

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by the Committee on June 8, 2026

Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
Meeting Type: Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee
Date: March 30, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m. ET
Location: Virtual Meeting via ZOOM Webinar

CALL TO ORDER

The Academic & Strategic Initiatives Committee met Monday, March 30, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., ET. The meeting occurred virtually via ZOOM webinar. Committee Chair Karyn Hoover presided.

ROLL CALL

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

- Jai Bokey - attended
- Dr. Kellie Ellis – attended
- Dr. Meredith Figg – did not attend
- Sean Garber – did not attend
- Karyn Hoover – attended
- Dennis Repenning – attended
- LaDonna Rogers - did not attend
- Kevin Weaver – did not attend
- Michael Wheeler – attended

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.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the January 26, 2026, committee meeting were approved as presented.

CPE PRESIDENT UPDATE

Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President, provided a brief update to the Committee that focused on 2026 Legislative Session happenings and recent budget development discussions with legislators.

ANNUAL REPORT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS – ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25

Ms. Sheila Brothers, CPE's Senior Director of Academic Excellence, provided an overview of the new, closed, and reviewed academic programs during the 2024-25 academic year.

- A total of 30 new academic programs were approved during the 2023-24 academic year. Eleven of these were approved at KCTCS colleges and nineteen programs were approved at four-year universities: one associate's program, seven bachelor's degrees, seven master's degrees, and four doctoral degrees.
- Per Council policy, universities submitted their program review reports in July 2025. These reports included a summary of the institutional program review processes, programmatic decisions and plans for the upcoming year.
- During the 2024-25 academic year, Kentucky's public universities reviewed 293 academic programs and provided these recommendations:
 - 46 programs were recommended to grow;
 - 151 programs were recommended to sustain;
 - 46 programs were recommended to be improved; and
 - 50 programs were recommended to close.

No further action was needed by the Committee.

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM – EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Ms. Brothers introduced one new academic program 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 degrees, certificates or diploma programs in the public postsecondary education institutions.

Council staff reviewed the proposed program and recommended approval.

Associate of Interdisciplinary Studies (CIP 24.0102)

Presented by: Jennifer Wies, Associate Provost and Professor of Anthropology

- The 60-credit hour program is intentionally structured to serve adult learners, returning students, and transfer students who have accumulated significant college credit—but stop out of higher education. Students can craft a curriculum tailored to the student's educational history and interests, fulfill graduation requirements, and focus on integrating multiple disciplines to research a specific problem or area. Learners can select up to two “areas of emphasis” in the areas of arts, business, science, education, social and behavioral science, health, humanities, and technology.

MOTION: Mr. Repenning moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval the proposed program from Eastern Kentucky University. Mr. Bokey seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM – MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Ms. Brothers introduced one new academic program from Murray State University for review and approval.

Bachelor of Science, Artificial Intelligence (CIP 11.0102)

Presented by: Matthew Tennyson, Professor and Chair of the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems

- The 120-credit hour program will integrate computing, mathematics, and statistics with focused coursework in AI, machine learning, and deep learning. This will be complemented by applied electives in robotics, natural language processing, computer vision, bioinformatics, and financial technology.

MOTION: Dr. Ellis moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval the proposed program from Murray State University. Mr. Wheeler seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS – UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Ms. Brothers introduced two new academic programs from the University of Kentucky for review and approval.

Bachelor of Science, Agricultural Ecosystem Sciences (CIP 1.1102)

Presented by: David McNear, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies for Agricultural Ecosystem Sciences

- The 120-credit hour program focuses on agricultural productivity and environmental quality, and formulating recommendations that consider economic, social, and environmental aspects. Students in the proposed program will select both a Technical Specialization as well as an Applied Specialization, and it would be the only program of its kind in the state.

Bachelor of Science, Mapping and GIScience (CIP 45.0702)

Presented by: Matthew Wilson, Professor and Geography Department Chair

- The 120-credit hour program focuses on instruction in spatial analysis and representation using industry standards in geospatial technology. It expands UK's current offerings of a minor in GIScience as well as a specific track in their 4-year Geography degree. To ensure quality, students will enroll in an internship that will provide a supervised professional experience in a public or private sector position, which will expose students to the skills and working environments of careers in mapping and geography.

MOTION: Dr. Ellis moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval the proposed programs from the University of Kentucky. Mr. Bokey seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM – UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

Ms. Brothers introduced one new academic program from the University of Louisville for review and approval.

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Global Supply Chain Management (CIP 52.0203)

Presented by: Dr. Amy Henley, Dean, College of Business

- The 120-credit hour program will prepare graduates to manage supply chains across international borders including the flow of goods, data, and finances related to a product or service. It will also leverage an advisory board of regional supply chain leaders to include real-world case studies and community-based learning opportunities.

MOTION: Mr. Wheeler moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval the proposed program from the University of Louisville. Mr. Repenning seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS – WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Ms. Brothers introduced five new academic programs from Western Kentucky University for review and approval.

Master of Science, Applied Behavior Analysis (CIP 42.2814)

Presented by: Dr. Ellen Casale, BCBA, Assistant Professor, Special Education and Principal Preparation; and Dr. Corinne Murphy, BCBA-D, Dean, College of Education & Behavioral Sciences

- The 120-credit hour program prepares graduates for certification as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), to improve the lives of individuals needing behavioral support across their lifespan. The program will integrate coursework, supervised practica, and internships with a focus on early childhood, school-aged, and adult populations. Additionally, WKU will offer unique applied learning experiences through initiatives such as the Kelly Autism Program, the Clinical Education Complex, and community-based partnerships that provide students with hands-on BCBA training opportunities.

Bachelor of Science, Disaster Science (CIP 43.0302)

Presented by: Dr. Leslie North, Chair, Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences

- The 120-credit hour program will provide foundational knowledge in hazard identification, emergency management principles, disaster mitigation, response operations, and recovery planning, while building core competencies in communication, critical thinking, and applied field practices appropriate for entry-level or mid-level positions in public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Additionally, the proposed degree program will intentionally engage post-traditional learners, veterans, justice-involved individuals, and other non-traditional students by offering flexible course delivery and clear workforce-aligned pathways into high-demand careers.

Master of Science, Disaster Science (CIP 43.0302)

Presented by: Dr. Leslie North, Chair, Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences

- The 30-credit hour program will build upon the knowledge students gained at the bachelor's level by emphasizing advanced analytical skills, research methods, leadership, policy development, and strategic decision-making in complex disaster environments. Graduates can expect a wage premium when compared with those holding a bachelor's degree, largely because advanced degrees will lead to higher-level roles and leadership positions with greater responsibilities.

Bachelor of Science, Environmental, Earth, and Sustainability Sciences (CIP 03.0104)

Presented by: Dr. Leslie North, Chair, Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences

- The 120-credit hour program will provide graduates with the skills needed for occupations related to natural resources, water and waste management, geospatial analytics, sustainability planning, conservation, and geotechnical/engineering support. Additionally, the proposed program merges 2 existing degrees and will reduce duplication as well as modernize the curriculum, while preserving geology pathways that lead to licensure and clear workforce pipelines.

Bachelor of Arts, Integrated Advertising and Public Relations (CIP 09.0900)

Presented by: Dr. Angie Jerome, Assistant Director of the School of Media and Communication

- The 120-credit hour program focuses on modernized communication efforts in which students will develop skills in cross-platform content creation, integrated campaign analytics, and unified messaging. Many of the courses require research, are writing intensive, and contain capstone and case studies completion.

MOTION: Dr. Ellis moved the Committee endorse for final Council approval all five of the proposed programs from Western Kentucky University. Mr. Bokey seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

KCTCS PROGRAMS APPROVED BETWEEN JANUARY-MARCH 2026

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 January and March 2026. No action was required from the Committee.

- Maysville Community and Technical College - Associate of Applied Science, Automotive Technology (47.0604)

ADJOURNMENT

The Academic & Strategic Initiatives Committee adjourned at 11:45 a.m., ET.