

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING LAND-GRANT ENGAGEMENT

A REPORT BY THE UK ENGAGE VISIONING COMMITTEE



PURPOSE STATEMENT

UK Engage fosters, facilitates and supports collaborative work to solve key questions and meet pressing needs facing Kentucky through broad partnerships across the university, the extension system and the communities we serve.

UK Engage fosters and supports collaborative research and applied scholarship, meaningful student engagement and mutually beneficial community partnerships, effectively connecting the university and extension system with communities to co-create community-derived solutions. This work is made possible through:

- Collaborative, translational research that addresses relevant and timely questions;
- Applied scholarship, connecting knowledge and expertise from the university to the community;
- Meaningful student learning and engagement; and
- Co-creation that forges community-focused solutions.

UK Engage is guided by principles that emphasize:

- Leveraging the knowledge, talent, research, resources and reach of the university at-large to help populations within the Commonwealth thrive;
- A broad focus that is both university-wide and state-wide;
- Mutually beneficial partnerships that support problem identification and solution creation;
- Addressing important societal and community issues;
- Taking transdisciplinary approaches in creative solution finding;
- Diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Extension knowledge and expertise to co-create beneficial engagement programs and enhance extension programming and impact at community level; and
- Overall alignment with university goals, student learning, research priorities and engagement objectives.

This report outlines the following strategic priorities:

- Strategy 1: Improving Organization and Engagement Support
- Strategy 2: Building a Culture of Engagement
- Strategy 3: Investing In and Incentivizing Engagement
- Strategy 4: Setting Priorities for Engagement
- Strategy 5: Supporting Faculty, Staff and Student Engagement

STRATEGY 1: IMPROVING ORGANIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT

Recommendation 1: Vice President and Dean

To support land-grant engagement and ensure a productive relationship with Cooperative Extension, the roles of Vice President for Land-grant Engagement and Dean of the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment should remain linked and part of the President's Cabinet (VP) and Provost's Cabinet (Dean).

Recommendation 2: Engagement Leadership Council

To support land-grant engagement and maintain institutional buy-in across critical academic, research and administrative units, an Engagement Council chaired by the VP should be established with responsibility for ensuring the mission, vision and values of the university's land-grant legacy remain central to its work.

Recommendation 3: Engagement Advisory Committee

Similar to the UK Engage Visioning Committee, an advisory council made up of members inside and outside of the university who are committed to engagement-type work should advise the VP and Leadership Council on the university's engagement mission.

Recommendation 4: Office of Land-grant Engagement

Through a multi-institutional analysis, it is clear the university needs to invest resources and staff into its engagement enterprise. Initial staffing investments should include full-time or part-time personnel responsible for: Competitive awards program, engagement culture, strategy, communications, coordination and assessment.

Recommendation 5: Cooperative Extension

Successful community-based/level engagement activities should be connected to Cooperative Extension. Partnerships should include support and leadership from the Director of Extension as a new Associate Vice President. Cooperative Extension's, "Community Needs Assessment" should be designed to provide guidance for potential engagement activities.

STRATEGY 2: BUILDING A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: Engagement Academy

Create an engagement academy with a two-fold mission: 1) Educating faculty, staff and students on campus about our land-grant mission, Cooperative Extension, opportunities for collaboration and identified community needs, and 2) Educating Cooperative Extension about the resources and expertise available at the university.

Recommendation 2: Engagement Sessions

Launch a series of seminars open to faculty, staff and students across the institution interested in engagement. Topics can include success stories, challenges to engagement, best practices, scholarship of engagement and others to build awareness and interest.

Recommendation 3: Website

Create a website that defines a clear mission, vision and values for land-grant engagement and highlight early engagement examples to increase public visibility that draws sustained attention to engagement work.

Recommendation 4: Communications Support

Hire communications support to assist with marketing, messaging and program copy related to engagement programs. Develop a communications plan with regularized messaging strategies to build a culture of engagement for the university.

STRATEGY 3: INVESTING IN AND INCENTIVIZING ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: Endowment

Develop a fundraising plan to expand the Gene and Jean Cravens Endowment fund to support additional engagement programming, scholarships and professorships in line with the donors' intention and priorities for engagement.

Recommendation 2: Operational Costs

Identify and establish recurring institutional support for the engagement mission to cover staff, operations, assessment, program management and other needs identified by the VP/Dean and the Engagement Leadership Council.

Recommendation 3: Grant/Competitive Engagement Awards

Develop a competitive seed grant program similar to the "Igniting Research Collaborations" (IRC) to incentivize multidisciplinary, community-based engagement programs.

Recommendation 4: Shared Investment

Identify requirements for collaborative engagement initiatives to include investment by partnering colleges/units and community/business stakeholders. Such a requirement could be structured through the competitive engagement awards process, similar to the state's County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP) through the Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy.

STRATEGY 4: SETTING PRIORITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: Priority Setting Process

Create a process for setting thematic engagement priorities that integrates broad institutional feedback, aligns with the university's strategic plan and meets needs identified by external stakeholders and potential partners.

Recommendation 2: Kentucky Extension Community Needs Assessment

Integrate the Kentucky Extension Community Needs Assessment into the priority setting process and identify opportunities to expand and enhance the Kentucky Extension Community Needs Assessment to further identify needs and opportunities for engagement initiatives without creating a heavy survey burden on Kentucky counties and communities.

Recommendation 3: Research Priority Areas

Identify the appropriate balance and coordination between the university's research priority areas and engagement work to further incentivize and encourage multidisciplinary, translational and community-focused projects.

Recommendation 4: Cross-disciplinary/Transdisciplinary Priorities

Incentivize cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary partnerships in engagement. This could include, but should not be limited to, coordinated efforts in tandem with the Center for Clinical and Translational Science.

Recommendation 5: College Priority Alignment

Provide opportunities for academic colleges and university units to find cohesion for their work with engagement priorities. For a successful engagement enterprise, partners should see their work through an engagement lens.

Recommendation 6: Community Alignment and Cooperative Extension

The success of land-grant engagement is contingent upon work that is bottom-up and founded in Kentucky communities. To foster success, Cooperative Extension should be a partner with (rather than a channel through which) other units work in and with Kentucky communities.

Recommendation 7: Measuring Success

Assessment tools should be developed for measuring success in engagement. Assessment should align with the university's strategic plan assessment, Cooperative Extension evaluation and other institutional reporting procedures such as SACS-COC and the Carnegie Community Engaged University distinction.

Recommendation 8: Sample Priority Groups

Some initial priority groupings were identified through the UK Engage Visioning process. As a result, the engagement website features success stories around these priority groups:

- Community Vitality and Economic Development
- Health and Wellness
- Industry and Workforce Development
- Community Arts
- Youth Leadership, Development and Service
- Land-grant University Partnership

STRATEGY 5: SUPPORTING FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: Alignment with Accreditation

Land-grant Engagement is an "Administrative Unit" (AU) with reporting requirements for the university's SACS-COC accreditation process. Goals and strategies supporting engagement should level-up into AU reporting requirements.

Recommendation 2: Faculty Engagement

Incentivize engaged teaching and engaged scholarship in the promotion and tenure process for university faculty. Each faculty member should be able to see themselves as participants in engaged work. Avoid being exclusionary in a way that hurts campus involvement. The Provost, VPR, deans and department chairs should collaboratively support integrating

engagement into faculty professional development and rewards strategies.

Recommendation 3: Staff Engagement

Opportunities to lead and participate in engagement activities should be encouraged for staff. Units can play a role in supporting engagement and staff can serve as subject matter experts in various capacities. UK Human Resources should consider appropriate mechanisms for incentivizing and rewarding staff engagement.

Recommendation 4: Student Engagement

Student engagement applies to the ways that students can be active learners in the world. This can include classroom activities and out-of-class programs. Building a culture of student engagement may include internship programs through Cooperative Extension, service-learning opportunities, mentorship arrangements with faculty and staff, among other programs.

Recommendation 5: Engaged Scholarship

Engaged scholarship should be integrated into the faculty promotion and tenure process, research programs and other strategic priority areas for the university.

APPENDIX I: UK ENGAGE VISIONING COMMITTEE

UK ENGAGE

Overview of Purpose: The position of Vice President for Land-grant Engagement (VPLGE) is responsible for facilitating a broad range of relationships, programs and initiatives that further the university's public engagement mission locally and across the Commonwealth. In the first year of the new position's existence, eight partnerships between the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and other colleges have been initiated.

The university's strategic plan—The UK Plan for Unprecedented Research, Purposeful and Optimal Service and Education (UK-PURPOSE)—recognizes the important role of engagement in the areas of health and well-being, innovation and diversity.

To facilitate these outcomes, the VPLGE has the following objectives:

- Supporting the strategic plan goals through research, knowledge translation and community engagement;
- Fostering cohesive, innovative and relevant programs that include Cooperative Extension and other community-facing units;
- Expanding and enhancing the university's commitment to community-based partnerships in multi-disciplinary areas; and
- Connecting and institutionalizing opportunities for partnership between Kentucky citizens and UK's colleges, research centers and health education programs.

Visioning Partners: A crucial part of this process is the support, expertise and guidance of the Visioning Partners, who will serve as a "think tank," providing insight, expertise and ideas on the future of land-grant engagement. This group will inform priorities, structure and evaluation of engagement activities by the VPLGE in accordance with the strategic plan. Members are selected based on their success in engagement and community outreach and development efforts.

The committee will provide initial ideas and insights on the university's existing engagement work and ideas for the future to an "Executive in Residence" who is responsible for leading a strategic visioning exercise. The "Executive in Residence" will also be responsible for:

- Engaging in a review process of existing programs, data and community feedback to discern best practice models and strategic priorities for future success;
- Conducting a field analysis of other land-grant universities similarly structured with robust engagement models;
- Identifying opportunities, structure and processes to secure and distribute funding for engagement pilot programs; and
- Creating a means for evaluating the success for land-grant engagement and community-based programs.

The "Executive in Residence" shall complete a summary of the results of the focus groups and independent research effort and recommend a series of steps that meet the strategic priorities for the university and land-grant engagement. Recommendations for structure of the VPLGE office will be complete by early June, and the final work product produced in August of 2022.

VISIONING PARTNERS

- **Nancy Cox** (Convener) - Vice President for Land-grant Engagement and Dean of the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment
- **Al Cross** - Professor and Director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues
- **Alison Davis** - Professor and Director of the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky
- **Seth Debolt** - Professor and Director of the James B. Beam Institute for Kentucky Spirits
- **Jeff Fugate** - Acting Associate Dean of Administration in the College of Design
- **Clint Hardy** – Agriculture Extension Agent, Daviess County
- **Kim Henken** - Director of Extension Engagement and Administrative Initiatives
- **Brooke Hudspeth** – Associate Dean of Pharmacy Practice/Chief Practice Officer in the College of Pharmacy
- **Jennifer Hunter** – Assistant Director of Family and Consumer Sciences and Extension Professor
- **Brad Lee** – Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Plant and Soil Sciences
- **Trudi Matthews** – Senior Director of Quality and Value Strategy for UK HealthCare
- **Ian McClure** - Associate Vice President for Research, Innovation and Economic Impact
- **Brad Olson** - Assistant Professor of Community and Leadership Development
- **Melynda Price** – Director of the Gaines Center for the Humanities and Professor
- **Quentin Tyler** - Director of Michigan State University Extension
- **George Ward** - Executive Director for Coldstream Research Park and Real Estate
- **Laura Stephenson** - Associate Dean, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and Director of the Cooperative Extension Service

LEADERSHIP AND FACILITATION

- **Mary Shelman** (Executive-in-Residence) – Founder and Partner of the Shelman Group; chair of Visioning Partners discussions
- **Chris Crumrine** - Director of Government Relations for the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment; liaison to Mary Shelman and facilitator of the overall review process

APPENDIX II - UK ENGAGE TIMELINE

February 2022	Mary Shelman named Executive in Residence to lead the UK Engage Visioning Partners Process
February 2022	UK Engage Visioning Partners convened
February 2022	UK Engage overview and update provided to the Kentucky Extension Advisory Council
March-April 2022	Shelman meets individually with Visioning Partners
March-May 2022	Initial field scan of 20 benchmark universities
April-May 2022	Shelman meets individually with additional internal and external stakeholders to discuss UK Engage and gather feedback and input
May-June 2022	In-depth review of five benchmark universities identified based on the initial field scan noted above
July 2022	Review and discussion of UK Engage visioning process and initial findings with Cooperative Extension Administration and the CAFE Executive Operations Council
August 2022	Small group meetings and discussion with additional internal and external stakeholders regarding land-grant engagement and potential collaborations with Cooperative Extension
August 2022	Review and discussion of initial findings with the UK Engage Visioning Partners
September 2022	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
October 2022	Inaugural Celebration of Engagement
October 2022	Overview of UK Engage visioning process with Regional and Area Extension Directors
October 2022	UK Engage presentation to Kentucky Council on Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching

October-Nov 2022	County-level discussions of land-grant engagement opportunities and agent input process facilitated by Area Extension Directors and County Managers
December 2022	UK Engage updated for at Agriculture and Natural Resources agent in-service
December 2022	UK Engage update, discussion of continuing and emerging collaborations, and summary of agent input with Extension Administration
February 2023	UK Engage recommendations drafted
February 2023	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
April 2023	UK Engage and UK HealthCare begin discussing partnership opportunities
April 2023	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
May 2023	UK Engage, Kentucky 4-H and College of Social Work Partnership Launch
June 2023	Land-grant Engagement Operations Team Established
June 2023	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
July 2023	Associate Dean and Director of Cooperative Extension named Associate Vice President for Land-grant Engagement
July 2023	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
September 2023	Inaugural Engagement Academy
September 2023	Second-annual Celebration of Engagement
September 2023	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
October 2023	Engagement Grant Program announced

October 2023	Inaugural County Connections Event
October 2023	UK Engage update and discussion with Extension Administration
November 2023	UK Engage Recommendations adopted

APPENDIX III: UNIVERSITY BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

Background

The University of Kentucky created the Vice President for Land-grant Engagement to strengthen its tripartite mission of teaching, research and service bringing Kentucky's flagship university closer to and working with counties and communities across the Commonwealth. Since its establishment, the Vice President has engaged in a strategic research and planning effort that includes:

- Early Partnership Exploration and Opportunities
- Phase I - UK Engage: Preliminary Fieldwork
- Phase I – UK Engage: Land-grant Engagement Benchmarking

The following provides a current status report summary of this work as of May 16, 2022.

Phase 1 – UK Engage: Preliminary Field Work

The Vice President for Land-grant Engagement established the role of “Executive in Residence” and retained Mary Shelman to assist the “UK Engage” committee and initiative’s strategic work over the next several months. The initial field work undertaken by the Executive in Residence includes interviews with members of the UK Engage visioning partners.

During the month of May, Shelman continues her field work and conducts interviews with the following UK and external stakeholders:

- Nancy Schoenberg, Associate Vice President for Research and Health Disparities, Office of the Vice President for Research, Professor of Behavioral Science, College of Medicine
- Linda Dwoskin, Associate Vice President for Research, Special Projects, Office of the Vice President for Research, Professor of Pharmaceutical Education
- Katie Cardarelli, Senior Associate Provost for Administration and Academic Affairs, Associate Professor, College of Public Health
- Gia Mudd-Martin, Director of Community Engagement and Research, Center for Clinical and Translational Science, Associate Professor, College of Nursing
- Mark Shanda, Dean of the College of Fine Arts
- Janie Heath, Dean of the College of Nursing

- Pam VanArsdall, Division Chief, Dental Public Health, College of Dentistry
- Caroline Francis, Director of Career Development, UK Alumni Association
- Jorge Atilas, Dean and Director of West Virginia Extension and Engagement, and Kristi Wood-Turner, Director, West Virginia University Center for Community Engagement
- Ashley Stokes, Dean of Extension, University of Tennessee (previously at Colorado State University)

Phase 1 – UK Engage: Land-grant University Comparison Institutions

With the assistance of Assistant Professor of Community and Leadership Development Dr. Brad Olson, we identified several universities worth deeper investigation. These universities were identified based on the following criteria: Their status as an 1862 or 1890 public land-grant university; Carnegie Classification of either “high” or “very high” research activity; applied for/received the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification in 2015 or 2020; and have received recognition for engagement activities.

These universities include:

1. Colorado State University
2. West Virginia University
3. Oregon State University
4. The Ohio State University
5. University of Florida
6. Michigan State University
7. Virginia Tech University
8. Purdue University
9. University of California-Davis
10. University of Minnesota
11. Auburn University
12. Iowa State University
13. North Carolina State University
14. Oklahoma State University
15. Pennsylvania State University
16. University of Missouri
17. Louisiana State University
18. University of Georgia
19. University of Tennessee
20. Clemson University

From this list, we focused on the first five institutions and asked the following questions:

1. How does the university organize and/or structure its engagement work, with particular attention to the organizational structure, personnel, support and facilitated collaboration with other academic and administrative units?
2. How does engagement interface, partner with and support the university's extension mission?
3. Are there exemplar programs or projects from which the University of Kentucky can learn best practices?
4. How is engagement incentivized, initiated and financially supported?

During the month of May, we examined the first five universities and yielded the following insights included in this executive summary.

Land-grant Engagement "Field Scan" Executive Summary

In an effort to summarize the full report, the following thematic findings on organization, financial incentives and measuring success are provided below.

Structure/Organization

Colorado State University (CSU) established an "Office of Engagement" led by the Vice President of Engagement and Extension, a role that also sits on the university president's leadership team but is not within CSU's College of Agricultural Sciences. The office has an assistant vice president with a dual responsibility for CSU extension. Additionally, there are several center directors, including individuals responsible for "community development," "engagement program management" and "engaged scholarship." Additionally, CSU is in the process of rolling out an aggressive hiring campaign to further staff engagement efforts.

CSU maintains a "land-grant-engagement-like committee" within the office of and led by the university provost and co-chaired by the VP for land-grant engagement. It consists of 13 faculty members, eight emeritus members and six ex-officio members [\[link\]](#).

West Virginia University's (WVU) Dean of Extension and Engagement Director is housed within WVU Extension Service, reporting to the provost of the university, and supported by six individuals in the leadership office including two focused on partnerships and program management. There is an apparent disconnect from WVU Extension and the

broader university campus. WVU Extension has recently become home for the WKU Center for Community Engagement (originally established in the late 2000s as the Center for Service Learning, with a cross-campus mandate to support serving learning).

Oregon State University's (Oregon) equivalent engagement-oriented role operates as Vice Provost for the Division of Extension and Engagement, and oversees all of Oregon's extension services, the Center for Outdoor Recreation Economy and Oregon's continuing education programs; the position reports to the provost and serves on the president's cabinet. The unit has a robust staff, including the recently created role of executive director for engagement, director of extension, communications director, diversity coordinator, budget and HR officer, as well as regional and county leaders. Oregon was flagged as an example of a highly effective structure that connects and blends engagement, extension and outreach in support of the land-grant mission.

The Ohio State University's (OSU) equivalent engagement role falls within the university provost office, operating as a vice provost in charge of the Office of Outreach and Engagement. The office includes a team of six individuals, including an assistant vice provost, program director, event coordinator and communications staff.

The University of Florida (UF) has engagement programs spread across multiple colleges and departments but does not have a central leadership role in engagement. The university's college of agriculture, cooperative extension program and agricultural experiment station is housed within the Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences, led by a senior vice president-level position reporting to the president

Financial/Incentive Programs

CSU established the "Thriving Cities Challenge" within the Office of Engagement to promote both racial equity and climate change resiliency in a single program. The competition invites "solutions" and awards a \$10,000 capacity grant to the winners for implementing their project. Thriving Cities is one of 12 programs across five featured areas in food and agriculture, health and well-being, natural resources and sustainable programming, and family development.

Oregon created the "Outreach and Engagement Award" in the amount of \$2,000 to faculty who meet certain criteria and engagement objectives.

OSU's Office of Outreach and Engagement provides incentive funds and engagement grants for faculty and staff, international affairs grants and community-based development grants through a competitive award process.

Measuring Success

Oregon benchmarks their engagement success using the Carnegie Classification methodology for engaged universities. Information on other universities has not yet been identified.