



Kentucky Postsecondary Education Trusteeship Conference

NAVIGATING CHANGE: LEADING KENTUCKY HIGHER EDUCATION INTO THE NEXT ERA

September 28-29, 2026

Owensboro Convention Center, Owensboro KY



HIGHER EDUCATION
Matters

NOTES

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AGENDA-AT-A-GLANCE

MONDAY, SEPT. 28 – PRE-CONFERENCE TRAINING & MEETINGS

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	New Board Member Orientation	West AB
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Board Meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education	Riverview Room

MONDAY, SEPT. 28 – DAY 1 PROGRAMMING

11:00 AM	Conference Registration Opens	Hallway
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Networking Lunch	East Ballroom
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Welcome & Opening Keynote: Rebuilding the Promise: Value, Purpose, and the Future of Higher Education	East Ballroom
2:00 – 2:45 PM	Voices of Governance: Board Chairs Reflect on the Keynote	East Ballroom
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Concurrent Breakout Sessions #1 #1: The Trustee's Guide to Accreditation: Advancing Quality, Accountability, & Institutional Success #2: Sustaining Institutional Vitality by Identifying and Navigating Risk #3: Legal Insights Into Higher Education: An Interactive Panel Discussion	West AB West D West E
4:15 – 5:15 PM	Concurrent Breakout Sessions #2 #1: The AI Frontier: Governance in the Age of Intelligence #2: The Federal Higher Education Landscape: Policy, Funding, and Institutional Impact #3: Transforming the Student Journey: Modern Postsecondary & Workforce Initiatives in KY	West AB West D West E
5:15 – 6:30 PM	Connecting for Success: Networking Reception	KY Legend Pier

TUESDAY, SEPT. 29 – DAY 2 PROGRAMMING

9:00 – 9:45 AM	Keynote: Increasing Higher Education's Value Proposition for Students and Employers	East Ballroom
9:45 – 10:45 AM	Translating Insights into Action: Presidential Perspectives	East Ballroom
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Concurrent Breakout Sessions #3 #1: The Value Verdict: What Employers and Families Expect from Higher Ed #2: Intercollegiate Athletics: Trustee Oversight in a Changing Landscape #3: From Data to Decisions: Using Kentucky's Postsecondary Data Resources	West AB West D West E
12:05 – 12:55 PM	Networking Lunch	East Ballroom
12:55 – 1:15 PM	Foundation for the Future: Honoring Excellence in Governance	East Ballroom
1:15 – 2:15 PM	Legislative Leaders' Perspectives on Higher Education	East Ballroom
2:15 – 2:30 PM	Closing Remarks & Adjournment	East Ballroom

DAY 1 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

1:00-2:00 p.m.

East Ballroom

Welcome and Opening Keynote

REBUILDING THE PROMISE: VALUE, PURPOSE, AND THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education stands at a critical crossroads as shifting economic demands push traditional models to evolve. In this keynote, Lumina Foundation President Jamie Merisotis will outline a practical roadmap for expanding flexible learning pathways, defining high-value credentials, and rebuilding public trust to drive long-term prosperity.



Introductory Remarks

Madison Silvert

Chair
Council on Postsecondary
Education



Keynote

Jamie Merisotis

President
Lumina Foundation



Q&A Moderator

Dr. Aaron Thompson

President
Council on Postsecondary
Education

2:00-2:45 p.m.

East Ballroom

Panel Discussion

VOICES OF GOVERNANCE: BOARD CHAIRS REFLECT ON THE KEYNOTE

The Board Chairs of the public four-year universities and KCTCS will provide their perspectives on the keynote address. Moderated by Madison Silvert, CPE Board Chair.



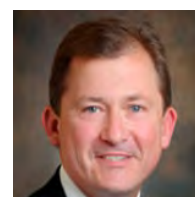
Madison Silvert

Council on
Postsecondary
Education



Larry Benz

University of
Louisville



Britt Brockman

University of
Kentucky



Michael Eaves

Eastern Kentucky
University



Keith Hamilton

Kentucky Community
and Technical
College System



Sanford Holbrook

Morehead State
University

DAY 1 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

3:00-4:00 p.m.

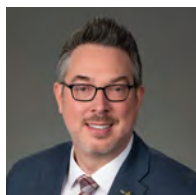
CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Please choose one of the three breakout sessions to attend; sessions will not repeat.

Location: West AB

THE TRUSTEE'S GUIDE TO ACCREDITATION: ADVANCING QUALITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND INSTITUTIONAL SUCCESS

Accreditation is more than a compliance exercise. It serves as a framework for institutional quality, improvement, and accountability. Attend this session to explore the purpose and value of accreditation; review recent and forthcoming revisions to the Commission on Colleges and Universities' principles, policies, and procedures; and learn how these changes can drive institutional innovation.



Presenter

Dr. Geoffrey Klein

Vice President, The Commission on Colleges and Universities

Location: West D

SUSTAINING INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY BY IDENTIFYING & NAVIGATING RISK

Drawing on a rigorous, peer-benchmarked diagnostic of Kentucky's public institutions, this session will separate headline noise from balance-sheet reality. Discover where Kentucky outperforms national peers in student completion, where financial and demographic risks actually lie, and why traditional strategies won't align degree production with labor-market demand. You will leave with a clear framework for institutional scale, operational collaboration, and critical questions to ask at your next board meeting.



Presenter

Dr. Dan Greenstein

Chief of Industry Transformation, Ellucian & Chancellor Emeritus of Pennsylvania System of Higher Education

Location: West E

LEGAL INSIGHTS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INTERACTIVE PANEL DISCUSSION

Dive into the pressing legal issues facing higher education today with this dynamic panel of experts. To ensure the discussion is tailored to your interests, attendees will participate in real-time polls, allowing the conversation to focus on the topics most relevant to you



Moderator

Travis Powell

Executive Vice President & General Counsel, Council on Postsecondary Education



Panelist

Dana Fohl

Vice President, Compliance & University Counsel Eastern Kentucky University



Panelist

Jim Newberry

Member Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC



Panelist

Judge Wilson

General Counsel Berea College

DAY 1 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

4:15-5:15 p.m.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Please choose one of the three breakout sessions to attend; sessions will not repeat.

Location: West AB

THE AI FRONTIER: GOVERNANCE IN THE AGE OF INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence is no longer a future consideration for higher education. It is already reshaping how institutions teach, operate, and compete. Governing boards face a core question: not whether to engage with AI, but how to oversee it deliberately. This session will examine the strategic issues trustees are facing, including supporting faculty through instructional change, expanding student access to AI-enabled tools (where it makes sense), and aligning academic programs with a shifting workforce. The session also will highlight recent Commission initiatives designed to provide additional support, guidance, and value to member institutions.



Presenter
Tamara Askew
Principal of Higher
Education, Deloitte

Location: West D

THE FEDERAL HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE: POLICY, FUNDING, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

Navigating the federal higher education landscape requires staying ahead of shifting administrative priorities, regulatory realignments, and legislative moves on Capitol Hill. This session will explore major Department of Education and executive actions, including Workforce Pell implementation, graduate borrowing limits and student loan accountability metrics, accreditation updates, and recent agency guidance. It also will examine the federal funding outlook and Pell Grant shortfalls alongside key pending legislation. You will leave with a clear framework for institutional scale, operational collaboration, and critical questions to ask at your next board meeting.



Presenter
Austin Reid
Federal Affairs Advisory,
National Conference of
State Legislatures

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DAY 1 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

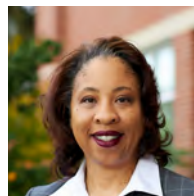
Location: West E

TRANSFORMING THE STUDENT JOURNEY: MODERN POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE INITIATIVES IN KENTUCKY

This podcast-style session led by the Council on Postsecondary Education staff will explore Kentucky's latest higher education strategies designed to streamline academic pathways, expand access, and align learning with high-demand careers. Attendees will gain insight into key state initiatives, including proactive admissions, three-year degree programs, performance-based funding, adult learner programs, and specialized workforce training in emerging industries.



Travis Powell
Executive Vice President
& General Counsel



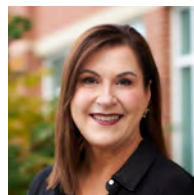
Dr. Dawn Offutt
Executive Director,
Student Access



Dr. Melissa Bell
Vice President,
Academic Excellence



Tracy Teater
Associate Director,
Kentucky Student
Success Collaborative



Dr. Leslie Sizemore
Vice President,
Workforce and Economic
Initiatives



Greg Rush
Assistant Vice President,
Finance Policy and
Programs

5:15-6:30 p.m.

*Kentucky
Legend Pier*

Reception

CONNECTING FOR SUCCESS: NETWORKING RECEPTION

Cap off day one at the networking reception, an opportunity to engage with fellow attendees in a relaxed, informal setting. Join us for an evening of lively conversation, refreshing beverages and delicious hors d'oeuvres. Whether you're looking to discuss the latest trends in higher education, explore potential collaborations, or simply catch up with colleagues, this reception provides the perfect environment to connect and share ideas. Cash bar will be open.

---- End of Day One ----

DAY 2 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

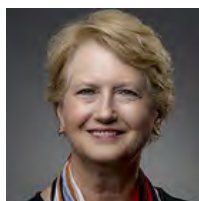
9:00-9:45 a.m.

East Ballroom

Keynote Address

INCREASING HIGHER EDUCATION'S VALUE PROPOSITION FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

In his state of higher education address, Dr. Aaron Thompson will discuss the urgent need to increase and make more visible the individual and collective value of postsecondary credentials. Using Lumina Foundation's national priorities for achieving their 2040 attainment goal, Dr. Thompson will reflect on what Kentucky is doing well and how we might better respond to demographic shifts, economic uncertainty, and the evolving needs and expectations of students and employers.



Introductory Remarks

Elaine Walker

Vice Chair
Council on
Postsecondary Education



Keynote

Dr. Aaron Thompson

President
Council on Postsecondary
Education

9:45-10:45 a.m.

East Ballroom

Panel Discussion

TRANSLATING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION: PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

The Presidents of the public four-year universities and KCTCS will provide their perspectives on the topics brought up during the keynote address.



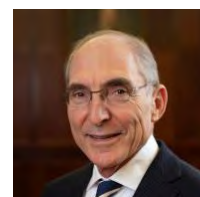
Dr. David McFaddin
Eastern Kentucky
University



Dr. Gerry Bradley
University of
Louisville



Dr. Tim Caboni
Western Kentucky
University



Dr. Eli Capilouto
University of
Kentucky



Dr. Jay Morgan
Morehead State
University



Dr. Ryan Quarles
Kentucky Community
and Technical
College System



Dr. Ron Patterson
Murray State
University

DAY 2 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

11:00-12:00 p.m. CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Please choose one of the three breakout sessions to attend; sessions will not repeat.

Location: West AB

THE VALUE VERDICT: WHAT EMPLOYERS AND FAMILIES EXPECT FROM HIGHER ED

How do families and employers evaluate the return on investment of a higher education degree today? In this session, Gallup experts will share national insights on how shifting macroeconomic forces, workforce demands, and public sentiment are redefining the perceived value of postsecondary credentials. Drawing from fresh survey data on employer hiring perceptions alongside family perspectives on affordability, this session will distill high-level social and economic trends into practical, forward-looking intelligence - equipping university trustees to proactively position their institutions to innovate, thrive, and lead in the decade ahead.



Presenter

Stephanie Marken

Senior Partner, GALLUP

Location: West D

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS: TRUSTEE OVERSIGHT IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The landscape of intercollegiate athletics is undergoing a fundamental transformation, driven by landmark judicial decisions; evolving Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) regulations; transfer reforms; and federal legislative proposals like the *Protect College Sports Act*. With landmark settlements establishing direct revenue sharing, roster limits, and new oversight mechanisms through the College Sports Commission, universities face unprecedented financial and operational implications. Designed specifically for trustees and regents, this session will examine the shifting dynamics of collegiate sports and outline the key governance responsibilities required to navigate them.



Jay Blanton

Vice President of
University Relations
University of Kentucky



Elizabeth McCoy

Trustee & Athletics
Committee Chair
University of Kentucky



Jason Schlafter

Executive Associate
Athletic Director
University of Kentucky

DAY 2 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

Location: West E

FROM DATA TO DECISIONS: USING KENTUCKY'S POSTSECONDARY DATA RESOURCES

Kentucky has a wealth of trusted postsecondary data—but knowing where to find it and how to use it is essential for effective decision-making. From understanding the true cost of college after grants and scholarships to examining enrollment, completion, workforce and other student outcomes, accessible data can help students make informed choices and help institutional leaders and policymakers shape strategies that improve results.



Jessica Fletcher
Chief Communications
Officer, Council on
Postsecondary Education



Dr. Chris Ledford
Executive Director of Data
and Advanced Analytics,
Council on Postsecondary
Education



Sam Keathley
Sr. Workforce Analyst,
Kentucky Center for
Statistics



Trey Pippen
Program Director, Futuriti
Council on Postsecondary
Education

12:05-1:15 p.m.

East Ballroom

Luncheon Keynote & Recognition Ceremony

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE: HONORING EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE

Enjoy an informal lunch with open networking and unstructured conversation. Following the lunch, the Council is pleased to celebrate the dedication, leadership, and visionary stewardship of Kentucky's long-serving regents and trustees. We honor these board members for their steadfast commitment, essential guidance, and visionary oversight in building a stronger foundation for their institutions, students, and communities.

Futuriti

How is your campus using Futuriti.org?

From career advising to financial aid tips and tricks, to student recruiting, students across the state are using Kentucky's own college and career ecosystem to make data-informed decisions.



DAY 2 AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

1:15-2:15 p.m.

East Ballroom

Panel Discussion

LEGISLATIVE LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Kentucky legislative leaders will share their perspectives on the policy and funding issues shaping the future of postsecondary education in the Commonwealth. Moderated by Renee Shaw, this discussion will explore student success, workforce alignment, affordability, accountability, and the role of higher education in leading Kentucky into the next era.



Moderator
Renee Shaw
Former Director of
Public Affairs, KET



Panelist
Sen. Gerald Neal
Minority Floor Leader



Panelist
Rep. JT Payne
Member of
Postsecondary
Education Committee



Panelist
Rep. James Tipton
Chair of Postsecondary
Education Committee



Panelist
Rep. Max Wise
Majority Floor Leader

2:15-2:30 p.m.

East Ballroom

Closing Session

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CPE President Aaron Thompson will reflect on the key takeaways from the conference and offer a path forward to address the challenges and opportunities facing higher education institutions.



Dr. Aaron Thompson
President
Council on Postsecondary Education



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KYCPE



KYCPE



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