

## MEETING MINUTES

Approved by the Council on April 2, 2026

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Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Meeting Type: Special-called Business Meeting  
Date: March 16, 2026  
Time: 11:30 a.m. ET  
Location: Virtual meeting via ZOOM webinar

### WELCOME REMARKS

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The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education held a special-called business meeting on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. ET. The meeting occurred virtually, and Chair Madison Silvert presided.

### ATTENDANCE

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There was a quorum of 14 voting Council members in attendance.

- Rev. CB Akins – attended
- Jai Bokey – attended
- Jacob Brown – attended
- Lindsey Case – attended
- Jennifer Collins – attended
- Dr. Kellie Ellis – attended (joined 11:50)
- Dr. Meredith Figg – attended
- Sean Garber – did not attend
- Karyn Hoover – attended
- Dennis Repenning – attended
- LaDonna Rogers – attended
- Madison Silvert – attended
- Elaine Walker – did not attend
- Kevin Weaver – attended
- Michael Wheeler – did not attend
- Comm. Robbie Fletcher – did not attend

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.

### REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION OF FUNDING FOR PROPOSED DOCTOR OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AT EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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The focus of the meeting was the recommendation to approve an appropriation request of \$50 million to the General Assembly for a new Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) program at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). This action item was expedited to ensure it reached the General Assembly before the budget conference committee.

Mr. Travis Powell, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, and Mr. Brent Floyd, Senior Associate of Finance Policy and Programs, presented the request and key

discussion points. EKU was determined to be eligible for the program as it meets the academic requirements (75th percentile nationally/80th percentile among SREB institutions for retention and graduation) and financial liquidity requirement (maintaining over 3 months of cash on hand, specifically calculated at 3.18 months).

Mr. Powell stated the proposal includes a unique \$42 million escrow reserve required by the accrediting body (Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation) as an "insurance policy," to be returned to the state after final accreditation and graduation of the program's first class. Additionally, \$8 million was requested for initial biennial operating expenses.

Dr. Melissa Bell, Vice President of Academic Excellence, discussed the review process the proposed program underwent prior to seeking Council approval.

EKU President David McFaddin highlighted Kentucky's critical physician shortage. He stated that 94% of Kentucky counties are designated as health professional shortage areas, and eight counties currently have no primary care physicians. He stated that EKU's program will aim for a class size of 150, with a specific focus on a rural medicine track. If funding is appropriated and the program is approved, the first class is expected to matriculate in fall 2031 and graduate in spring 2035.

Council members asked if adding a fourth medical school in the state would affect enrollment at UK, UofL and Pikeville University, and whether the new DO school would alleviate practitioner shortages in rural areas. EKU's responses alleviated these concerns. CPE staff also clarified that if approved, the requested escrow reserve will remain in the state government's bank reserves in an interest-bearing account.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved the Council approve the General Fund appropriation request for a proposed doctorate in osteopathic medicine at Eastern Kentucky University in the following amounts:

- \$42 Million requested in escrow reserves to initiate program offerings
- \$8 Million requested for initial operating expenses

Ms. Rogers seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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The Council adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m. ET.