

# PR 1

Office of the President  
June 19, 2020

1. University Calls All 30,000 Students to Check in Following Move to Remote Learning

All 30,000 University of Kentucky students received phone calls from the friendly voices of University employees, checking in to see how their transition went from in-person classes to remote learning. The initiative was led by Student and Academic Life and the Student Government Association who partnered with Information Technology Services and its Salesforce Call Center Campaign capability. The calls were made from mid- to late-April and involved nearly 200 volunteer staff and faculty. This outreach effort allowed the University to provide resources to students who needed help.

2. UK Faculty, Staff Heed Call for Personal Protection Equipment

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a need for more personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers. Various groups of University faculty, staff, and alumni have helped acquire or create PPE. Under the leadership of College of Fine Arts faculty members Rae Goodwin and Crystal Gregory, faculty and staff from across the college and other volunteers made hundreds of cloth masks for UK HealthCare. A group of UK Chinese and Chinese-American faculty members, led by Haoying Sun from the Gatton College of Business and Economics and Tracy Lu of the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment (CAFE), raised more than \$5,000 in 24 hours to acquire thousands of disposable and N95 masks. Michael Winkler, a radiologist at Gill Heart and Vascular Institute, worked with School of Art and Visual Studies' Siavash Tohidi and College of Engineering's Daniel Lau to create customized PPE on 3D printers. UK HealthCare emergency physician Brian Adkins and family friend Catherine Kamei, created the "Superhero Mask Project," home-sewn masks that display superhero figures. After taking the idea to social media, more than 600 masks were made and distributed to hospitals throughout Kentucky. The UK Confucius Institute and the Office of China Initiatives worked with their Chinese partners to bring 15,000 pieces of PPE to campus from a variety of sources in China. The N95 masks and face shields were donated to various groups at UK, including UK HealthCare, residents of UK's Graduate and Family Housing, Martin Luther King Center, and UK Postal Services' Distribution Center. Additionally, the parent of Chinese student Pan Fan in CAFE donated 1,000 masks for UK students. Staff at Cooperative Extension offices throughout Kentucky assembled more than 1,000 face shields being 3D printed at Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges. Extension staff members have also sewn over 5,000 masks. The shields and masks were distributed to health care facilities statewide.

### 3. UK, WRFL Find Alternative Ways to Celebrate Graduates

Although the May 2020 University Commencement was postponed, UK and student-run radio station WRFL 88.1FM honored graduates through different means May 3-9. WRFL broadcasted the names of May and August 2020 graduates during the week, culminating with speeches by President Eli Capilouto and Student Government Association President Michael Hamilton. The concept was spearheaded by WRFL and other student leaders and staff within the Office of Student Organizations and Activities and the Office of University Events. UK highlighted special graduate stories and messages from student leaders and President Capilouto on its social media channels throughout the week. Graduates were encouraged to share their special moments at home by using UK's traditional Commencement hashtag, #UKGrad. Graduates, parents, and families were encouraged to upload special UK grad profile photo frames for Facebook and Instagram. Individual colleges and departments also honored their graduates in various ways, including special video messages, social media engagement, and commemorative gifts. On April 17, the United States Army and the College of Social Work honored 24 graduating officers through a virtual ceremony on Zoom. The graduates successfully completed the Army-University of Kentucky Master of Social Work at Fort Sam Houston.

### 4. UK Gets NSF Funding to Develop Face Mask that Can Deactivate COVID-19

Engineering professor and director of UK's Center of Membrane Sciences, Dibakar Bhattacharyya, and his collaborators have received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to create a membrane mask that would capture and effectively deactivate SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The \$150,000 grant was secured through a Rapid Response Research (RAPID) grant from the NSF, which has called for immediate proposals that have potential to address the spread of COVID-19. Engineering faculty members J. Todd Hastings and Thomas Dziubla, as well as Yinan Wei from the Department of Chemistry are involved in the project.

### 5. UK Study Suggests State Imposed Measures Reduced COVID Cases Nationwide

A study released by the Institute for the Study of Free Enterprise (ISFE) evaluated the impact of four measures taken by state governments to slow the spread of COVID-19 — bans on large social gatherings, public school closures, the shuttering of entertainment-related businesses, and shelter-in-place orders. It found the combination of closing entertainment businesses — such as restaurants, movie theaters and gyms — and shelter-in-place orders, dramatically reduced the growth rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases. The report found that by April 27, the number of cases would have been 35 times higher without any of the measures — suggesting the U.S. would have reported 35 million (rather than one million) COVID-19 cases. The study also determined the other two measures — bans on large gatherings and school closures — had a less significant impact. A previous study by the ISFE confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kentucky would have reached 45,000 by April 25 without any state-imposed measures. For comparison, the total of confirmed cases was fewer than 4,000 at that time. Principal authors of the study

are Charles Courtemanche and Aaron Yelowitz, both professors in the Gatton College of Business and Economics, home of the ISFE.

6. New COVID-19 Biobank at UK Will Support Research

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) has created a new biospecimen bank to support research on the novel virus. Logistical support for the biobank is led by the UK Markey Cancer Center. The COVID-19 Research Registry and Specimen Bank will collect specimens from volunteers who have tested positive for or are suspected of having the virus. The bank will work closely with the UK COVID-19 Unified Research Experts (CURE) Alliance team, a new workgroup within UK's College of Medicine that unites experts from across the campus to focus on advising COVID-19 patient care and clinical trials.

7. UK's Superfund Research Center Receives \$8.7 Million

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) has awarded the University of Kentucky Superfund Research Center (UK-SRC) a five-year, \$8.7 million grant to conduct research aimed at better understanding and minimizing the negative health and environmental impacts of chlorinated organic compounds found at Superfund sites across the Commonwealth and the U.S. Funded by the National Institutes of Health's NIEHS Superfund Research Program since 1997, the UK-SRC integrates multidisciplinary research, training, and community engagement around a common theme: reducing risks posed by environmental contaminants in vulnerable communities. Kentucky is home to 20 (13 active) Superfund sites that are on the Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List.

8. New \$6.6 Million UK Study Could Change What We Know About Platelets

College of Medicine researcher Sidney Whiteheart has been awarded a prestigious Outstanding Investigator Award from the National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute (NHBLI) for his research on how platelets function in hemostasis and during immune responses. The \$6.6 million grant will fund the Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry professor's research over the next seven years. The study focuses on how platelets function when they form clots in blood vessels and when they sense circulating pathogens, like viruses. Whiteheart says the research could directly contribute to drug development for human diseases, especially thrombotic diseases and chronic viruses in the blood.

9. Study Reveals Pharmacy-level Barriers to Treating Opioid Use Disorder in Appalachian Kentucky

A study led by College of Public Health researcher April Young and Emory University researcher Hannah Cooper shows that a number of pharmacies in the Appalachian region of Kentucky are limiting the dispensing of buprenorphine, a medication used to treat opioid use disorder (OUD). This study arose from work funded by the Kentucky Communities and Researchers Engaging to Halt the Opioid Epidemic

(CARE2HOPE) grant, led by Young and Cooper. Published in the International Journal of Drug Policy, the study looked at buprenorphine dispensing practices in 12 Kentucky counties. The research team interviewed 14 pharmacists operating 15 pharmacies throughout these counties to explore dispensing practices and perceived influences on these practices.

10. UK HealthCare Implements State's Only eICU Clinical Command Center

Royal Philips, a global leader in health technology, and UK HealthCare announced a collaboration to create Kentucky's only operating clinical command center for tele-critical care and operational optimization. Leveraging Philips' acute telehealth platform, eCareManager, UK HealthCare is implementing a centralized virtual care model to help providers detect risk of patient deterioration so they can intervene earlier and help improve care outcomes for their sickest patients. Using this comprehensive system, UK HealthCare will provide 24/7 remote monitoring and access to specialists for patients in the neurological, trauma, surgery, post-anesthesia care, medical intensive care, emergency department, and cardiovascular patient care venues.

11. UK Alumni Help Front-line Health Care Workers, Local Restaurants

Two groups of UK alumni have been leading efforts to help feed health care workers on the front lines of the battle against COVID-19. Lexington residents Tonya and Rick Parsons, UK Fellows and Life Members of the UK Alumni Association, have raised money to purchase gift cards to local restaurants to give to UK HealthCare Emergency Department doctors, nurses, and staff at Chandler and Good Samaritan hospitals or to provide them catered meals. They established the private Facebook page Feed UK Hospital ER, and as of May 4, they had collected more than \$13,000 toward the project. In a separate effort, recent alumni Michael Zhu, Jodi Llanora, Kyle Luo, Logan Jones, and John Stein established the Kentucky chapter of Feed the Front Line, an organization that has the double mission of feeding front-line health care workers and supporting local restaurant employees. The group had raised more than \$10,000 by late April and delivered over 600 meals to health care establishments.

12. Two Parades Have Honored UK HealthCare Workers

A parade of nearly 30 vehicles made its way down South Limestone and back Friday, April 10, pausing briefly at UK HealthCare hospitals in a show of support and to honor front-line workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lexington street was filled with UK Police cruisers, trucks, and other vehicles with both signs and sirens to show appreciation to front-line workers including those at UK Chandler Hospital, Kentucky Children's Hospital, UK Good Samaritan Hospital, and Shriner's Hospital for Children as well as local police, fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The parade was organized by Rick McDonald of Gooch Construction, who worked with UK Police in coordinating the event. Meanwhile, on May 1, a parade of nearly 20 vintage and classic cars, such as Corvettes and Maseratis, from the Keeneland Concours d'Elegance fundraising event honored front-line health care workers and delivered a \$25,000 donation to Kentucky Children's Hospital. The parade drove past the pediatric clinic at

Kentucky Clinic South, UK Good Samaritan Hospital, and the UK HealthCare Pediatric Clinic at Maxwell Street before arriving in the front circle at UK Chandler Hospital Pavilion A to deliver the donation to Dr. Mark Newman, Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, and Dr. Scottie Day, Physician-in-Chief at Kentucky Children's Hospital.

13. Visit the University of Kentucky Today — Virtually

As social distancing became a way of life, the University campus lost not only its students, but also its prospective students who make campus visits. In response to that, UK unveiled a new virtual visit site in April, [visit.uky.edu](http://visit.uky.edu). This site provides an opportunity for students to experience what's possible on our campus — from anywhere. Additionally, new live online sessions are available for prospective students to connect with admission staff, representatives from the academic colleges, and current students through one (or multiple) virtual information sessions overseen by the UK Visitor Center.

14. Pilot Digital Badge Program to Help Students, Non-students Build Their Resumes

UK has launched a pilot program this summer that will give UK students and non-UK students an opportunity to take online courses in a specific area, regardless of their major or current studies, with the ability to earn a digital badge. A badge is a certification indicating demonstrated competency in a specific skill or area of expertise. On-demand, highly personalized, and shareable, badges give learners an opportunity for professional growth and value-added skills in areas that are directly related to their future or current career interests. The program requires students to complete two related online courses to earn a digital badge in the area of their choosing. Many of the digital badges allow students to choose two courses from three or four being offered in that badge.

15. Governor's School for the Arts Announces Virtual Summer Program

In summer 2019, the College of Fine Arts hosted the Governor's School for the Arts (GSA) for the first time on UK's campus and would have been back this summer if not for the COVID-19 pandemic. GSA will be hosted virtually from June 29 to July 17 this year to maximize the safety of students, staff, and faculty. While UK will not serve as the physical home this summer, the University remains a close partner as GSA develops opportunities and resources for the 2020 program.

16. Faculty and Staff Achievements

Donna Arnett (Dean, College of Public Health) served on a panel of national public health leaders at the virtual annual meeting of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health May 15.

Mark Coyne (College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment) received the 2020 William B. Sturgill Award, an honor given each year to a graduate faculty member who has provided outstanding contributions to graduate education at UK.

Anastasia Curwood (College of Arts and Sciences) was named the 2020 Dr. Doris Wilkinson Faculty Inclusive Excellence Award winner for enhancing the University

through inclusive leadership and vision, particularly in the realm of graduate and professional education.

Teresa Fan (College of Medicine/Markey Cancer Center) was awarded the 2020 Markey Women Strong Distinguished Researcher Grant of \$50,000 to fund cancer research.

Jeannette Sutton (College of Communication and Information) was awarded more than \$93,000 from the National Science Foundation to study risk communication on Twitter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

University Press of Kentucky release "Hitchcock and the Censors" by John Billheimer is the recipient of the Mystery Writers of America 2020 Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Critical/Biography.

Kate Zaytseva (College of Medicine/Markey Cancer Center) was awarded the 2020 Markey Women Strong Distinguished Researcher Grant of \$50,000 to fund cancer research.

Sherali Zeadally (College of Communication and Information) won the 2020 Albert D. and Elizabeth H. Kirwan Memorial Prize, bestowed each year to a faculty member in recognition of their outstanding contributions to original research or scholarship, with an emphasis on work produced four years prior to the award.

#### 17. Student Achievements

Sophie Beavin (Natural Resources and Environmental Science, of Prospect, Kentucky) received the 2020 Student Employee of the Year award from UK Human Resources.

Michael Hamilton (Political Science, of Johnson County, Kentucky) is one of two senior students honored with the Otis A. Singletary Outstanding Senior Award.

Marina Danielle Kirtland (Law, of Catlettsburg, Kentucky) has been named the Sixth Circuit 2020 Distinguished Law Student by The American College of Bankruptcy.

James Tyler Nichols (Mechanical Engineering, of Taylorsville, Kentucky) received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue research in aerospace engineering at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Stephen Parsons (Computer Science, of Lexington, Kentucky) received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue research in robotics and computer vision at UK.

Joe Walden (Psychology and Neuroscience, of Cincinnati, Ohio) is one of two senior students honored with the Otis A. Singletary Outstanding Senior Award.

#### 18. Alumni Achievements

Nadia Almasalkhi (International Studies/Arabic and Islamic Studies, of Louisville, Kentucky) received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue research in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Sam Hazen (CEO of HCA Healthcare) was named to a "Great American Economic Revival" industry group that will advise the White House on reopening the economy after the COVID-19 shutdown.

Christine Kindler (History) has received Humanity in Action's Berlin Fellowship, which recognizes commitment to social justice and human rights.

Rodney McMullen (chairman and CEO of The Kroger Company) was named to a "Great American Economic Revival" industry group that will advise the White House on reopening the economy after the COVID-19 shutdown.

Esther Putman (Neuroscience and Biology, of Lexington, Kentucky) received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue research in bioengineering at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Eura Shin (Computer Science, of Morehead, Kentucky) received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue research in robotics and computer vision at Harvard University.