

## MEETING MINUTES

Approved by the Committee on January 26, 2026

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Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Meeting Type: Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee  
Date: November 3, 2025  
Time: 10:00 a.m. ET  
Location: Virtual Meeting via ZOOM Webinar

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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The Academic & Strategic Initiatives Committee met Monday, November 3, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., ET. The meeting occurred virtually via ZOOM webinar. Committee Chair Karyn Hoover presided.

### **ROLL CALL**

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There was a quorum of 5 voting Council members in attendance.

- Dr. Kellie Ellis – attended
- Dr. Meredith Figg – attended
- Sean Garber – did not attend
- Karyn Hoover – attended
- LaDonna Rogers - attended
- Kevin Weaver - attended

Additionally, three other Council members attended as non-participants:

- Jai Bokey
- Dennis Repenning
- Michael Wheeler

CPE President Aaron Thompson served as secretary of the board, per the CPE Bylaws. Heather Faesy, CPE program manager, served as recorder of the meeting minutes.

### **CPE PRESIDENT UPDATE**

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Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President, provided a brief update to the Committee that focused on his recent discussions with legislators regarding the upcoming budget session and the emphasis the Council has placed on developing out the Graduate Profile in all programs on campuses.

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

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The minutes of the September 8, 2025, committee meeting were approved as presented.

## INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT: ADULT LEARNERS AND ENROLLMENT GROWTH

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The following three members of the Council staff presented an update on the Council's efforts to drive enrollment growth of non-traditional students and review recent outcomes:

- Ms. Tracy Teater, Associate Director of Adult Learner Initiatives
- Dr. Chris Ledford, Director of Data and Advanced Analytics
- Ms. Anushka Karki, Intern for Data and Advanced Analytics

Kentucky identifies adult learners as individuals aged 25-64 who are pursuing postsecondary education. Many juggle work, family responsibilities and other life commitments, making it challenging for them to enroll, persist and complete their educational goals. Over the last several years, the Council has increased its focus on this special population by promoting:

- Credit for Prior Learning
- Seamless Transitions from Adult Education
- Support for Justice-Impacted Students
- Support for Parenting Students

After years of adult enrollment declines, these statewide strategies are beginning to reverse the trend. The inclusion of an adult learner premium in Kentucky's performance-based funding distribution model is also incentivizing campuses to become more adult-friendly.

## PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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Ms. Sheila Brothers, CPE's Senior Director of Academic Excellence, introduced three new academic programs for review and approval. KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council on Postsecondary Education to define and approve the offering of all postsecondary education technical, associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degree, certificate or diploma programs in the public postsecondary education institutions.

Council staff reviewed the proposed programs and recommended approval.

### 1. Kentucky State University – Master of Science, Sports Analytics (CIP 31.0504)

Presented by: Dr. Patrese Nesbitt, Assistant Professor, Faculty Senate President

- The 30-credit hour program is a one-year, fully online program that will train students in advanced data analysis, business management and communication skills tailored to the sports industry. The curriculum will combine academic theory and applied industry practice, preparing graduates to approach various challenges in the sports industry using exercise prescription, fan engagement, revenue generation, injury prevention and health disparity forecasting.

MOTION: Dr. Ellis moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval the proposed program from Kentucky State University. Ms. Rogers seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

2. University of Kentucky – Bachelor of Science, Applied Economics (CIP 45.0602)

Presented by: Dr. Darkshak Patel, Assistant Professor of Economics and Director of Undergraduate Studies

- The 120-credit hour program will provide graduates with a solid foundation in economic theory, advanced training in econometrics and statistical analysis and practical experience in applied research and data analysis. It will offer a more rigorous analytical focus and advanced qualitative skills than the university's existing bachelor's program in economics, and equip students with in-demand analytical, econometric and data science skills needed across various industries.

3. University of Kentucky – Bachelor of Science, Artificial Intelligence (CIP 11.0102)

Presented by: Dr. Zongming Fei, Professor of Computer Science

- The 120-credit hour program will provide students with the skills for building, evaluating and using artificial intelligence (AI) systems, which learn from data and interactions, reason with knowledge acquired and make decisions and take actions to solve real world problems. Students will learn core AI concepts and techniques, including knowledge representation, logic systems and automated reasoning, neural networks, machine learning, intelligent agents, planning, natural language processing, computer vision and AI ethics allowing for a comprehensive education that will be applicable in a wide variety of fields and professions.

MOTION: Ms. Rogers moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval the two proposed programs from the University of Kentucky. Mr. Weaver seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed. Dr. Figg abstained from the vote.

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#### **KCTCS PROGRAMS APPROVED BETWEEN SEPT-NOV 2025**

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KRS 164.020 (15) mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational/technical and occupational nature. Ms. Brothers presented the one new program reviewed and approved by the Council between September and November 2025. No action was required from the Committee.

- Gateway Community and Technical College - Associate of Applied Science, Medical Laboratory Technician (CIP 51.1004)

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#### **HEALTHCARE CAREER SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

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Ms. Michaela Stevenson, Program Manager of Healthcare Workforce Initiatives discussed the outcomes of grants awarded to 12 institutions to support summer bridge programs that expose high school students to healthcare careers and related postsecondary opportunities.

These grants provided high school students with hands-on experiences, foster interest in healthcare professions and equip students with the academic, social, and career-readiness skills needed to succeed in postsecondary healthcare programs. Highlights reported included increased hands-on experiences, support for first-generation students, and college credit opportunities. Select programs offered participants the chance to earn CPR, First Aid, and Stop the Bleed certifications, equipping them with practical, career-relevant credentials to enhance their readiness for future clinical experiences.

Ms. Stevenson also invited Council members to attend the upcoming Healthcare Workforce Collaboratory taking place on December 9, where some of the award recipients will be in attendance.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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The Academic & Strategic Initiatives Committee adjourned at 11:15 a.m., ET.