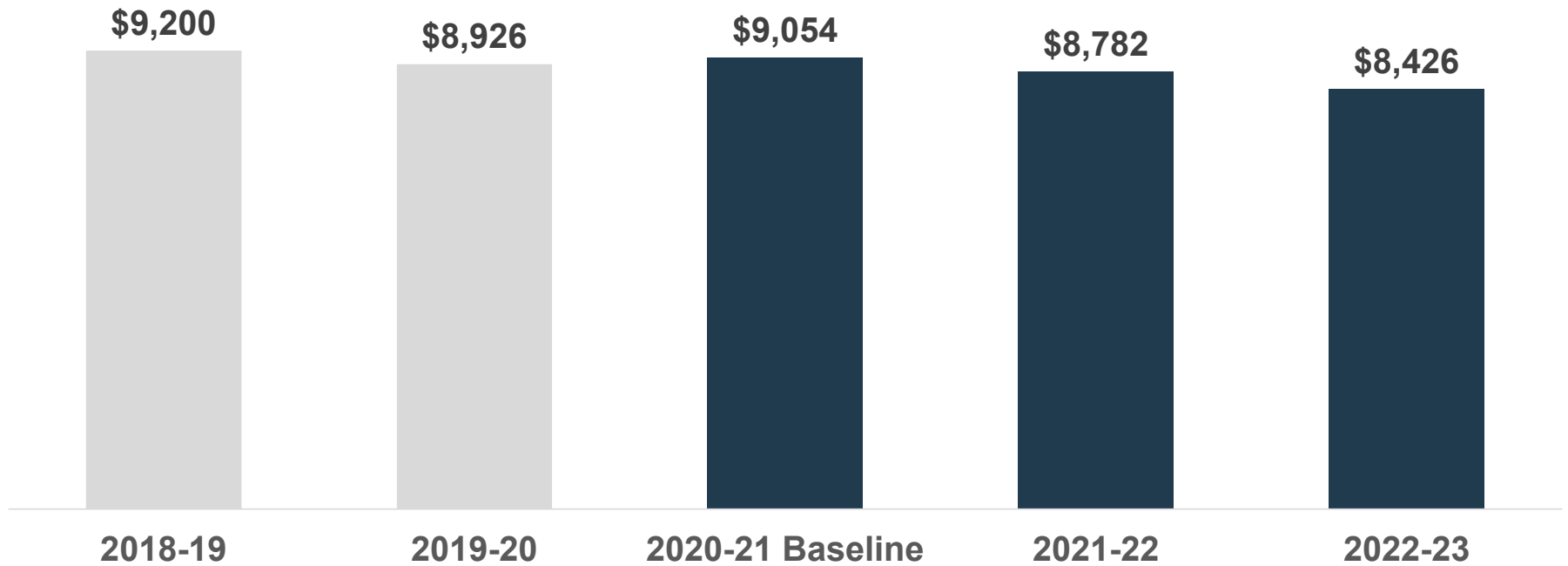
Western Kentucky University

June 20, 2024



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- AFFORDABILITY

Unmet Need: Average amount students must pay out-of-pocket after all financial aid and expected family contributions.



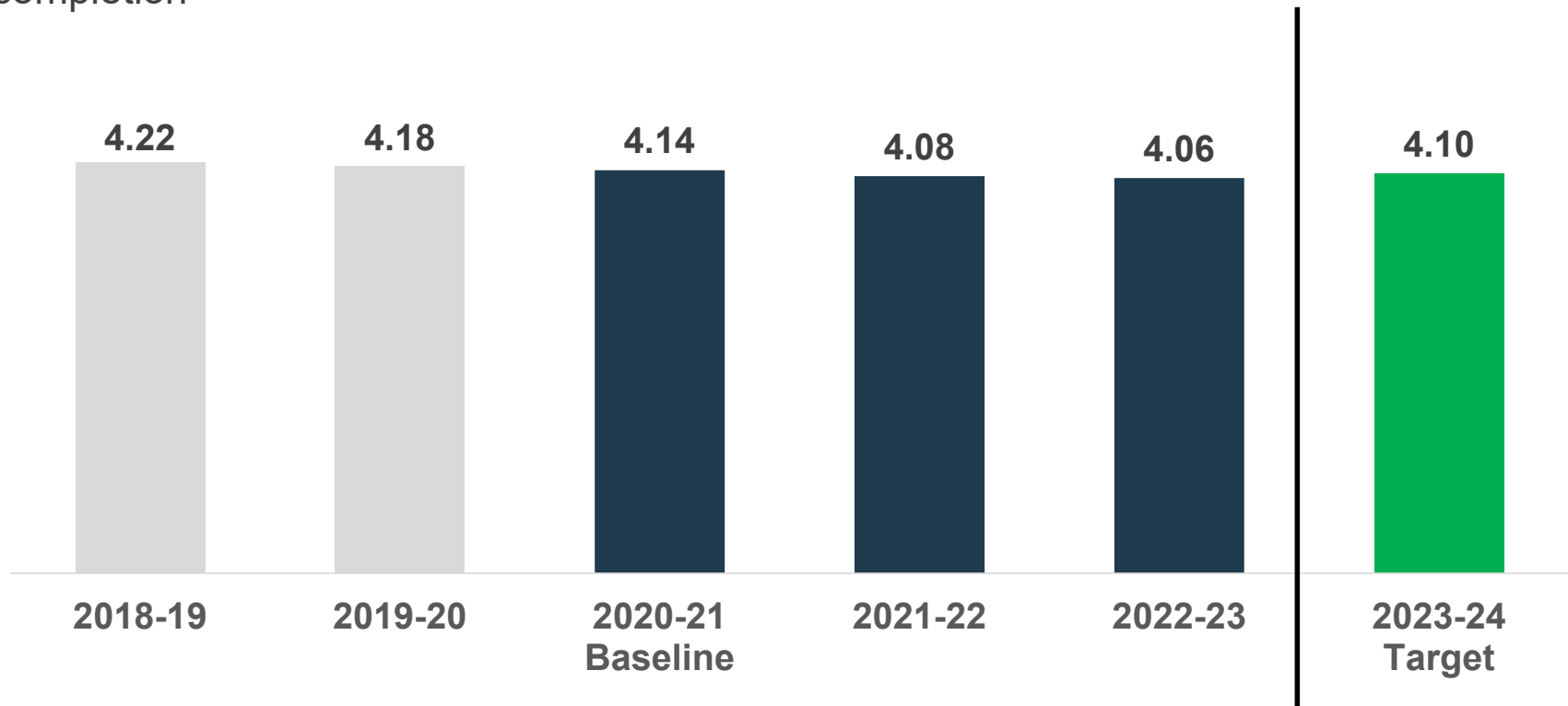
WKU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON AFFORDABILITY



- Incorporate student need & other factors in financial aid decision-making
- Moderate tuition and fees increases
- Reduce campus expenses and cost increases
- Provide informational resources and advising
- Enhance FAFSA completion
- Improve information flow and quality with college access professionals

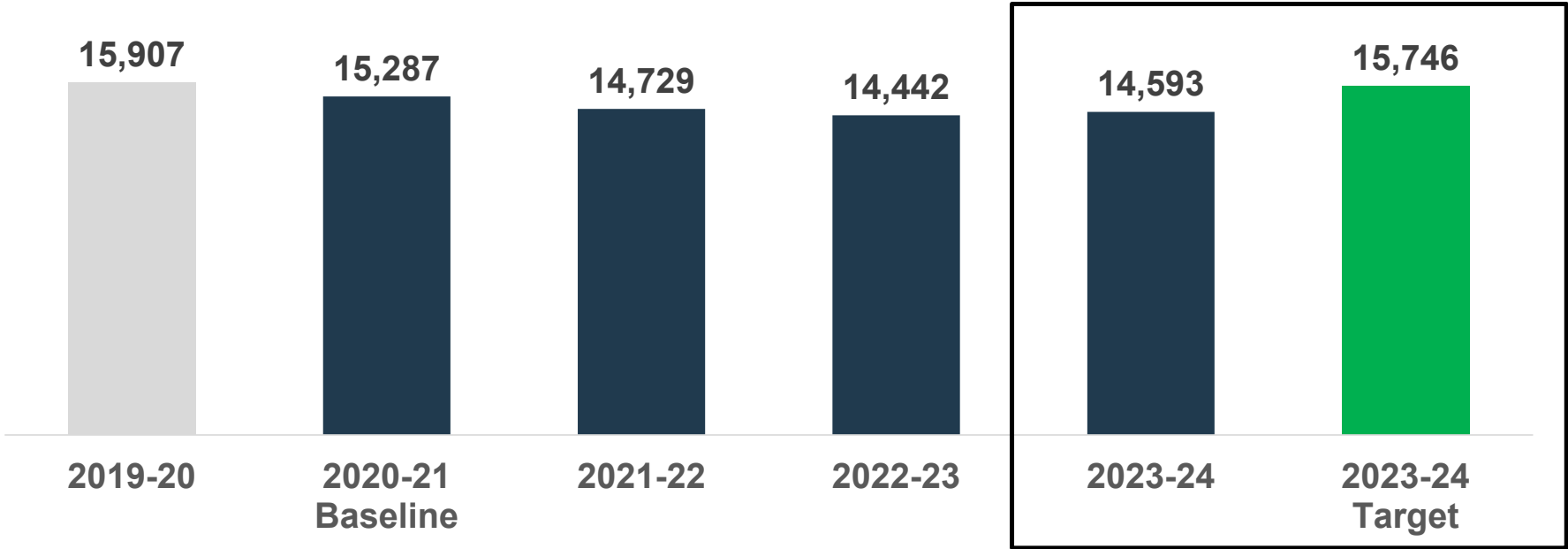
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- AFFORDABILITY

Time to Degree: Average number of academic years students are enrolled prior to undergraduate degree completion

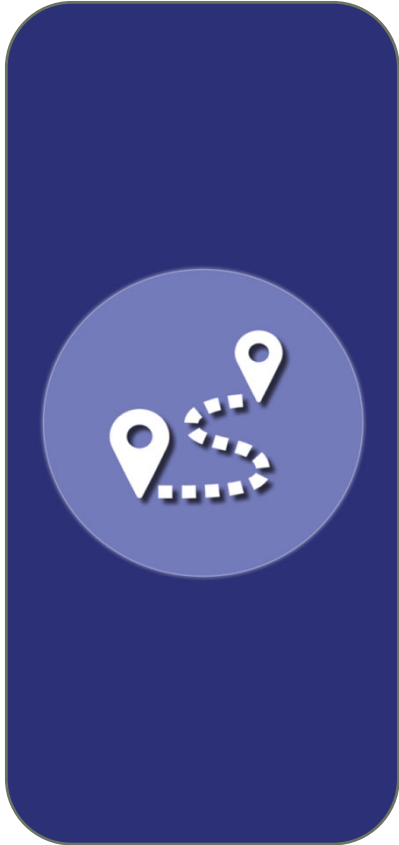


KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- TRANSITIONS

Undergraduate Enrollment: Total unduplicated number of students who enroll in an undergraduate program offered by one of Kentucky’s public colleges or universities in an academic year, either full-time or part-time.



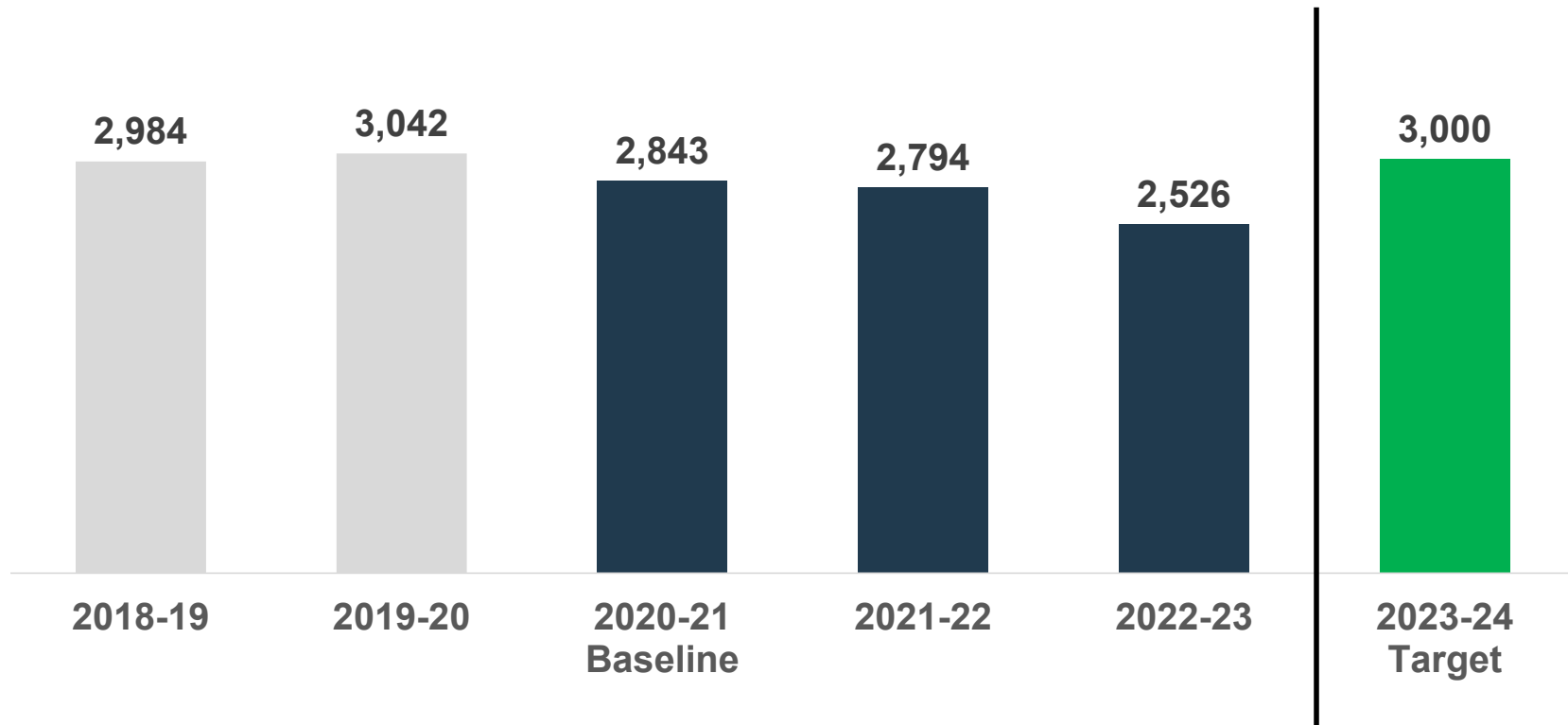
WKU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON TRANSITIONS



- Create opportunities for high school and high school graduates to prepare for college at WKU
- Facilitate virtual access to WKU for college and career exploration
- Provide regular contact mechanisms with high schools and community colleges
- Create targeted recruitment strategies for type of student and enlist assistance of alumni
- Streamline and simplify admission procedures

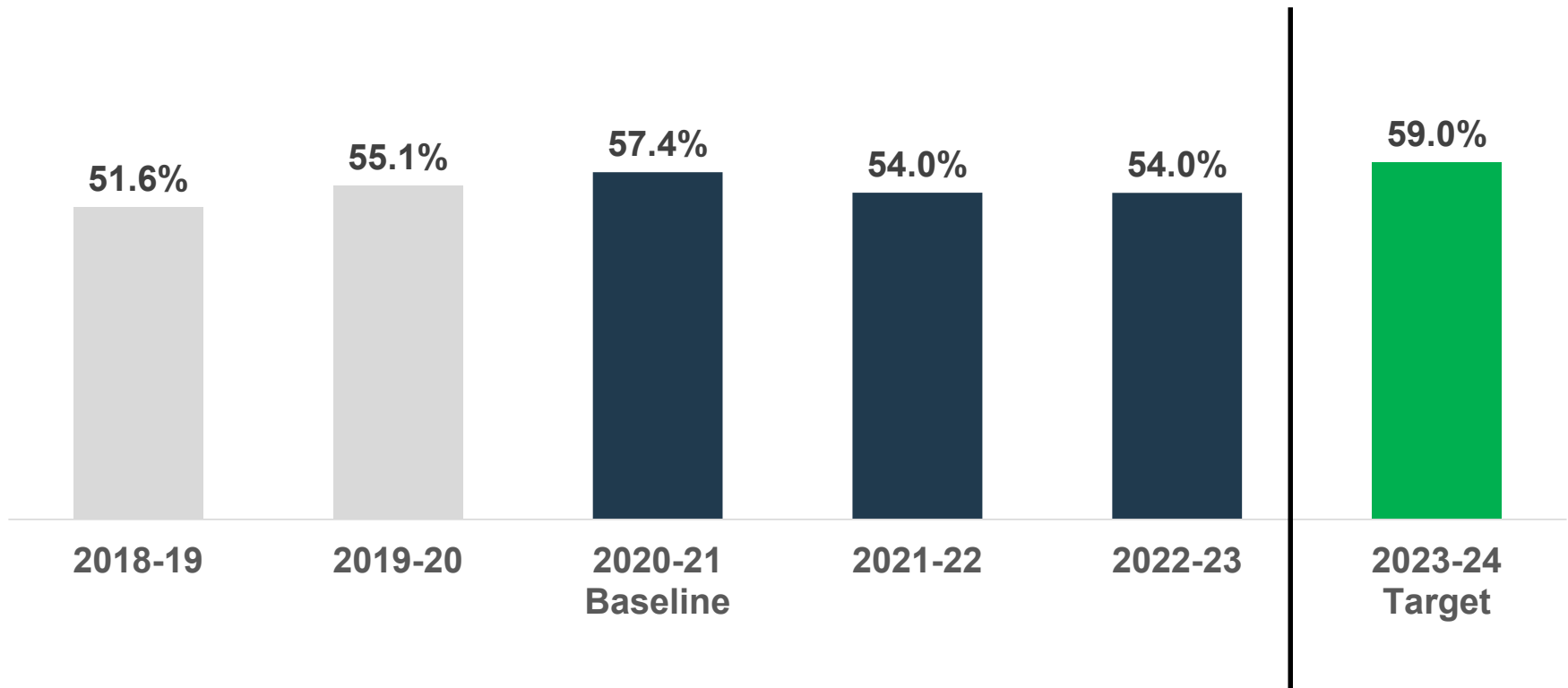
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- SUCCESS

Undergraduate Degrees & Credentials: Number of undergraduate degrees awarded in an academic year.



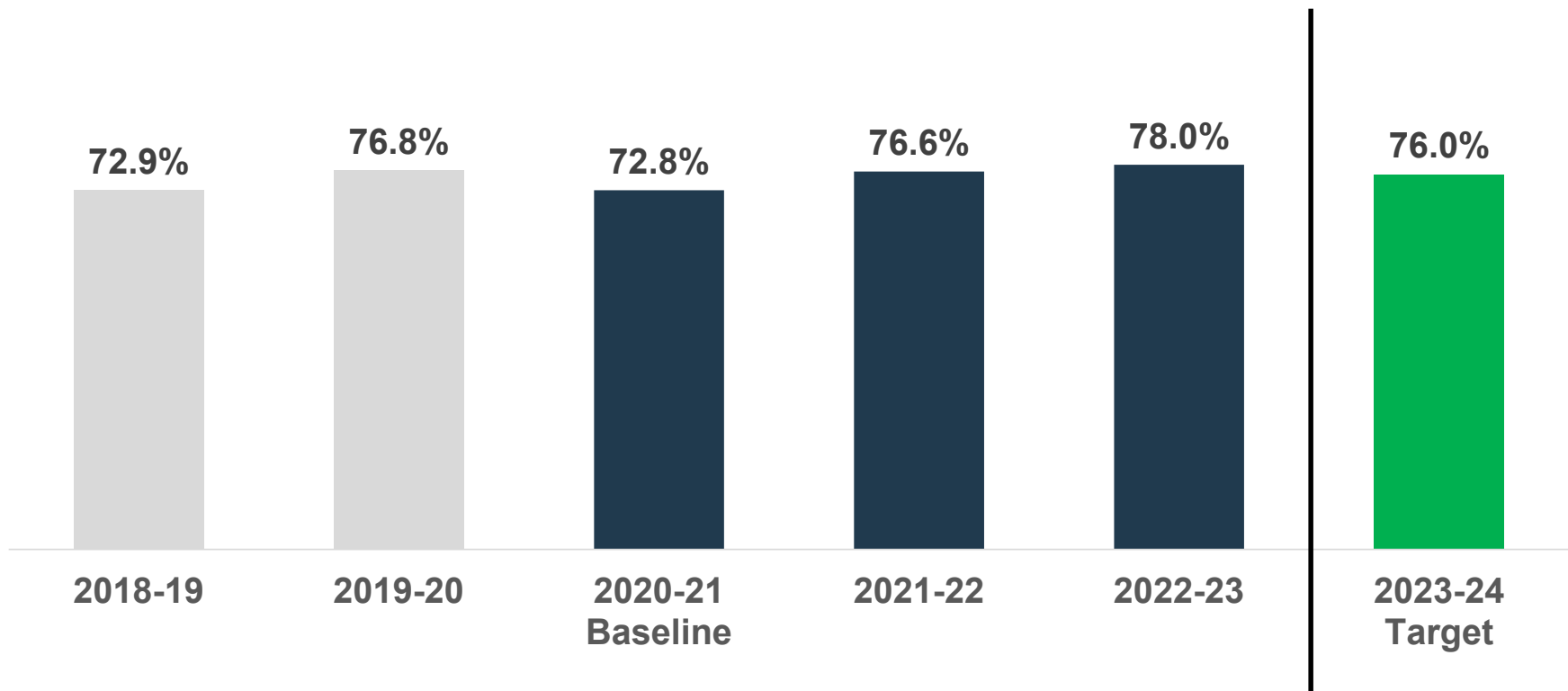
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- SUCCESS

Graduation Rate: Percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who receive a undergraduate degree within 6 years



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- SUCCESS

Retention Rate: Percentage of first-time, degree- or credential-seeking students enrolled in the summer or fall of their first year who are still enrolled at the same institution the following fall.



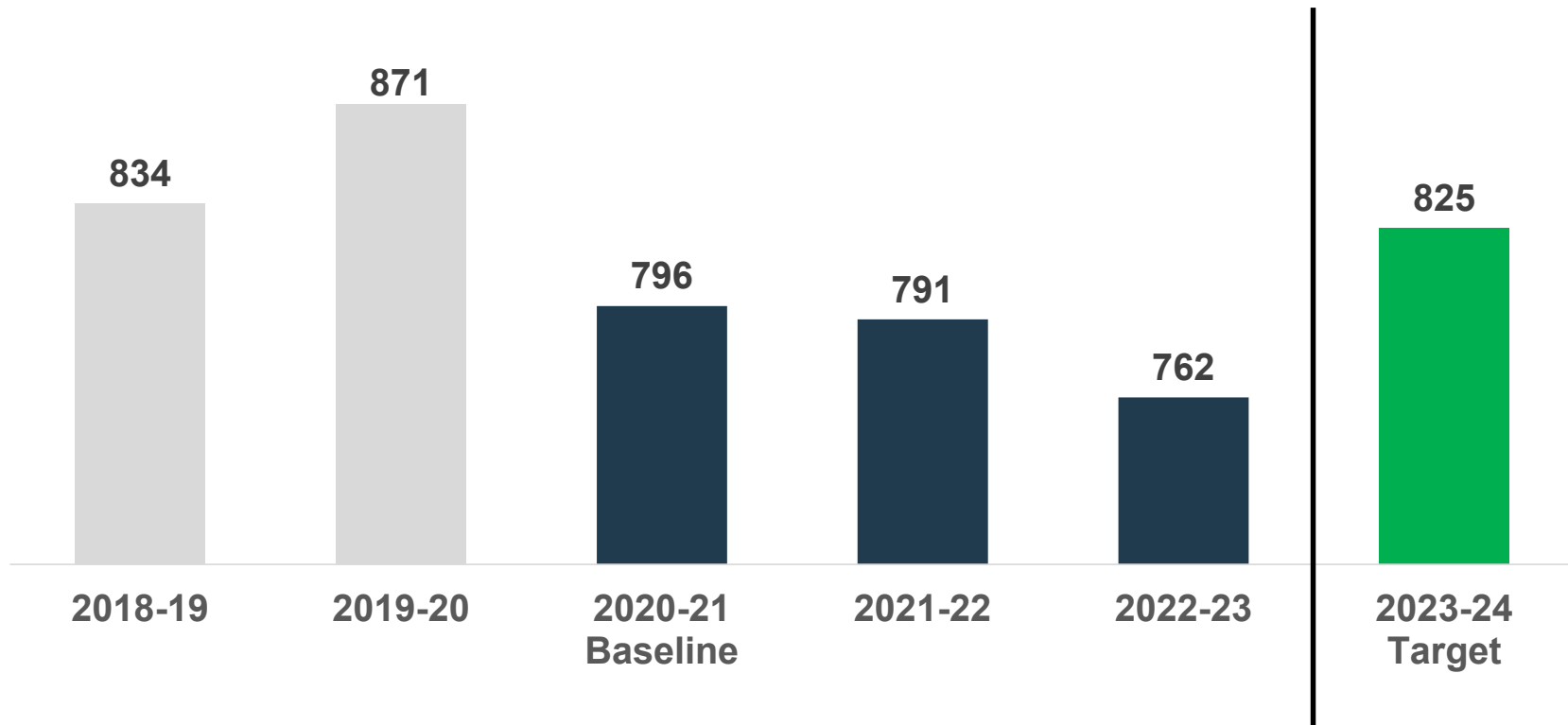
WKU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON SUCCESS



- Enhance and initiate practices to improve retention and graduation
- Create procedures to facilitate on-time graduation
- Create programs focused on the success of URM and low-income students
- Initiate procedures to facilitate the success of adult learners, including active duty and retired military personnel
- Facilitate transfer of dual credit courses, community college credit, and credit at other universities
- Institute advising and fiscal procedures focused on transfer students
- Determine means for individuals to complete unfinished degrees
- Ensure academic program standards are maintained
- Establish and promote equity in academic and co-curricular activities

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- TALENT

Graduate and Professional Degrees: Total number of graduate/professional degrees awarded in an academic year.



WKU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON TALENT



- Establish experiential learning opportunities related to the student's prospective career path
- Continue to develop career-based activities
- Facilitate business and other community partnerships
- Align relevant academic programs with employment needs
- Expand community engagement, especially in Kentucky's high-need areas

WKU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON VALUE



- Promote WKU as an institution of excellence for higher education and career advancement
- Communicate the return on investment of a WKU degree
- Invest in the future





Affordability



Transitions



Success



Equity



Talent



Value

HIGHER EDUCATION *Matters*

A Campus Action Plan for
Western Kentucky University

2022-2024



AFFORDABILITY

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

1. Reduce financial barriers to college enrollment and completion.

1a. Incorporate student need & other factors in financial aid decision-making that include assistance provided but not limited to the following:

- Continue The Hilltopper Guarantee, which provides 100% tuition coverage for any first-time, first-year student from KY who receives Pell Grant assistance and has at least a 3.0 cumulative high school GPA.
- Utilize the WKU Opportunity Fund for short-term financial assistance for students in the form of Emergency Aid Grants, Completion Grants, etc. to promote retention and persistence to graduation.
- Maintain support for the expanded WKU Academic Merit, Transfer, WKU Family, Military, TIP, Border State, and Hilltopper Guarantee programs to maintain affordable access to higher education.
- Provide WKU Educator Discount to assist KY teachers in graduate learning by providing in-state tuition rates for educators from states with reciprocal teaching qualifications with KY.

1b. Moderate tuition and fees increases:

- Institute a 2% increase in FY 22.
- Hold tuition and fee increases to less than 1% in FY23.
- Petition CPE for tuition increase approval processes to be structured so that rates are approved earlier than current practice, allowing students to make informed financial decisions regarding attendance and choice of institution.

1c. Reduce campus expenses and cost increases:

- Allow flexibility in choosing which mode of delivery/location students prefer at WKU that best fits their needs and schedules without concern of additional expense.
- Eliminate distance learning fees.
- Continue to explore means to support promotion of retention and persistence.
- Provide fee waivers and/or reduced fees for WKU admissions applications and assist with FAFSA completion and course selection.



AFFORDABILITY

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

2. Improve the public's understanding of how to pay for college.

2a. Provide informational resources and advising including but not limited to the following:

- Counsel students and their families on financial planning via workshops, one-on-one appointments and other timely interventions (rate of participation among WKU students to exceed 90%).
- Train faculty and staff to assist with providing basic financial assistance to students.
- Provide Spanish versions of basic FAFSA information on the online resource center.

2b. Enhance FAFSA completion:

- Continue WKU SFA staff partnership with KHEAA to provide staff support for 22+ FAFSA completion events in the regional service area.
- Educate the campus community and promote the one-on-one FAFSA completion assistance provided by WKU Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), a TRIO Program.
- Expand outreach regarding the necessity of FAFSA completion for both incoming and returning WKU students.

2c. Improve information flow and quality with college access professionals:

- Enhance relationship with KHEAA, KASFAA, and High School-WKU TRIO programs (Educational Talent Search 1-2-3- and Upward Bound) to bring guidance counselors to campus for 2 events or more per year for training workshops and/or informational luncheons.
- Connect regional recruiters to their area's high schools for in-school workshops there.



TRANSITIONS

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

3. Increase students' readiness to enter postsecondary education.

3a. Afford opportunities for high school and high school graduate to prepare for college at WKU:

- Offer high-quality dual credit opportunities.
- Promote the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science.
- Operate a Summer Scholars' Bridge Program through CPE Grant support.
- Explore additional means to advance campus and e-learning opportunities.

3b. Facilitate virtual access to WKU for college and career exploration:

- Maintain webpages accessible on a variety of electronic devices.
- Use digital communications for transmitting admission processes and requirements.
- Aided by the Handshake Program, offer online access to career services for students associated with WKU, including dual credit and summer scholars, which incorporates mentoring/tutoring.

3c. Provide regular contact mechanisms with high schools and community colleges:

- Hold information fairs at WKU and in high schools.
- Continue college and university open house events.
- Establish/maintain/expand e-communication pathways.



TRANSITIONS

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

4. Increase enrollment in postsecondary education.

4a. Create targeted recruitment strategies for type of student and enlist assistance of alumni:

- Develop high school academies.
- Develop second- and third-year holistic experiences akin to the first-year village and LLCs, but tailored for the transfer student.
- Serve adult learners in 10 South Central Kentucky counties through our continued collaboration with the WKU TRIO project-Educational Opportunity Centers.
- Provide adults with orientation to college.
- Strengthen existing and develop new partnerships with businesses and the military to help adults initiate or complete a postsecondary degree.
- Evaluate barriers to higher education for low-income students, in addition to providing financial training and assistance.
- Continue the activities of ISEC, which works with the society of African American Alumni, Divine 9 (historically Black sorority/fraternity alumni associations) the NAACP, churches, and civic groups with an alumni presence to assist with recruitment.

4b. Streamline and simplify admission procedures:

- Explore further conditional acceptance practices during recruitment events.
- Implement Degree Works to improve degree and certificate program planning (DW is software used to facilitate academic advising and degree audits, and it empowers students by providing easy access to their path to graduation and career goals).
- Continue and, as possible, expand WKU TRIO projects that have a large alumni association to assist with PSE, transition and success.
- Pursue “stop out” and re-engagement strategies for students who abandoned their degree program prior to completion.
- Work with the accepted but non-matriculated population to determine why they are not pursuing a college education, and for their next year honor admission and scholarship awards.



SUCCESS

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

5. Increase persistence in and timely completion of postsecondary programs.

5a. Enhance and initiate practices to improve retention and graduation:

- Create a Comprehensive Advising Program for all years of college aided by our degree audit system, Degree Works, to provide 1) academic coaching to improve understanding and use of success resources, 2) career counseling for life after graduation and 3) 4-year financial plans to promote “4 to Finish” and overall understanding of long-term educational finances.
- Complement general and faculty advisor activities by continuing faculty advisor training and possibly expanding to a certified advisor program.
- Evaluate barrier courses to college readiness & completion and take progressive action.
- Improve degree and certification program planning, aided by Degree Works, and offer global and common learning experiences to 1) continue our Living and Learning Communities (LLCs), 2) develop opportunities beyond the first year, be they academic, recreational, social, and otherwise, and 3) facilitate global learning including study abroad especially in first two years.

5b. Create procedures to facilitate on-time graduation:

- Establish a comprehensive advising program to enable students to complete college in no more than 8 semesters (depending on the credits with which undergraduate students enter).
- Incorporate winter and summer courses into degree programs as needed to maintain on-time graduation.
- Schedule classes and institute class rotation schedules to facilitate degree progression and on-time graduation.
- Tailor High-Impact Practices (HIPs) to underserved and minoritized students to close opportunity gaps.

5c. Create programs focused on the success of URM and low-income students:

- Establish living and learning communities with a special focus on: 1) supporting and extending the Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC), 2) implementing a first-generation student program to address their unique issues, 3) continuing the ISEC Black Male Initiative (WHY KNOT US), Black Female Initiative (WHY KNOT US TOO) and Hispanic/Latin initiative, each specifically focused on the postsecondary success of targeted populations (academic, social, emotional, financial) and 4) expanding the newly created ISEC Graduate Academy for URM graduate students.
- Grow TRIO programs.
- Explore the expansion of viable work options on campus, targeted scholarships, additional tutoring and supplemental instruction.

5d. Initiate procedures to facilitate the success of adult learners, including active duty and retired military personnel:

- Create appropriate online offerings for degrees/certificates/micro-credentials to fit the needs of adults currently in or planning to enter the workforce.
- Tailor communications and services specific to adults, and differentiate between undergraduate and graduate adult learners.
- Investigate the development of an Adult Learner Outreach & Orientation Multimodal Center.

6. Maximize transfer of academic and experiential credit.

6a. Facilitate transfer of dual credit courses, community college credit, and credit at other universities:

- Stay current with course transfer acceptability within the state.
- Work with community college advisors for 4-year programming.
- Request involvement in community college curriculum development that will affect transferability to WKU in order to articulate better transfer agreements.
- Evaluate credit for prior learning and experience.



SUCCESS

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

6b. Institute advising and fiscal procedures focused on transfer students:

- Update transfer marketing and communication plans.
- Clarify and enhance academic pathways.
- Conduct timely transfer audits.
- Work with departments on transfer credit facilitation by creating academic pathways with KCTCS and community colleges in the surrounding region and extending 2+2 programs.
- Continue to work with advisors at community colleges.
- Reimagine transfer orientation virtually and in-person.
- Reimagine transfer scholarships including GPA requirement level and competitiveness.

6c. Determine means for individuals to complete unfinished degrees through advancing the Degrees When Due project, among others.

7. Ensure academic offerings are high-quality, relevant and inclusive.

7a. Ensure academic program standards are maintained:

- Conduct academic program reviews to facilitate continuous improvement of all academic programs.
 - Perform 5-year and annual program sustainability reviews.
 - Continue appropriate assessment of classes and programs.
 - Obtain regular, valid and reliable feedback from stakeholders.
 - Assess practices against aspirational higher education providers.
- Maintain accreditation standards for accredited programs and increase their numbers.
- Review and assess the Colonnade Program (WKU's General Education program), coupled with major degree programs that address the ten essential skills of the Kentucky Graduate Profile.
 - Review teaching methodologies and infrastructure to integrate best practices and incorporate, where possible, high-impact practices (HIPs), immersive learning in diverse cultures, process-learning, collaborative learning and others.
 - Provide training in pedagogy for all those who instruct students.
 - Maintain infrastructure and technology to support instruction.

7b. Establish and promote equity in academic and co-curricular activities:

- Support and enhance the Colonnade Program to:
 - Transform high enrollment courses into more active & inclusive environments.
 - Inspire greater student responsibility for learning.
 - Reimagine courses to expand new pedagogical ideas.
- Integrate best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion into teaching methods.
 - Provide training for faculty and staff to support equity in learning.
 - Develop our continued commitment to inclusive teaching.
 - Make pedagogy and assessment more equitable.
- Expand the Holistic Student Approach
- Create means to address unmet financial needs



TALENT

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

8. Improve the career outcomes of postsecondary graduates.

8a. Establish experiential learning opportunities related to the student's prospective career path:

- Assist students with their individualized personal and professional development plan (an aspect of the Comprehensive Advising Program and thereby our Student Success Plan) that will serve as a guide for the pursuit and completion of a four-year degree in preparation for a successful career or entrance into further schooling/training.
- Develop hard and soft skills as well as cultivating global citizens through the Colonnade Program, a student's degree program and the Student Success Plan that will provide common intellectual experiences and high-impact practices.
- Facilitate internships, shadowing, part-time employment and the like in conjunction with the Academic Advising and Career Development Center (ACDC), the Innovation Campus at WKU, Global Learning and International Affairs, creative learning and research conducted by faculty and federal, state, and other public and private establishments.
- Consider the best means to centralize knowledge about and access to these experiential opportunities, such as expanding/developing experts or alumni in residence programs in the colleges.
- Create a modernized, flexible curriculum to allow for experiential learning hours to count toward degree programs.

8b. Continue to develop career-based activities:

- Support real-time and virtual advising and activities of ACDC related to career planning.
- Hold career fairs at the college and University levels involving prospective employers.
- Offer training opportunities through certificates, new market-relevant undergraduate degrees, graduate programs and other avenues.
- Involve the alumni association in enhancing career preparation.
- Provide career counseling in multiple modalities to prepare students for life beyond graduation.

8c. Facilitate business and other community partnerships:

- Develop connections via the Innovation Campus at WKU to facilitate business/faculty/staff/student partnerships.
- Involve the alumni association network to facilitate career connections.
- Use the Small Business Accelerator to aid in business development emanating from WKU research and/or community members.
- Provide continuing education opportunities for community members to enhance their employability and/or business development, including the current program of webinars and presentations by the alumni association and ACDC.



TALENT

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

9. ■ Increase research and service to support strong communities and economies.

9a. Align relevant academic programs with employment needs:

- Identify programs that specifically address these needs and create new ones to supplement ongoing ones where warranted.
- Create an Office of Undergraduate Research to facilitate experiential learning and coordinate activities with ACDC for internships and other outside WKU experiential learning opportunities.
- Enhance employment preparedness for graduates by strengthening the programs and career-focused opportunities in WKU's Graduate School.
- Support faculty scholarly and creative activities that address these high-need areas.
- Provide continuing education in these high-growth/demand/wage areas.

9b. Expand community engagement, especially in Kentucky's high-need areas:

- Develop/expand signature programs, degrees and credentials to address these areas.
- Align university priorities with communities, business and industry, educational institutions and others to create mutually beneficial cultural, environmental, scientific and social opportunities.
- Transform the WKU Center for Research and Development into a true Innovation Campus that engages corporations in collaborative research; incubates faculty, staff, and student ideas; cultivates and grows local businesses; and provides a hub for entrepreneurial growth and investment (see also 8a & 8c).



VALUE

Objectives, Strategies & Targets

10. Increase public belief in the power of postsecondary education.

10a. Promote WKU as an institution of excellence for higher education and career advancement:

- Develop a comprehensive communication plan.
- Foster and advocate for the WKU Experience.
- Use WKU campuses, colleges and departments for in-person and virtual forums as locations for said promotions.
- Engage alumni and highlight alumni successes, as well as promoting current student, faculty, and staff activities and successes.
- Associate WKU with opportunities for people of the region to be educated, entertained, assisted and inspired outside the classroom.

11. Build support for greater investment in postsecondary education.

11a. Communicate the return on investment of a WKU degree:

- Incorporate ROI information into the comprehensive communication plan.
- Provide summaries of the cost of attendance and benefits of a degree to students.

11b. Invest in the future:

- Examine university-related foundations' structures to determine if there are opportunities for efficiency or simplification that will enhance our ability to attract voluntary support and eliminate confusion.
- Assemble the necessary volunteer structure and involve deans and other senior leadership in support of a comprehensive fundraising campaign to support the University's Strategic Plan "Climbing to Greater Heights."



TARGETS

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target
Time to Degree	4.14	4.1
Undergraduate Enrollment	15,287	15,746
Undergraduate Degrees/Credentials	2,843	3,000
Graduate Degrees	796	825
Retention Rate	72.8%	76.0%
Graduation Rate	57.4%	59.0%

This document is Western Kentucky University's Campus Action Plan, which details how the institution will carry out the objectives of the statewide strategic agenda, "Higher Education Matters." This plan also includes campus targets for key performance indicators.

March 2022



2022-30 STATEWIDE STRATEGIC AGENDA

INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE

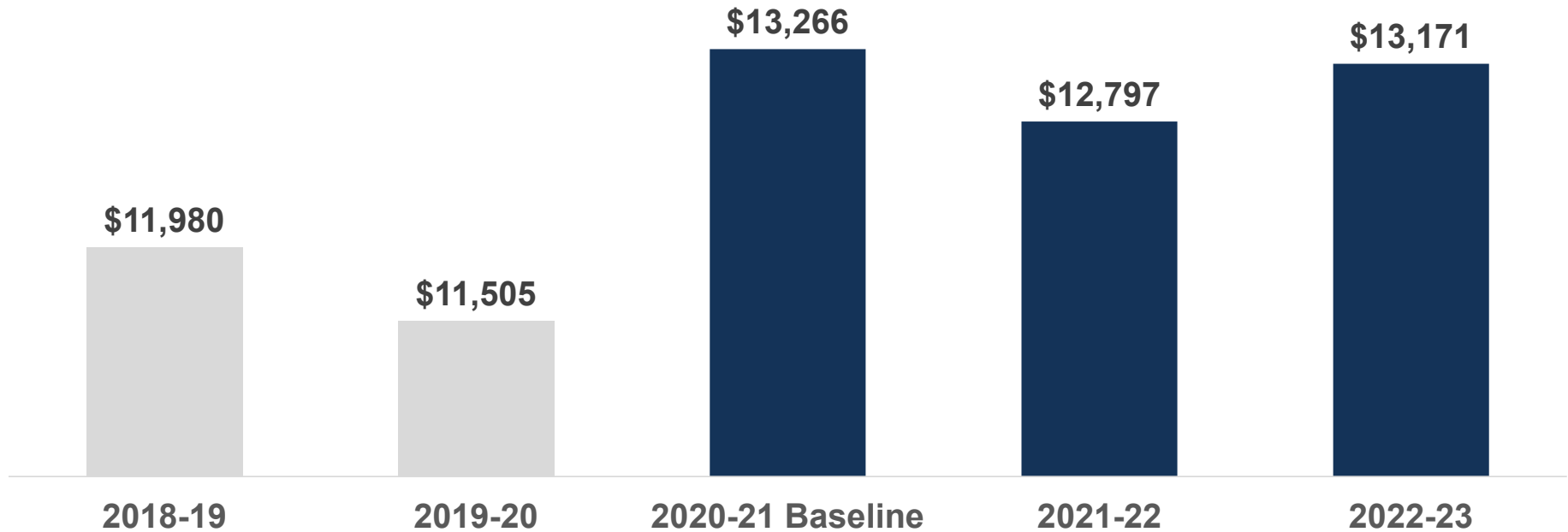
Kentucky State University

June 20, 2024



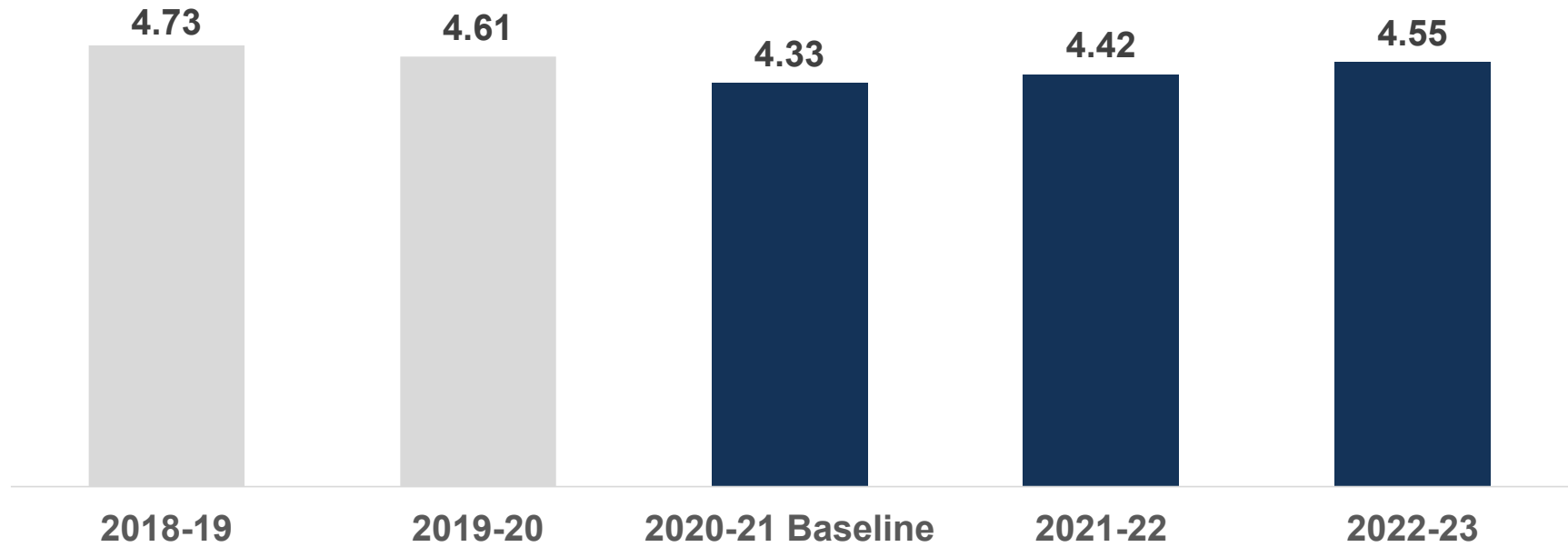
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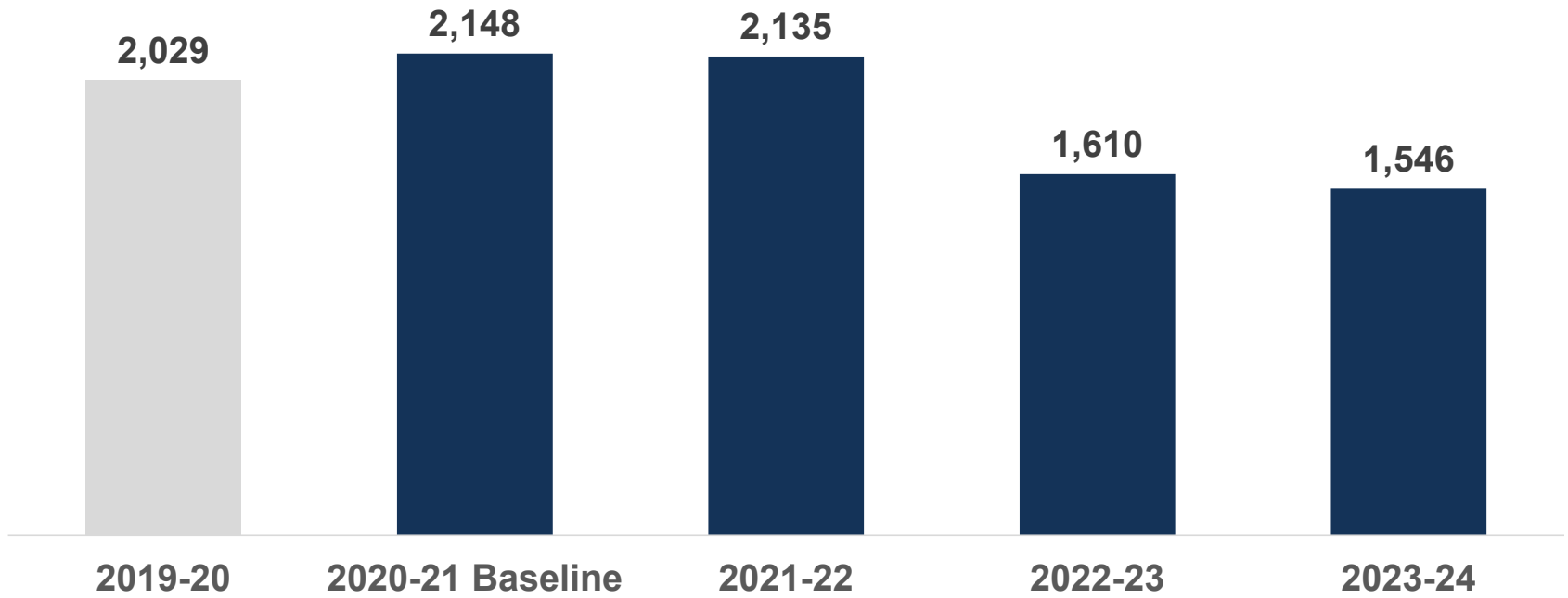
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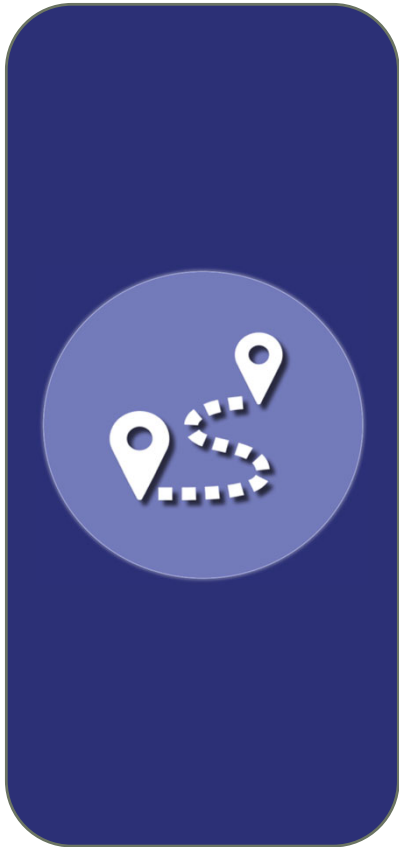
- By Fall 2025, increase the percentage of in-state students through intentional recruitment strategies and scholarship opportunities.
- By Fall 2025, implement a transfer student scholarship.
- Extend articulation agreements to include reverse articulation to support graduation rates at the sending and receiving institutions.
- Leverage partnership scholarship opportunities for continuing students (Norton's Health, CHI Saint Joseph Health and paid internships).

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- TRANSITIONS

Undergraduate Enrollment: Total unduplicated number of students who enroll in an undergraduate program offered by one of Kentucky’s public colleges or universities in an academic year, either full-time or part-time.



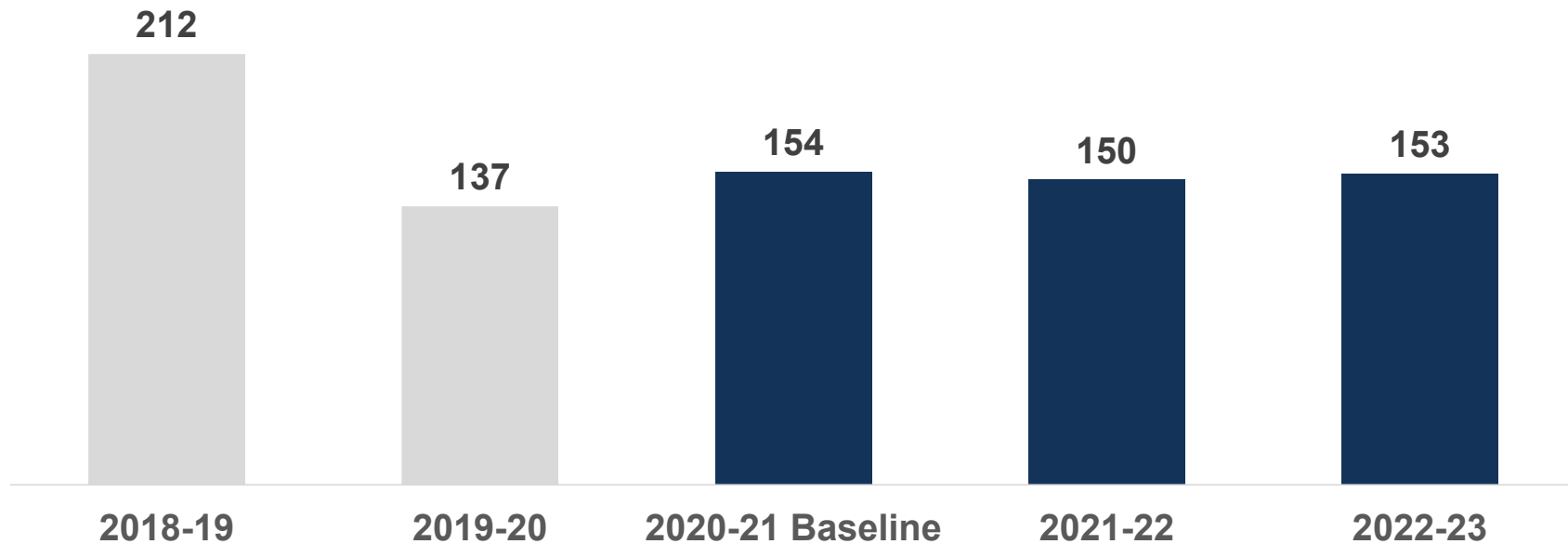
KSU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON TRANSITIONS



- By Fall 2025, expand P-12 school partnerships in eastern, western, and central Kentucky.
- By Fall 2025, expand professional advisor and admission outreach to support transition to post secondary education.
- By Fall 2024, expand the collaboration with the Family Scholar House.

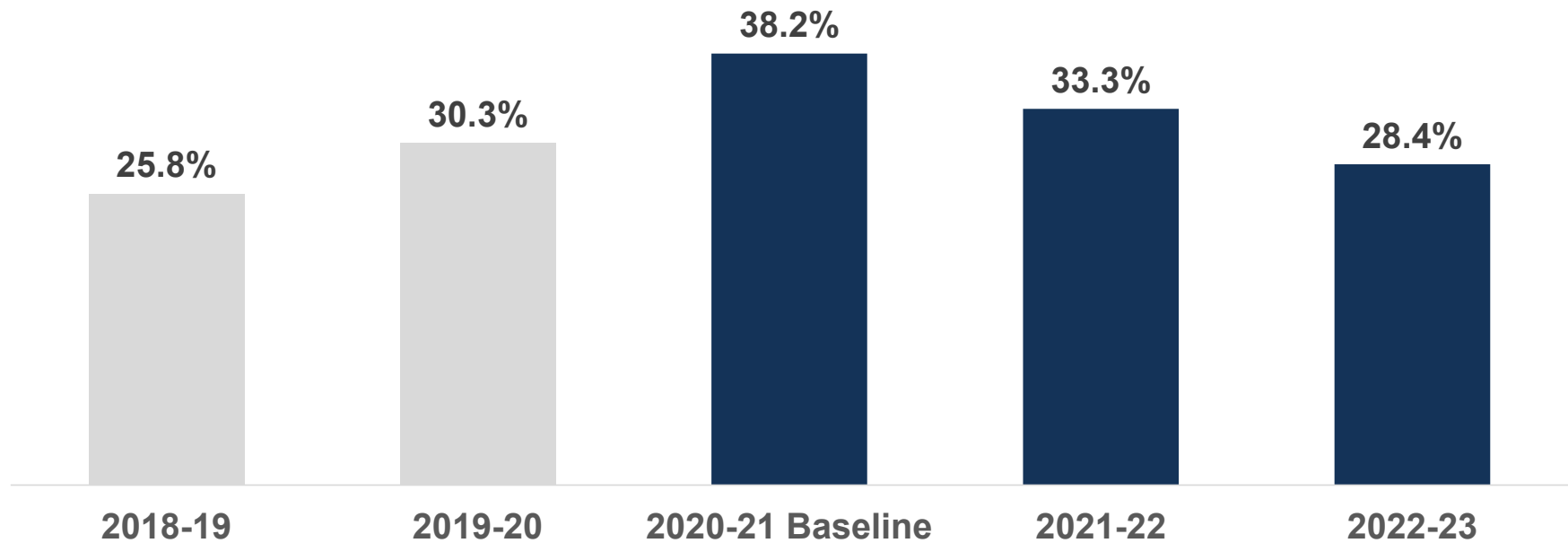
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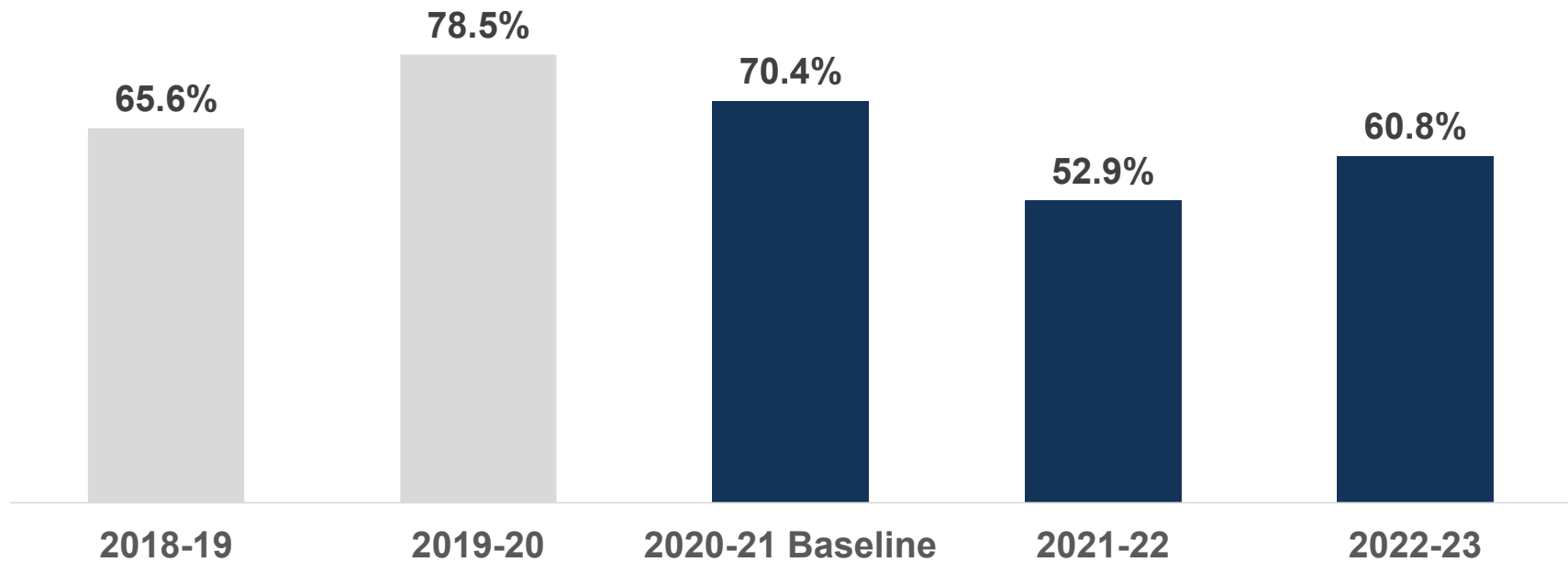
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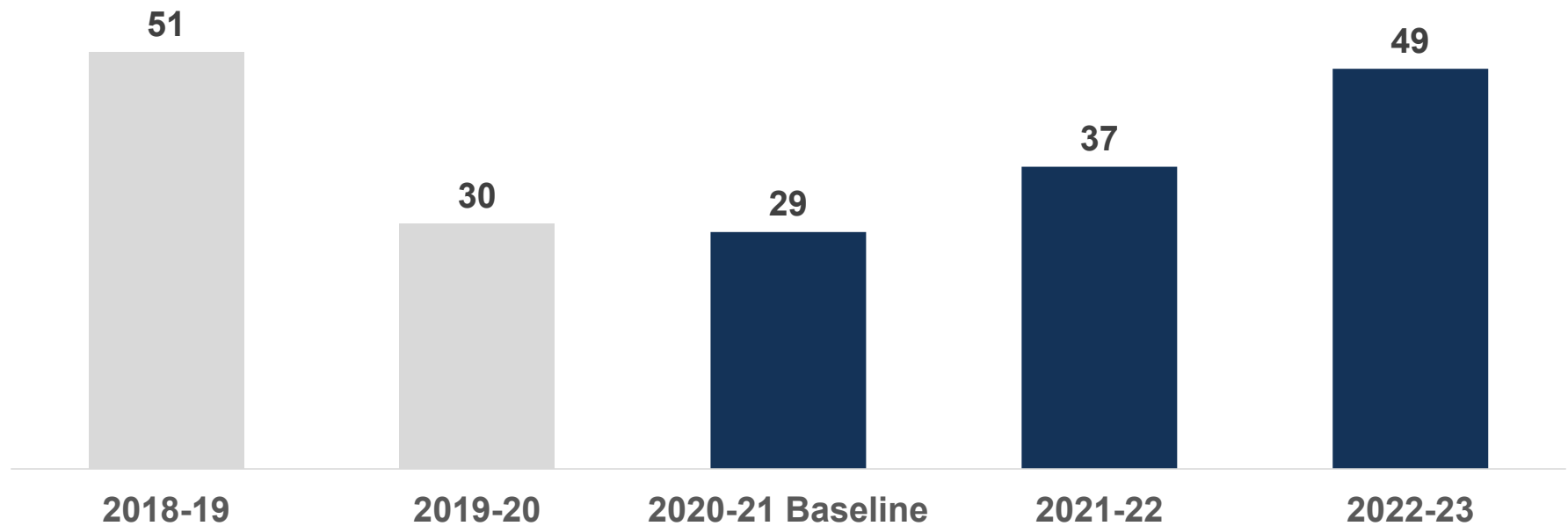
KSU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON SUCCESS



- By Fall 2025, expand the use of “early alert” system to support the increase of the number of students meeting the 30, 60, and 90 credit hour production within their cohort.
- By Fall 2025, expand mental health services providing additional support based on the needs of our students.
- By Fall 2025, increase the services provided by professional advisors to facilitate additional support outside of the classroom.
- By Fall 2025, establish the Center for Teaching and Learning to support faculty development in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum design and development, and student centered learning practices.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS -- TALENT

Graduate and Professional Degrees: Total number of graduate/professional degrees awarded in an academic year.



KSU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON TALENT



- By Fall 2025, develop new graduate programs in STEM, public health and service areas through the new KYSU Online.
- By Fall 2025, increase opportunities in STEM+H fields by providing tuition-based scholarships.
- By Fall 2025, develop a plan to pursue research doctoral degree pathway.

KSU'S KEY STRATEGIES ON VALUE



- By Fall 2025, increase the number of stackable micro credentials that are designed to support the needs of industry.
- By Fall 2025, develop a plan to redefine the student profile for Kentucky State University.
- By Fall 2025, increase the progression and completion rates by 5%.



**KENTUCKY STATE
UNIVERSITY**



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Andy Beshear
Governor

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Aaron Thompson, Ph.D.
President

June 12, 2024

Madison Silvert, Chair
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
3115 Forest Edge Cove
Owensboro, KY 42303

Dear Chair Silvert:

I am submitting this annual report as the basis of my evaluation and a review of the agency's key accomplishments from May 2023 through June 2024. All items are organized by the five priorities of the statewide strategic agenda, with an additional section to capture achievements in agency operations.

I am extremely proud of what CPE accomplished this year. The recently concluded legislative session was one of the better ones for higher education. Not only did the General Assembly increase appropriations for performance funding and campus infrastructure, CPE was called upon repeatedly to offer expertise and advice through testimony and one-on-one conversations. Notably, CPE submitted a comprehensive report to the General Assembly (SJR 98) making recommendations on postsecondary governance, baccalaureate access in Eastern Kentucky, and KCTCS effectiveness that took hundreds of staff hours to complete. These activities are a testament to CPE's growing credibility and influence among legislators.

I am gratified that our work continues to attract national acclaim and attention. Notably, Complete College America awarded CPE its highest honor this year, The Stan Jones Legacy Award, for consistently embodying the vision of Complete College America and increasing the number of students who earn credentials of value. Kentucky was one of seven states selected by Lumina Foundation to participate in the Great Admissions Redesign, an effort led by CPE's Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC). Initiatives like the Kentucky Advising Academy (for high school guidance counselors) and Career Ladders in Mental and Behavioral (CLIMB) Health exemplify how CPE has extended our impact and reach while continuing to fulfill our postsecondary statutory obligations.

I hope you'll take some time to review this report in detail. I look forward to our discussion, and I am grateful for your continued confidence and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Aaron Thompson, Ph.D.

cc: Council on Postsecondary Education membership



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education 2023-24 Agency Review

The 2022-30 Strategic Agenda for Postsecondary Education sets an overarching goal for 60% of Kentucky’s working-age population to earn a postsecondary degree or credential by 2030. The 60x30 KY goal is the foundation of the priorities, objectives and strategies of the agenda, and it guides the work of the agency.

The following report looks at high-level actions and outcomes from May 2023 through June 2024. It is organized around the five priority areas of the agenda (Affordability, Transitions, Success, Talent, and Value). A final section, State Leadership, highlights work in key areas not immediately reflected in the agenda.



AFFORDABILITY

Kentucky will ensure postsecondary education is affordable for all Kentuckians.

CPE is working on efforts to increase college access and affordability for all Kentuckians. Key strategies include limiting tuition and fee increases; recommending operational efficiencies; educating students and families about college savings programs, grants, scholarships, and responsible borrowing; and advocating for additional state General Fund appropriations.

KEY INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-24

Monitoring Tuition and Fees: In 2023, the Council approved a slightly higher increase in [tuition ceilings for academic years 2023-24 and 2024-25](#), based on relevant state and national data. The new rates provide an appropriate balance between the resource needs of institutions and college affordability for students and families. Over the last year, CPE staff monitored the impact of approved ceilings and will determine future adjustments in the upcoming biennium.

Total Cost of Attendance Data: CPE staff recently compiled data showing the total cost of attendance by institution, including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies and other relevant expenses. The research examines tuition and fees as a percent of total price, noting the percentage change over the last decade. Staff will use this research to assist in future policy making and the development of 2025-27 tuition and fee recommendations.

Monitoring Student Debt Levels: CPE recently released a [report on undergraduate student debt levels](#) examining trends affecting undergraduate students attending a KCTCS college or Kentucky public university. The report reveals that the proportion of students graduating with loan debt fell nearly 15 percentage points over the last five years, from 58.1% in 2017-18 to 43.2% in 2022-23. The decline was even more pronounced over the decade, falling 20.8 percentage points. Additionally, among completers who graduated with debt, average loan balances fell from \$29,224 to \$26,414, a decline of \$2,810 or 9.6% since 2017-18.

Financial oversight: Staff continued to fine-tune a process for assessing the financial health of institutions. The analysis evaluates fiscal stability and sustainability, as well as gauging institutional susceptibility to market risk factors. As part of the analysis, staff identified methods, metrics and data sources for assessing institutional viability in their respective markets and determined whether institutions are making efficient and effective use of state resources. CPE has worked with several institutions on a voluntary basis and is looking to expand this work as staff capacity allows.

Performance Funding: CPE staff convened the Postsecondary Education Working Group on Performance Funding during the 2023 calendar year to conduct its three-year comprehensive review of Kentucky's public university and KCTCS performance funding models (KRS 164.092). The review focused on current and expected outcomes, unintended consequences for institutions and potential adjustments. As a result, the work group [recommended five changes to the university model and six changes to the KCTCS model](#). All suggestions were approved by the 2024 General Assembly, along with an additional request to define a new metric for underrepresented students using criteria other than race.

FAFSA public service awareness campaign: In light of substantial changes to the 2024-25 FAFSA form, GEAR UP Kentucky and KHEAA conducted a public awareness campaign to prepare students for the new application process. The promotion included statewide TV and radio commercials via the Kentucky Broadcasters' Association Public Education Partnership program, a social media campaign and an [online resource hub for students](#).



AFFORDABILITY

Kentucky will ensure postsecondary education is affordable for all Kentuckians.

Affordable Learning KY: This Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL) [initiative](#) promotes student success and fosters educational equity by supporting the adoption, adaptation and creation of affordable, Open Educational Resources (OER) in the Commonwealth. Over the past year, ALKY held a symposium celebrating Open Education (OE) Week that brought together over 75 state and national experts to discuss topics such as artificial intelligence, accessibility and social justice in OE. ALKY leaders have presented at workshops and conferences across the U.S., and three member institutions have adopted systems of course marking to identify offerings that only use textbooks and resources free to students. ALKY also has established a learning community focused on Manifold, an OER publishing platform currently available to all postsecondary institutions in the KYVL consortium.

Innovative Scholarship Pilot Program: In partnership with KHEAA, CPE piloted a program supported with General Fund appropriations to provide college access and promote undergraduate student success for displaced students (foreign nationals seeking or receiving U.S. asylum or resettled refugees), as well as students participating in international exchange programs. During its first year, the [pilot program served nearly 350 displaced students](#), which strengthened Kentucky's talent pipeline, drove statewide innovation and increased our capacity to meet evolving workforce needs. The program also established a community of practice to provide a forum for sharing and scaling proven practices; offered professional development for faculty and other campus practitioners serving displaced student populations; and provided resources to help leverage other state, federal or private resources. CPE was recognized by the National Association of System Heads (NASH) for this work in the spring of 2024 as a recipient of the Scaling for Change Award.

Students' Right-To-Know: Kentucky continues to be nationally recognized for its [Students' Right to Know interactive web tool](#). The site provides information about postsecondary program costs and allows students and others to research employment outcomes and salary information by academic program. CPE, in partnership with KYSTATS, maintains and promotes this site and is currently pursuing additional improvements.

Improving Advising for How to Pay for College: CPE's Kentucky Advising Academy (KAA), launched in 2022, provides free professional learning and resources for school counselors, Family Resource/ Youth Service Center coordinators and other professional educators. It hosted several face-to-face and virtual learning opportunities and expanded the [online toolkit](#) for K-12 advisors and staff. The toolkit includes advising strategies and other information focused on college affordability, grants, scholarships and FAFSA completion.



TRANSITIONS

Kentucky will ensure more students transition to college prepared to succeed.

Over the decade, Kentucky has experienced a sharp decline in its immediate college-going rate. CPE is helping high school students successfully navigate postsecondary transitions by removing tripwires that cause individuals to stumble on their path to college, particularly if they are first-generation or historically underserved by postsecondary institutions. We also are working to simplify bureaucratic and onerous admission processes and demystify financial aid and borrowing.

KEY INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-24

Commonwealth Education Continuum:

CPE continued to facilitate the [Commonwealth Education Continuum \(CEC\)](#), a P-20 initiative that promotes statewide conversations and actions among P-12 education, higher education and workforce leaders aimed at strengthening Kentucky's education pipeline. The workgroups are focused on four areas in 2024: Postsecondary Affordability, K-12 Educator Workforce, P-20 Competency Framework and Advising and Transitional Support.

Dual Credit and Early Postsecondary

Opportunities: CPE recently overhauled its [Dual Credit Policy](#), which now includes a statewide goal for 50% of Kentucky high school graduates to complete a dual credit course by the year 2030 with a grade of "C" or higher. Additional changes emphasize the importance of increasing dual credit access for underserved populations and ensuring postsecondary institutions accept dual credit to meet general education requirements. CPE staff held [monthly webinars](#) on dual credit and early postsecondary opportunities for high school and postsecondary advisors, created and continuously improved a [Dual Credit Toolkit](#) and provided numerous onsite workshops throughout the year.

The Great Admissions Redesign: In early 2024, [Lumina Foundation named CPE one of seven winners of The Great Admissions Redesign](#), a competition to revolutionize the admissions process and increase accessibility to

higher education for all students. As part of this effort, CPE and the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) received \$150,000 to facilitate a collaborative, student-centered, design-thinking continuous improvement approach to address long-standing barriers and untapped potential in admissions and financial aid processes. The project also includes an artificial intelligence (AI) webinar series, open to the public, examining opportunities to use AI to shore up campus capacity and streamline the admissions process.

Equitable and Accelerated Pathways: In 2023, CPE joined a national initiative called "[Launch: Equitable and Accelerated Pathways for All.](#)" CPE, the lead agency, is working with ten state partners to expand access to high-quality and equitable college and career pathways for all learners. In the first year of implementation, staff have conducted equity analyses and needs assessments; participated in cross-state curated academies for each focus area (policy, data, partnerships, and funding); convened stakeholder focus groups; and created a strategic action plan to increase access and equity for all in the areas of "credentials of value" and "seamless transitions."

Summer Bridge Programs: CPE awarded over \$325,000 in campus grants in 2024 for summer bridge programs. These programs bring rising first-year college students on campus before the beginning of the school year to improve their academic preparation, which increases



TRANSITIONS

Kentucky will ensure more students transition to college prepared to succeed.

retention and graduation rates and narrows gaps in educational outcomes for underrepresented students. Grants were awarded through a competitive RFP process based on specific criteria, including an independent evaluation of effectiveness and impact. In 2024, 27 campuses received up to \$15,000 each.

Advising Outreach: [The Kentucky Advising Academy](#) (KAA) continues to expand its work across the state. Over the past year, KAA produced monthly [podcasts](#), webinars and other advising content through social media channels, as well as facilitating several in-person professional learning sessions across the state. Over the last year, KAA has supported over 80% of K-12 public school districts through professional learning and resources, as well as numerous public two-year and four-year institutions. Additionally, through a partnership with the Education Strategy Group (ESG), KAA launched an [online postsecondary advising toolkit](#) to support educators serving in advising roles. The toolkit includes the newly created Kentucky Postsecondary Advising Framework, which was developed through the Kentucky Advising Academy's school counselor engagement and professional development opportunities.

Mini-Grants to Support Advising: In February 2024, [KAA awarded mini-grants](#) reimbursable up to \$5,000 to 17 Kentucky K-12 public schools and area technology centers to increase student access to postsecondary opportunities, assist in student readiness for college enrollment and build essential skills necessary for college and career success. Successful proposals supported college campus visits, family postsecondary awareness nights, activities to help students transition from high school to college and more.

GEAR UP Kentucky (GUK): [GUK](#) served nearly 6,000 students in 12 school districts and 9 partner postsecondary institutions in 2022-23, with a central goal of improving successful transitions between secondary and postsecondary education. Program staff provided over 18,000 hours of student advising (an 18% increase from the previous year), 19,000+ hours in college and career readiness curricula and 1,910 hours of student leadership development programs. To provide early exposure to a postsecondary campus, 840 middle and high school students participated in a college visit during the school year, and 36 students participated in a three-week residential GUK Summer Academy at Morehead State University, where they completed three hours of free college credit. As a result, GUK saw significant gains in key outcomes over the previous year, including a five percentage-point increase in FAFSA completion, a ten percentage-point increase in college applications and a four percentage-point increase in college enrollment. Additionally, 11 of 12 GUK high schools exceeded the statewide high school graduation rate in this period. GUK's program-wide average graduation rate exceeded the statewide rate for the fifth year in a row.

State-level Advising Website: CPE is close to launching a web-based platform to provide prospective students (high school students, adults, military veterans and active-duty personnel) with opportunities to explore career interests and related postsecondary programs and services. The platform will include essential information about college affordability, enrollment requirements at public postsecondary institutions and occupational outlook data for the state. This platform is being created in partnership with KDE and the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), with feedback provided by multiple stakeholder groups representing all intended audiences.



SUCCESS

Kentucky will ensure more students earn high-quality degrees and credentials.

CPE has doubled down on its promotion of high-impact practices that research has proven to be effective in increasing student persistence and completion. Staff works with campuses to implement both academic and non-academic policies and services to support holistic student development and workforce readiness.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-24

Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC): The [KYSSC](#) continued its work with both two-year and four-year institutions through a grant funded by the James Graham Brown Foundation. The KYSSC's strategic priorities include Admissions Redesign, Transfer Partnerships, Gateway Course Success, Student Basic Needs, Mental Health and Adult Attainment. For each student success priority, the KYSSC facilitated communities of practice to promote research-based practices, provided professional development, encouraged cross-institutional and community collaboration and drove continuous improvement of promising and best-practice implementation. The KYSSC also promotes resource sharing through the Impact exChange, an online platform for faculty and practitioners. In May 2024, the KYSSC received a \$3.25 million grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation to sustain and scale the work through 2028.

Students' Basic Needs: In the last year, CPE has expanded its work to assist postsecondary students in meeting their basic needs. After an in-depth analysis of benefit participation rates, CPE partnered with the Cabinet of Health and Family Services (CHFS) to place "kynectors" – CHFS employees who provide benefit eligibility screening, application assistance and referrals to community-based organizations for basic needs support – at each KCTCS college and Kentucky public university. As of spring 2024, kynectors have been placed at all two-year campuses to provide outreach services and promote benefit programs such as SNAP (food assistance), CCAP (childcare assistance), KTAP (cash assistance), and Medicaid (healthcare assistance). Additionally,

at the end of 2023, [CPE and KYSSC received a three-year grant from the ECMC Foundation of \\$1.5 million](#) to support increasing childcare solutions for adult learners and workers with dependents; communications for basic needs resources; the creation of a basic needs data dashboard; and backbone support to drive the basic needs agenda.

Improving Transfer: CPE was selected by the National Association of System Heads (NASH) to participate in a Transfer NASH Improvement Community in 2022. Since that time, Kentucky has used their improvement science model to enhance Kentucky's transfer mapping processes. Data findings are being compiled into a change playbook that will ultimately create a Kentucky generated, proven results resource for future institutional use. Additionally, CPE staff member Beth Collins received NASH's [Testing for Change Award](#) in the spring of 2024, which highlighted CPE's pivotal role in shaping the NASH model of improvement science.

Gateways to Opportunity: CPE and KYSSC [released a report](#) in 2024 on actions taken to improve the corequisite developmental education model and ensure it works equally well for all students. Specific focus in 2024 was placed on three main objectives in mathematics and English: (1) center students' needs in the pursuit of scalable improvements in gateway courses; (2) strengthen communication and collaboration within and across institutions; and (3) remove barriers to equitable access and success in gateway courses across modalities.



SUCCESS

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2024 Student Success Summit: The 13th annual [Kentucky Student Success Summit](#) was held on February 26-27, 2024, at the Knically Conference Center in Bowling Green. The theme was “Partnerships that Work,” and sessions focused on partnership development as a tool to advance student success and employer partnerships to meet workforce needs and improve the economic mobility of students. Over 400 faculty, staff and administrators from Kentucky’s public and private colleges attended the convening to connect with colleagues and develop partnerships to strengthen long-term improvements.

Mental Health & Suicide Prevention: In early 2024, The Jed Foundation, a national nonprofit that works to protect emotional health and prevent suicide among teens and young adults, announced a [four-year collaboration with CPE, KCTCS, and KYSSC](#) to pilot a program to evaluate, develop and deploy mental health, suicide prevention, and substance misuse resources. The program will reach nearly 200,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students across Kentucky and will serve as a collaborative and community-oriented approach to mental health promotion and suicide prevention.

Focus on Adult Learners: In 2022, CPE released [Kentucky’s Adult Learner Action Plan](#) detailing strategies to address barriers adult college students face while trying to obtain a degree or credential. Since that time, CPE has expanded its efforts to promote Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) programs, which award college credit for students’ previous learning and non-college (work) experiences. Staff held a three-part webinar series on CPL in the fall of 2023, as well as two informational sessions during the 2024 Student Success Summit. Most recently, [CPE teamed up with Ithaka S+R](#), a non-profit educational research and consulting organization, to identify and reduce barriers that prevent adults from completing a postsecondary credential. This work will consider the impact of administrative holds and past due

balances on students and administrators, explore policy opportunities to improve support for adult learners with some college and no credential, and assess the readiness of Kentucky institutions to implement programs or collaborative solutions for stopped-out students. The work will conclude with a convening to share research findings, recommendations and strategies for future action.

Academic Leadership Development Institute (ALDI): CPE selected 17 participants from public two-year and four-year institutions for the sixth cohort of the [Academic Leadership Development Institute \(ALDI\)](#), which prepares faculty and staff from historically excluded/underrepresented populations for leadership roles in Kentucky higher education. Participants are nominated based on their leadership ability, interest in professional advancement and dedication to higher education. The goal is to create a learning community of early career, underrepresented minority faculty and staff who are on track for professional advancement.

Annual DEI Review and Best Practices Report: Annually, CPE and the Committee on Equal Opportunities (CEO) review public institutions’ progress toward diversity, equity and inclusion goals. If institutions meet or exceed minimum standards, they remain eligible for new academic programming. In the summer of 2023, [staff compiled a report](#) reviewing the statewide and institutional progress made from 2015-16, the first year of implementing the policy, through 2020-21, the most recent year of data available. The report also highlighted campus best practices in diverse student recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, retention and completion, which focused on such issues as admissions applications, financial aid, housing and campus climate. The annual report and comprehensive review process allow institutions to learn from one another and build upon progress year after year.



SUCCESS

Kentucky will ensure more students earn high-quality degrees and credentials.

Cultural Competency Credential Certification:

In 2021, the Council approved a Cultural Competency Credential Certification process at CPE. In January 2024, the CEO and Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee approved Morehead State University's proposal for a student-level, 18-credit hour Cultural Competency Certificate. Morehead State is the second institution to receive CPE certification, and staff is encouraging other campuses to go through the process.

2023 Higher EDquity Symposium: The fifth annual Higher EDquity Symposium was held on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University on November 13-14, 2023. The theme was "Engagement and Belonging as Pathways to Success: Cultivating a Commonwealth for All." Sessions focused on recruiting and retaining students from all backgrounds, cultivating campus environments that foster a sense of belonging, and strategies for equipping students with skills

to thrive in today's workforce. Over 100 faculty, staff and administrators from Kentucky's public and private colleges attended the symposium, including the pre-conference sessions.

Kentucky Graduate Profile: In 2024, CPE expanded its work with the [Kentucky Graduate Profile](#). All 16 community and technical colleges and eight public universities have a campus Academy Team working to infuse Kentucky's ten essential skills into the curriculum of every program, including general education. The goal of the Graduate Profile is to ensure every Kentucky graduate receives high-quality, relevant academic training for career success. This year CPE is partnering with Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) to provide valid and reliable assessment measures for each of the ten essential skills. This work will be showcased at the 2024 Trusteeship Conference.



TALENT

Kentucky will increase talent and innovation to support our communities, employers and economy.

A primary purpose of postsecondary education is to produce adaptive, highly skilled workers to fuel the economy. CPE collaborates with government, education and workforce partners to ensure Kentucky's graduates earn high-value degrees that lead to professional employment opportunities.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-24

Healthcare Workforce Collaborative (HWC):

The [Kentucky HWC](#) was launched in 2022 to grow the pipeline of healthcare workers in Kentucky. The Collaborative is made up of healthcare professionals, institutional representatives and government and community partners, and it meets bi-monthly to discuss short- and long-term solutions to Kentucky's healthcare worker shortage. In addition to reviewing the effectiveness of current campus- and state-level programs, the Collaborative oversaw \$8 million in grants awarded to campuses to support healthcare academic programs, student recruitment into the programs and improved pathways from high school to college-level health care programs.

Healthcare Workforce Collaboratory 2023: The Collaboratory was held on October 10th, and it assembled almost 200 policy experts, state leaders and representatives from college campuses and the healthcare industry to consider solutions for meeting healthcare workforce shortages and increasing future capacity. The event featured sessions and networking opportunities to help bridge the gap between postsecondary institutions and workforce partners. An awards ceremony recognized Secretary Eric Friedlander, Senator Robert Stivers, and Representative Ken Fleming as 2023 Innovative Healthcare Leaders.

Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund (HWIF): Established by [HB 200](#) in 2023, the HWIF is a public-private partnership to provide healthcare training scholarships for Kentucky resident students and incentives to reward high-performing healthcare professional programs. Since that time, staff have filed the appropriate regulations, established and convened a steering committee, developed an implementation plan, and prepared for the first submission of funding proposals in July 2024.

Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Investment

Fund: Similar to HWIF, [CPE was tasked with administering appropriations to the Kentucky Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Investment Fund](#). Eligibility for this fund not only includes postsecondary aviation programs, but also extends to public high school vocational programs. An advisory committee of industry and postsecondary experts will advise CPE staff and help set criteria for the fund's review processes. Currently the fund has not received an appropriation. In the meantime, CPE is moving forward with writing the administrative regulations and reaching out to the identified steering committee members.

CLIMB-Health Initiative: This initiative established [Career Ladders In Mental and Behavioral Health](#) for individuals with lived experience in addiction recovery. It provides participants with an initial peer support specialist certification, with the goal of encouraging them to obtain a series of stackable certifications culminating in an Associate of Applied Science in Human Services through KCTCS, and/or a bachelor's degree in social work at a participating four-year university. Nine KCTCS colleges have committed to the initiative thus far, and the first year of implementation has been strong with almost 1,000 students enrolled in the program to date. Additionally, each CLIMB college has begun collaborations with regional partners to develop expanded employer, agency and provider participation. Those partners were brought together at a day-long convening on May 14th at The Campbell House in Lexington.

Career Development Officers: CPE launched the Career Development Officers (CDO) affinity group in the fall of 2022, which is comprised of workforce and career services professionals from the state's public and private postsecondary institutions. The



TALENT

Kentucky will increase talent and innovation to support our communities, employers and economy.

group's purpose is to operate as a resource; to share innovative ideas, policies, and strategies; and to assist those on Kentucky campuses who oversee and work within career services or career development departments. Meetings occur bi-monthly, and staff are in the midst of planning an in-person symposium in July 2024.

CPE as a Liaison and Partner: CPE continues to act as a liaison with state workforce and economic development agencies to ensure higher education is part of the state's overall economic development strategy. Staff participates in SWATT (Statewide Workforce and Talent Team), which ensures employees have the skills and credentials existing and prospective employers need. This group is comprised of leadership from the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and KCTCS, as well as Economic Development Secretary Jeff Noel and Education

Secretary Jamie Link. CPE also partners with the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) and its subcommittees to identify high-demand occupations and prepare more Kentuckians for these openings.

Research and Workforce Development Funding: CPE oversaw and administered the \$2.2 million Workforce Development Trust Fund distribution to 15 community and technical colleges to increase capacity for programs that address industries' needs for critical workers over the 2022-24 biennium. Additionally, universities have drawn down 45% of the state's recent investment of \$40M to the Bucks for Brains initiative. Both programs are designed to spark economic and workforce activity through support for innovative programs, research and scholarship.



VALUE

Kentucky will improve public understanding that postsecondary education is key to greater opportunity and economic growth.

People increasingly are questioning the value of a college, but this skepticism is based more on feeling than fact. Research clearly shows that higher education benefits individuals and society in countless ways. College graduates earn higher salaries, are less likely to be unemployed and have better health outcomes than individuals without a postsecondary credential. Through research, opinion pieces and other products, CPE is determined to show how much higher education matters.

KEY INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023-24

#KyHigherEdMatters: The [statewide advocacy campaign](#) continues through social media and other channels, despite a lack of dedicated funding. Staff are researching ways to expand this work and collaborate with campuses to promote a unified message.

Legislative Outreach: President Thompson and his leadership staff engaged in numerous conversations with the Governor, executive branch staff, legislators, legislative staff and members of state and federal education organizations on issues affecting higher education in Kentucky. Additionally, CPE advised key legislators and staff throughout the budget development process, served as a key resource on several bills and provided testimony before and during the 2024 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Community Outreach: President Thompson and CPE leadership held numerous meetings and events throughout the state to advocate for the value of higher education. Audiences included statewide and local Chambers of Commerce, Toyota, Kentucky Hospital Association and Fort Campbell. This outreach is broadening the agency's reach and helping CPE secure additional funding opportunities.

Direct Marketing Outreach: CPE promoted its work through multiple avenues. CPE News now has nearly 10,000 unique subscribers, exceeding benchmark standards for government organizations. Additionally, CPE's news releases, op-eds and infographics often are the catalyst for media stories and interviews.

Social Media Outreach: The social media accounts for CPE and President Thompson continue to grow, which furthers the Higher Education Matters message and promotes the work of the Council, its President and its units. As a result, social media engagement rates (likes, comments and shares) greatly exceed the benchmarks for government and higher education outreach and engagement.

Direct Media & Outreach: President Thompson and key leadership staff were interviewed by state and national media outlets nearly 100 times, and they provided over 100 keynote or plenary presentations at state and national conferences and events.

Weekly infographics: CPE distributes a [#KYHigherEdMatters Infographic of the Week](#), which features CPE, state or national data related to higher education trends, to 4,000 email subscribers and almost 4,000 social media followers through CPE's channels. In addition, these graphics are distributed to President Thompson's social media accounts, broadening distribution to approximately 8,900 users.

Research and Publications: CPE released several key [research reports](#) this year, including a study on undergraduate student debt, a report on DEI best practices, reports on gateway courses and improving transfer, and the annual progress report on strategic agenda key indicators. These publications continue to solidify CPE's reputation as a trusted and reliable provider of higher education content.



VALUE

Kentucky will improve public understanding that postsecondary education is key to greater opportunity and economic growth.

External Funding: CPE's reputation as an organization that creates value is corroborated by the increase in external funding in recent years. Grants from the James Graham Brown Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Save the Children, Cabinet for Health and Family Services and NASH enhance CPE's ability to affect change in Kentucky higher education. In total, CPE has been entrusted with several multi-year grants from national, state and community organizations that total over \$36 million.

Awards and Recognitions: President Thompson and CPE have been recognized several times over the past year:

- In April 2023, President Thompson received the [Smith-Wilson Award for Civil and Human Rights in Education](#) for his notable contributions to equitable education for all students.
- In December 2023, CPE received Complete College America's (CCA) highest honor, the [Stan Jones Legacy Award](#), which recognizes an individual, organization or state that has consistently embodied the vision of Complete College America and worked to increase the number of students who earn credentials of value.
- In March 2024, President Thompson received the [Betty and David Jones, Sr. Legacy Award](#) from Simmons College of Kentucky to recognize his commitment to education for all Kentuckians.
- In April 2024, CPE received the National Association of Higher Education Systems (NASH) [Scaling for Change Award](#) for its work in developing the nation's first statewide scholarship for displaced individuals.
- In May 2024, President Thompson received the [Wendell Thomas Award](#) from the Kentucky Association of Blacks in Higher Education (KABHE) in recognition of his endeavors to promote the cause of African Americans in higher education and for his commitment to promoting equal opportunity.



STATE LEADERSHIP

Strengthen CPE's role as an effective and respected postsecondary education coordinating agency.

In addition to strategic priorities, CPE has many administrative and statutory duties to fulfill. Key accomplishments in agency operations are highlighted below.

SJR 98 Study: In response to Senate Joint Resolution 98 (2023), CPE conducted a three-part study to determine (1) the efficacy of Kentucky's current postsecondary governance structure; 2) the feasibility of a new four-year public university in Southeast Kentucky; and 3) the feasibility and impact of narrowing KCTCS's scope to technical education and training only, with the comprehensive (regional) universities assuming responsibility for general education and transfer programs. CPE served as the chief project manager and lead in conducting quantitative research and analysis and consulted with third parties Ernst & Young and the University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research. The tight eight-month timeline required a [final report](#) by December 1, 2023. Following its submission, staff and contractors remained heavily involved presenting the report, providing additional context and following up with additional research.

Kentucky State University Management Improvement Plan: CPE continued its deep engagement with Kentucky State University (KSU) through the implementation of [HB 250](#) (2022). Over the last year, CPE and KSU staff focused on installing a new president, Dr. Koffi Akakpo, and completing management improvement plan objectives. Specifically, a new chief financial officer has been hired, a new monthly financial reporting package has been adopted and all objectives related to financial incentives have been completed.

Coordination of Statewide Issues: Throughout the past year, CPE facilitated numerous meetings with the campus presidents and legislative liaisons to discuss legislative strategies and provide

a coordinated approach to statewide issues. CPE's systemic approach has improved higher education's efficiency and effectiveness.

Collaboration and Learning Opportunities:

CPE has increased its outreach to institutions and community partners by hosting numerous workshops and events. With topics ranging from advising to credit for prior learning to workforce development, CPE provided collaborative opportunities for thousands of higher education constituents. This past year, CPE has hosted around 25 half-day or full day convenings, over 50 community of practice workshops, nearly 40 webinars and five large scale/multi-day events.

Statewide Board Training Opportunities:

In lieu of an in-person conference, CPE held a [four-part webinar series](#) for trustees, regents and higher education leadership. Speakers included Jamie Merisotis, President and CEO of Lumina Foundation; Carol Cartwright, President Emeritus of Bowling Green State University and Senior Fellow at AGB; Belle Wheelan, President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS); and a legislative panel moderated by President Thompson. Staff also maintained and monitored completion of the [online board training and orientation courses](#) by newly appointed and elected board regents and trustees.

Interactive Data Center Redesign:

To provide more narrative-driven data to stakeholders, staff are redesigning the CPE data portal. New public-facing dashboards will be created to help users visualize postsecondary progress in each strategic agenda priority area. Once the website and dashboards are built, the current data center will be removed from public view and shared with institutions and internal users through Tableau.



STATE LEADERSHIP

Strengthen CPE's role as an effective and respected postsecondary education coordinating agency.

Academic Common Market: When an academic program is not available in Kentucky, students are able to participate in the [Academic Common Market](#). This program, managed by CPE staff, allowed approximately 490 students in the 2023-24 academic year to attend approved out-of-state institutions at the in-state tuition rate.

Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL): One of CPE's key duties is managing the [KYVL](#), a consortium of over 300 Kentucky libraries and institutions, including colleges and universities, public libraries, K-12 schools, hospitals and the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA). KYVL services include research databases, a courier service and the Kentucky Digital Library, with shared services and collaborative purchasing resulting in annual savings of approximately \$10 million for Kentucky's postsecondary institutions. In 2023-24, members searched KYVL databases over 68 million times and downloaded or viewed more than five million full-text articles, images or videos. KYVL's courier transported thousands of items per month to facilitate resource sharing among public and academic libraries. Additionally, 19 partner institutions published over 50 local archival collections in the Kentucky Digital Library, making this unique content available online for scholarship, research and lifelong learning. (KYVL also houses the Affordable Learning KY initiative, described in the "Affordability" section of this report.)

Licensure of Institutions: CPE led [Kentucky's licensure functions](#) for non-public institutions operating within the state and managed the state's participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) and NC-SARA requirements. Staff renewed 74 licenses and approved ten new licenses; approved 144 new program applications and 271 program modifications; audited faculty in 79 new programs; and issued 11 new conditional licenses in 2023, with five of those satisfying conditions.

Agency Operations: Thanks to several grants and other non-state funds, CPE has been able to retain its full-time and part-time staff of 98 employees (24 with GUK and 12 part-time). Staff also operated and managed a FY 24 budget of \$7,205,700 for operations and strategic initiatives. We are pleased to report that the results of the FY23 agency audit showed no deficiencies or material weaknesses and a fair presentation of financial data.



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The Council does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services, and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation, including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities.



ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

JUNE 20, 2024



Affordability



Transitions



Success



Equity



Talent



Value

CPE Board Priorities

The Council envisions a future where higher education serves as a catalyst for social mobility, economic prosperity and community development. Using the state's ***Strategic Agenda for Postsecondary Education*** as a framework for action, the CPE board will prioritize:

- 1) Improving collaboration, coordination and communication with Kentucky stakeholders, the public at-large, postsecondary institutions and the workforce; and
- 2) Removing barriers and increasing supports to and through college completion for all students with continued focus on URM and low-income student populations.

Key State-Led Work



AFFORDABILITY

- Continue to moderate tuition increases in 2023-24 and 2024-25
- Nationally recognized *Students' Right to Know* website
- FAFSA Public Service Awareness campaign and outreach
- Humanitarian Assistance Scholarship program
- Significant increases in need-based state financial aid programs
- Research and analysis to better monitor and address affordability issues (debt and unmet financial need).



Outcomes

- **Average unmet financial need** (the average annual amount students pay out of pocket after financial aid and expected family contributions are subtracted) decreased 3.4% for public university undergraduates in 2022-23, from \$9,691 the previous year to \$9,359.
 - Unmet need for URM students fell from \$12,390 to \$9,458 over the same period.
 - Low-income students at public universities also saw their average unmet need decline by 3.7% in 2022-23.
- At KCTCS, average **unmet financial need** decreased by 0.6%. While unmet need for URM KCTCS students fell by 1.9%, average unmet need for students with low incomes rose slightly (by 0.9%).
- Undergraduates at public universities on average take 4.12 years to complete a degree, the same as last year. **Average time to degree** for KCTCS students inched up, from 2.92 in 2021-22 to 2.94 in 2022-23.
- **FAFSA completion** percentages dipped slightly from 88.9% to 88.6% in 2022-23 but were up slightly for URM students.

Key State-Led Work



TRANSITIONS

- Commonwealth Education Continuum
- Campus grants for summer bridge programming
- KY Advising Academy-led outreach and PD
- Admissions Redesign Initiative
- Readiness & transition services through GEAR UP KY
- Dual credit policy overall and professional development
- Postsecondary Advising grants to 17 school districts



Outcomes

- **Total undergraduate enrollment** at public universities in Fall 2023 increased 3.8% over the previous year, from 167,882 in fall 2022 to 174,243 in fall 2023.
- Every public university experienced **enrollment gains** in fall 2023 except for Kentucky State University, Morehead State University and Northern Kentucky University. ECU led the way with a 5.4% enrollment increase in fall 2023, followed closely by the University of Kentucky at 5.3%.
- **Enrollment at KCTCS** climbed 6.5% over the same period, from 73,956 to 78,771. KCTCS surpassed its 2023 target by 4,254 students.
- **URM undergraduate enrollment** at public universities and KCTCS increased 7.9 and 11%, respectively from the previous year. Enrollment numbers for low-income students are not yet available.
- Despite enrollment gains, the **rate of high school seniors going directly to postsecondary education** continues to decline (53.3% in 2021-22). College going rates for URM, Low-Income and Male students are less than 50%.

Key State-Led Work



SUCCESS

- KY Student Success Collaborative renewal
- Student Basic Needs and “Kynectors” on all campuses
- KY Transfer initiative
- Statewide student mental health initiative
- KY Graduate Profile & 10 essential employability skills
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion report on best practices
- Academic Leadership Development Initiative (ALDI)



Outcomes

- Four of the eight public universities increased **bachelor's degree production** in 2022-23. However, total bachelor's degrees awarded by public universities in 2022-23 fell 1.9% over the previous year. Undergraduate degrees awarded to URM students at public universities increased by 6.9%.
- The **average six-year graduation rate** increased by 0.7 of a percentage point, from 59.2% in 2021-22 to 59.9% in 2022-23. The six-year graduation rate for low-income students increased by half a percentage point, but the URM rate fell by 2.5 percentage points.
- KCTCS increased the average **three-year graduation rate** by 2.7 percentage points, from 41.4% in 2021-22 to 44.2% in 2022-23. The three-year graduation rate for URM students increased 2.1 percentage points, while the rate for low-income students increased 0.5 of a percentage point.
- **First-year to second-year retention** at public universities was up 2.5 percentage points, from 78.2% in 2021-22 to 80.7% in 2022-23. At KCTCS, retention increased 3.5 percentage points, from 57.3% in 2021-22 to 60.8% in 2022-23.
- **2-to-4 Year Transfer rates** continue to inch up from 58.3% in 2021-22 to 58.9% in 2022-23.

Key State-Led Work



TALENT

- Healthcare Workforce Collaborative (HWC) and Collaboratory
- Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund (HB 200)
- CLIMB-Heath Initiative – Career Ladders in Mental and Behavioral Health
- New Career Development Officers peer group
- Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Investment Fund
- Workforce Development Trust Fund and Bucks for Brains



Outcomes

- KY's **statewide educational attainment rate** continues to climb, now at 55.1% and on track to reach the 60% goal by 2030.
- Public universities increased **graduate degree production** by 7.8%, from 8,773 in 2021-22 to 9,460 in 2023.
- CPE awarded and oversaw \$8 million in grants to campuses to support **healthcare programs and improved healthcare pathways** through the HWC.
- Nearly 1,000 students enrolled in new **CLIMB program** with 9 participating KCTCS campuses.
- Oversaw distribution of 45% of the state's recent investment of \$40M to **Bucks for Brains** which is designed to spark economic and workforce activity through support for innovative programs, research and scholarship.

Key State-Led Work



VALUE

- #KYHigherEducationMatters advocacy campaign
- Legislative and community outreach
- Growth in social media and direct marketing presence
- Nearly 100 state and national media interviews
- Numerous keynote and conference presentations
- Weekly infographics to expanded audience
- External funding from JGB, ECMC, Lumina, Save the Children, CHFS, NASH to help advance CPE's agenda
- State and national awards and recognitions

Key State-Led Work



State Leadership

- SJR 98 study and additional studies assigned in 2024
- KSU Management and Improvement Plan
- KY Virtual Library
- Postsecondary Licensure
- Academic Common Market
- Data collection, management, reporting and analysis
- Agency management and operations

