

Minutes of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee
University of Kentucky Board of Trustees
Friday, February 19, 2021

The Human Resources and University Relations Committee of the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees met on Friday, February 19, 2021, via Zoom Webinar.

A. Meeting Opened

Sandy Shuffett, chair of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Chair Shuffett asked Katie Hardwick to announce the attendance.

B. Roll Call

The following members of the Committee were in attendance: Cathy A. Black, Lee X. Blonder, David Melanson, Paula Pope, Sandy Shuffett, Bryan Sunderland and Courtney Wheeler.

C. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Melanson to approve the minutes from the Tuesday, December 15, 2020 Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Sunderland. The motion carried without dissent.

D. Land-Grant Engagement: Building on our Historic Roots

Chair Shuffett introduced Vice President for Land-grant Engagement and the Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Nancy Cox and Associate Dean and Director of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Laura Stephenson.

Vice President Cox thanked the Board of Trustees for allowing her to discuss the role of land-grant engagement in the college, and the work they have been doing since the October Board Retreat to extend the mission across campus. "Consistent with UK's land-grant mission, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment serves the people of Kentucky and the world through unparalleled teaching, transformative research and relevant service to farms, families and communities."

Vice President Cox continued by discussing land-grant engagement across campus and strategic and integrated partnerships that leverage the assets and statewide reach of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CAFE), building on the already strong commitment to Kentucky.

Vice President Cox introduced Dr. Laura Stephenson, Associate Dean of the College and Director of Cooperative Extension to discuss the college's foundation – the Cooperative Extension System.

Dr. Stephenson thanked the Board for inviting her to share UK's Extension mission in Kentucky. "We are committed to building and strengthening the skills of our youth, families, individuals and local communities. Because our state is always changing, and new areas of need emerge, Kentucky Cooperative Extension service evolves to be relevant to every generation. We continue to build on our strong foundation of community engagement, redesign our county operations structure, and focus on assessing community needs to guide us."

Dr. Stephenson continued by discussing a community needs assessment process conducted in 2019 that included every county in Kentucky. She reported that more than 38,000 people participated in interviews, focus groups and completion of a needs-based survey and the information was used to develop local plans of work and as a result of the combined data, the Extension prioritized three statewide focus areas: 1) substance use prevention and mental health; 2) economic and workforce development; and 3) community leadership, engagement and pride.

Dr. Stephenson stated that the results of the community needs assessment also helped the Extension prioritize opportunities for early partnerships on land-grant engagement. "To meet our goals, we recognized that we would need to reconsider and restructure our organization as a 21st-century cooperative extension system. Cooperative Extension's newly redesigned operations will allow us to meet community needs in a more integrated way, empower agents to focus on community educational programming more effectively, and develop a pipeline to facilitate future partnerships."

Dr. Stephenson continued by explaining as they implemented the local programs based on the county plans of work and the community needs assessments, they had to pivot quickly with COVID. "We developed a rapid response approach with web-based programming to focus on the needs that emerged. Our offices served as regional sites for personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supply distribution. Extension agents mobilized local volunteers to sew face masks, gowns, surgical caps and construct face shields in response to requests from local hospitals and healthcare facilities. Extension offices in many counties served as coordinators for food bank and commodity distribution to collect, package and distribute food to those in need."

Dr. Stephenson offered examples of partnerships including working with the Governor's team agents to aid in statewide vaccine education. They coordinated focus groups to aid the state marketing firm to design vaccine messages that would resonate with diverse local audiences, particularly in Kentucky's rural areas. They partnered with UK Nursing, Pharmacy and Public Health colleges to further support vaccine access and education across the state. She recognized the Extension faculty that has been pivotal to support local food systems challenges by offering online versions of required industry certification programs and monthly production programs.

Dr. Stephenson stated, “We are committed to build a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion through our program efforts.” She offered examples including the success of the horticulture program in Louisville. “As a result of multiple community partnerships, there are nine community garden sites that provide fruit and vegetable harvests for over 500 gardeners. During COVID it was one of the most challenging projects we organized to ensure people were safe as they planted, tended and harvested their crops. These efforts reached 11 different linguistics groups and saw a 25% increase in first-time gardeners. We are incredibly proud of the networks we have across the state and on our campus. These deep partnerships allow us to broaden the expertise base, scope and reach of programs across the state.”

Dr. Stephenson introduced Vice President Cox to discuss additional engagement missions of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

Vice President Cox discussed the UK Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL), a nationally accredited lab that uses surveillance and regulatory testing for animal disease, public health and research for Kentucky animal agriculture. “This is a high-value service to the Commonwealth; studies show at least an \$8 return on investment for every \$1 invested in the VDL and the laboratory is used to train senior veterinary medical students, ensuring future veterinarians are prepared to meet the needs of animal agriculture.”

Vice President Cox continued by highlighting another program supported by the college – The Division of Regulatory Services (DRS), which is the only consumer protection and farmer support agency of its kind in Kentucky. She explained how the DRS works with the Food and Drug Administration to ensure that animal and pet feed is made safely, helping prevent diseases that could pose a human health risk. She added that there are more than 1,200 feed manufacturers in Kentucky and more than 24,000 feed products registered in the state.

Vice President Cox provided additional engagement examples including:

- The Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) serves Kentucky communities with programming and research through Community Strategic Planning, Community Design, Economic Development Strategies, Healthcare Leadership Program and Youth Engagement Leadership Program. CEDIK collaborates with other campus units as a part of UK's larger economic development initiatives.
- Kentucky Small Business Development Center provides critical support to Kentucky small businesses navigating the federal COVID-19 relief landscape and operates out of 17 centers across the Commonwealth.
- The James B. Beam Institute for Kentucky Spirits collaborates with the UK colleges of Agriculture, Food and Environment; Arts and Sciences; Business and Economics; and Engineering and industry by educating the next generation of

distillers and conducts research to ensure the long-term sustainability of the bourbon industry.

- The Grain and Forage Center of Excellence in Princeton, Kentucky which is dedicated to advancing agriculture and technologies and collaborates with high-tech private partners to provide engagement opportunities with the grain and forage industry.

Vice President Cox continued, “In the time that I have served as Vice President for Land-grant Engagement, I have had the opportunity to meet with and begin collaborating with units across campus including Vice President for Research Lisa Cassis and her team. That conversation allowed us to pinpoint opportunities for further exploration within the research priority areas of diversity and inclusion; substance use disorder; cancer; diabetes and obesity; cardiovascular; energy and neuroscience.”

Vice President Cox concluded her report by discussing coordinated partnerships with collaborative research groups targeting their research priority areas. “This is what it means to be a land-grant university in the 21st century, and we are looking forward to future opportunities in this area.”

Chair Shuffett opened the floor for questions.

Trustee Blonder asked about community-supported agriculture across the state. Vice President Cox discussed the Food Connection, which serves farmers, food producers, students and community members by supporting the development of sustainable food systems on UK’s campus and across Kentucky. Dr. Stephenson discussed the Extension Horticulture and Agriculture agent outreach across the state that provides informal education in agricultural production, environmental stewardship and horticulture practices.

Trustee Swanson asked for more information regarding the collaborations focused on disease prevention. Vice President Cox discussed the Extension effort’s dependence on faculty sharing their information and expertise with the Extension agents. She also pointed out that CAFE faculty does not include disease experts, so the college is working on partnerships with medical and health science faculty to help with the delivery of that information.

Chair Shuffett thanked Dean Cox and Dr. Stephenson. “We appreciate your enduring commitment to fulfilling our land-grant mission. Even in the most challenging of times, this work demonstrates our promise, as President Capilouto often says, to be the University of, for and with Kentucky.”

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Hardwick