

**KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION  
BUSINESS MEETING**



April 17, 2025 – 1:30 p.m. ET  
Northern Kentucky University, Vortuba Student Union, room 104  
Virtual Livestream Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89129396618>

*\*consent action item*

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*Next meetings @ Shaker Village, Harrodsburg*

- *June 12, 2025 – Council Board Retreat*
- *June 13, 2025 – Council Work Session and Board Meeting*

## MEETING MINUTES

*Draft for Approval by the Council on April 17, 2025*

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Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Meeting Type: Joint Meeting of the Council, Institutional Presidents, and the Board of Student Body Presidents  
Date: January 30, 2025  
Time: 4:00 p.m. ET  
Location: CPE offices, 100 Airport Rd, Frankfort – Conf Rm AB

### WELCOMING & CALL TO ORDER

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The Council on Postsecondary Education, Institutional Presidents, and the Board of Student Body Presidents met in a joint meeting on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., ET. The meeting occurred at the CPE offices in Frankfort. Chair Madison Silvert presided.

### ATTENDANCE

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Council Members attendance:

- Attended: CB Akins, Lindsey Case, Jennifer Collins, Kellie Ellis, Meredith Figg, Sean Garber (virtual), Faith Kemper (virtual), LaDonna Rogers (virtual), Madison Silvert, Macy Waddle, Elaine Walker, Kevin Weaver.
- Did not attend: Muhammad Babar, Jacob Brown, Karyn Hoover, Commissioner Robbie Fletcher.

Advisory Council of Presidents attendance:

- Attended: David McFaddin (EKU), Koffi Akakpo (KSU), Jay Morgan (MoSU), Cady Short-Thompson (NKU), Kirsten Turner, delegate for Eli Capilouto (UK), Kim Schatzel (UL), Ryan Quarles (KCTCS), Mason Dyer (AIKCU).
- Did not attend: Robert Jackson (MuSU), Tim Caboni (WKU)

Board of Student Body Presidents attendance:

- Attended: William Lambert (EKU), Aury Rios-Alcantara (KSU), Brady Lawson (MOSU), Brendan Hawkins (MUSU), Lucy Burns (NKU), Maddie Duff (UK); Allie Rose Phillips (UL); Sam Kurtz (WKU); Robert Higdon (KCTCS); Audra Shouse (KCTCS); Zachariah Lawson (AIKCU)

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

## **DISCUSSION**

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An agenda was distributed for the meeting, but no action was taken. Discussion topics included college affordability and mental health resource accessibility for students. BSBP Chair Allie Rose Phillips also discussed early plans for the student-planned 2025 Higher Education Rally.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. ET.

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## MEETING MINUTES

*Draft for Approval by the Council on April 17, 2025*

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Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Meeting Type: Business Meeting  
Date: January 30, 2025  
Time: 1:00 p.m. ET  
Location: CPE offices, 100 Airport Rd, Frankfort – Conf Rm AB

### WELCOME REMARKS

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The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education held a business meeting on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. ET. The meeting occurred at the Council offices in Frankfort, Kentucky. Chair Madison Silvert presided.

### ATTENDANCE

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The following Council members attended the meeting in person: CB Akins, Lindsey Case, Jennifer Collins, Kellie Ellis, Meredith Figg, Madison Silvert, Macy Waddle, Elaine Walker and Kevin Weaver. Council members who attended virtually were Sean Garber, Faith Kemper and LaDonna Rogers.

Council members who did not attend were Muhammad Babar, Jacob Brown, Karyn Hoover and Commissioner Robbie Fletcher.

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

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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The minutes of the November 21-22, 2024, meetings were approved as presented.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE – REPORT AND ACTION ITEM

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Committee Chair Kevin Weaver presented the Nominating Committee Report. After soliciting nominations and expressions of interest, the Committee unanimously agreed to re-elect Madison Silvert as Chair and Elaine Walker as Vice Chair.

MOTION: The Nominating Committee's recommendation of approval served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **KY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE) COMMISSIONER REPORT**

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KDE Deputy Commissioner Thomas Tucker provided the report on behalf of Commissioner Fletcher, who was unable to attend the meeting. He reported that Commissioner Fletcher has been visiting with as many school districts as he is able to strengthen state and local relationships. Tucker also discussed KDE's ability to serve more students through the food service program and outcomes of the recent 2024 computer science report.

## **UPDATE FROM THE STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBER**

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Ms. Waddle provided a brief report focused on college affordability and mental health resource accessibility for students, topics to be discussed at the joint meeting of the Council and student body presidents.

## **CPE PRESIDENT REPORT**

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President Aaron Thompson's written report was included in the board materials. He provided additional comments about the upcoming Futuriti website launch and accompanying press conference at the Capitol, the SkillBridge partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense and recent staff speaking engagements. Mr. Travis Powell, Sr. Vice President and General Counsel, and Ms. Regan Satterwhite, Director of Legislative Relations, provided an update on bills proposed in the first few weeks of the 2025 legislative session.

## **STATEWIDE STRATEGIC AGENDA DISCUSSION – MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY**

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President Robert Jackson provided the Council with an update on Murray State University (MuSU). President Jackson discussed MuSU's key strategies for each of the statewide strategic agenda priorities, as well as the baseline data and 2023-24 targets for key performance indicators. Attending the presentation with him was Dr. Renee Fister, Associate Provost, and Brenden Hawkins, Student Body President.

Following the presentation, Chair Silvert presented President Jackson with a resolution thanking him for his service to Murray State and postsecondary education in Kentucky in advance of his retirement on June 30, 2025.

MOTION: Rev. Akins moved the Council approve the resolution for President Bob Jackson. Mr. Weaver seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **ACADEMIC AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES COMMITTEE – REPORT & ACTION ITEMS**

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Committee Chair Karyn Hoover was unable to attend the meeting and requested Meredith Figg present the report and recommendations made by the Academic and Strategic Initiatives (ASI) Committee, which met on January 27, 2025. She announced that Committee members:

- Received the annual report of academic programs, which included a summary of the programs approved, closed and reviewed during the 2023-24 academic year.
- Received a report on the final enrollment numbers for fall 2024.
- Received a briefing on the upcoming Student Success Summit being held Feb 10-11 at the University of Kentucky Gatton Student Center.
- Reviewed and endorsed for Council approval three proposed new academic programs:
  - Master of Science, Applied Behavior Analysis (CIP 42.2814) at Murray State University
  - Doctor of Philosophy, Biomedical Informatics and Data Science (CIP 26.1103) at University of Kentucky
  - Doctor of Philosophy, Translational Bioengineering (CIP 14.0501) at University of Louisville.

MOTION: The ASI Committee's recommendation to approve the endorsed action items served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed. Meredith Figg abstained.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE – REPORT AND ACTION ITEMS**

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Committee Chair Jacob Brown presented the report and recommendations made by the Finance Committee, which met on January 27, 2025. Committee members:

- Received an update on asset preservation pool spending for fiscal years 2022-24 and 2024-26.
- Discussed the timeline for the 2025-26 tuition-setting cycle.
- Previewed potential revisions to the tuition-setting policy scheduled for approval at the April meeting.
- Reviewed and endorsed for Council approval revisions to the 2022-24 and 2024-26 asset preservation pool guidelines.
- Reviewed and endorsed for Council approval an interim capital project at Kentucky State University to renovate the Betty White Building at a project scope of \$2,853,330.45 (federal funds from U.S. Department of Agriculture).

MOTION: The Finance Committee's recommendation to approve the endorsed action items served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – REPORT AND ACTION ITEM**

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Chair Silvert presented the report and recommendation of the Executive Committee, which met the morning of January 30, 2025. Committee members:

- Received an agency budget update that provided a financial overview of the operating funds, technology trust funds, restricted and trust fund programs, grants and fiduciary funds through the second quarter of fiscal year 2025.
- Discussed the Council’s board retreat scheduled for June 12-13, 2025.
- Received the Q2 financial report conducted by auditor Moss Adams for Kentucky State University.
- Accepted and endorsed for Council approval the fiscal year 2024 audit conducted by Blue & Co.

MOTION: The Executive Committee’s recommendation to approve the endorsed action item served as the motion. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

Chair Silvert appointed Dr. Michael Yoder to the Healthcare Workforce Investment Committee to serve the unexpired term vacated by Beth Brinley, who retired in December 2024.

## **RETURN ON INVESTMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CBER)**

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Mr. Michael Childress from the University of Kentucky Martin School of Public Policy and Administration presented the findings of a study commissioned by the Council that examined Kentucky’s return on investment for funding allocated to public postsecondary institutions and state financial aid programs. A key finding was that the tax revenue generated by Kentucky college graduates is four-and-a-half times greater than the state’s initial investment in their degrees. Additionally, consumer spending generated by college graduates is 17 times greater, which supports local businesses across the Commonwealth. The full report can be found at: <https://cpe.ky.gov/data/reports/2024-cber-roi-report.pdf>.

## **2023-24 KENTUCKY DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS**

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Dr. Chris Ledford, Director, Data and Advanced Analytics, and Madalyn White, Senior Associate, presented the degree and credential data for the 2023-24 academic year. Data showed that total credential production has grown steadily over the last five years, with the most pronounced increases at KCTCS and AIKCU institutions, as well as in graduate degrees across both four-year sectors. The report also highlighted trends around



degrees/credentials awarded to students in targeted subgroups, such as adult and low-income students.

## **HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT FUND (HWIF) UPDATE**

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Dr. Leslie Sizemore, Associate Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development, presented an update on the work of the HWIF. During the first year of the HWIF, 46 healthcare training program partnership proposals were awarded funding, totaling a public/private investment of \$13,290,000 for healthcare training scholarships. A total of 27 healthcare partners invested in a HWIF partnership, and 35 healthcare training programs across 21 institutions/training sites were awarded funds. The awarded funds will provide full-tuition scholarships for one or two years to an estimated 794 Kentucky students. Through HWIF, CPE was also able to make a \$150,000 incentive fund award to EKU's School of Nursing. The private portion of this award (\$75,000) was donated by Humana.

## **CAMPUS GOOD NEWS REPORTS**

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Reports from the institutions were provided in the agenda materials. Chair Silvert provided highlights from Eastern Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, University of Louisville and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

## **CLOSED SESSION PER KRS 61.810(1)(f)**

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Chair Akins requested a motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

MOTION: Ms. Figg moved the Council go into closed session per KRS 61.810(1)(f) to discuss individual personnel matters relating to the reappointment of an employee. Ms. Walker seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

The Council remained in closed session for 30 minutes and returned at 3:45 p.m. ET.

MOTION: Ms. Figg moved that the Council go back into open session. Ms. Walker seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

MOTION: Chair Silvert stated that the Executive Committee moved the Council extend President Thompson's employment contract to January 1, 2030, and beginning fiscal year 2024, provide a \$50,000 contribution to a deferred compensation account conditioned upon continued employment on June 30 of each fiscal year. This would be in addition to any other compensation provided in the contract. A second was not needed.

VOTE: The motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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The Council adjourned the business meeting at 3:50 p.m. ET.

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A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING

**FAITH KEMPER**

for her service to the Council on Postsecondary Education  
and the Commonwealth of Kentucky

WHEREAS, Faith Kemper served on the Council on Postsecondary Education from June 2022 through March 2025; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, Ms. Kemper applied her business acumen, insight and leadership skills gained from over three decades at Proctor and Gamble to higher education issues in Kentucky; and

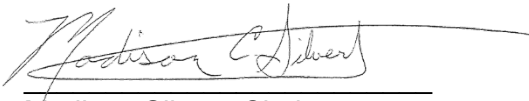
WHEREAS, Ms. Kemper's commitment to community service was reflected in her willingness to serve in multiple capacities for the good of Kentucky's students, as well as in leadership positions in the Kentucky Women's Network and the Kenton County Executive Committee; and

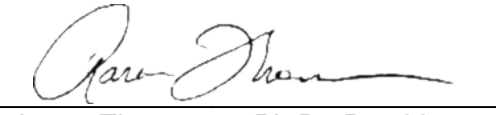
WHEREAS, Ms. Kemper dutifully served on the Council's Committee on Equal Opportunities, where she worked to ensure the needs of all students were being met through institutional practices and initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kemper has dedicated her time and energy to the Council on Postsecondary Education by participating in countless meetings, events and other activities; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Council value and respect Ms. Kemper's intelligence, compassion and desire to serve, and the application of these skills to public higher education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council on Postsecondary Education does hereby adopt this resolution, April 17, 2025, thanking Faith Kemper for her dedication and service, and wishing her good fortune as she starts her next adventure in the Northwest.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Madison Silvert, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Aaron Thompson, Ph.D., President

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top left shows a line of yellow school buses with "SCHOOL BUS" written on the front. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, desks, chairs, and educational posters. A large white diagonal shape cuts across the image from the top left to the bottom right, serving as a background for the text.

# Kentucky Department of Education Update

Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Presentation | April 17, 2025



# Creekside Elementary School Kicks Off All In for Ag Education Week



# Persistence to Graduation Summit

- The KDE Division of Student Success is hosting the 2025 [Persistence to Graduation Summit](#) at the Hilton in downtown Lexington on June 12-13. This year's theme will be "Elevating Student Voice."
- Engaging and interactive sessions will be led by facilitators from across the state and content will include:
  - Student transition and re-engagement strategies;
  - Alternative education programming;
  - Well-rounded educational opportunities;
  - Safe and supportive learning environments; and
  - Effective use of education technology.
- Registration is available at no cost to participants through Title IV, Part A funding, but registration is limited to the first 300. For more information contact [Lalah Brewer](#).



TEACH KY

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**. Go **TEACH**.



# Billboard Campaign



Rachel Maxwell  
Southern Elementary School

go **SPARK CURIOSITY**

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**. Go **TEACH**.  
Find your path at [goteachky.com](https://goteachky.com).



Allison King  
Paintsville Elementary

go **CULTIVATE GROWTH**

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**.  
Go **TEACH**.

Find your path at [goteachky.com](https://goteachky.com).

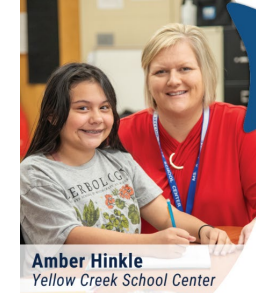


Kim Roberts  
Graves County High School

go **FUEL IMAGINATIONS**

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**.  
Go **TEACH**.

Find your path at [goteachky.com](https://goteachky.com).



Amber Hinkle  
Yellow Creek School Center

go **FOSTER CONFIDENCE**

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**.  
Go **TEACH**.

Find your path at [goteachky.com](https://goteachky.com).



Hayley Dant  
Randall K. Cooper High School

go **NURTURE DREAMS**

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**. Go **TEACH**.  
Find your path at [goteachky.com](https://goteachky.com).



C.J. Fryer  
Beechwood High School

go **IGNITE PASSION**

Go **INSPIRE**. Go **LEAD**. Go **TEACH**.  
Find your path at [goteachky.com](https://goteachky.com).







Video Link: [https://youtu.be/3J5I3B\\_wBI4](https://youtu.be/3J5I3B_wBI4)



Go **INSPIRE.**

Go **LEAD.**

Go **TEACH.**

# GoTeachKY Ambassador Maddie Morgan Promotes Teaching Profession with MSU Teach Students

Maddie Morgan is one of 21 Kentucky teachers selected for the 2024-2025 GoTeachKY Ambassador Program.

Ambassadors travel throughout the state providing valuable information to those considering teaching careers and help elevate the profession.

During a visit to Morehead State University (MSU) on Feb. 13, Morgan spoke to students, emphasizing the importance of effective teaching strategies, and the impact educators can have on student's lives.

Morgan says one of the best things about being an educator is the chance to make a difference.



# Kentucky Educators Rising Conference Draws Record Number of Aspiring Educators



# Kentucky's SkillsUSA Students Show Off Abilities at Statewide Conference



## Upcoming Graduates Recognized by KCTCS and KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education at "Going Pro" Signing Day



- The event at the Capitol kicked off Kentucky's Talent Take-off, the Going Pro signing season for high schools and KCTCS colleges. Signing day was also the first event to kick off Community College Month.
- Several employers — like Toyota and LG&E KU — and students who signed on to their companies spoke at the event.

# Fire Science Career and Technical Education Pathway Continues to Expand in Kentucky

- Henderson County High School and Woodford County High School will introduce their own programs next fall
- Fern Creek has flourished since its establishment in 2019, when it started with around 40 students. Today, nearly 200 students participate.
- The program at Lawrence County High School has been running for two years.



**TITLE:** CPE President Report

**DESCRIPTION:** President Thompson will highlight specific initiatives during his report to the Council. This written report serves as his official report for April 17, 2025.

**STAFF CONTACT:** Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President

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**SHEEO Basic Needs Academy:** Kentucky was one of seven states—along with Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Minnesota, and New York—selected to participate in a three-year initiative developed by SHEEO in partnership with the ECMC Foundation. The Basic Needs Academy supports state teams seeking to expand their capacity to integrate basic needs information into state postsecondary data systems. Each team will receive a \$60,000 sub-grant and will have access to coaches and content experts from the Coleridge Initiative, The Hope Center and WestEd's Data Integration Support Center throughout the project.

**CPE Wins Opioid Abatement Grant:** CPE is receiving a grant for \$488,676 from Kentucky's Opioid Abatement Commission to work with postsecondary institutions to provide trauma-informed recovery support services to adult learners impacted by opioid use disorder and co-occurring mental health challenges. The program will begin on July 1 and run for 12 months.

**GEAR UP KY Institute for a College-Going Culture:** The final GEAR UP institute in the current grant cycle was held April 16 at the Campbell House in Lexington, Kentucky. The theme was "Passing the Torch: Sustaining Student Success," and students, participating schools/districts, partnering postsecondary institutions and GEAR UP Kentucky staff were recognized for their accomplishments over the past seven years.

**DCBS Training Program:** CPE has agreed to facilitate a two-year transition process for the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) staff training program from ECU to a new training consortium comprised of Morehead State, NKU and Brescia University. This is a significant undertaking. DCBS has 5,000+ employees with training needs, with over 400 courses provided. CPE's Workforce and Economic Development unit is leading this work and is assembling a five to seven-member transition team to ensure program quality, while modernizing coursework.

**Futuriti Website:** Since launching the Futuriti website, which focused on college and career exploration, 13,500 individual visitors have accessed the site. The YouTube promotional video has been watched over 16,200 times, and Futuriti posts on X have received about 5,245



impressions. CPE staff also have presented Futuriti demos to more than 40 groups and organizations.

**Dr. Thompson's National Speaking Engagements:** On March 27, I was fortunate to serve on a panel moderated by *Inside Higher Education's* editor-in-chief, Sara Custer, about how improvements to student transfer and credit mobility can generate a stronger financial return for institutions. On April 2, I participated in a plenary panel at a national convening on postsecondary attainment in Washington D.C. My session focused on ways we can redefine the value of higher education for prospective students and policymakers.

**Staff Recognitions:** CPE staff members continue to gain state and national recognition for their good work.

- **Missy Ross, Kim Welch, and Laura Negron** of GEAR UP Kentucky served as presenters for multiple sessions at NCEP's National GEAR UP Academy, which occurred online February 3-6. The National GEAR UP Academy works to improve the skills, knowledge, and practices of GEAR UP leaders, practitioners, and partners.
- **Ilona Burdette and Enid Wohlstein** of the Kentucky Virtual Library represented CPE at the annual Kentucky Public Library Association conference in Lexington on February 21. Enid presented a session entitled, "Support Your Early Learners: KYVL Resources for Homework or Homeschool," and Ilona was part of a presentation called "Connecting Communities: Sharing Your Collections Through the Kentucky Digital Library."
- **Amanda Ellis** and I led a Kentucky team at a Hunt Institute-sponsored gathering in Arizona focused on the impact of teacher retention and recruitment across the education continuum. Representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education, the Education and Labor Cabinet and a university college of education also attended.
- The Kentucky Advising Academy, directed by **Mitzi Holland**, was featured in an article on the Education Strategy Group's (ESG) website. The piece singled out Kentucky's Postsecondary Advising Framework as a best practice for equipping advisors and counselors with tools to create a seamless advising system.
- **Kara Couch**, CPE Program Manager in Administrative Services, received the Values and Guiding Principles award given annually to the Kentucky public procurement professional who best exemplifies the values of the profession. The award is sponsored by the Kentucky Public Procurement Association.
- **Janna Vice**, CPE Senior Fellow, delivered remarks at the Posters at the Capitol event, where over 100 students from Kentucky's public institutions showcased their research for legislators. Janna spoke about how university research helps students master the ten essential skills of an undergraduate education, which are the foundation of the Kentucky Graduate Profile.

**New CPE Staff Members:** I'm pleased to welcome several new employees to CPE.

- **Devon Love** joined the Workforce and Economic Development team as an Associate. He comes to us from Sullivan University, where he worked as a career services advisor. Devon is enrolled in a doctoral program in educational leadership at the University of the Cumberlands, where he also earned a master's degree in organizational leadership. He earned a bachelor's degree from ECU.
- **Jessica Fletcher** joined the Student Access and Success team as a Program Director of Outreach and Partnerships. She most recently worked with KYSTATS, where she led the development of Futuriti. She also has worked at KDE, the Education and Labor Cabinet, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Prichard Committee. Jessica has a master's degree in public administration from Murray State University and a bachelor's degree in journalism from ECU.
- **Brent Floyd** joined the Finance Policy and Programs unit as a Senior Associate. Brent previously worked at the University of Kentucky as a business officer at the Martin and Patterson Schools. Brent has a Master of Public Administration from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Eastern Kentucky University.
- **Fallon Willoughby**, an employee of Southcentral Community and Technical College, joined the KYSSC Gateway Course Success team as a part-time Senior Fellow on March 20.

**Legislative Update:** It was a short but active session of the Kentucky General Assembly, which resulted in the passage of several bills impacting CPE or public postsecondary institutions. Regan Satterwhite, CPE's Director of Legislative Relations, will provide a brief update.

- **HB 4** (anti-DEI)
- **HB 193** (dual-credit scholarships)
- **HB 251** (education preparation program evaluations clean-up)
- **HB 263** (student teacher stipend program, direct payments to students)
- **HB 303** (Heroes to Healers)
- **HB 424** (employee review at postsecondary institutions)
- **SB 3** (NIL payments)
- **SB 77** (removes statutory prohibition of doctoral degrees at comprehensives)
- **SB 87** (CPE study on potential air traffic control safety programs)
- **SB 179** (nuclear energy development)
- **SR 237** (civics education report)

# Higher Education Legislation from the 2025 Session of the Kentucky General Assembly

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Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education  
Updated April 4, 2025



# House Bill 4 (Rep. Decker)

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- An act relating to initiatives regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- This bill mandates that institutions adopt policies ensuring non-discrimination based on political or social viewpoints and prohibits the use of resources for DEI offices, officers, and training programs. The bill also prohibits mandatory DEI statements in hiring, admissions, and contracts. It establishes strict compliance measures, requiring annual certification of adherence and periodic audits, with funding penalties for violations. Institutions must comply by June 30, 2025, with annual reporting beginning in 2026.
- Removes the requirement that CPE postpone the approval of new academic programs unless institutions meet their equal educational opportunity goals.
- Received final passage via veto override on March 27.

# Senate Bill 77 (Sen. Deneen)

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- Through its Senate Committee Substitute (SCS), this bill establishes an approval process for doctoral programs at comprehensive universities.
- It removes existing restrictions preventing these institutions from offering certain doctoral degrees, such as Ph.D. and veterinary medicine programs.
- It establishes criteria that require comprehensive universities to meet national or regional retention and graduation rate standards and standards for financial stability in order to submit proposals to offer doctoral programs.
- It grants CPE the authority to review and approve new doctoral program proposals from comprehensive universities, with a process to make funding recommendations for new doctoral programs as part of the biennial budget process.
- Signed by the Governor on March 19.

# House Bill 424 (Rep. Tipton)

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- An act relating to employment at postsecondary institutions.
- The bill establishes new employment standards and accountability measures for faculty and administrators at Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions.
- It requires performance and productivity evaluations for presidents, faculty, and staff at least once every 4 years, with the possibility of removal for those who fail to meet standards, regardless of tenure status.
- It allows boards of regents and trustees to delegate appointment and removal decisions to the president, in accordance with board-approved policies.
- Institutions must have their evaluation policies in place by January 1, 2026, with implementation to begin on July 1, 2026.
- Received final passage via veto override on March 27.

# Senate Bill 87 (Sen. Funke Frommeyer)

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- An act relating to aviation.
- This bill aims to enhance and expand air traffic control education.
- It directs the CPE, in collaboration with the Transportation Cabinet, to assess the capacity of public postsecondary institutions to offer programs that lead to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-recognized credentials in air traffic control safety, submit a report of findings to the LRC, and notify institutions who are identified as capable by December 1, 2025.
- By January 1, 2026, the institution(s) shall submit a request to CPE for approval of those programs and by June 30, 2026 shall approve said program(s).
- Signed by the Governor on March 14.

# Senate Resolution 237 (Sen. Reed)

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- This resolution aims to enhance civic education by improving Kentucky students' understanding of the United States' constitutional republic and its democratic processes.
- It requests CPE and the Kentucky Department of Education to submit a joint report (due July 1, 2025) to the LRC regarding:
  - Current programs within public education institutions to comply with the federal requirement of education on the Constitution
  - Implementation strategies to comply with and expand these educational programs.



# Senate Joint Resolution 55 (Sen. Tichenor)

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- This resolution directs public postsecondary institutions to adopt policies aimed at combating antisemitism by January 1, 2026.
- These policies are required until June 30, 2028, and must align with the definition of antisemitism established in 2021 SR 67.
- Institutions are also required to include Jewish organizations as community resources for their students.
- It mandates that institutions annually report relevant data to the CPE, which will compile the findings, submit them to the LRC, and publish on the Council's website.
- Signed by the Governor on April 2.

## Senate Bill 3 (Sen. Wise)

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- This bill relates to student-athletes in Kentucky being able to earn money from sponsorships or deals related to their name, image, or likeness (NIL).
- It allows institutions to contract with student athletes and set reasonable limits on how much athletes may earn, ensuring the payments are not extreme compared to what's usual.
- It adds liability protections for individuals employed by affiliated corporations.
- It exempts certain institutional agreements from disclosure under the Kentucky Open Records Act.
- Signed by the Governor on March 13.

# House Bill 303 (Rep. Bratcher)

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- An act relating to military healthcare personnel.
- The bill aims to streamline the transition of military healthcare personnel into civilian healthcare careers by enabling Kentucky colleges and universities to create academic career pathways and bridge programs. These programs are designed to reduce the time needed for credentialing by integrating military training and experience into civilian healthcare education.
- The bill promotes faster certification and employment for at least 27 military healthcare occupations (including Combat Medic, Radiology Specialist, and Pharmacy Specialist).
- The bill also encourages collaboration with professional licensure boards, the DOD SkillBridge Program, and various veterans' organizations to enhance recruitment, reduce transitional barriers, and support the employability of military healthcare professionals.
- Signed by the Governor on March 19.

# House Bill 193 (Rep. Payne)

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- This bill merges two existing statutes related to dual credit scholarships for general and career and technical education.
- It requires that general education courses be in the statewide general education core to be eligible for the dual credit scholarship.
- It removes the requirement that students pay back 50% of their scholarship if they do not successfully complete the dual credit course.
- Signed by the Governor on March 19.

# Proposed Legislation (*that did not pass*)

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## **Statewide Transfer Pathways (HB 427, Rep. Grossl)**

This bill proposed the creation of statewide transfer pathways for the first 60 credit hours of high-demand baccalaureate programs at public universities and KCTCS. Once established, institutions must accept transfer credits within these pathways as general education or program-specific credits before applying them as electives.

## **Statutory Relief for Campuses (HB 491, Rep. Riley)**

This bill proposed eliminating burdensome state government and capital projects requirements by redefining "equipment" to include advanced computing devices, such as smart medical and scientific equipment, raising financial thresholds for capital projects, increasing the minimum cost for real estate leases, equipment purchases, and IT system upgrades to qualify as capital projects. Additionally, it removes certain administrative requirements, such as invoice form specifications and meeting deadlines for university boards of regents.

**TITLE:** Proposed New Academic Programs for Review & Recommendation

**DESCRIPTION:** The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee recommends the Council approval proposed new academic programs from Kentucky State University, Morehead State University, Murray State University, the University of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University.

**STAFF CONTACT:** Sheila Brothers, MPA, Senior Director of Academic Excellence

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**COMMITTEE REVIEW & APPROVAL**

The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee reviewed and endorsed for final approval the below proposed new academic programs from Kentucky State University, Morehead State University, Murray State University, the University of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University at its April 14, 2025, meeting.

**PROGRAMS PROPOSED FOR APPROVAL**

Council staff has reviewed the following proposed programs and recommends approval by the board. The university-submitted documentation has been included in your agenda packets for review.

Kentucky State University

- Master of Science, Biological and Agricultural Engineering (14.0301)
- Master of Science, Criminal Justice (43.0104)
- Master of Social Work, Social Work (44.0701)

Morehead State University

- Doctor of Engineering, Systems Engineering (14.2701)

Murray State University

- Associate of Science, Dental Hygiene (51.0602)

University of Kentucky

- Master of Accounting, Accountancy and Analytics (30.7104)
- Doctor of Audiology, Audiology (51.0202)

Western Kentucky University

- Bachelor of Science, User Experience (11.0105)

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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.

Regarding the programs proposed by Morehead State University and Murray State University:

- KRS 164.2951 permits comprehensive universities to offer advanced practice doctoral programs, and 13 KAR 2:110 describes the criteria and conditions for the approval of advanced practice doctoral programs at comprehensive universities. A comprehensive university requesting approval for an advanced practice doctorate is obligated to provide additional details about the program beyond what is normally required. The institution also must describe how the doctorate will build upon an existing master's degree in the same field, detail any distinctive qualities of the existing master's program, demonstrate that the doctorate is required to advance in the field of study, explain the proposed program's impact on the institution's undergraduate education and provide evidence that the program will not impair funding for any existing programs at other public universities.
- KRS 164.295 permits comprehensive universities to offer associate programs. The CPE's "New Program Approval Policy" (approved in 2020) describes how KCTCS must be included in such proposals. Specifically, if a university intends to offer an associate program, the program will only move forward if KCTCS determines, within 30 days of notification, that a community and technical college(s) in the proposing institution's area of geographic responsibility: (1) does not have an interest in creating a similar program, and (2) does not have the ability to implement the program in a more cost-efficient and effective manner.

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** Kentucky State University  
**Program Name:** Biological and Agricultural Engineering  
**Degree Destination:** Master of Science

**CIP Code:** 14.0301

**Credit Hours:** 36

**Implementation Date:** 8/1/2025

### **Program Description**

As one of 19 land-grant HBCUs nationwide, Kentucky State University has long been recognized for its work in aquaculture, and this program will build upon that reputation. The proposed Master of Science in Biological and Agricultural Engineering program will prepare students to apply mathematical and scientific principles to the design, development, and operational evaluation of equipment and facilities to produce, process, store, handle, and distribute food, feed, and fibers. The program will emphasize research competency, including designing and conducting experiments and interpreting data. In addition to typical agricultural applications, the program will also promote applications to aquaculture and forestry.

As part of the graduation requirement, students will work on a real-world engineering problem, in partnership with a sponsoring industry partner. A regional board of industry leaders will provide feedback on the curriculum and assess potential internship opportunities with corporate entities throughout the world.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- identify, formulate, and solve complex engineering problems by applying principles of engineering, science, and mathematics;
- apply engineering design to produce solutions that consider public health, safety, and welfare, as well as global, cultural, social, environmental, and economic factors;
- recognize ethical and professional responsibilities in engineering situations and make informed judgments that consider global, economic, environmental, and societal contexts; and
- conduct independent research using appropriate research design, methods, and analysis.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

Kentucky State University currently offers master's degrees in Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences, and in Environmental Studies. Therefore, the institution currently has faculty with expertise in the areas of aquaculture and aquatic sciences, horticulture, soil science, soil-less science, entomology, food technology, and agricultural economics. The proposed program will benefit from these existing faculty, as well as the facilities and physical resources used by the existing graduate programs. The institution also has sufficient facilities (including library and learning resources, and science and technology laboratories) and student support services for the program. Kentucky State University received approval last academic year for a baccalaureate program in the same field, which can supply students for the master's program.



A similar program exists at the University of Kentucky, but Kentucky State University demonstrated sufficient student and market demand.

**Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

- Year 1 – 10
- Year 2 – 20
- Year 3 – 40
- Year 4 – 60
- Year 5 – 80

**Employment Demand**

Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, heightened public awareness of the hazards facing the environment is contributing to the demand for agricultural and environmental engineers. For example, these workers will help design solutions to mitigate pollution and promote access to clean drinking water. Employment of agricultural and environmental engineers is projected to grow 6% from 2022 to 2032, faster than the average for all occupations. Regional demand suggests graduates can anticipate strong earning potential, with an entry-level salary of \$73,812 and post-entry median salary of \$96,218. Nationally, approximately 3,400 openings for agricultural and environmental engineers are projected each year, on average, over the next decade.

**Budget**

Funding is available from the USDA and other governmental funding agencies, including scholarships for HBCU master’s programs. These funds will cover three-quarters of the cost of the two faculty members needed for the program, with tuition covering the remaining twenty-five percent.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 2,693,500
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 2,136,200

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** Kentucky State University  
**Program Name:** Criminal Justice  
**Degree Destination:** Master of Arts

**CIP Code:** 43.0104

**Credit Hours:** 30

**Implementation Date:** 8/1/2025

### **Program Description**

This proposed Master of Arts in Criminal Justice program at Kentucky State University will prepare students for mid-level positions in the field of criminal justice and will be particularly attractive to individuals already employed in the criminal justice field seeking management and other leadership positions. There will be two concentrations: Cybersecurity and Professional. The Cybersecurity concentration will prepare students to serve in positions such as security analysts. The Professional concentration will be attractive to those seeking positions in criminal justice generally, particularly leadership roles.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- analyze the structure, functions, and interrelationships of law enforcement agencies, courts, corrections, and related organizations within the criminal justice system;
- develop leadership and management competencies to lead and supervise personnel within criminal justice organizations;
- conduct applied research and program evaluations to assess the effectiveness of criminal justice administration practices;
- collaborate with interdisciplinary teams and stakeholders to develop and implement strategies for addressing challenges within criminal justice administration; and
- exhibit professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

Kentucky State University received approval last academic year for a baccalaureate program in the same field, providing a supply of students for the master's program. Similar programs exist at Eastern Kentucky University, the University of Louisville, University of Kentucky, and Western Kentucky University. However, there are differences in curricular foci, as well as intended student populations, which warrants addition of this program.

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 25

Year 2 – 50

Year 3 – 75

Year 4 – 120

Year 5 – 125

### **Employment Demand**

Bureau of Labor Statistics data for Kentucky shows positive job growth trends. Three-year historic occupational growth rates are in the 78<sup>th</sup> percentile and masters-prepared graduates can expect an entry-level salary of \$51,586. Median salaries are estimated to be \$81,803, showing clear potential for increases as time progresses.

**Budget**

The program will be supported by CPE funding for three years, as well as through tuition and fees. One additional faculty member will need to be hired, likely within two years of implementation.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 5,690,000
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 2,092,200

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** Kentucky State University  
**Program Name:** Social Work  
**Degree Destination:** Master of Social Work

**CIP Code:** 44.0701

**Credit Hours:** 60

**Implementation Date:** 8/1/2025

### **Program Description**

The proposed Master of Social Work in Social Work (MSW) at Kentucky State University will advance social work practice and focus on mental health services and policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Offering intentional engagement in urban areas, the program will provide graduates with professional experiences through interactions with clients, agencies, and policy makers, allowing graduates to promote social work theories for a variety of populations.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- apply ethical decision-making frameworks and professional values in diverse social work practice settings;
- evaluate social work problems, formulate solutions, and apply appropriate interventions based on evidence and theory;
- integrate knowledge of human behavior theories and frameworks to understand the complex interaction between individuals and their social environment; and
- develop proficiency in social work research methods and will critically assess and apply research findings in practice.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

A Bachelor of Social Work in Social Work is already offered by Kentucky State University, which will provide a ready pipeline for the proposed program. While similar MSW programs exist at Eastern Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, and Western Kentucky University, student and market demand are strong, both in the region surrounding Kentucky State University and throughout the state. Due to accreditation requirements, curricula tend to be similar from institution to institution. However, institutions are supportive of the proposed program.

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 25

Year 2 – 35

Year 3 – 45

Year 4 – 50

Year 5 – 60

### **Employment Demand**

Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicates market demand is in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile, demonstrating ample job availability for graduates. KSU's survey of healthcare providers and social service agencies in its region showed a 15% annual growth rate in demand for social workers, particularly in rural areas where social work professionals are in short supply. Data from Kentucky Labor Market highlights a projected increase in job openings for social workers over the next five years.

**Budget**

Two faculty will need to be hired to offer the program. The budget for the program is predicated upon 20 students enrolled per year, although enrollment is projected to start at 25 students per year.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 3,891,250
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 1,216,208

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** Morehead State University  
**Program Name:** Systems Engineering  
**Degree Destination:** Doctor of Engineering

**CIP Code:** 14.2701

**Credit Hours:** 60

**Implementation Date:** 8/3/2026

### **Program Description**

Morehead State University is well known for its expertise in space science. The proposed Doctor of Engineering in Systems Engineering program will focus on process and product design for the aerospace, defense, and manufacturing industries, with a strong emphasis on space systems. Students will choose from one of two specializations: Space Systems Engineering or Integrated Systems Engineering. The program will leverage Morehead State University's unique resources, including specialized laboratories and experienced faculty, to offer students a hands-on, applied research-focused learning experience.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- demonstrate a deep understanding of systems engineering principles and methodologies, including system architecture, design, modeling, simulation, and project management;
- apply systems engineering knowledge to solve existing problems in the aerospace, defense, and manufacturing industries;
- conduct independent applied research, analyze data, and effectively communicate findings through written reports and presentations; and
- collaborate effectively with other engineers and professionals in a team-based environment.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

Morehead State University's "program of distinction" is in space science and the institution has long been recognized for its unique contributions to the field of space systems. After receiving CPE approval for a master's degree in Space Systems Engineering Science in 2014, Morehead State University subsequently received approval for a baccalaureate program in Space Systems Engineering in 2020. The proposed program will create a natural progression for students seeking advanced education in the field of systems engineering.

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 4

Year 2 – 6

Year 3 – 8

Year 4 – 10

Year 5 – 12

### **Employment Demand**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects 6% growth nationally for aerospace engineers from 2021 to 2031, indicating a steady demand for engineers in these fields. A Doctor of Engineering degree will position graduates for senior-level and leadership roles within these

growing sectors. Data from the BLS and from industry salary surveys show that professionals with doctoral degrees in engineering earn significantly higher salaries than those with bachelor's or master's degrees. Morehead State University provided letters of support from three Kentucky businesses that expressed the need for highly skilled individuals in this field, which will strengthen Kentucky's technological workforce.

**Budget**

The program is projected to be self-sustaining through a combination of internal reallocations, external grants and contracts, and tuition revenue. Morehead State University's Space Science Center has been consistently successful in attracting funding from government sources (NASA and the U.S. Department of Defense), private aerospace companies (Intuitive Machines, Radiance Corporation, Rajant) and via subcontracts from university partners (MIT, University of Maryland). One faculty member will be hired in the fifth year of the program when the program's annual costs are expected to be fully offset by the anticipated revenue.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 1,070,000
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 1,450,000

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** Murray State University  
**Program Name:** Dental Hygiene  
**Degree Destination:** Associate of Science

**CIP Code:** 51.0602

**Credit Hours:** 76

**Implementation Date:** 8/15/2025

### **Program Description**

The proposed Associate of Science in Dental Hygiene program at Murray State University will prepare students to pass the National Board Exam for Dental Hygiene and the clinical board exams that are required for licensure as a Registered Dental Hygienist. The responsibilities of a licensed dental hygienist in Kentucky include scaling and polishing teeth, applying topical fluoride agents, placing pit and fissure sealants, providing nutritional counseling, exposing and processing dental radiographs, and educating patients in the proper care of their teeth and supporting structures. Upon graduation, students will be ready for licensure exams or be well situated to progress to a baccalaureate program in dental hygiene. Representatives from Murray State University and KCTCS met to discuss the proposed program, as well as the statewide need for dental hygienists. Future plans include development of additional KCTCS associate programs in dental hygiene, a possible baccalaureate program in dental hygiene at Murray State University, and clear transfer pathways between related associate's and baccalaureate degrees.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- complete and record a patient health assessment and identify the physical and oral health status;
- critically analyze assessment findings to address a patient's dental hygiene needs;
- solve problems and make decisions utilizing scientific literature as a basis for dental hygiene decision-making;
- assess, plan, implement, and evaluate community-based oral health programs; and
- provide dental hygiene services in a variety of settings.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

Only three other dental hygiene associate programs exist in the state (Big Sandy Community and Technical College, Bluegrass Community and Technical College, and Western Kentucky University). No dental hygiene program exists in Murray State University's 18-county service region.

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 8

Year 2 – 22

Year 3 – 28

Year 4 – 28

Year 5 – 28



**Employment Demand**

The projected job growth for dental hygienist is above average at the region (8%), state (7%), and national (9%) levels. Murray State University recently conducted a needs assessment by surveying 24 local dentists and orthodontists in its region. Dentists reported 16 open full-time positions and two part-time positions and that filling positions typically takes more than six months of searching. Overwhelmingly, regional dentists feel that a dental hygiene program at Murray State University is needed. Both the Kentucky Dental Association and the Purchase Dental Society confirmed the shortage of dental hygienists in western Kentucky and support development of the proposed Dental Hygiene program.

**Budget**

The initial start-up expenses of a dental hygiene program are high due to equipment needs, although Murray State University has received a \$1,000,000 grant to purchase 14 dental chairs and associated equipment. Three additional faculty members will need to be hired, but expenditures for the program will be covered by student tuition and fees.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	<b>\$ 4,269,302</b>
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	<b>\$ 3,954,750</b>

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** University of Kentucky  
**Program Name:** Accountancy and Analytics  
**Degree Destination:** Master of Accountancy

**CIP Code:** 30.7104

**Credit Hours:** 36

**Implementation Date:** 8/25/2025

### **Program Description**

The proposed Master of Accountancy in Accountancy and Analytics at the University of Kentucky will prepare students with technical, analytical, and professional skills required for success in diverse professional accounting roles. By integrating advanced accounting concepts with business data analytics applications, the program will address the growing demand for professionals in various areas in the accounting discipline. Students will also complete the necessary courses to sit for professional exams such as the CPA (Certified Public Accountant), CFE (Certified Fraud Examiner), CIA (Certified Internal Auditor) and CMA (Certified Management Accountant).

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- apply financial accounting-related technical knowledge;
- use analytical knowledge to address financial reporting-related issues; and
- demonstrate strong visual, written, and oral communication and presentation skills.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

The program will complement and coexist with the University of Kentucky's existing in-person Master of Science in Accountancy program. Through shared courses, the proposed program will provide new learning opportunities to a broader audience and enhance overall enrollment while maintaining the integrity and appeal of the existing program.

Similar programs exist at other universities. However, a combination of several aspects of the proposed program warrants its addition, including welcoming students without an undergraduate degree in accounting, allowing students to choose whether to take courses online or in person, and focusing on business analytics (as opposed to data analytics).

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 5

Year 2 – 10

Year 3 – 15

Year 4 – 20

Year 5 – 25

### **Employment Demand**

Demand for professional accountants continues to be strong, with “data analysis” being one of the most needed critical skills. The program will attract graduate students who do not have an undergraduate degree in accounting (who are considering a career leading to enhanced

employment opportunities) and international students pursuing a STEM-certified degree. Regional job postings from Lightcast show sufficient opportunities for graduates. The program was created in response to numerous inquiries from prospective students and a recommendation from the institution's Accounting Advisory Board.

**Budget**

The primary source of funding for the program will be student tuition. Given the projected number of students and tuition estimates, total revenues by the fifth year are expected to support hiring additional faculty to teach more sections. The institution will use summer overloads and/or 12-month faculty for new classes and utilize current instructors and offerings for the existing classes. Leveraging existing accounting courses will keep incremental operating expenses relatively low in the first few years.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 2,250,000
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 1,500,000

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** University of Kentucky  
**Program Name:** Audiology  
**Degree Destination:** Doctor of Audiology

**CIP Code:** 51.0202

**Credit Hours:** 104

**Implementation Date:** 8/1/2025

### **Program Description**

The proposed Doctor of Audiology in Audiology at the University of Kentucky will be a three-year, nine-semester advanced practice doctoral degree providing the necessary academic and clinical experiences for students to enter audiologic practice upon graduation. The format of the degree, including the externship, is consistent with the structure of existing audiology degree programs across the country and will meet audiology state licensure and national certification requirements, as well as programmatic accreditation standards.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- qualify for state licensure and/or professional certification in audiology;
- apply critical thinking skills and reason and judgement to solve complex audiology problems; and
- demonstrate clinical skills essential to delivering services to a wide range of populations.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

The University of Kentucky currently offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in a related field, speech pathology. The University of Louisville has the only Audiology degree program in the commonwealth and will average eight completions, annually. Sufficient student and market demand exist for an additional program in this field.

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 5

Year 2 – 10

Year 3 – 15

Year 4 – 20

Year 5 – 25

### **Employment Demand**

This program will address a shortage of audiologists, both in Kentucky and across the country. A job market analysis conducted for the proposed program indicated that demand for audiologists is expected to grow at twice the rate of all occupations over the next 10 years. Most Kentucky counties have relatively high percentages of persons with hearing loss, yet the number of audiologists per county in the commonwealth is quite low in most of the state. According to the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association, there are 3.0 audiologists

per 100,000 individuals in Kentucky, which ranks 47th in the country. Anecdotally, audiology positions at UK Healthcare often remain unfilled for extended periods of time.

**Budget**

Recurring general fund dollars will be used to support the program director position, and tuition will be used to support the remaining faculty positions. Until tuition is generated, UK Healthcare has committed to provide funds to help with the start-up of the program, including purchasing necessary equipment and supporting faculty salaries.

<b>Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 2,276,362
<b>Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):</b>	\$ 2,019,950

## PROPOSED PROGRAM SUMMARY

**Institution:** Western Kentucky University  
**Program Name:** User Experience  
**Degree Destination:** Bachelor of Science

**CIP Code:** 11.0105

**Credit Hours:** 120

**Implementation Date:** 8/1/2025

### **Program Description**

The Bachelor of Science in User Experience at Western Kentucky University will provide students with design-thinking processes and agile methodologies applied to the design of digital products, such as websites, dashboards, mobile apps, games, and more. Integrating human insights into the process of designing, researching, and creating technological interfaces, the User Experience program will combine insights and knowledge from a variety of perspectives, including human-computer interaction, learning, neuroscience, perception, product design, user-centered design, and usability.

As a result of this program, graduates will be able to:

- Apply user experience modeling and design frameworks to create digital products that address user needs and behaviors and meet industry standards;
- integrate design principles with one or more programming languages;
- conduct user experience research to evaluate design decisions, emphasizing the importance of the product development lifecycle, from ideation through deployment; and
- evaluate user experience research data to inform iterative design decisions.

### **Connection to Other Programs**

Western Kentucky University currently offers baccalaureate programs in Computer Science and in Visual Arts with a concentration in User Experience Design, as well as a certificate in User Experience Design. The proposed program will enhance, not replace, these existing curricula. Courses in the program will be taught by current faculty in disciplines such as computer science, art and design, graphic design, psychological sciences, and psychology.

Similar programs exist at Northern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky, however the foci are slightly different. Northern Kentucky University's program offers content in both user experience ("front end") and the servers and databases ("back end") needed to support the functionality, while Western Kentucky University's program focuses on the user experience. The University of Kentucky's program is an industrial design program that covers both physical and digital products, whereas Western Kentucky University's program is focused on a digital user's experience.

### **Student Demand**

Initial estimates of enrollment are:

Year 1 – 10

Year 2 – 23

Year 3 – 37

Year 4 – 55

Year 5 – 77

**Employment Demand**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not have a specific category for user experience professionals but includes those roles under broader categories such as "User Interface Designers" and "Web Developers." Anticipated regional job growth in those types of field ranges from 17% (commercial and industrial designers) to 32% (software quality assurance analysts and testers). Glassdoor's 2023 "50 Best Jobs in America" report ranked user experience design as one of the top fields, noting strong demand and high salaries. The report also highlighted that user experience positions offer competitive salaries and are in high demand across various industries.

**Budget**

The User Experience program will primarily make use of existing resources. It will be an interdisciplinary program, shared by the Potter College of Arts and Letters and the Ogden College of Science and Engineering. Both colleges having existing, robust enrollment. No additional faculty will be needed, as eight current faculty across the two units will cover the courses as part of their regular teaching load.

**Projected Revenue over Next Five Years (\$):**      \$ 1,027,118

**Projected Expenses over Next Five Years (\$):**      \$ 415,011

**TITLE:** New Academic Programs Approved at KCTCS

**DESCRIPTION:** The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee received an update on two AAS program proposals from KCTCS institutions between February and April 2025 in accordance with the program approval process. No additional action is necessary from the Council.

**STAFF CONTACT:** Sheila Brothers, MPA, Senior Director of Academic Excellence

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### COMMITTEE'S REVIEW

The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee received this information update at their April 14, 2025, meeting. It will not be covered or presented in detail at the board meeting; however, staff will be available for questions.

### APPROVED PROGRAMS AT KCTCS

Council staff reviewed and approved the following programs. No further action is needed.

#### Henderson Community College

- Associate of Applied Science, Education (CIP 13.1501) – The program will offer students the training required to begin careers in education. Several schools in the region report an insufficient supply of teachers. Graduates will be prepared to enter the classroom as primary and secondary school teacher's aides. In addition, Murray State University has a regional campus on Henderson Community College's campus and will partner on a "2 + 2" program, meaning interested students will be able to complete the associate program and coursework for a bachelor's degree from the Henderson Community College campus.

#### Somerset Community College

- Associate of Applied Science, Human and Social Services (44.0000) – The program will prepare individuals for entry-level positions in agencies and institutions that provide social, community, educational and mental health services. The program was created (in part) in response to a joint meeting between representatives of CPE's Healthcare Workforce Initiatives and academic leadership from Somerset Community College. Attendees discussed the lack of programs to address mental health needs in the region, with all parties noting a shortage of available, qualified well-trained employees. Upon completion of the program, graduates will be prepared to seek employment in various areas, which may include mental health settings, chemical dependency settings,



hospitals, educational institutions, correctional facilities, geriatric settings, child and youth centers, childcare facilities and social service agencies.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council to define and approve the offering of all technical, certificate, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degree at public postsecondary institutions. It also mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from KCTCS for new programs of a vocational-technical and occupational nature.

## **PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS FOR KCTCS INSTITUTIONS**

Associate degree programs of a vocational-technical-occupational nature (i.e. AAS) undergo the following process for approval:

- KCTCS posts a proposal to the program approval system. Institutions and Council staff have 30 days to respond.
- If no issues are identified, the program is approved by Council staff and reported as an information item to the Council.
- If issues are identified, the institution addresses those through the program approval system, and the review period is extended. Once the issues are resolved, the program is approved by Council staff and reported as an information item at the next Council meeting.

**TITLE:** Commonwealth Education Continuum Update

**DESCRIPTION:** The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee received an update on the work and initiatives of the Commonwealth Education Continuum.

**STAFF CONTACTS:** Dr. Amanda Ellis, Vice President of K-12 Policies and Programs  
Robin Hebert, Senior Fellow of K-12 Policies and Programs

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**COMMITTEE’S REVIEW**

The Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee received this information update at their April 14, 2025, meeting. It will not be covered or presented in detail at the board meeting; however, staff will be available for questions.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The Commonwealth Education Continuum (CEC), a P-20 council, exists to strengthen Kentucky’s education pipeline. Its work addresses the moral imperative for all students to have access and opportunity to earn degrees and credentials that lead to sustainable, competitive-wage careers. This collaborative effort will help Kentucky meet its 60x30 educational attainment goal.

Established in 2021, the Continuum is co-chaired by Kentucky Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) President Dr. Aaron Thompson and Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Kentucky Commissioner of Education. It consists of members whose expertise ranges from early childhood to the workforce.

Over the last four years, the CEC has continued to seek stakeholder input and use data to address barriers and identify ways to increase transitions to postsecondary education.

*Attachment: Slides shared during the April 14, 2025, meeting.*



Commonwealth  
Education Continuum

# Commonwealth Education Continuum Kentucky's P-20 Council

**Dr. Amanda Ellis, Vice President, Student Access and Success**  
**Robin Hebert, Senior Fellow, P-20 Policies and Programs**

# Mission



Commonwealth  
Education Continuum

The **Commonwealth Education Continuum** exists to remove barriers throughout the system to ensure students can access a seamless P-20 education journey. The Continuum supports actions that lead to Kentuckians earning the necessary degrees and credentials to succeed in the workforce, elevate our communities, and increase economic opportunity. The CEC achieves this by:

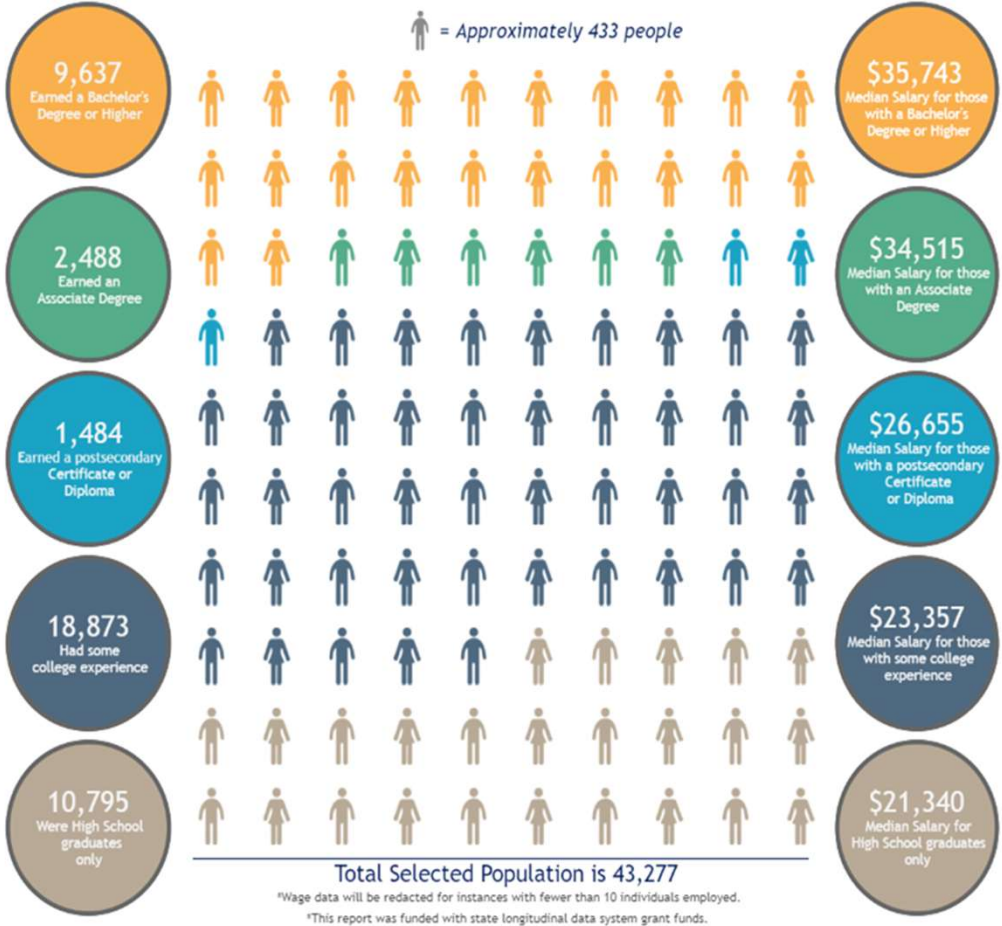
- Convening cross-sector partners,
- Monitoring and reporting progress,
- Identifying and advocating for policy solutions, and
- Accelerating action.

# Vision

The **Commonwealth Education Continuum** champions an agile education system that serves Kentuckians from cradle to career.

We aspire to be the most seamless education system in the nation, where Kentuckians have access and opportunity to earn quality degrees and credentials that lead to prosperous careers and fulfilling lives.

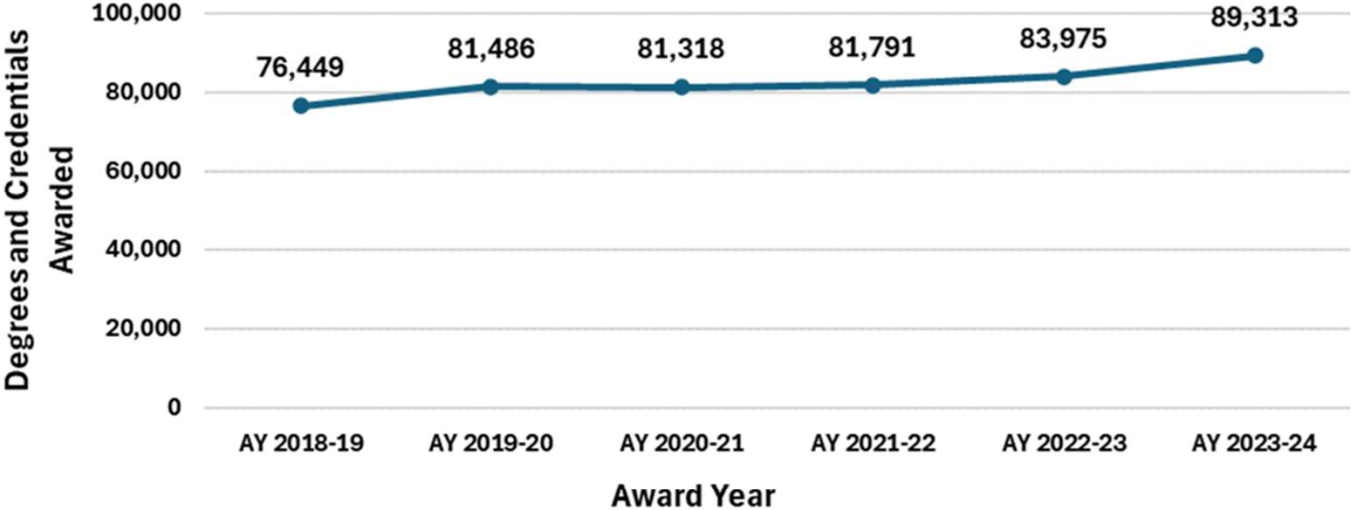
# 2019 Outcomes for 2012 High School Graduates



Source: KYSTATS 2019 Life Outcomes Report

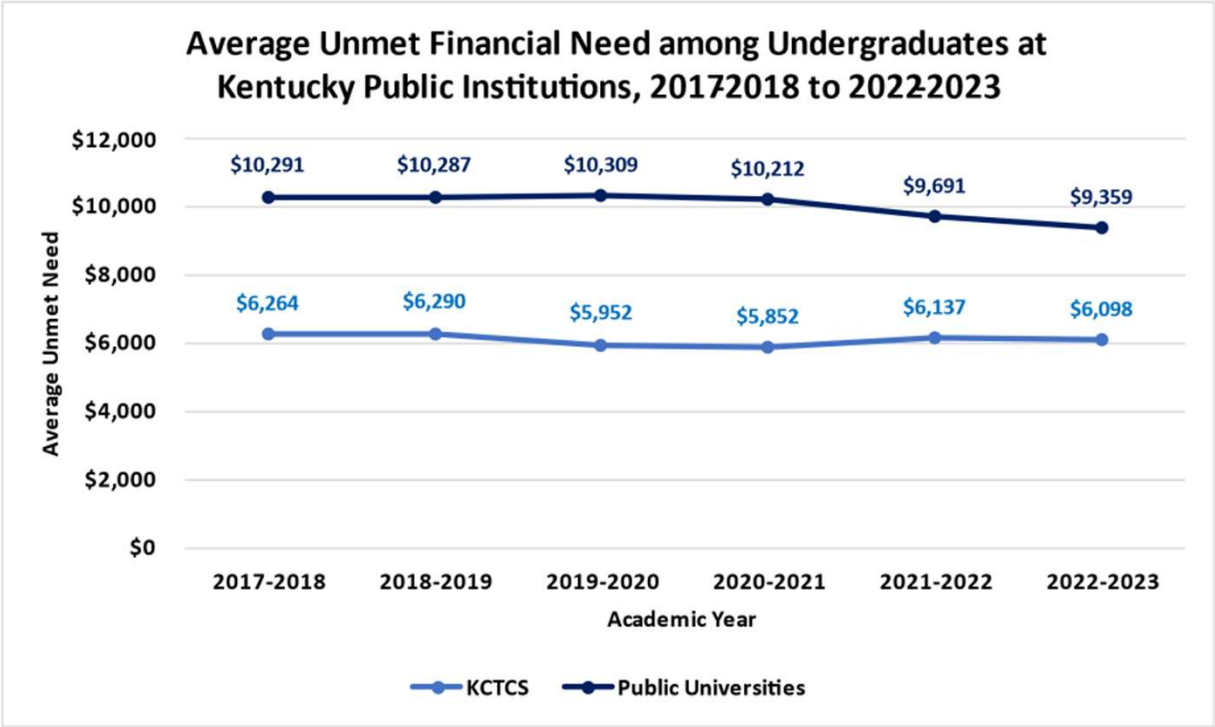
# All Public Institution Degrees and Credentials

Total Degrees and Credentials



- 1 Year Change: +6.4%
- 5 Year Change: +16.8%

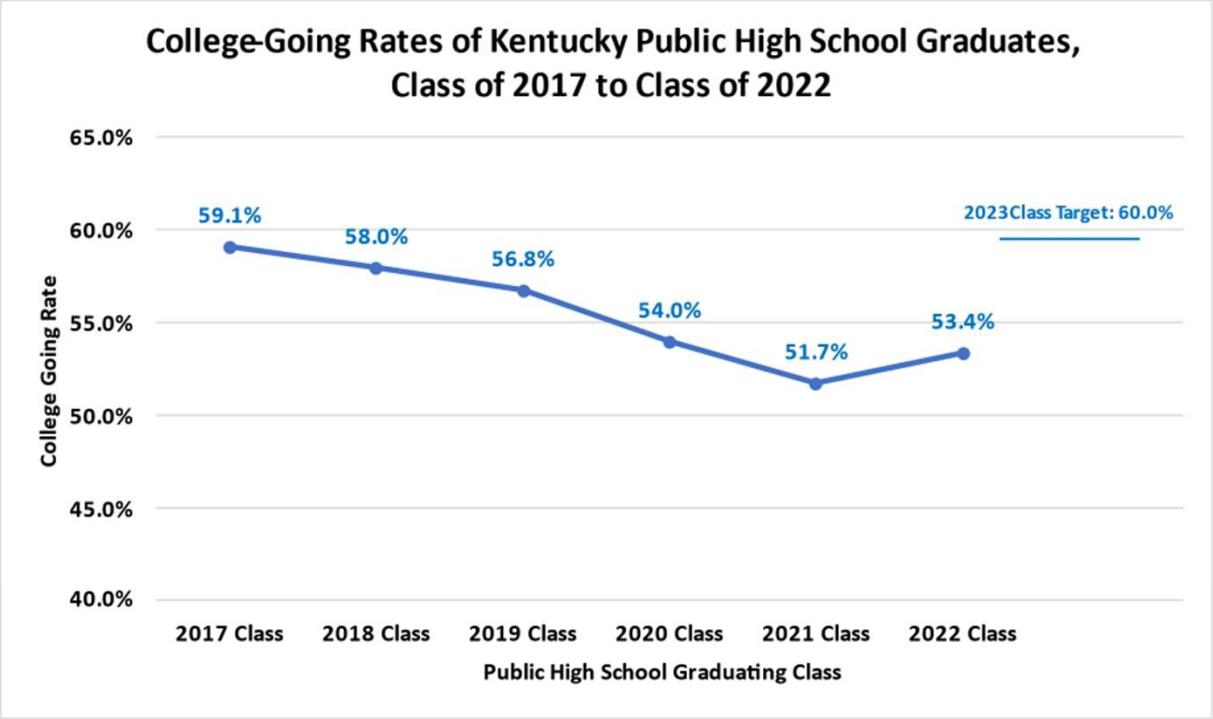
# Average Unmet Need - Public Institutions



- **KCTCS**
  - **1YR: -0.6%**
  - **5YR: -2.7%**
- **Public Universities**
  - **1YR: -3.4%**
  - **5YR: -9.1%**

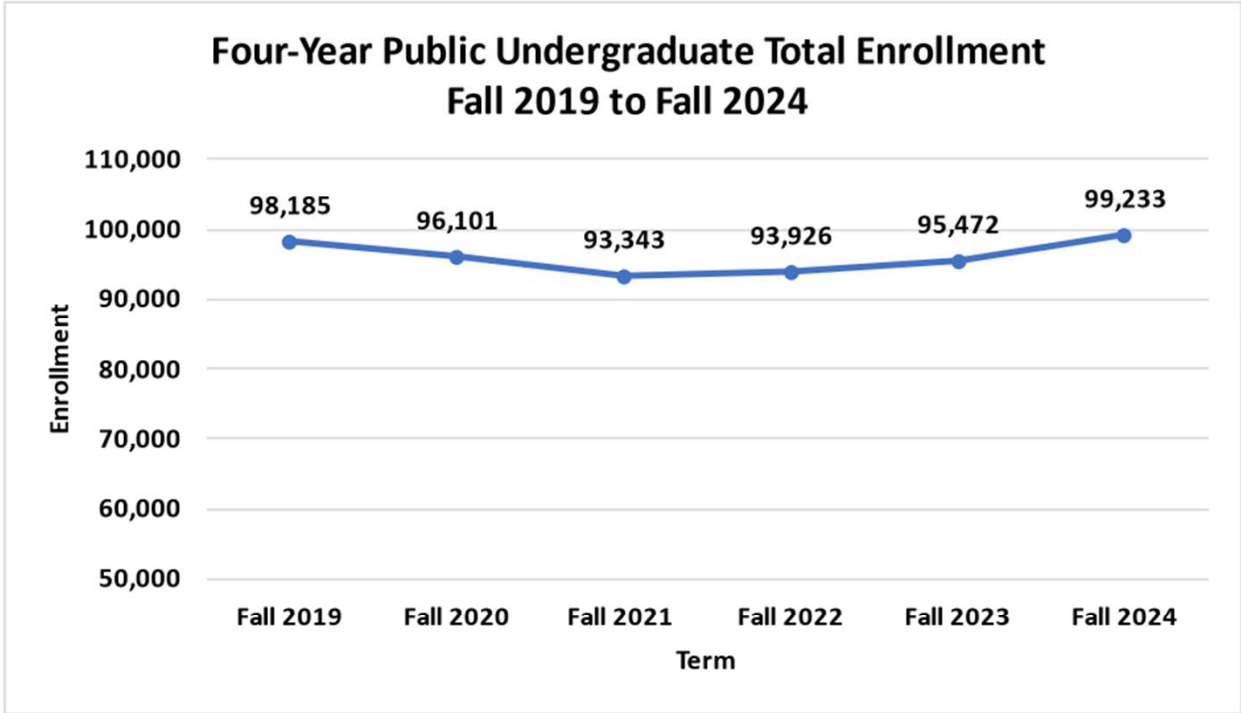


# College-Going Rates Public High School Grads



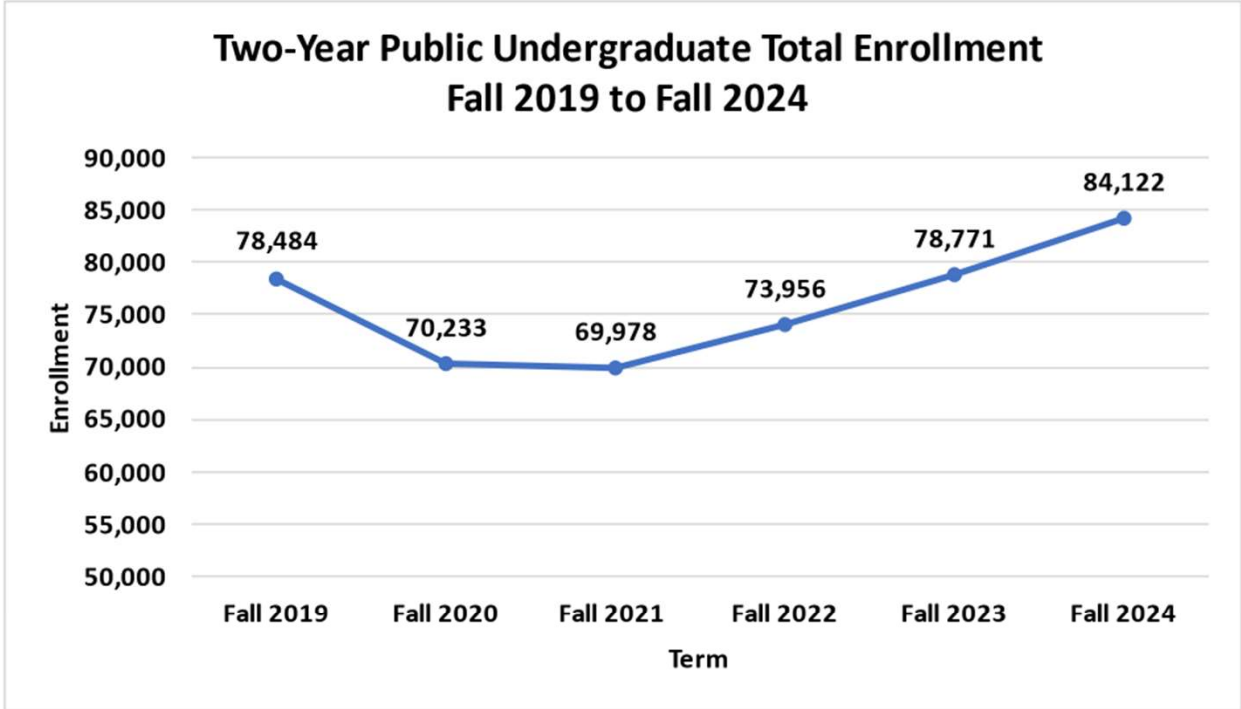
- **1YR: +1.7pp**
- **5YR: -5.7pp**

# 4YP Undergraduate Enrollment - Total



- **1 Year Change: +3.9%**
- **5 Year Change: +1.1%**

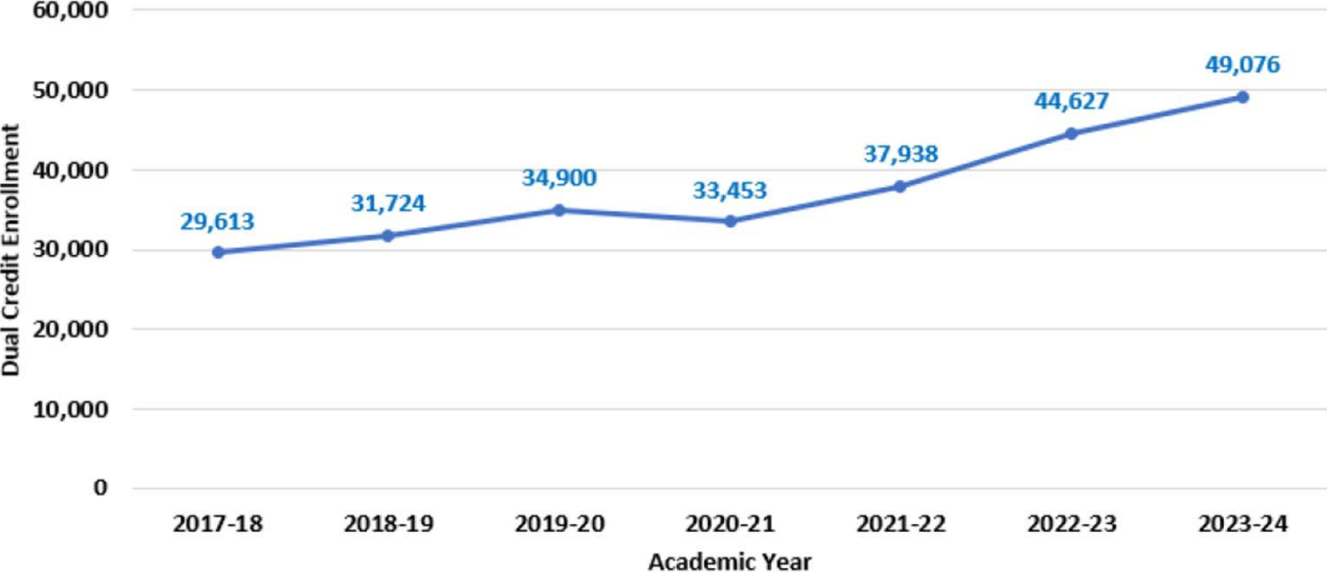
# 2YP Undergraduate Enrollment - Total



- **1 Year Change: +6.8%**
- **5 Year Change: +7.2%**

# Dual Credit Participation

Kentucky Dual Credit Enrollment, 2017-18 to 2023-24



Since 2017-18, dual credit enrollment has grown **65.7%**.



## 2023 Life Outcomes for 2016 Kentucky Public High School Graduates



This dashboard is powered by the Kentucky Center for Statistics. Those using screen readers may need to click the enter key to select options in filters. This dashboard is best viewed on a desktop computer. If you have any questions regarding accessibility, please contact [kystats@ky.gov](mailto:kystats@ky.gov). Follow us @KYSTATS on social media.

An alternative, accessible format in Excel is available for download here:

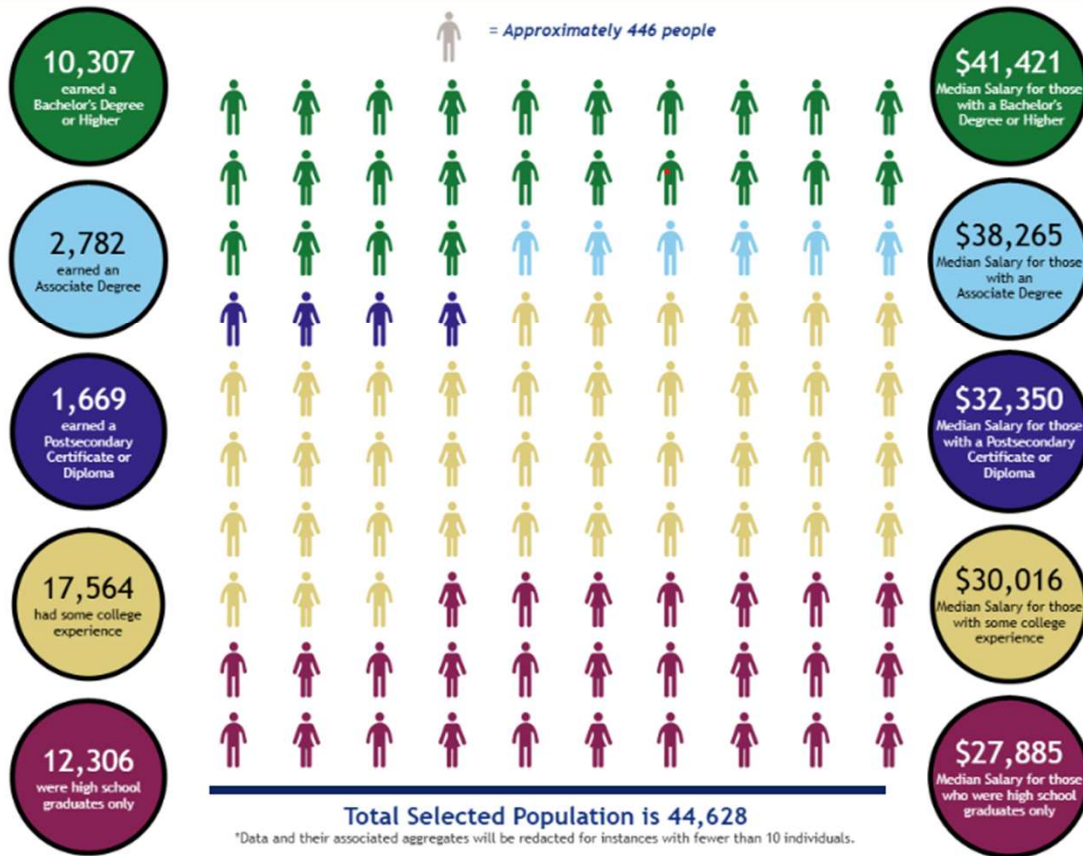
[https://bit.ly/LOHS\\_PAF](https://bit.ly/LOHS_PAF)

Technical documentation can be found in PDF form here:

[https://bit.ly/LOHS\\_TechNotes](https://bit.ly/LOHS_TechNotes)

Filter Dashboard by Demographic

All Graduates



# The CEC in Action



## The Renewed Promise of P-20 Councils

P-20 councils, since their inception, have sought to align expectations across early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary education and workforce systems and strengthen cross-sector partnerships to drive meaningful improvements for students and their families. Despite their clear goals, traditional P-20 councils have long faced challenges that can end up thwarting their efficacy. Some of the most common challenges include capacity constraints, funding shortfalls, a lack of consensus on evolving priorities, communication challenges, partisan polarization, and a lack of student and community voice in decision-making.

In short, these challenges have led us to a glaring present reality in which most states that had P-20 councils in the late 1990s and early 2000s no longer have active councils. This leaves us with one crucial question: Does this reality indicate that the value of P-20 councils has run its course?

**We believe, when designed well and positioned to help drive the state's strategic priorities, there remains significant promise in the value of P-20 councils.**



Commonwealth Education Continuum @CEC\_KY · Oct 26

Solyana Mesfin is a 2nd yr Woodford Porter & Muhammad All Scholar at @uofl. She served as the first student member on the KY Board of Ed & served on the KY Dept. of Ed. Commissioner Stu Advisory Council. Solyana is dedicated to ensuring equity while prioritizing student voice.



### COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, KENTUCKY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET AND THE KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION

#### Resolution to establish the Commonwealth Continuum

**WHEREAS**, Kentucky is committed to equitable access to a high-quality education to ensure the educational development and success of all students; and

**WHEREAS**, despite progress, too many Kentuckians lack postsecondary credentials, and significant attainment gaps exist between underrepresented minority and white adults; and

**WHEREAS**, too few of Kentucky's high school graduates transition to and graduate from college; and

**WHEREAS**, early postsecondary opportunities such as dual credit help students earn low-cost college credits and prepare them for a postsecondary environment; and

**WHEREAS**, all students need strong advising, mentoring, outreach and support systems to navigate the sometimes difficult pathway between secondary and postsecondary education; and

**WHEREAS**, Kentucky's teachers and school leaders need access to high-quality, innovative training and ongoing professional development to prepare students for college - academically, socially, and emotionally;

**WHEREAS**, the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) set a goal to increase the percentage of Kentuckians with a postsecondary credential to 60% by 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to meet or exceed this goal and increase four-year college degrees and create a highly-skilled workforce; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and the Kentucky Department of Education will join forces with other education policy leaders and practitioners to establish the Commonwealth Continuum. The Continuum will provide a forum for Kentucky's P-12 and postsecondary systems to work collaboratively to develop a high-quality, diverse educator workforce; provide student and family support for successful educational transitions; improve equitable access to higher education; strengthen preparation for career success; and improve awareness of postsecondary opportunities through a unified, state-level communication and outreach campaign.

# Establishment of the Commonwealth Education Continuum

## Kentucky's P-20 Council

The CEC was established January 2021. Since that time, we have accomplished the following:

- 1 of 8 states who have a P-20 council in the U.S.
- **Over 80% attendance** for all CEC quarterly meetings.
- The CEC has been nationally recognized as a model of state collaboration.
- Increased collaboration and awareness through social media with over **450 posts** relating to access and opportunities for students to continue their education.

### Workgroups

- **Engaged over 1700 stakeholders** in workgroup membership, interviews, focus groups, and design teams.
- Convened **11 focused workgroups** and one ad-hoc data workgroup in four years.

### Internal Evaluation/Continuous Improvement:

- 19 of the 28 members and three co-leads provided feedback on overall satisfaction and suggestions for improvement.

### CEC Data Dashboard:

- The CEC Data Workgroup developed a data dashboard to monitor progress in real-time as it relates to the focus areas.

### Mission/Vision Statements:

- The CEC co-wrote mission and vision statements to guide its work.

# Workgroups

## 2021:

- Early Postsecondary Opportunities
- Educator Workforce
- Successful Transition to Postsecondary

## 2022:

- Ninth Grade On Track
- Access to Dual Credit
- Successful Gateway Course Completion

## 2023:

- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Data Workgroup

## 2024:

- K-16 Competency Skills Collaboration
- Postsecondary Advising
- Postsecondary Affordability
- Educator Workforce Strategies for Recruitment, Retention, and Support for Administrators



## Financial Aid & Literacy

“When [students] get to us, a lot of deadlines have passed and they’re scrambling. Providing them with a financial aid advisor during the admissions process as opposed to after they’re admitted may help them.”

- Higher Education Staff

“I have seen the students struggle with their financial status, how to receive more funding, and how they are going to tackle what aid doesn’t cover. Students struggle to reach out for support before they are in crisis.”

- Higher Education Staff

- Several students expressed concerns about how to pay for college and fear of debt.
- Counselors and higher education staff called for more information and support around financial aid, including the FAFSA and scholarships.
- They also called for financial literacy to be provided to students early and more often to empower them to better understand their financial decisions after high school (e.g. loans, credit, etc.).

ESG



## College & Career Exposure

“At our school you have to take at least three years of a certain pathway, but you can’t change it after freshman year. So if you get into a pathway that you might not want to do anymore, you can’t change it. It would be helpful to explore other pathways and have an idea of other options.”

-High School Student

“My daughter didn’t really get to figure out what she wanted to do while in high school. I had to set up a job shadow opportunity for my child. Why didn’t the high school help me?”

- Parent

- **EARLY EXPOSURE:** College and career conversations should start as early as pre-K or elementary school.
- **PATHWAYS:** School and college faculty often see specific pathways as a great way for students to get ahead and learn about a career. Some students like how their pathways give them a head start on college credits, but other students find pathways too restrictive.
- **SOFT SKILLS:** In addition to academic preparation, teachers and counselors see teaching students soft skills - like time management, self-advocacy, communication - as important parts of their role in preparing students for postsecondary.
- **INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS:** ILPs have been completed out of compliance, but some schools are trying to leverage them for college & career exploration.

ESG



# Key Accomplishments: Kentucky Advising Academy (KAA)

The KAA has **engaged over 80%** of Kentucky school districts through professional learning opportunities, webinars, and conferences.

- Co-created the **Kentucky Postsecondary Advising Framework** with school districts, postsecondary institutions, and state agencies.
- Hosts a monthly webinar on timely postsecondary advising topics. **The webinars have been viewed over 400 times** and 16 Kentucky postsecondary institutions and 6 school districts have helped to lead and share effective advising practices.
- Co-created a **College and Career Advising Online Toolkit** filled with resources for counselors and professionals working with students and families. **The toolkit has been accessed over 9,500 times.**
- Awarded over **\$500,000 in grants to Kentucky school districts** to incentivize increasing access to advising and opportunities for college and career planning.
- **Presented to over 15 state and national professional groups** including but not limited to: National College Attainment Network, Kentucky Counselors Association, Family Resources/Youth Service Center Coordinators, College Advisors, Kentucky College Admission Counseling, KHEAA Outreach Coordinators, Association for Career and Technical Education
- Established an Advising Community of Practice (CoP) with **23 members** representing postsecondary institutions, K-12 counselors/advisors, and supporting agencies and organizations to prioritize initiatives to support Kentucky students in receiving equitable access to postsecondary opportunities.

# Key Accomplishments: Futuriti

- Futuriti is a website where Kentucky citizens can find information about careers, education, financial aid, and job opportunities
- The website is a project of the Commonwealth Education Continuum and was designed by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), and the Kentucky Center for Statistics.
- The website provides a way for Kentuckians to clearly see the high-demand jobs, helps them to plan ahead and take the classes they need to earn credentials required for these careers.
- Feedback and input on the site and its contents were provided by **1223 stakeholders** representing Kentucky groups, high school and college students, and career counselors.
- The site includes:
  - a. Job descriptions and wages for more than 700 careers;
  - b. Cost, completion and debt information on all public and private universities, community colleges, and technical schools in the Commonwealth;
  - c. A listing of the majors offered at Kentucky public and private universities;
  - d. All career pathways offered at each Kentucky high school and technical center.
- The website, **viewed by over 15,000 unique users since February 4**, has been and will continue to be promoted to Kentucky middle and high schools, as well as Kentucky Career Center and Adult Education offices.



# Key Accomplishment: Dual Credit

- Revised the Dual Credit policy with significant stakeholder feedback and support from the CEC, including the **creation of the nation's first Dual Credit Attainment Goal: 50% of KY students graduating with at least one dual credit course** .
- Established a Dual Credit Community of Practice (COP) to convene a volunteer group of **60+ members from K-12, postsecondary, and state agencies**, to improve Kentucky's dual credit system and expand access to underrepresented students.
- **Since 2017, dual credit enrollment has increased by 65.7%, from 29,613 students to 49,076.**
- Co-created a **Early Postsecondary Opportunities Toolkit** with over 330 active users for high school and postsecondary partners to use to implement a highly effective and inclusive early postsecondary opportunities program. Hosts a monthly webinar highlighting effective partnerships and strategies for offering high school students the opportunity to experience college courses and prepare for postsecondary.
- **Awarded more than \$86,000 for 33 Dual Credit Bridge program grants** to participating institutions to strengthen the support for students as they engage in dual credit courses and the partner institution.
- **The General Assembly expanded the number from 2 to 4 general education dual credit classes and 10 technical education dual credit classes** funded by the Dual Credit Scholarship. In 2023, KHEAA disbursed \$12.33m for general education and \$8.12M for work ready dual credit scholarships. The KY General Assembly appropriated \$13,150,000 in lottery funds for 2023 to support this program.
- Professional development sessions for Hawaii Department of Education, KYACAC, the Kentucky Principals' Advisory Council, College in High School Alliance Professional Learning Network, Principal Partnership Project, and NACEP; and webinars, **with more than 1,100 participants** including middle school, high school, postsecondary and agency partners.

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# Key Accomplishment: FAFSA Completion

- KHEAA established a state-wide partnership team focused on expansion of FAFSA communications and increased completion rates.
- KHEAA shared web-based resources, onsite FAFSA face-to-face support locations, and training opportunities to help promote FAFSA completion.
- KAA and KHEAA Outreach collaborated to share resources and spread information to stakeholders for increased communication to students, families, and school staff for support.
- GearUp KY and KHEAA collaborated on a television commercial to promote FAFSA that has been played on public television **over 137,000 times** and continues to run.



# Key Accomplishment: Summer Bridge

- **Over 1,200 students participated in 40 summer bridge programs at 27 institutions** in 2021 and 2022 and **enrolled** the following fall.
- Over 4 years, total grant awards to Kentucky's postsecondary institutions totaled approximately **\$6.5m**.
- Over half of the programs (21) had **higher fall-to-fall persistence rates** for summer bridge students compared to the overall freshman cohort for each year.
- KCTCS programs were especially effective, 12 of the 17 programs over the two years analyzed **had higher fall-to-fall persistence rates for summer bridge students than the overall freshman class**.
- **Higher persistence rates for academically underprepared students** than underprepared freshmen who did not participate in summer bridge.
- **Higher fall-to-fall persistence rates for low-income students** than for the overall freshman class.
- **Higher fall-to-fall persistence rates for underrepresented minority students** than for the overall freshman class.
- Six institutions **achieved over 85% persistence for summer bridge participants** during at least one year:
- **Summer bridge programs helped bring in an additional \$315,000 in tuition dollars in students' second year alone. The return on investment is likely even greater as students continue to persist and earn their degrees.**

# Key Accomplishment: Educator Workforce

- Praxis Change: EPSB changed teacher certification candidate PRAXIS score eligibility from **5 to 10-years**.
- The University of Louisville offers the C4 Summer Bridge Program for recruitment and support of aspiring educators with a **97% retention rate**.
- Workgroup Report: The educator workforce work group completed extensive analysis of principal supports in Kentucky and completed a report detailing recommendations for schools, districts and the state related to principal preparation programs and ongoing professional support for aspiring, novice and experienced principals (USHCA)



# CEC Coordination and Funding

The CEC is coordinated by Amanda Ellis and Robin Hebert, CPE, through the direction of the co-leads.

## Funding Sources:

**CEC Operations:** CPE general funds and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds provided by KDE.

**KAA:** GEER provided by Governor Beshear/Lt. Governor Coleman, ESSER (KDE), CPE

**Futuriti:** ESSER (KDE), CPE

**Dual Credit/EPSO:** GEER (Gov. Beshear/Lt. Coleman), ESSER (KDE), College in High School Alliance Grant

**FAFSA:** Federal Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) grant

**Summer Bridge:** GEER (Gov. Beshear/Lt. Coleman), ESSER (KDE)

**Educator Workforce:** ESSER (KDE)



Commonwealth  
Education Continuum

**Next Steps...**



**TITLE:** Tuition and Mandatory Fee Recommendation, Academic Years 2025-26 and 2026-27

**DESCRIPTION:** The Finance Committee recommends the Council approve the proposed tuition and mandatory fee recommendations for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27.

**STAFF CONTACTS:** Dr. Bill Payne, Vice President for Finance Policy and Programs  
Adam Blevins, Associate Director for Finance Policy and Programs

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**COMMITTEE REVIEW & APPROVAL**

The Finance Committee reviewed and endorsed for final approval the proposed tuition and mandatory fee recommendations for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27 at its April 14, 2025, meeting.

The Finance Committee moved to approve, and endorse to the full Council, resident undergraduate tuition and mandatory fee ceilings for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27 that equate to:

- A maximum base rate increase of no more than \$675.<sup>00</sup> over two years, and a maximum increase of no more than \$450.<sup>00</sup> in any one year, for public research universities.
- A maximum base rate increase of no more than \$630.<sup>00</sup> over two years, and a maximum increase of no more than \$420.<sup>00</sup> in any one year, for comprehensive universities.
- A maximum base rate increase of no more than \$9.<sup>00</sup> per credit hour over two years, and a maximum increase of no more than \$6.<sup>00</sup> per credit hour in any one year, for students attending KCTCS institutions.

The Finance Committee also moved that the public institutions be allowed to submit for Council review and approval:

- Nonresident undergraduate tuition and fee rates that comply with the Council’s *Tuition and Mandatory Fees Policy*, or otherwise adhere to provisions of an existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and an institution.
- Market competitive tuition and fee rates for graduate and online courses.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Council staff used a collaborative process to develop its tuition and mandatory fee recommendation for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27, which included sharing information and engaging in discussions with campus presidents, chief budget officers, and Council members. Based on feedback from multiple stakeholders and recognizing that many Kentucky students and families and the state’s postsecondary institutions are coping with the effects of

persistent inflation, there is general sentiment that system average increases in resident undergraduate tuition and fees should be capped toward the upper end of the moderate range in academic year 2025-26 and limited to the upper end of the low range in 2026-27 to support a necessary balance between the ability of students and families to pay for college and the resources required for postsecondary institutions to maintain quality academic programs, address cost increases, and support ongoing progress toward the state's 60x30 college attainment goal.

For the upcoming tuition cycle, CPE staff and campus officials agreed that staff's recommendation should include tuition and fee ceilings for the next two academic years (i.e., 2025-26 and 2026-27). Adopting rate ceilings for a two-year period has become an increasingly common approach in recent tuition-setting cycles. Four times over the past 11 years the Council has approved ceilings that span two years, including academic years 2014-15 and 2015-16, 2018-19 and 2019-20, 2021-22 and 2022-23, and 2023-24 and 2024-25. Using a two-year approach facilitates strategic planning and budgeting at the postsecondary institutions and makes college costs more predictable for Kentucky students and families.

## **KEY ISSUES**

Over the past four months, Council staff and campus officials identified and discussed a number of key issues that helped inform construction of staff's 2025-26 and 2026-27 tuition and mandatory fee recommendation, including: (a) the level of state support for campus operations; (b) a pending reduction in the state's pension subsidy; (c) relatively low tuition increases in recent years; (d) the onset of unprecedented and persistent inflationary cost increases; (e) recent trends in college spending; (f) declining college going rates; (g) recent increases in student enrollment at nearly every institution; and (h) recent decreases in student loan debt. Each of these issues is described in detail below.

### *State Funding*

The level of state support for campus operations is a key issue every year. While increases in General Fund appropriations can help institutions address budgetary challenges, funding cuts add to those challenges. The primary sources of revenue that postsecondary institutions use to educate students are state appropriations and net tuition and fee revenue (a.k.a., total public funds). For this reason, reductions in state support or flat funding can stress campus budgets and contribute to higher tuition.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary System Change in State Funds for Educating Students Between Fiscal Years 2024-25 and 2025-26				Table 1	
<u>Funding Category</u>	<u>Fiscal 2024-25 General Fund</u>	<u>Fiscal 2025-26 General Fund</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	
Adjusted Net General Fund <sup>1</sup>	\$785,575,500	\$785,575,500	\$0	0.0%	
Performance Fund	<u>105,000,000</u>	<u>115,000,000</u>	<u>10,000,000</u>	9.5%	
Funds for Educating Students	\$890,575,500	\$900,575,500	\$10,000,000	1.1%	

<sup>1</sup> The adjusted net General Fund appropriation (a.k.a., the Formula Base) is calculated by deducting debt service and mandated program funds from each institution's regular appropriation.

On April 12, 2024, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a state budget for fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26 (24 RS, HB 6) that for the second biennium in a row provided increases in state support for postsecondary institutions. While the enacted budget provided \$43.5 million new dollars to institutions in the first year of the biennium (i.e., a \$35.8 million recurring increase in adjusted net General Fund and a \$7.7 million increase in the Performance Fund), there was no increase in adjusted net General Fund and a \$10.0 million increase in the Performance Fund in the second year.

Specifically, after deducting debt service and mandated program appropriations, the postsecondary institutions, both individually and in the aggregate, will receive the same level of adjusted net General Fund in 2025-26 that they received in 2024-25 (see Table 1). Although the Performance Fund appropriations will ultimately be distributed among institutions, it is important to keep in mind that these are incentive funds, which will not become part of the recurring base of institutions that earn the funds.

*Pension Subsidy*

Beginning with the 2012-13 tuition-setting cycle, and in every cycle since, CPE staff has explicitly considered the impact of required increases in retirement system contributions on postsecondary institution operating budgets. This approach was necessitated by large and frequently unfunded increases in Kentucky Employees Retirement System (KERS) employer-paid retirement contributions that were required by the state.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institutions Change in Kentucky Employee Retirement System Subsidy <sup>1</sup> Between Fiscal Years 2024-25 and 2025-26				Table 2
Institution	Fiscal 2024-25 General Fund	Fiscal 2025-26 General Fund	Dollar Change	Percent Change
UK	NA	NA	--	--
UofL	NA	NA	--	--
EKU	\$6,236,800	\$5,345,800	(\$891,000)	-14.3%
KSU	0	0	0	--
MoSU	3,439,100	2,947,800	(491,300)	-14.3%
MuSU	1,800,000	1,800,000	0	0.0%
NKU	NA	NA	--	--
WKU	1,522,200	1,522,200	0	0.0%
KCTCS	0	0	0	--
Total	\$12,998,100	\$11,615,800	(\$1,382,300)	-10.6%

In fiscal year 2021-22, the General Assembly appropriated \$22.1 million in new funding to support the transition of comprehensive universities (except for NKU) and KCTCS to a level-dollar allocation method for determining KERS pension contributions. These funds were intended to cover 100 percent of the marginal cost increase in employer paid pension contributions in 2021-22, using projections based on an actual 2019-20 employer contribution base. House Bill 8 (21 RS), which established the pension subsidy, also included a schedule for reducing the subsidy amount by 10% per year over a five-year period, until the residual amount reached \$11.0 million. The General Assembly ended up delaying the start of the subsidy reduction by one year.

Table 2 shows the annual dollar and percent change in the KERS pension subsidy between fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26. As can be seen in the table, between this year and next, the enacted state budget (24 RS, HB 6) calls for an \$891,000 reduction in the pension subsidy at Eastern Kentucky University and a \$491,300 reduction in the subsidy at Morehead State University (i.e., a \$1.4 million system total decrease). These reductions are not inconsequential for the identified institutions. They represent the equivalent of a 1.4 percent budget reduction at EKU and a 1.3 percent budget reduction at MoSU on each institution's respective 2024-25 adjusted net General Fund base.

### *Recent Tuition Increases*

Another issue that CPE staff and campus officials routinely consider during periodic tuition-setting cycles is the level of tuition and fee increase adopted by Kentucky colleges and universities in the previous year, or over the past several years. To the extent that a prior-year tuition increase was relatively low, or that the average annual increase over several years was historically low, that information may provide rationale for increased flexibility in the upcoming tuition cycle, depending on other key factors.

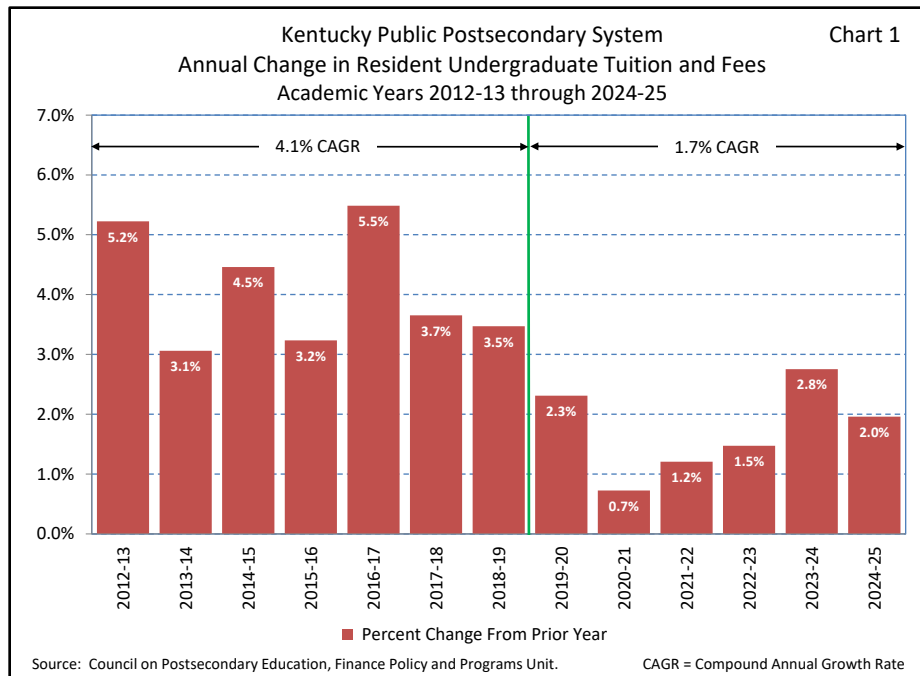
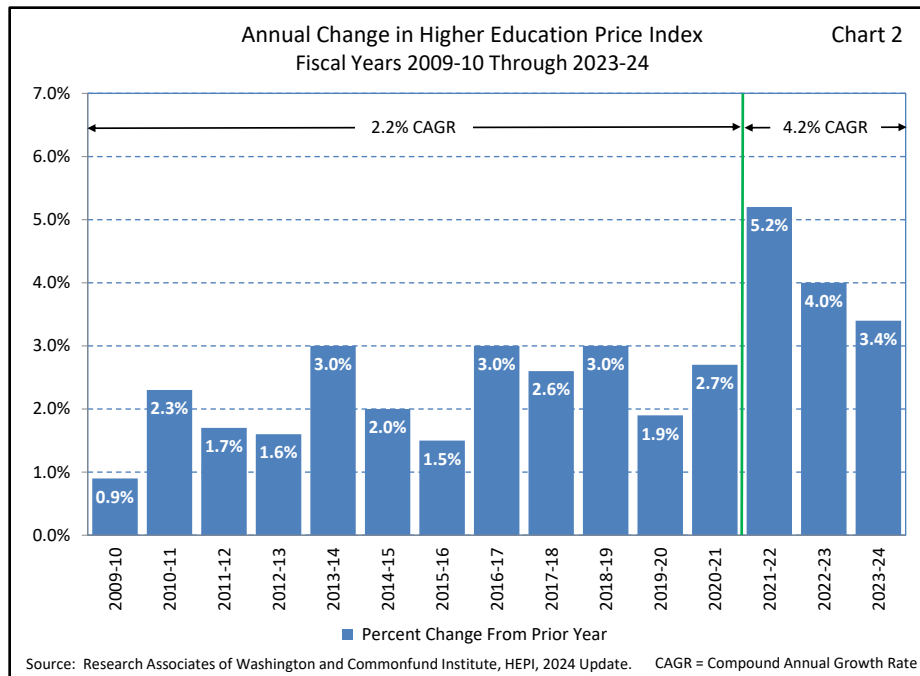


Chart 1 shows the annual change in resident undergraduate tuition and fees between academic years 2012-13 and 2024-25 for Kentucky’s public postsecondary education system. As can be seen in the chart, during the seven-year period between 2012-13 and 2018-19, resident undergraduate tuition and fees at the postsecondary institutions increased at an average annual rate of 4.1% per year; but over the six years since, resident undergraduate tuition and fees grew at an average annual rate of 1.7%, or a reduction of more than half the average annual increase of the prior period.

The difference in average annual growth rates between these two periods was heavily influenced by Council tuition and fee ceilings, which in recent years have prioritized maintaining affordability for Kentucky students and families to help counter a persistent decline in college going rates and decreases in student enrollment.

### *Impact of Inflation*

Another factor considered by stakeholders for the upcoming tuition cycle was the level and persistence of higher education inflation and the impact of those rising costs on campus operating budgets. Inflation is an important metric to monitor because the cost of educating students tends to go up every year and, for the most part, those costs are recurring. Fixed and unavoidable cost increases are receiving heightened scrutiny this cycle due to the magnitude of increases over the past three fiscal years (i.e., 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24) and expectations that cost increases will be high again this year.



In 2022, inflation measured using the Commonfund Institute’s Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) registered 5.2%, its highest level in more than 20 years. As can be seen in Chart 2, that unprecedented one-year increase was followed by a 4.0% increase in higher education costs in 2023 and a 3.4% increase in 2024, which on their own represent large increases relative to historical averages. To put these statistics in perspective, in no single year between 2010 and 2021 did growth in the HEPI exceed 3.0%. The compound annual growth rate in the price index over that time period was 2.2% per year, compared to 4.2% average annual growth over the past three years.

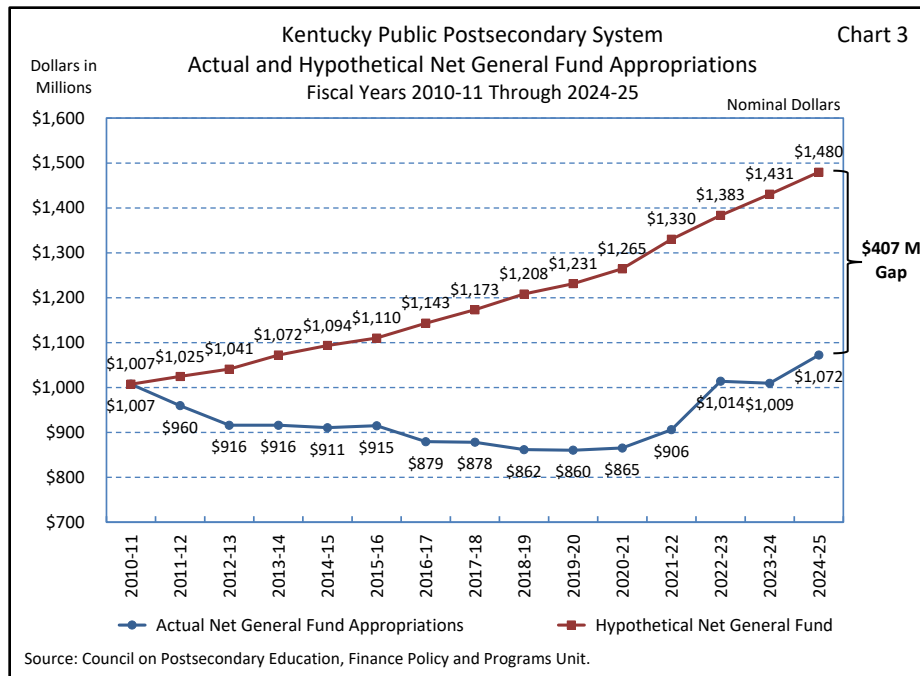
Inflation is a key consideration in tuition setting because of the relationship between growth in higher education costs and the availability of resources (or lack thereof) to offset those costs. As previously mentioned, the main sources of funding for educating students are state appropriations and tuition and fee revenue. In any given year, the level of stress on institutional budgets and corresponding need to raise revenue through tuition and fee increases is a function of rising costs and availability of state support to cover those costs. Table 3 below, which calculates the projected tuition increase needed to cover inflationary cost increases for the upcoming academic year, illustrates this point. Assuming that inflation increases by 3.4% (i.e., the five-year average HEPI) and given an expected net change in state support of \$8.6 million, a 5.0% increase in tuition and fees would be required to cover the cost increases in 2025-26 alone.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary System		Table 3
Projected Tuition Increase Needed to Cover Inflationary Costs Between Academic Years 2024-25 and 2025-26		
Estimated Inflationary Cost Increase:		
Education and Related Spending (Fiscal 2023-24)		\$2,351,726,587
Assumed Inflation Rate (5-Year Average HEPI)		X 3.4%
<b>Estimated Cost Increase</b>		<b>\$79,958,700</b>
Expected Change in State Funds:		
Adjusted Net General Fund Appropriations		\$0
Postsecondary Education Performance Fund		10,000,000
Reduction in Pension Subsidy (HB 8)		(1,382,300)
<b>Expected Net Change in State Support</b>		<b>\$8,617,700</b>
Projected Tuition Revenue (@ 1.0% Increase):		
Net Tuition and Fee Revenue (Fiscal 2023-24)		\$1,431,323,000
Apply 1.0% Rate Factor		X 1.0%
Projected Tuition Revenue Generated (@ 1.0%)		\$14,313,200
Tuition Increase Needed to Cover Costs:		
Estimated Cost Increase		\$79,958,700
Minus: Expected Net Change in State Support		(8,617,700)
Residual Cost (Revenue) Increase		\$71,341,000
		÷
Projected Tuition Revenue Generated (@ 1.0%)		\$14,313,200
<b>Required Tuition Increase Multiple</b>		<b>5.0</b>

The importance of state General Fund support for maintaining affordability for students and families cannot be overstated, as was illustrated in the previous table. But that support should not be a one-time occurrence. An examination of HEPI components and calculations over the past 20 years reveals that higher education cost factors, and thus the composite regression index, increase every year. As previously mentioned, most of those costs are recurring. For these reasons, it requires sustained state support over an extended time horizon to achieve the multiple, simultaneous, and often competing goals of affordability, access, and academic quality.

Unfortunately, for more than a decade during the past 15 years, state support for campus operations in Kentucky did not keep pace with inflation. Chart 3 compares actual net General Fund appropriations for Kentucky public postsecondary institutions (represented by the blue line) to hypothetical net General Fund appropriations allowed to increase at the rate of growth in higher education costs (represented by the red line) over a 15-year period between fiscal years 2010-11 and 2024-25. This time frame is significant because by 2010-11 most states in the U.S. had begun reinvesting in higher education following the Great Recession.

As can be seen in Chart 3, between fiscal years 2010-11 and 2019-20, nominal net General Fund appropriations for Kentucky's public postsecondary system decreased seven out of nine years, falling from \$1.0 billion to \$860 million, respectively. Then, between 2020-21 and 2022-23, Kentucky began reinvesting in higher education, an outcome that is very much appreciated by the Council and postsecondary institutions.



Beginning in 2022-23 and in each year over the next two years, net General Fund appropriations (i.e., regular appropriation minus debt service) to the postsecondary institutions exceeded the 2010-11 funding level in nominal terms. However, had the level of state support increased at the rate of inflation (HEPI), the institutions would have received \$1.5 billion in 2024-25, or \$407 million more in state appropriations.

It is important to remind Council members that, despite stresses on campus budgets over the past decade, the Council has not allowed institutions to fully recover losses from state budget cuts or fully cover increased spending demands caused by inflation through higher tuition and fees. Rather, the funding gap has been addressed through campus cost savings and efficiencies.

### *College Spending*

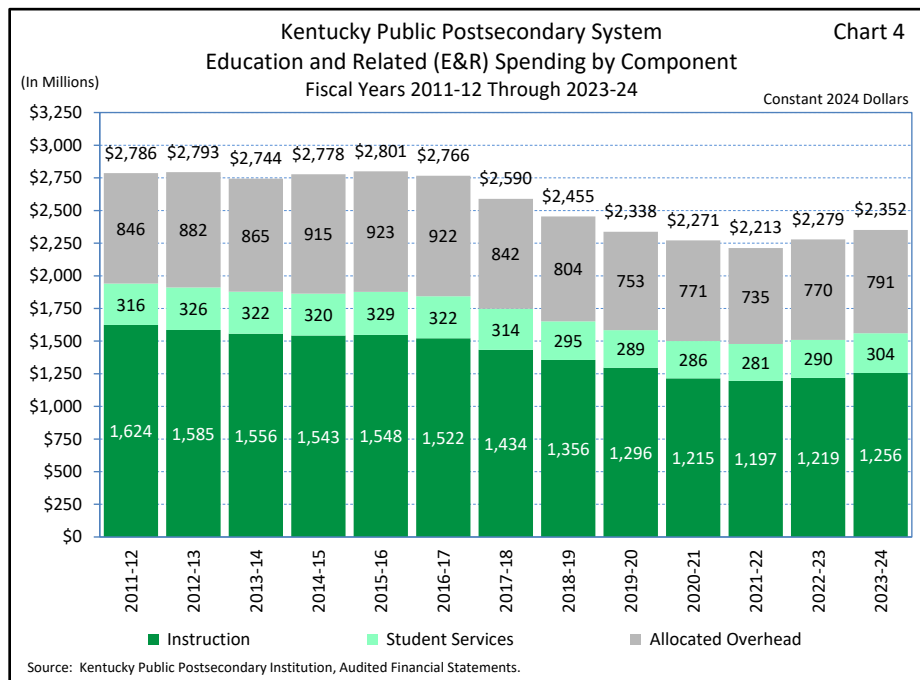
A metric that has recently been added to the list of key issues reviewed by CPE staff and campus officials is the trend in higher education spending. Specifically, Education and Related (E&R) spending is calculated for each institution (using Delta Cost Project methodology), aggregated for the system, and tracked over time. The source of data for this metric is campus audited financial statements. Monitoring the level of expenditures over time is useful for assessing the adequacy of total public funds resources (i.e., state appropriations, plus net tuition and fee revenue) available to educate students.

When the trend in E&R spending was examined two years ago, it was evident that the combination of relatively low increases in tuition and fees (i.e., a result of Council tuition ceilings) and declining or flat state support had taken a toll on campus operating budgets. Although real campus spending to educate students had remained relatively flat for five years in a row (i.e., between 2011-12 and 2015-16) indicating that it kept pace with inflation, between



2015-16 and 2021-22, campus spending decreased six years in a row, falling from \$2.8 billion to \$2.2 billion, respectively. This information provided support for Council adoption of a moderate tuition increase in 2023-24.

The recent trend has been positive. As can be seen in Chart 4, campus spending to educate students rebounded from the 2021-22 low and increased two years in a row. Specifically, between 2021-22 and 2023-24, real E&R spending increased from \$2.2 billion to \$2.35 billion, respectively. The level of increased spending the past two years was supported by a \$108 million increase in state General Fund support in 2022-23, the aforementioned moderate increase in tuition and fees (i.e., a 2.8% system average increase in 2023-24), and enrollment increases at most institutions in both years.



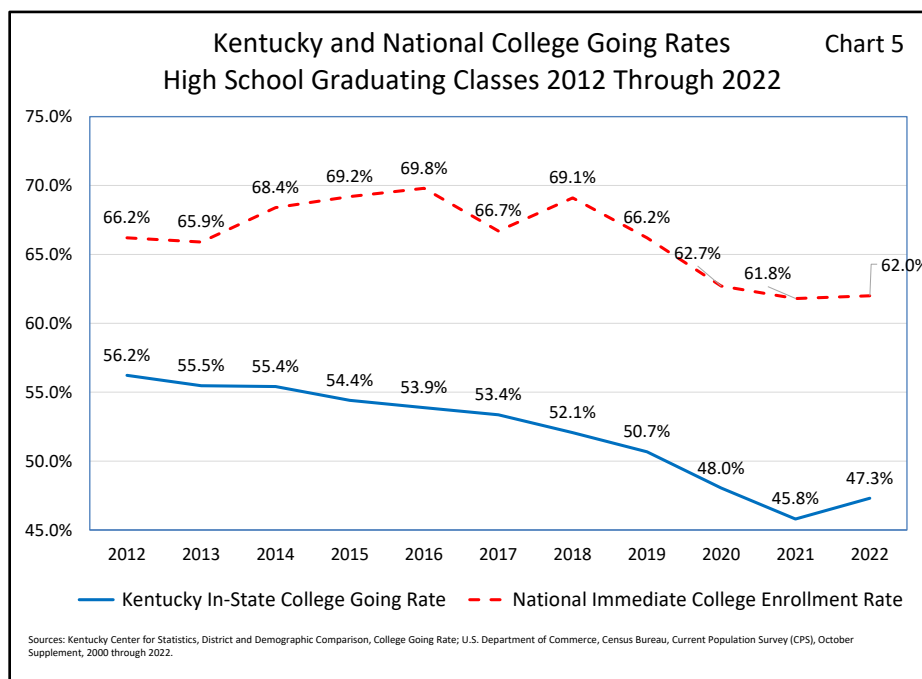
These data support the premise that declining state support coupled with Council tuition and fee ceilings have required Kentucky institutions to become more efficient. As previously mentioned, state appropriations and tuition and fees are the main sources of revenue available for educating students. Given the lack of state investment in higher education for much of the decade and given relatively low tuition increases in recent years, the downward trend in college spending is not surprising. The recent increase in real spending over the past two years was expected and intended.

### College Going Rates

The trend in college going rates among Kentucky high school graduates was added to the list of key issues for the 2023-24 tuition cycle. Maintaining or increasing the college participation rate is an important determinant in maintaining student enrollment and helping the state meet its 60x30 college attainment goal. Unfortunately, for most of the past decade, college-going rates in Kentucky trended in the wrong direction.

As can be seen in Chart 5, Kentucky's in-state college going rate (represented by the solid blue line) decreased nine out of the past 10 years. After peaking at 56.2% for the high-school graduating class of 2012, the state's college participation rate decreased nine years in a row to a low of 45.8% in 2021, before rebounding to 47.3% in 2022.

While the COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to the 4.9 percentage point decrease between 2019 and 2021, that two-year change represents the continuation of a longer-term trend of declining rates. To a certain extent, the decline in Kentucky college going rates between 2016 and 2021 mirrors the broader trend that occurred at the national level during this period, although Kentucky did not experience similar growth in college going rates that occurred at the national level between 2013 and 2016.



As can be seen in Chart 5, the national immediate college enrollment rate (represented by the dotted red line) decreased from 69.8 percent in 2016 to 61.8 percent in 2021, an 8.0 percentage point decline. However, as clearly shown in the chart, in any given year, Kentucky's college-going rate was well below the national average rate. In fact, it lagged the national rate by between 10 to 17 percentage points every year during this period.

Maintaining affordability for Kentucky students and families is an obvious strategy for trying to bolster college going rates and it is one that the Council and postsecondary institutions pursued over the past six years by adopting relatively low tuition and fee ceilings. As a reminder, the average annual increase in postsecondary system average tuition and fees over the past six years was 1.7% per year. In comparison, the average yearly increase in tuition and fees over the previous seven-year period was 4.1% per year or more than double the recent rate of increase.

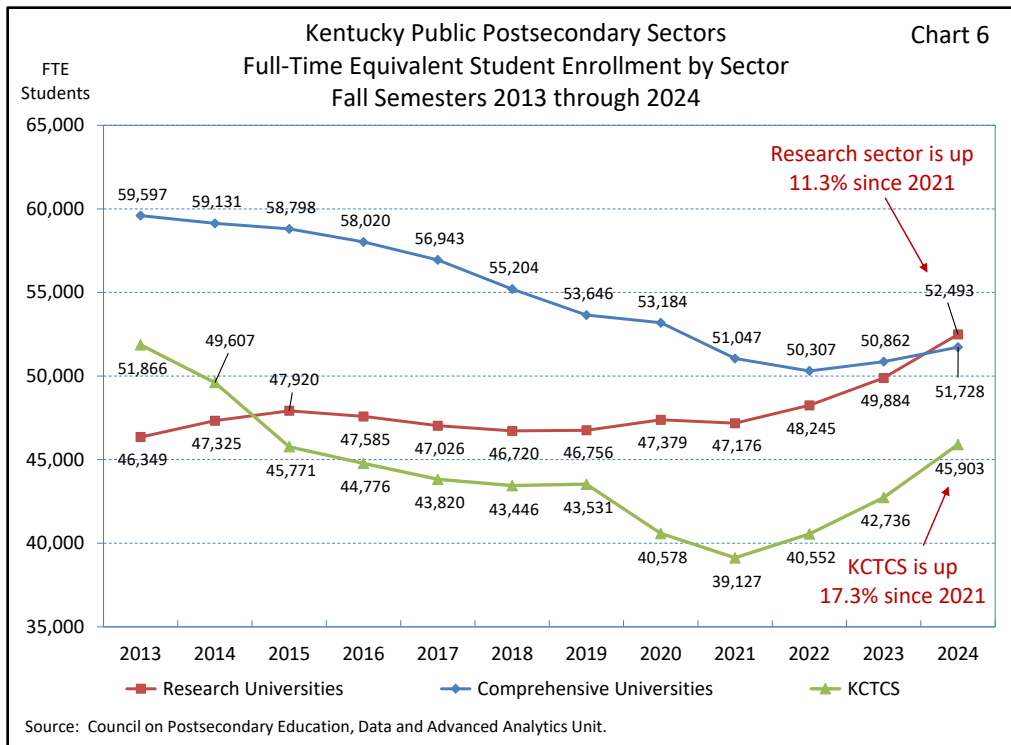
## *Enrollment Trends*

The direction and magnitude of changes in postsecondary institution enrollment have been key considerations in the tuition-setting process every year for at least the past six years. This is because the trend in student enrollment at most Kentucky colleges and universities was downward for much of the past decade (i.e., primarily fall semesters 2013 through 2021), but it is also because the Council adopted a resolution directing staff and campus officials to adopt strategies to halt and hopefully reverse the decline.

On March 3, 2021, the Council's Executive Committee, operating under a delegation of authority from the Council, adopted a resolution, expressing concern about the potential effects of enrollment decline on the ability of the postsecondary system to meet the state's 60X30 attainment goal. The resolution charged CPE staff and campus leaders to implement strategies and undertake bold actions to mitigate the near-term enrollment effects of COVID-19 and stem the tide of declining enrollment. One strategy pursued by the Council was to encourage enrollment by maintaining college affordability.

The good news is that enrollment numbers have rebounded at many institutions since fall semester 2021. As can be seen in Chart 6, aggregate full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment at the research universities, represented by the red line, increased by 6,144 students or 13.5% between fall semesters 2013 and 2024. The research sector was the only sector that recorded an overall increase during this period. The recent trend for the sector is positive, as well, with research university FTE enrollment growing by 5,317 students or 11.3% since fall 2021.

In the comprehensive sector, represented by the blue line in Chart 6, FTE student enrollment decreased nine years in a row, falling by 9,290 students or -15.6% between fall semesters 2013 and 2022, before increasing by 1,421 students or 2.8% over the past two years. At KCTCS, represented by the green line, FTE student enrollment decreased eight years in a row, falling by 12,739 students or -24.6% between fall semesters 2013 and 2021, but then increased by 17.3% over the next three years.

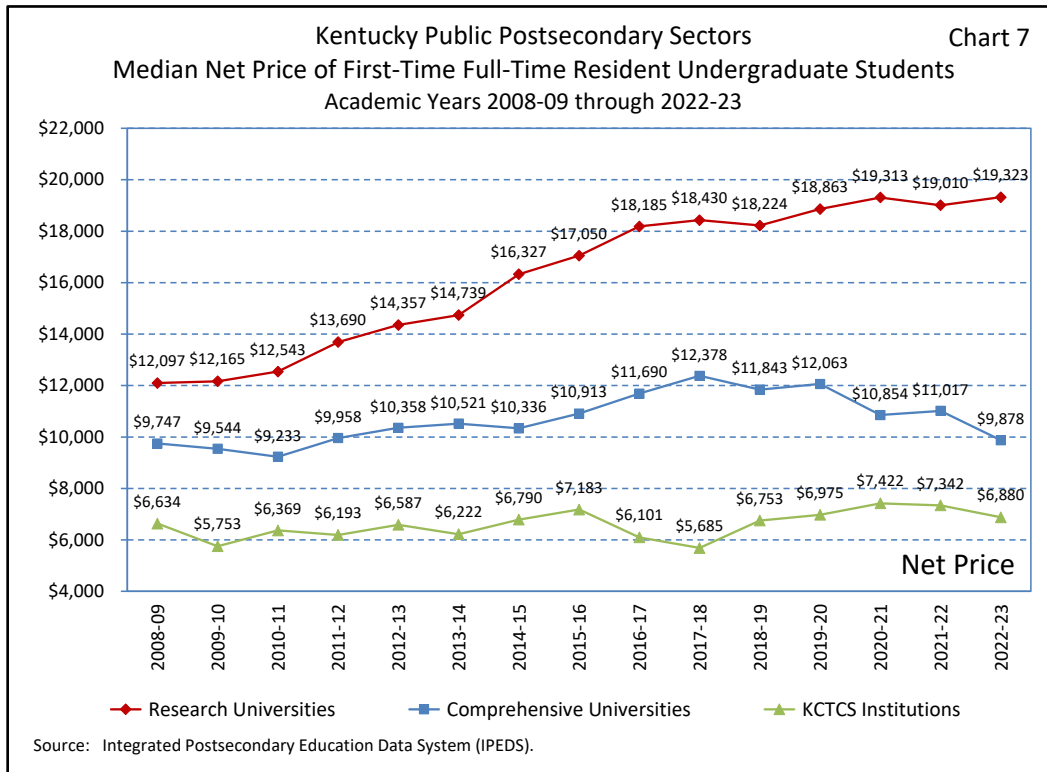


While maintaining affordability is still a high priority for Council staff and campus officials, the lack of sustained state support for campus operations over the past decade combined with several years of relatively low tuition and fee increases has resulted in real declines in college spending, which if left unchecked, could lead to increased reliance on adjunct faculty, fewer sections of courses being taught, larger class sizes, and a diminished level of academic quality. For this reason, staff is recommending tuition ceilings at the upper end of the moderate range in academic year 2025-26 and at the upper end of the low range in 2026-27 to achieve an appropriate balance between the resource needs of the institutions and affordability for Kentucky students and families.

### Net Price

An important metric for assessing the impact over time of changes in price and student financial aid on college affordability is the trend in the net college price. It has been added as a key issue this tuition cycle because of very positive trends in the net price of college attendance exhibited within the comprehensive and two-year college sectors.

As can be seen in Chart 7, the net price of college attendance differs markedly across Kentucky's public postsecondary sectors. As expected, the median net price paid by resident undergraduate students attending KCTCS institutions (represented by the green line) is the lowest among the sectors (i.e., \$6,880 in 2022-23), followed by a somewhat higher net price (i.e., \$9,878 that same year) paid by students enrolled at comprehensive universities (represented by the blue line), and exceeded by the net price paid (i.e., \$19,323) by students at research universities (represented by red line).



The overall trends in median net price over time also differ among sectors. At KCTCS institutions, annual changes in median net price have been sporadic, increasing in seven out of 14 years and decreasing in seven out of 14 years, with nine directional changes during that period. The overall trend is relatively flat, with median net price increasing by only \$246 between academic years 2008-09 and 2022-23.

A similar pattern can be observed in the net price trend in the comprehensive sector. Between 2008-09 and 2022-23, the median net price paid by resident undergraduate students attending comprehensive universities increased eight out of 14 years and decreased six out of 14 years, with five directional changes during that period. Like the two-year sector, the overall trend was relatively flat, with median net price increasing by only \$131 during this period.

Finally, the trend in net price has been generally up for students attending a research university. Between 2008-09 and 2022-23, the median net price paid by resident undergraduate students attending research universities increased 12 out of 14 years and decreased two out of 14 years. The overall trend was upward, with median net price increasing by \$7,226 during this period.

#### *Student Loan Debt*

A final measure that has been added to the list of key issues for the 2025-26 tuition cycle is the trend in student loan debt. Average student loan debt and the percentage of students graduating with debt are indicators that CPE staff has routinely monitored both in terms of conducting interstate comparisons and reviewing trends over time for Kentucky institutions. Many researchers consider trends in student loan debt as a litmus test for assessing college

affordability. Abrupt changes in average loan debt or the percentage of students graduating with debt, as well as overall trends in these metrics can signal the extent to which changes in college prices or in the amount and availability of student financial aid impact the ability of students and families to pay for college.

Over the past five years, average loan amounts for undergraduate degree and credential completers who graduated with debt has decreased, both among graduates of KCTCS institutions and graduates of public universities. The average loan amount of KCTCS degree, certificate, and diploma completers who graduated with debt decreased from \$14,571 in 2018-19 to \$13,629 in 2023-24, a 6.5% reduction. The average loan amount of public university undergraduate degree completers who graduated with debt decreased from \$34,773 in 2018-19 to \$32,996 in 2023-24, a 5.1% decrease.

In recent years, a smaller percentage of graduates from Kentucky public postsecondary institutions are leaving college with student loan debt. This is the case among graduates of KCTCS and among public university graduates. Specifically, among students who graduated from a KCTCS institution, 42.7% graduated with debt in 2018-19, compared to 28.0% who graduated with debt in 2023-24, a 14.7 percentage point reduction. Among students who graduated from a public university, 61.6% graduated with debt in 2018-19, compared to 54.9% of graduates in 2023-24, a 6.7 percentage point drop.

The positive trends in average student loan debt and the percentage of students graduating with debt were highlighted in the following quote by President Thompson. “This report is good news for Kentucky college students and reflects the tremendous efforts campuses are making to keep higher education accessible and affordable, despite inflationary pressures,” said Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE president. “While headlines warn of a national student loan debt crisis, balances among Kentucky students have been falling for a decade, and especially over the last five years.”

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

For the current tuition-setting cycle, staff recommended that the Council adopt two-year ceilings that will limit increases in resident undergraduate tuition and mandatory fees at Kentucky colleges and universities to predetermined amounts over the next two years.

Specifically, staff recommended to approve resident undergraduate tuition and mandatory fee ceilings for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27 that equate to:

- A maximum base rate increase of no more than \$675.<sup>00</sup> over two years, and a maximum increase of no more than \$450.<sup>00</sup> in any one year, for public research universities.
- A maximum base rate increase of no more than \$630.<sup>00</sup> over two years, and a maximum increase of no more than \$420.<sup>00</sup> in any one year, for comprehensive universities.
- A maximum base rate increase of no more than \$9.00 per credit hour over two years, and a maximum increase of no more than \$6.00 per credit hour in any one year, for students attending KCTCS institutions.

In addition to proposing resident undergraduate rate ceilings for the next two years, staff recommended that the public institutions be allowed to submit for Council review and approval:

- Nonresident undergraduate tuition and fee rates that comply with the Council’s *Tuition and Mandatory Fees Policy*, or otherwise adhere to provisions of an existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and an institution.

Finally, it is recommended that the public postsecondary institutions be allowed to submit for Council review and approval:

- Market competitive tuition and fee rates for graduate and online courses, as approved by their respective governing boards.

Included in the paragraphs below are four tables that identify each institution’s adopted 2024-25 base rate (i.e., current-year base rates) and maximum allowable base rates for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27 given staff’s recommended parameters. As a reminder, base rates are defined as total tuition and fee charges, minus any Special Use Fees or Asset Preservation Fees previously approved by the Council, and minus an existing agency bond fee at KCTCS.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution				Table 4	
Maximum Base Rate Increase for Resident Undergraduates					
Academic Year 2025-26					
Institution	Adopted 2024-25 Base Rates <sup>1</sup>	Maximum 2025-26 Base Rates	One-Year Dollar Change	One-Year Percent Change	
UK	\$13,502	\$13,952	\$450	3.3%	
UofL	12,940	13,390	450	3.5%	
WKU	\$11,452	\$11,872	\$420	3.7%	
NKU	10,704	11,124	420	3.9%	
EKU	10,020	10,440	420	4.2%	
MuSU	9,900	10,320	420	4.2%	
MoSU	9,772	10,192	420	4.3%	
KSU	9,087	9,507	420	4.6%	

<sup>1</sup> Base rates do not include Special Use Fees or Asset Preservation Fees previously approved by the Council, or a BuildSmart fee at KCTCS.

Table 4 shows the current-year base rate, maximum allowable base rate for academic year 2025-26, and one-year dollar and percent changes compared to the current-year base rate for each public university, using the recommended “no more than \$450.<sup>00</sup> in any one year for public research universities” and “no more than \$420.<sup>00</sup> in any one year for comprehensive universities” maximum increase parameters.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution				Table 5	
Maximum Base Rate Increase for Resident Undergraduates					
Academic Year 2026-27					
Institution	Adopted 2024-25 Base Rates <sup>1</sup>	Maximum 2026-27 Base Rates	Two-Year Dollar Change	Two-Year Percent Change	
UK	\$13,502	\$14,177	\$675	5.0%	
UofL	12,940	13,615	675	5.2%	
WKU	\$11,452	\$12,082	\$630	5.5%	
NKU	10,704	11,334	630	5.9%	
EKU	10,020	10,650	630	6.3%	
MuSU	9,900	10,530	630	6.4%	
MoSU	9,772	10,402	630	6.4%	
KSU	9,087	9,717	630	6.9%	

<sup>1</sup> Base rates do not include Special Use Fees or Asset Preservation Fees previously approved by the Council, or a BuildSmart fee at KCTCS.

Table 5 shows the current-year base rate, maximum allowable base rate for academic year 2024-25, and two-year dollar and percent changes compared to the current-year base rate for each public university, using the recommended “no more than 5.0 percent over two years” maximum increase parameter.

See Attachment A for detail regarding the maximum allowable total tuition and fee charges in 2025-26 and 2026-27 for resident undergraduate students at each public university. Unlike base rates, total tuition and fee charges include Special Use Fees and Asset Preservation Fees previously approved by the Council.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution				Table 6	
Maximum Base Rate Increase for Resident Students					
Academic Year 2025-26					
Institution	Adopted 2024-25 Base Rates <sup>1</sup>	Maximum 2025-26 Base Rates	One-Year Dollar Change	One-Year Percent Change	
KCTCS (per credit hour)	\$189.00	\$195.00	\$6.00	3.2%	
KCTCS (per credit hour x 30)	5,670	5,850	180	3.2%	

<sup>1</sup> Base rates do not include Special Use Fees or Asset Preservation Fees previously approved by the Council, or a BuildSmart fee at KCTCS.

Table 6 shows the adopted 2024-25 base rate, maximum allowable base rate for academic year 2025-26, and one-year dollar and percent changes compared to the current-year base rate for KCTCS institutions, using the recommended “maximum increase of no more than \$6.00 per credit hour in any one year” parameter. These rates are displayed both on a per-credit-hour basis and for a full-time student taking 30 hours.



Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution Maximum Base Rate Increase for Resident Students Academic Year 2026-27				Table 7
Institution	Adopted 2024-25 Base Rates <sup>1</sup>	Maximum 2026-27 Base Rates	Two-Year Dollar Change	Two-Year Percent Change
KCTCS (per credit hour)	\$189.00	\$198.00	\$9.00	4.8%
KCTCS (per credit hour x 30)	5,670	5,940	270	4.8%

<sup>1</sup> Base rates do not include Special Use Fees or Asset Preservation Fees previously approved by the Council, or a BuildSmart fee at KCTCS.

Table 7 shows the adopted 2024-25 base rate, maximum allowable base rate for academic year 2026-27, and two-year dollar and percent changes compared to the current-year base rate for KCTCS institutions, using the recommended “maximum increase of no more than \$9.00 per credit hour over two years” parameter.

See Attachment A for detail regarding the maximum allowable total tuition and fee charges in academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for resident students attending a KCTCS institution. Unlike base rates, total tuition and fee charges include KCTCS’ BuildSmart agency bond fee. CPE staff’s tuition and fee recommendation and corresponding maximum base rate increases are consistent with the objectives of the Council’s *Tuition and Mandatory Fee Policy*, including funding adequacy, shared benefits and responsibility, affordability and access, attracting and importing talent, and effective use of resources.

If the proposed parameters for academic years 2025-26 and 2026-27 are approved by the full Council, and if every university, KCTCS, and their respective governing boards were to adopt the maximum allowable increase in each year (which is not always a given), the system average increase in resident undergraduate base rates for Kentucky public postsecondary institutions would be 3.9 percent in 2025-26 and 1.9 percent in 2026-27.

Because Special Use Fees, Asset Preservation Fees, and a KCTCS BuildSmart Fee are backed out of base rates before applying the percent increase parameters, the effective rates of increase in total tuition and fee charges will be lower.

**INSTITUTION RATE PROPOSALS**

It is anticipated that the postsecondary institutions will submit their proposed 2025-26 tuition and fee rates for review and approval at the June 9 meeting of the Finance Committee and the June 13 meeting of the Council. CPE staff will recommend approval of resident undergraduate tuition and fees that comply with Council approved ceilings, nonresident undergraduate rates that comply with the Council’s *Tuition and Mandatory Fee Policy* or otherwise adhere to a previously approved Memorandum of Understanding, and market competitive rates for graduate and online courses.

Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institution  
 Maximum Allowable Resident Undergraduate Tuition and Fees  
 Academic Year 2025-26

Attachment A

Institution	Adopted 2024-25 Tuition & Fees <sup>1</sup>	Maximum 2025-26 Tuition & Fees	One-Year Dollar Change	One-Year Percent Change
UK	\$13,502	\$13,952	\$450	3.33%
UofL	13,136	13,586	450	3.43%
WKU	\$11,652	\$12,072	\$420	3.60%
NKU	11,088	11,508	420	3.79%
EKU	10,620	11,040	420	3.95%
MuSU	10,200	10,620	420	4.12%
MoSU	10,024	10,444	420	4.19%
KSU	9,387	9,807	420	4.47%
KCTCS (per credit hour)	\$197.00	\$203.00	\$6.00	3.05%
KCTCS (per credit hour x 30)	5,910	6,090	180	3.05%

Academic Year 2026-27

Institution	Adopted 2024-25 Tuition & Fees <sup>1</sup>	Maximum 2026-27 Tuition & Fees	Two-Year Dollar Change	Two-Year Percent Change
UK	\$13,502	\$14,177	\$675	5.00%
UofL	13,136	13,811	675	5.14%
WKU	\$11,652	\$12,282	\$630	5.41%
NKU	11,088	11,718	630	5.68%
EKU	10,620	11,250	630	5.93%
MuSU	10,200	10,830	630	6.18%
MoSU	10,024	10,654	630	6.28%
KSU	9,387	10,017	630	6.71%
KCTCS (per credit hour)	\$197.00	\$206.00	\$9.00	4.57%
KCTCS (per credit hour x 30)	5,910	6,180	270	4.57%

Note: Charges shown are annual full-time comparison rates (except for the per-credit-hour rates at KCTCS), assuming a student takes 15 credit hours per semester (i.e., fall and spring) for a total of 30 credit hours taken in an academic year.

<sup>1</sup> Tuition and fees include Special Use Fees at UofL, EKU, MoSU, NKU, and WKU, Asset Preservation Fees at EKU, KSU, MoSU, and MuSU, and BuildSmart agency bond fees at KCTCS.

**TITLE:** Interim Capital Project Request – Murray State University, Curris Center Roof Replacement

**DESCRIPTION:** The Finance Committee recommends the Council approve a \$1,510,000 agency restricted funds interim capital project at Murray State University’s main campus that will replace the roof of the Curris Center.

**STAFF CONTACT:** Adam Blevins, Associate Director, Finance Policy and Programs

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**COMMITTEE REVIEW & APPROVAL**

The Finance Committee reviewed and endorsed for final approval the proposed interim capital project at its April 14, 2025, meeting.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Murray State University (MuSU) officials have requested authorization for an interim capital project to replace the roof of the Curris Center on the university’s main campus. The project will replace 32,862 square feet of built-up roofing, which was last replaced in 1990 and had a 25-year useful-life expectancy. The MuSU Board of Regents approved the project on December 13, 2024. The project’s total scope is \$1,510,000 and will be funded with agency-restricted funds.

House Bill 592 (RS 18) created a new provision in KRS 164A.575, which allows public postsecondary institutions to authorize capital projects not specifically listed in the state budget as long as: (1) the projects are funded with non-general fund appropriations; (2) do not jeopardize funding for existing programs; and (3) are reported by the institution to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee. The relevant section of KRS 164A.575 is provided below:

- (15) Notwithstanding KRS 45.760, the governing board may authorize a capital construction project or a major item of equipment even though it is not specifically listed in any branch budget bill, subject to the following conditions and procedures:
  - (a) The full cost shall be funded solely by non-General Fund appropriations;
  - (b) Moneys specifically budgeted and appropriated by the General Assembly for another purpose shall not be allotted or re-allotted for expenditure on the project or major item of equipment. Moneys utilized shall not jeopardize any

existing program and shall not require the use of any current General Funds specifically dedicated to existing programs; and

- (c) The institution's president, or designee, shall submit the project or major item of equipment to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee for review as provided by KRS 45.800.

During the interim, the approval process for a capital project that exceeds \$1,000,000 and the agencies involved is as follows:

- The project must be approved by an institution's board of trustees or regents;
- The project must be submitted to the Council on Postsecondary Education for review and action;
- If approved by the Council, projects at KSU are submitted to the Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet for review and action, and subsequently submitted by the Secretary to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee for review;
- If approved by the Council, projects at EKV, MoSU, MuSU, NKU, UK, UofL, WKU and KCTCS are submitted by the requesting institution to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee for review, and a copy is provided to the Finance and Administration Cabinet as information; and
- Following review and action by the appropriate boards and agencies, the project may be initiated by the requesting institution.

Because this project was not previously approved by the Council and was not authorized by the General Assembly in the enacted 2024-2026 budget (RS 24, HB 6), Council approval is now required to authorize this project. MuSU will use restricted funds to finance this project. Debt will not be used to finance any portion of this project; therefore, provisions of KRS 45.763 do not apply.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Following action by the Council, CPE staff will notify the president of MuSU, the Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet and the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee regarding this interim capital project.

**TITLE:** Interim Capital Project Request – Northern Kentucky University, Reconstruct Outdoor Tennis Complex

**DESCRIPTION:** The Finance Committee recommends the Council approve a \$3,000,000 private donor funds interim project at the Northern Kentucky University main campus that will demolish and reconstruct the existing outdoor tennis complex.

**STAFF CONTACT:** Adam Blevins, CPE Associate Director, Finance Policy and Programs

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**COMMITTEE REVIEW & APPROVAL**

The Finance Committee reviewed and endorsed for final approval the proposed interim capital project at its April 14, 2025, meeting.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Northern Kentucky University (NKU) staff request authorization for an interim capital project to demolish and reconstruct the existing outdoor tennis complex on the university’s main campus. The project will allow the six-court complex to be demolished and reconstructed at the current site on the west side of the main campus. The NKU Board of Regents approved the project on January 15, 2025. The project may be completed in conjunction with a pickleball court project should both fit within scope. The total combined scope for the project is \$3,000,000, and it will be funded privately.

House Bill 592 (RS 18) created a new provision in KRS 164A.575, which allows public postsecondary institutions to authorize capital projects not specifically listed in the state budget as long as: (1) the projects are funded with non-General Fund appropriations; (2) do not jeopardize funding for existing programs; and (3) are reported by the institution to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee. The relevant section of KRS 164A.575 is provided below:

- (15) Notwithstanding KRS 45.760, the governing board may authorize a capital construction project or a major item of equipment even though it is not specifically listed in any branch budget bill, subject to the following conditions and procedures:
  - (a) The full cost shall be funded solely by non-General Fund appropriations;
  - (b) Moneys specifically budgeted and appropriated by the General Assembly for another purpose shall not be allotted or re-allotted for expenditure on the project or major item of equipment. Moneys utilized shall not jeopardize any

existing program and shall not require the use of any current General Funds specifically dedicated to existing programs; and

- (c) The institution's president, or designee, shall submit the project or major item of equipment to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee for review as provided by KRS 45.800.

During the interim, the agencies involved and the approval process for a capital project that exceeds \$1,000,000 is as follows:

- The project must be approved by an institution's board of trustees or regents;
- The project must be submitted to the Council on Postsecondary Education for review and action;
- If approved by the Council, projects at KSU are submitted to the Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet for review and action, and subsequently submitted by the Secretary to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee for review;
- If approved by the Council, projects at EKU, MoSU, MuSU, NKU, UK, UofL, WKU and KCTCS are submitted by the requesting institution to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee for review, and a copy is provided to the Finance and Administration Cabinet as information; and
- Following review and action by the appropriate agencies, the project may be initiated by the requesting institution.

Because this project was not previously approved by the Council nor authorized by the General Assembly in the enacted 2024-2026 budget (RS 24, HB 6), Council approval is now required to authorize this project. NKU will use private donor funds to finance this project. Debt will not be used to finance any portion of this project; therefore, provisions of KRS 45.763 do not apply.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Following action by the Council, CPE staff will notify the president of NKU, the Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet, and the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee regarding this interim capital project.

**TITLE:** Revisions to 2022-24 Endowment Match Program Guidelines

**DESCRIPTION:** The Finance Committee recommends the Council approve revisions to the *2022-24 Endowment Match Program Guidelines* as shown in the attachment.

**STAFF CONTACTS:** Adam Blevins, Associate Director of Finance Policy and Programs  
Bill Payne, Vice President of Finance Policy and Programs

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**COMMITTEE REVIEW & APPROVAL**

The Finance Committee reviewed and endorsed for final approval the proposed revisions to the *2022-24 Endowment Match Program Guidelines* at its April 14, 2025, meeting.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The Bucks for Brains program, also referred to as the Endowment Match Program (EMP), matches public dollars with private donations on at least a dollar-for-dollar basis to encourage research at the University of Kentucky (UK) and the University of Louisville (UofL) and to strengthen key programs at Kentucky’s comprehensive universities. All funds, both public and private, must be endowed, with investment proceeds used to provide a perpetual source of funding for research-related activities.

In the 2022-2024 Budget of the Commonwealth (22 RS, HB 1), the General Assembly authorized \$40.0 million in state bond funds for Bucks for Brains, with \$30.0 million of that amount appropriated to the Research Challenge Trust Fund (RCTF) to support UK and UofL and \$10.0 million allocated to the Comprehensive University Excellence Trust Fund (CUETF) to support the comprehensive universities.

The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) has statutory authority to determine the criteria and process by which public universities apply for access to appropriations to the RCTF (KRS 164.7917) and CUETF (KRS 164.7919). At its June 14, 2022, meeting, the Finance Committee approved the 2022-24 Endowment Match Program (EMP) Guidelines. In March 2024, staff brought proposed revisions to the Council to clarify language and reduce confusion for the institutions. The proposed revisions also included updated language permitting Kentucky State University to use up to 20 percent of funds awarded under Title III of the Higher Education Act to be endowed so long as the dollar-for-dollar matching requirement is maintained. The Council approved both the proposed revisions and the updated language at the March 2024 meeting.

During the 2025 Regular Session, the General Assembly passed legislation that prohibits initiatives related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for postsecondary institutions and agencies across the Commonwealth (HB 4). The bill specifies that neither the Council on Postsecondary Education nor any public postsecondary institution shall “expend any resources to establish or maintain a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative.” A “diversity, equity and inclusion initiative” is defined as a policy, practice or procedure designed or implemented to promote or provide differential treatment or benefits to individuals on the basis of religion, race, sex, color or national origin in such practices including, but not limited to, employee recruitment and hiring and student financial assistance and scholarship awards.

To comply with the legislative requirements of HB 4, CPE staff is proposing revisions to the Endowment Match Program Guidelines to remove DEI-related planning and reporting requirements from the program. On page five (5) of Attachment A, staff has identified the section that needs to be removed using red font and strikethrough.



## **Council on Postsecondary Education 2022-24 Endowment Match Program Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

Kentucky recognizes the importance of research to the economic well-being of its citizens. The Endowment Match Program encourages private investment in public higher education research activities to stimulate business development, generate increases in externally sponsored research, create better jobs and a higher standard of living, and facilitate Kentucky's transition to a knowledge-based economy. The program matches public money with private gifts to fund chairs, professorships, research scholars, staffs and infrastructure, fellowships and scholarships, and mission support at the public universities. This collaborative approach is critical to advancing Kentucky's research presence into national prominence.

### **Program Funding**

State funding for the Endowment Match Program is appropriated to the Research Challenge Trust Fund (RCTF) for the research universities and to the Comprehensive University Excellence Trust Fund (CUETF) for the comprehensive institutions. Both trust funds were created with passage of the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997 (HB 1).

Prior to 2022, there were four rounds of funding for the Endowment Match Program. In fiscal year 1998-99, the program received surplus General Fund appropriations of \$110 million (i.e., \$100 for the research universities and \$10 million for comprehensive institutions). In 2000-01, the General Assembly authorized \$120 million for the program (i.e., \$100 million for the RCTF and \$20 million for the CUETF). The legislature debt financed another \$120 million for the program in 2003-04 (i.e., \$100 million for the RCTF and \$20 million for the CUETF). Finally, the General Assembly authorized \$60 million in state supported bond funds for the program in 2008-09, with \$50 million appropriated to the research universities and \$10 million appropriated to the comprehensive universities.

For the upcoming 2022-2024 biennium, the General Assembly authorized \$40 million in bond funds for the Bucks for Brains program, with \$30 million appropriated to the Research Challenge Trust Fund and \$10 million appropriated to the Comprehensive University Excellence Trust Fund (22 RS, HB 1).

### **Program Administration**

The Council on Postsecondary Education oversees and administers the Endowment Match Program. The Council establishes areas of concentration within which program funds are used, develops guidelines for the distribution of program funds, and reviews reports from the institutions on uses of program funds and results achieved.

The boards of trustees and boards of regents of the Commonwealth's public universities are responsible for the Endowment Match Program on their respective campuses. The governing boards are required by Council guidelines to review and approve all donations, gifts, and pledges that will be matched with state funds and used to establish new endowments or expand existing endowments under the Bucks for Brains program. Furthermore, the boards

are charged with ensuring that the purposes of each endowment and sources of matching funds comply with Council guidelines and serve the public good.

Documentation of board approval must be submitted with each endowment request. In addition, the governing boards are required to review and approve Endowment Match Program reports that are submitted annually to the Council.

### Allocation of Program Funds

In the 2022-2024 Budget of the Commonwealth (22 RS, HB 1), the General Assembly authorized \$30 million in General Fund supported bond funds in fiscal year 2022-23 for the Research Challenge Trust Fund (RCTF) to support efforts to grow endowments for initiatives in fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health (i.e., STEM+H fields) at Kentucky public research universities. In accordance with KRS 164.7917, funding appropriated to the RCTF will be allocated two-thirds (2/3) to the University of Kentucky and one-third (1/3) to the University of Louisville, as shown in the table below. These funds will remain in the trust fund until matched and distributed.

University of Kentucky	\$20,000,000
University of Louisville	<u>10,000,000</u>
Total RCTF	\$30,000,000

In that same budget, the General Assembly also authorized \$10 million in state-supported bond funds in 2022-23 for the Comprehensive University Excellence Trust Fund (CUETF) to support endowment growth in STEM+H fields at Kentucky comprehensive universities. In keeping with KRS 164.7919, these funds will be apportioned among the comprehensive universities based on each institution’s share of sector total General Fund appropriations, excluding debt service and specialized, noninstructional appropriations (i.e., mandated programs). The resulting allocations are shown below. These funds will remain in the trust fund until matched and distributed.

Eastern Kentucky University	\$2,227,800
Kentucky State University	667,800
Morehead State University	1,279,000
Murray State University	1,484,900
Northern Kentucky University	1,864,600
Western Kentucky University	<u>2,475,900</u>
Total CUETF	\$10,000,000

### Matching Requirements

The Endowment Match Program was conceived as a way to bring new money from external sources into the Commonwealth’s system of postsecondary education. In order to receive state funds, the universities must provide dollar-for-dollar matching funds that satisfy the following requirements:

- Gifts and pledges must be newly generated to be eligible for state match. Newly generated contributions are those received by the university after November 15, 2021 (i.e., the date of the Council’s 2022-2024 biennial budget submission).

- Gifts and pledges must be from external sources to be eligible for state match. External source contributions are those that originate outside the university and its affiliated corporations. Eligible sources of funding include, but are not limited to, businesses, non-governmental foundations, hospitals, corporations, and alumni or other individuals. Funds received from federal, state, and local government sources are not eligible for state match. Federal funds awarded to Kentucky State University under Title III of the Higher Education Act (HEA) are an exception to this rule and are eligible for state match. Federal guidelines under the Strengthening HBCUs Program allow up to 20% of Title III grant awards to be endowed provided they are matched dollar-for-dollar.
- General Fund appropriations and student-derived revenues (e.g., tuition and fees revenue) are not eligible for state match.
- The minimum institutional request amount is \$50,000. A university may combine smaller donations from businesses, nongovernmental foundations, hospitals, corporations, and alumni or other individuals to meet the \$50,000 minimum.
- All funds, both state and private, must be endowed. “Endowed” means that state and donated funds will be held in perpetuity and invested to create income for the institution, with endowment proceeds eligible for expenditure, in accordance with donor restrictions, university endowment spending policies, and Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) requirements.
- Requests for state funds must identify the matching funds that are cash and the matching funds that are pledges.
- Pledges, or promises of future payment, are eligible for state match provided they are based on a written contract or agreement and include a payment schedule, which does not exceed five years from the initial pledge date. Pledge payment schedules showing receipts to date and scheduled future payments are to be included in the audited financial statements of either the institution or the foundation.
- If pledged funds are not received within five years of the initial pledge date, the university must replace the portion of private funds not received with another eligible cash gift or the unmatched portion of the state funds plus an allowance for accrued interest will revert to the trust fund for reallocation. In such cases, a time frame for the replacement or return of state funds will be negotiated between Council staff and institutional representatives.
- University officials must notify the Council staff of unpaid pledges six months before the end of the five-year deadline, or immediately when a gift has been revoked.

### **Uses of Program Funds**

Proceeds from the endowments can be used to support various activities including endowed chairs and professorships, research scholars, research staff, graduate fellowships, undergraduate scholarships, research infrastructure, and mission support as described below.

#### *Category 1 Uses of Program Funds*

**Chairs:** New faculty positions, salary supplements to existing faculty positions, and associated expenses for those positions, including start-up costs, salaries, benefits, travel, and other professional expenses as permitted by university policy.

**Professorships:** New faculty positions, salary supplements to existing faculty positions, and associated expenses for those positions, including start-up costs, salaries, benefits, travel, and other professional expenses as permitted by university policy.

**Research Scholars:** Salaries, benefits, and other personnel related expenses associated with non-tenured, medical school faculty who exhibit the potential to assume a chair or professorship position once tenure has been awarded. Research scholars should have clearly defined research agendas that relate specifically to the fields of study envisioned for the ultimate occupants of the chairs or professorships. Funding for this purpose is time limited. Each research scholar may be supported with endowment proceeds for a maximum of six years. At the end of that time, if the research scholar has not been appointed to the identified chair or professorship, university officials should fill the position with an appropriately qualified, tenured faculty member.

**Research Staff:** Salaries, benefits, and other personnel related expenses associated with full- time or part-time staff assistants who directly support the research activities of an endowed chair or professor.

**Research Infrastructure:** Start-up and operating expenses that directly support the research activities of an endowed chair or professor, including equipment, materials and supplies, and other research related expenses as permitted by university policy.

### *Category 2 Uses of Program Funds*

**Graduate Fellowships:** Fellowship stipends for outstanding graduate or professional students, which may include travel and other expenses as permitted by university policy. Eligibility for fellowships will be determined by academic deans and/or campus financial aid officials consistent with donor intent as specified in endowment agreements.

**Undergraduate Scholarships:** At the comprehensive universities only, program funds can be used to support scholarships for outstanding undergraduate students, which may include travel and other expenses as permitted by university policy. Eligibility for scholarships will be determined by academic deans and/or campus financial aid officials consistent with donor intent as specified in endowment agreements.

**Mission Support:** Program funds can be used to support research and graduate missions at all institutions, and programs of distinction or applied research programs approved by the Council at the comprehensive institutions. Consideration will be given to mission support activities such as: (1) expenditures that enhance the research capability of university libraries (i.e., books, journals, research materials, media, and equipment); (2) start-up costs, equipment, and supplies that support faculty, graduate student, or undergraduate student research activities; (3) funding for visiting scholars, lecture series, and faculty exchange; and (4) expenditures for the dissemination of research findings (i.e., nationally prominent publications and presentations at conferences, symposiums, seminars, or workshops).

However, priority will be given to mission support expenditures that encourage the research related activities of faculty and students.

### **Use of Funds Requirements**

- At the research universities, at least 70 percent of program funds must be endowed for the purpose of supporting chairs, professorships, or research scholars, or research staff and infrastructure that directly support the research activities of an endowed chair, professor, or research scholar (i.e., Category 1 Uses). No more than 30 percent of program funds may be endowed for the purpose of supporting mission support activities or graduate fellowships (i.e., Category 2 Uses).
- At the comprehensive institutions, at least 50 percent of program funds must be endowed for the purpose of supporting chairs or professorships, or research staff and infrastructure that directly support the research activities of an endowed chair or professor (i.e., Category 1 Uses). No more than 50 percent of program funds may be endowed for the purpose of supporting mission support, graduate fellowships, or undergraduate scholarships (i.e., Category 2 Uses).

### **Areas of Concentration**

- At both research and comprehensive universities, 100 percent of program funds must be endowed to support initiatives in STEM+H fields (22 RS, HB 1). These areas are of strategic benefit to Kentucky and are core components of a knowledge-based economy. A copy of the Council’s official STEM+H Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code list is available upon request.
- At the research universities, the Council expects state and external matching funds to be substantially directed toward supporting research that leads to the creation, preservation, or attraction of businesses that will increase the number of good jobs in Kentucky. For these purposes, “good jobs” are defined as jobs that yield income at or above the national per capita income.
- The Council recognizes that strong research programs are clustered around related academic disciplines and encourages campus officials to create a critical mass of scholars who can influence the nation’s research and academic agendas.
- The Council recognizes that the boundaries of traditional disciplines are increasingly permeable and encourages the use of endowment funds for interdisciplinary, problem solving, or applied research activities.
- The Council recognizes the importance of cooperation between universities and corporations and encourages partnerships in the technologies, engineering, and applied sciences.
- Program funds cannot be used for positions that are primarily administrative. However, chairs, professors, or scholars with active research agendas who may have an appointment such as department chair, center director, or dean are eligible.

### **Program Diversity**

~~The Council on Postsecondary Education and participating universities are committed to ensuring the gender and ethnic diversity of Endowment Match Program faculty, professional staff, and financial aid recipients. The universities shall develop and implement plans to achieve reasonable diversity in the recruitment and retention of women, African Americans, and other underrepresented minorities for positions funded by the Endowment Match Program, including scholarship and fellowship recipients. In addition, the universities will report by November 1 every odd numbered year to the Council the race and gender of program faculty, professional staff, and financial aid recipients.~~

## **Reporting**

Institutions will provide a report to the Council by November 1 every odd numbered year (i.e., coinciding with the Council's biennial budget submission), documenting how state and campus matching funds were used. These reports will include such items as the number of endowed chairs, professorships, and research scholars created or expanded using program funds, the gender and race of program faculty, research staff, and financial aid recipients, and the impact of the program in terms of job creation, increases in sponsored research attributable to the program, and generation and profitable use of intellectual property.

The institutions will also continue to provide FD-21 reports as part of their annual Comprehensive Database submissions to the Council. CPE staff will work with campus officials to identify any additional information that should be included in reports provided to the Council.

<b>TITLE:</b>	Undergraduate Student Debt Levels in Kentucky
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	Staff will provide an overview of a study completed on undergraduate student debt levels at graduation from Kentucky's public institutions.
<b>STAFF CONTACTS:</b>	Travis Muncie, CPE Chief Information Officer Dr. Christopher Ledford, Director, Data and Advanced Analytics

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### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Earlier this year, CPE staff conducted a study on undergraduate debt levels and how Kentucky's efforts around tuition caps, improving financial literacy and increasing grant aid have impacted those levels. The study investigated debt trends over the past five academic years among undergraduate completers at Kentucky's public institutions. (Debt at graduation was defined as the total debt accumulated through the end of the academic year in which a student earned their highest credential on record.)

Following last year's inaugural report, this edition shows that average debt levels for undergraduate completers in Kentucky continue to decline across sectors and credential levels. Moderating debt loads among Kentucky's graduates has been a key focus of campuses across the state, as well as CPE and state leaders. Specifically, increases in financial aid and better financial counseling and resources, along with decreasing times to degree, are contributing to lower debt levels across sectors.

- Average debt for all public undergraduates (including those graduating with and without debt) dropped 32.8 percent between 2018-19 and 2023-24. The proportion of graduates with debt declined from 54.8% to 40.9% over the same period.
- At KCTCS, average debt of graduates declined by 38.6 percent between 2018-19 and 2023-24. The proportion of graduates with debt declined from 42.7 percent to 28.0 percent over the same period.
- At four-year public universities, average debt of graduates declined by 15.5 percent between 2018-19 and 2023-24. The proportion of graduates with debt declined from 61.6 percent to 54.9 percent.
- Declining debt trends generally hold across demographic and academic subgroups and higher education sectors.

CPE staff will present the findings of this report, which was released in late March. The report is published here: <http://cpe.ky.gov/data/reports/2025debtreport.pdf>



# Undergraduate Student Debt Levels in Kentucky

Five-Year Trends for Undergraduate Degree and Credential Completers at Public Universities and KCTCS

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**Christopher Ledford**

**Travis Muncie**

**Data and Advanced Analytics**



# Balancing Student Debt: Accessibility vs. Management

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# Balancing Student Debt

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- **Student loans provide:**
  - access to higher education
  - reasonable borrowing options
  - potential for increased economic mobility
- **However, student debt loads can swell, impacting enrollment and completion, if not well managed.**

# Student Debt Initiatives

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- **CPE, campuses, and lawmakers collaborate to increase financial literacy and access to financial aid, moderate college costs, and improve the efficiency and efficacy of the student experience.**
  - Students' Right to Know
  - Futuriti
  - FAFSA Days and financial literacy
  - Time to degree decreasing systemwide
  - Annual tuition increase limits

**Contrary to public discourse, average debt loads and the proportion of graduates with debt are declining at Kentucky public institutions.**

# Methodology

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# Measuring Undergraduate Debt

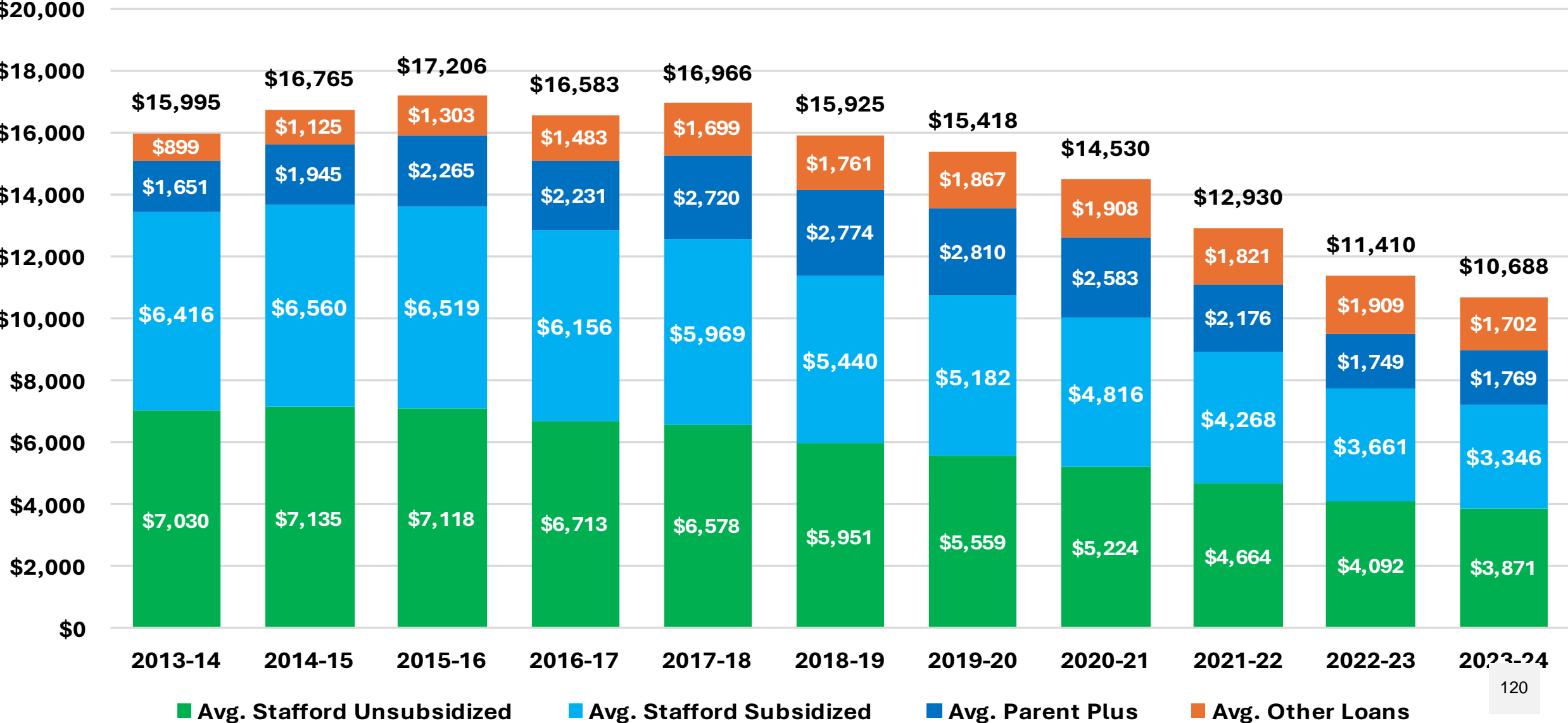
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- We measure graduate debt over the last decade as the total debt accumulated by each graduate from first enrollment through the end of the academic year in which they earned their **highest credential on record**.
- Using this methodology, we find conclusive evidence that **average debt at graduation** and the **proportion of graduates with debt are declining across sector**.
- In our discussion, we will focus on **five-year change** for consistency across sector, highlighting other important changes as relevant.

# All Public Sector Completers

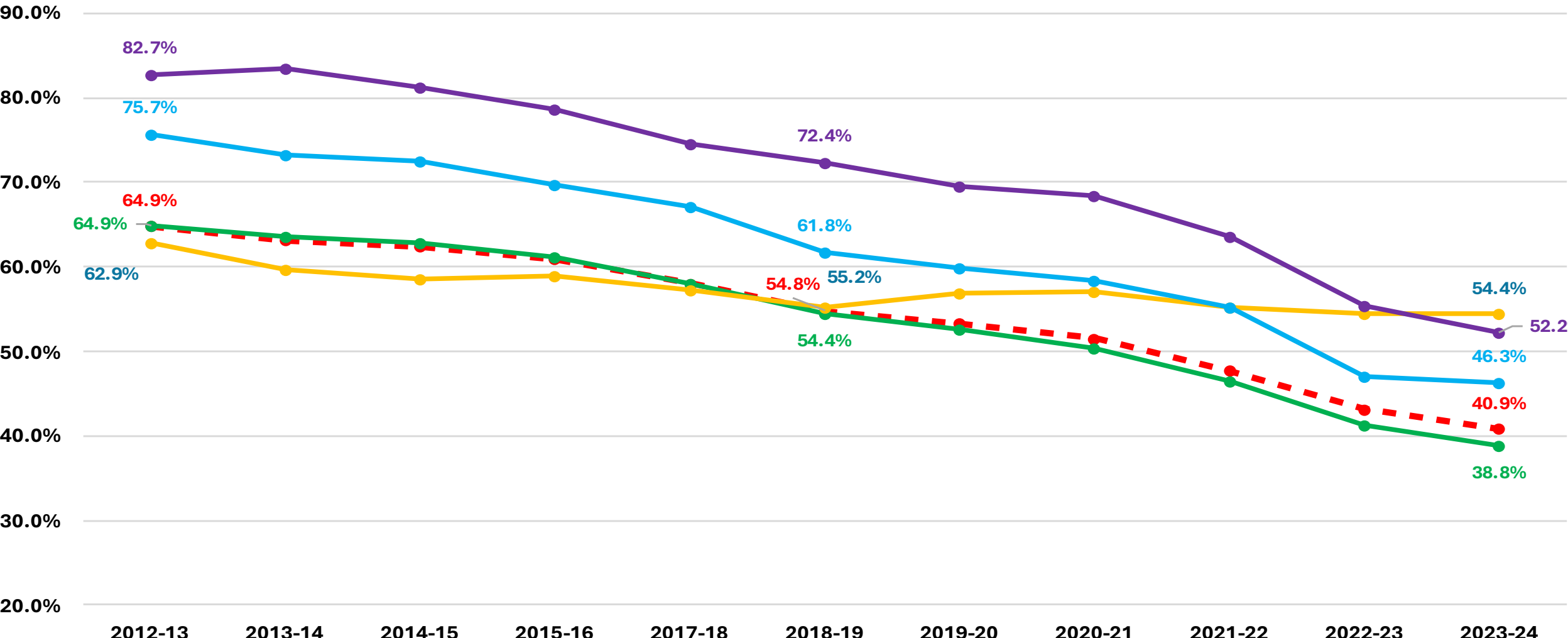
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# All Public Institutions – All Grads

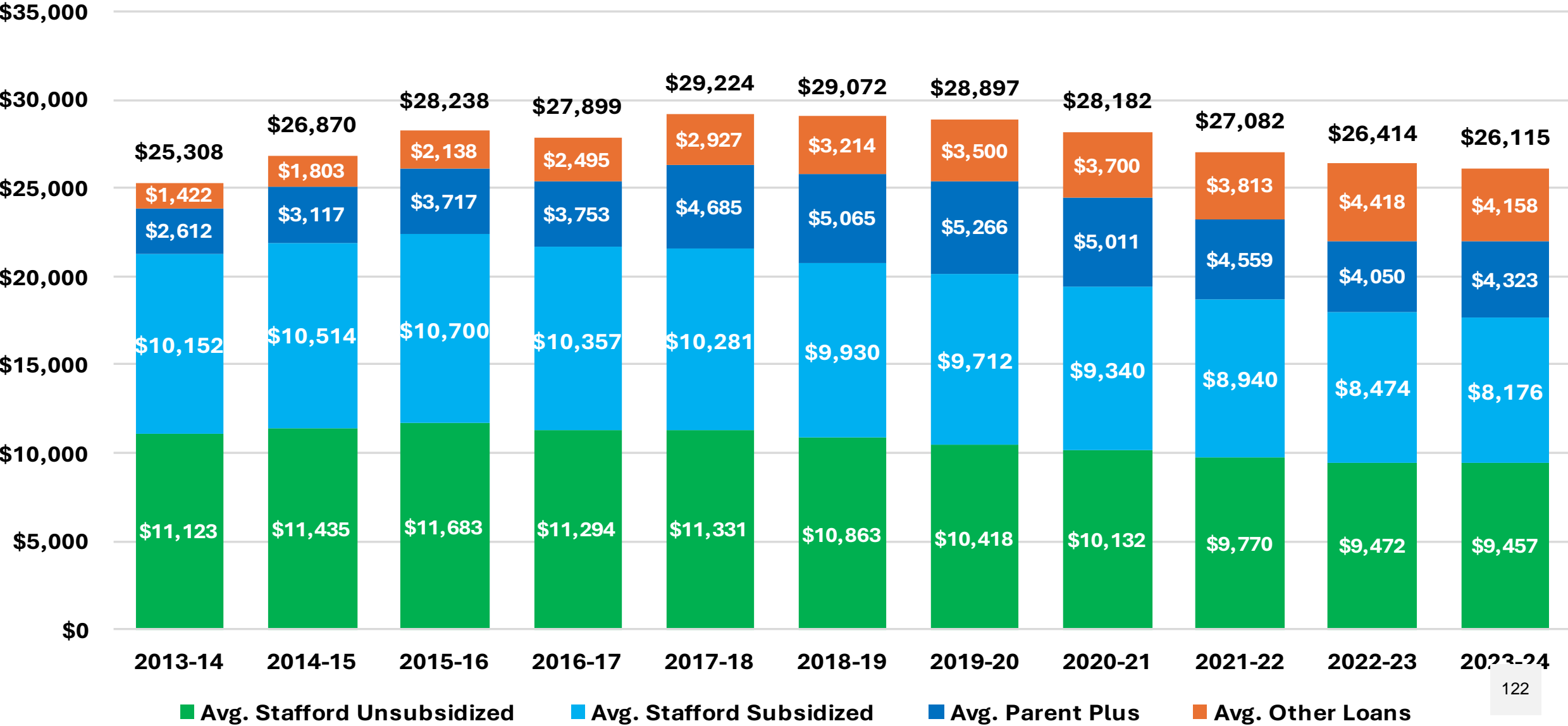




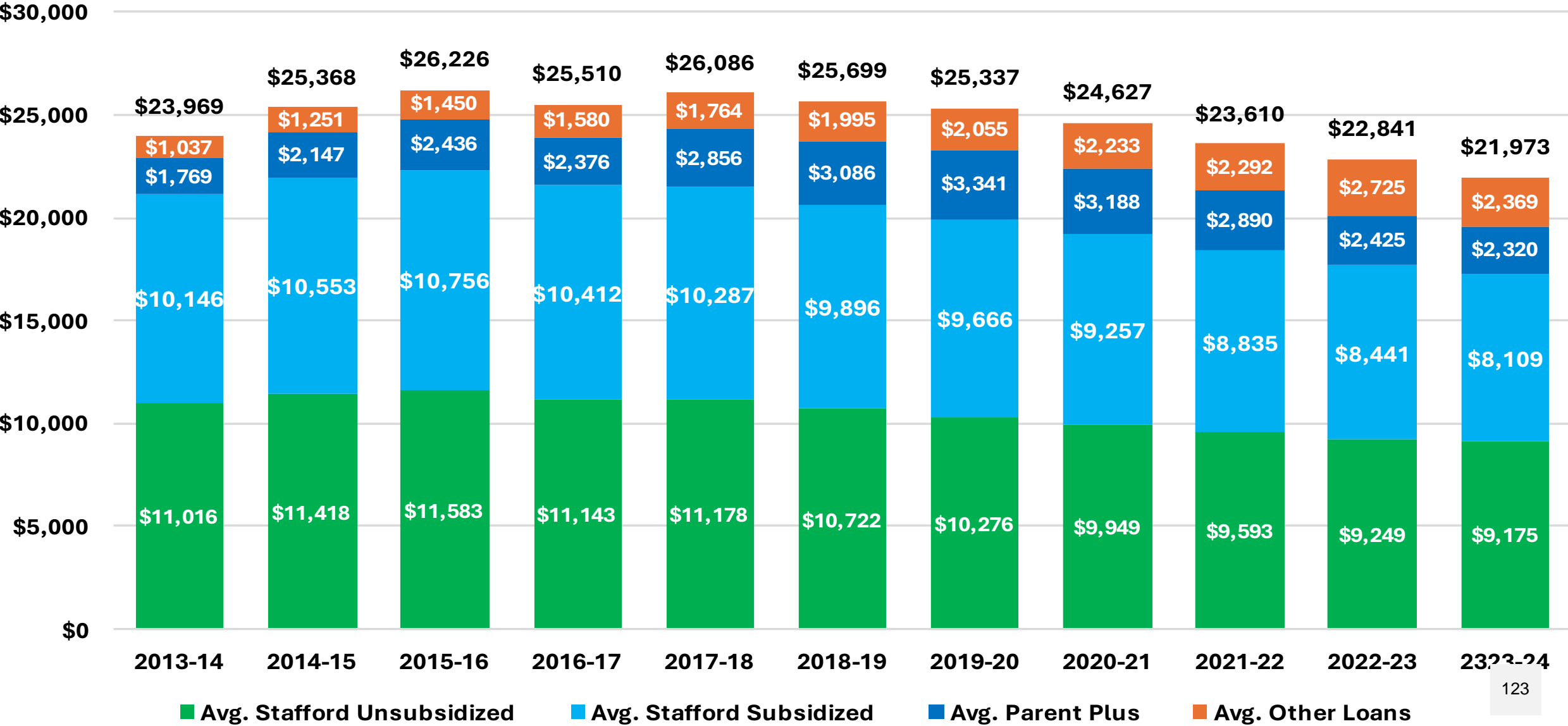
# All Public Institutions – Proportions of Grads with Debt



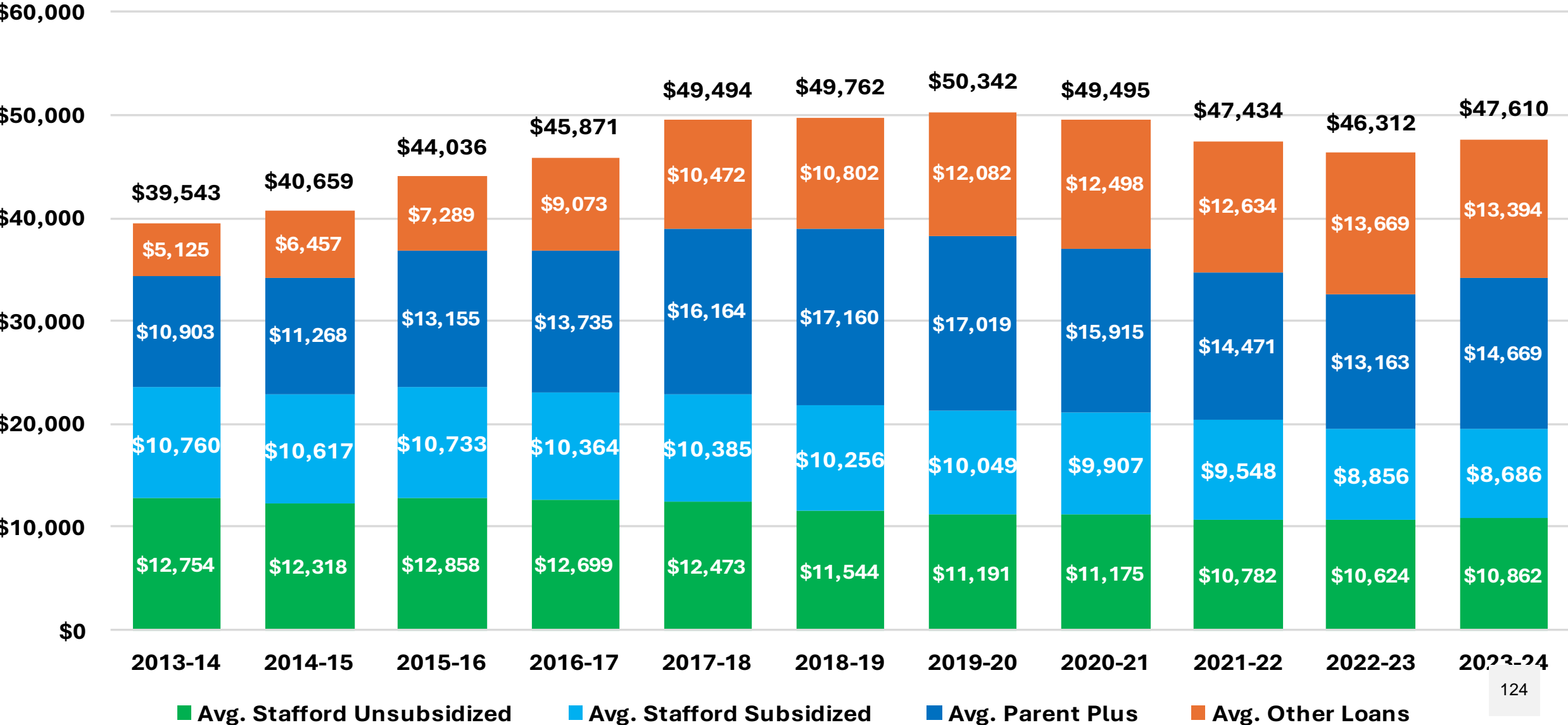
# All Public Institutions – All Grads with Debt



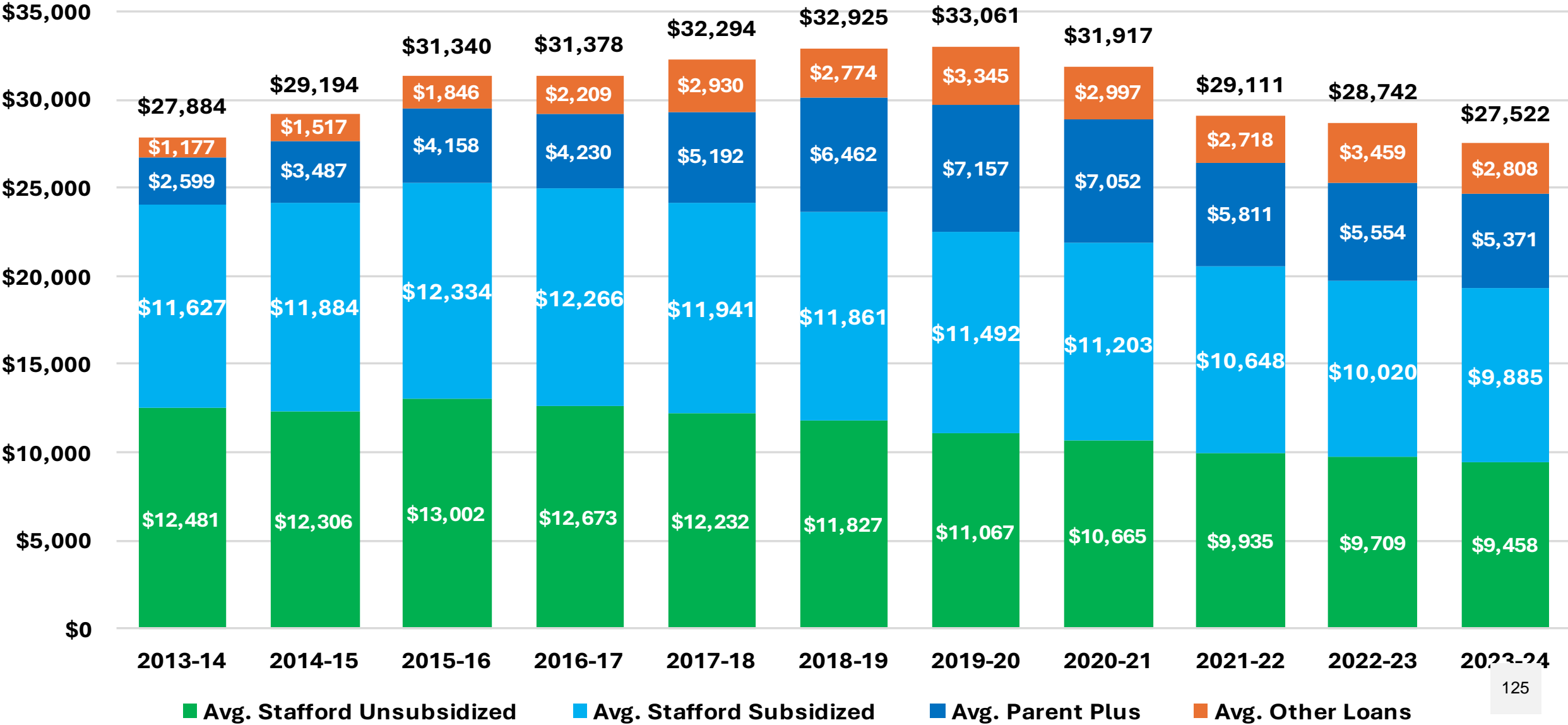
# All Public Institutions – In-State Grads with Debt



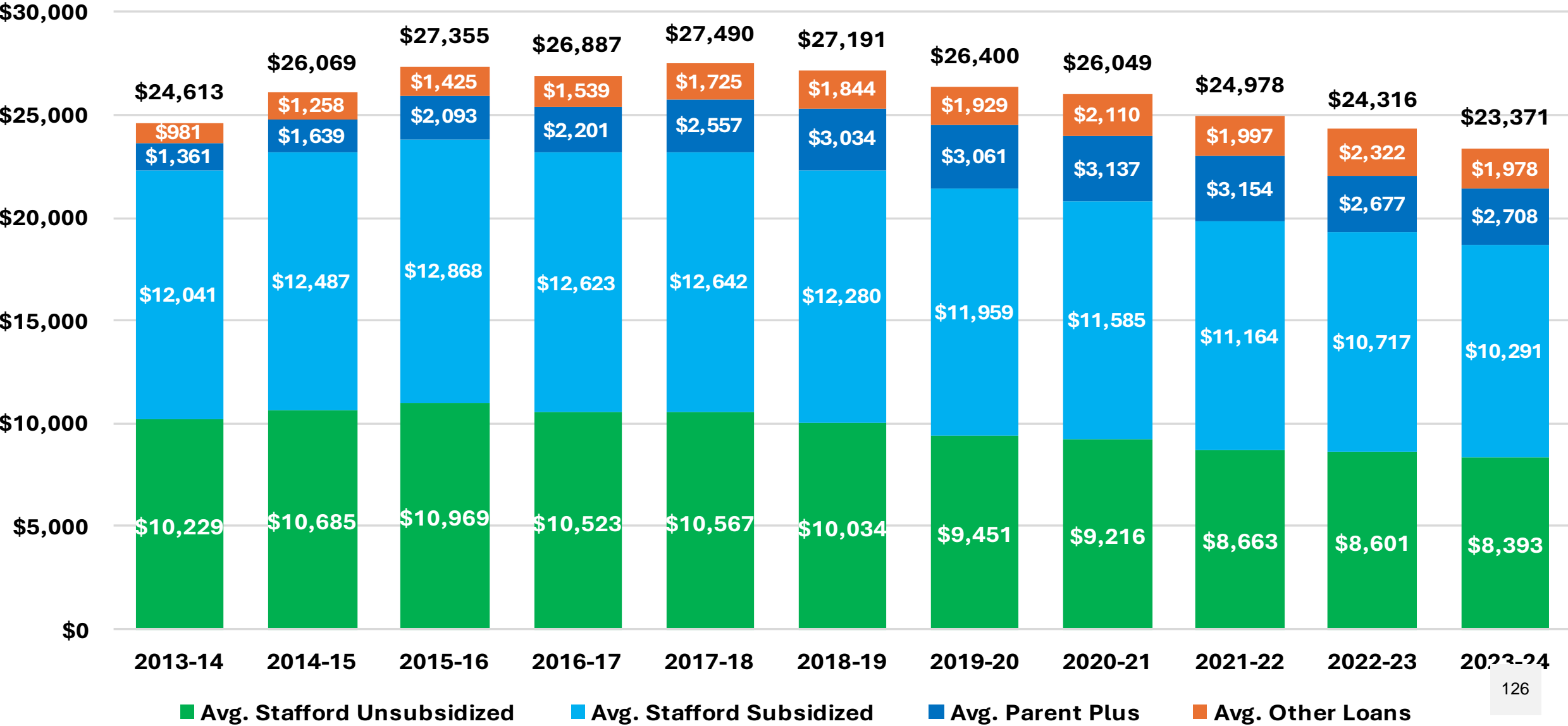
# All Public Institutions – Out-of-State Grads with Debt



# All Public Institutions – URM Grads with Debt



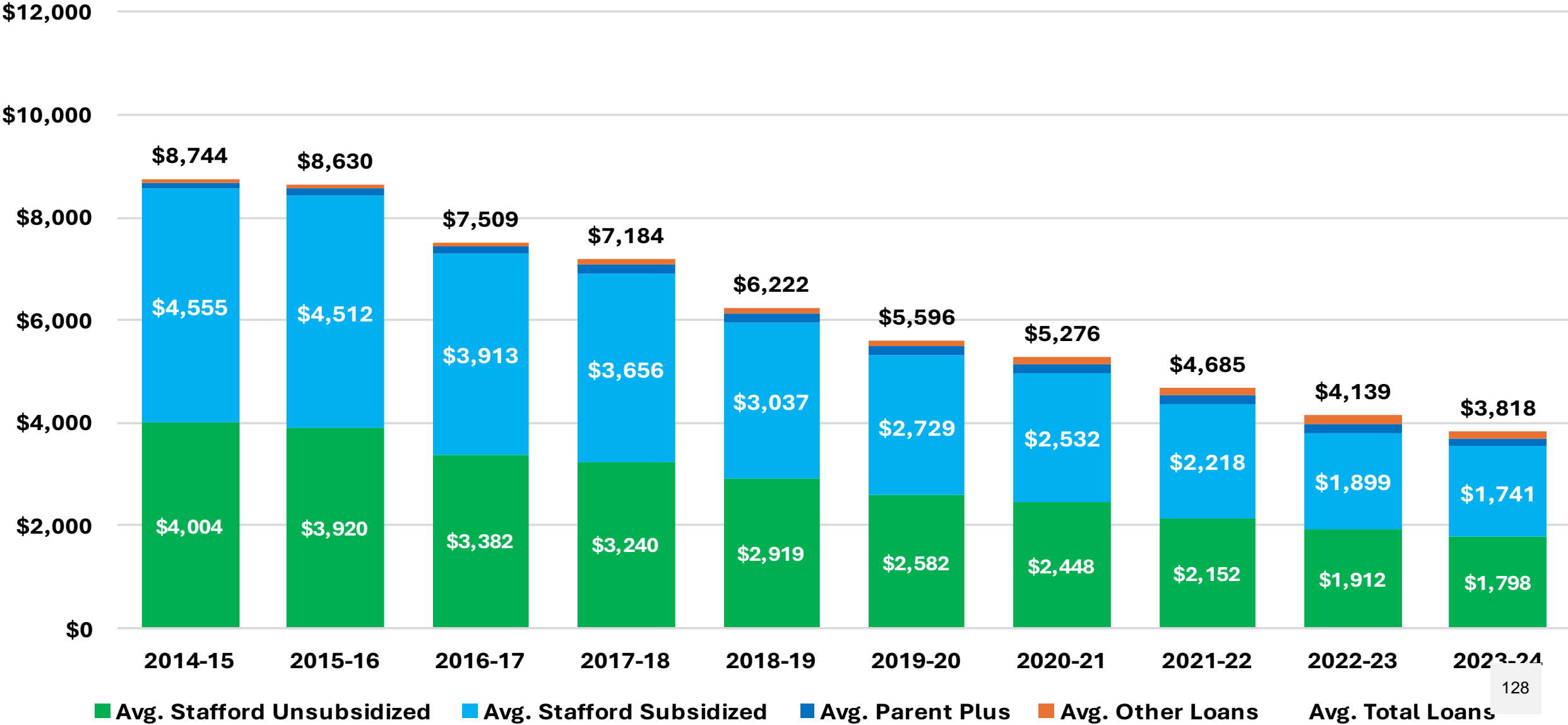
# All Public Institutions – Low Income Grads with Debt



# KCTCS Completers

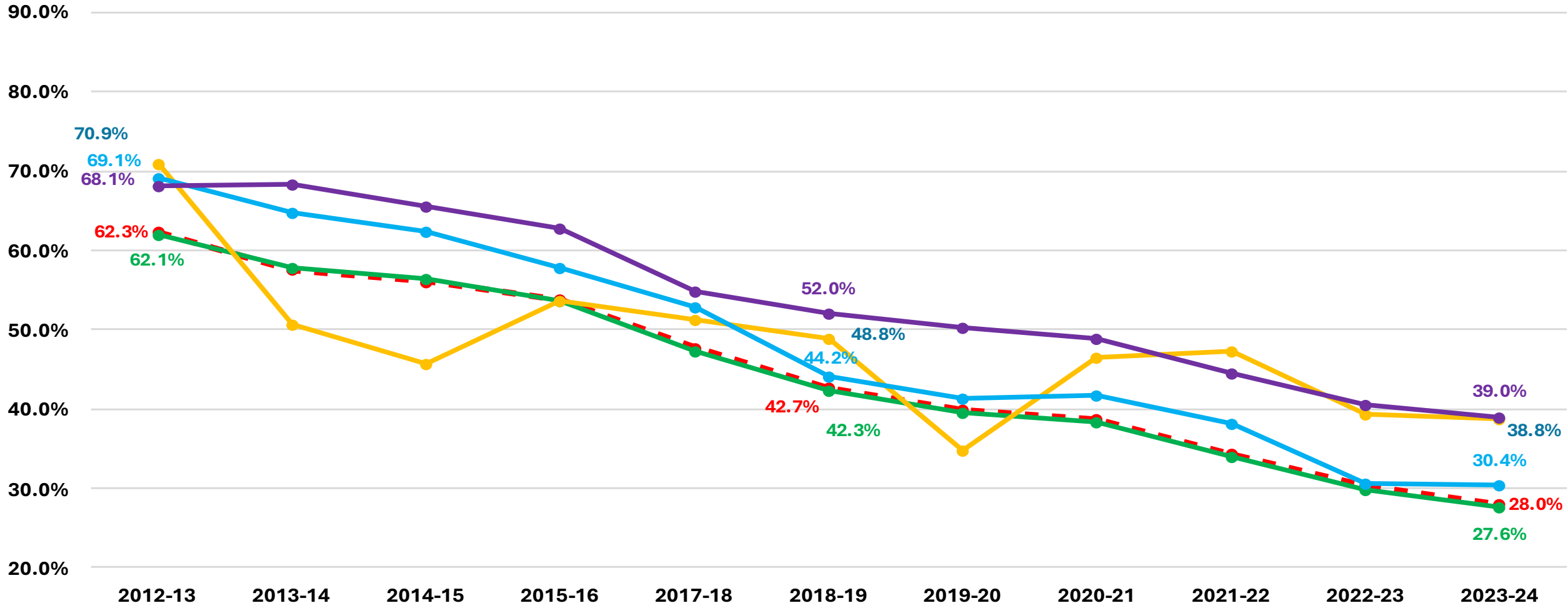
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# KCTCS – All Grads



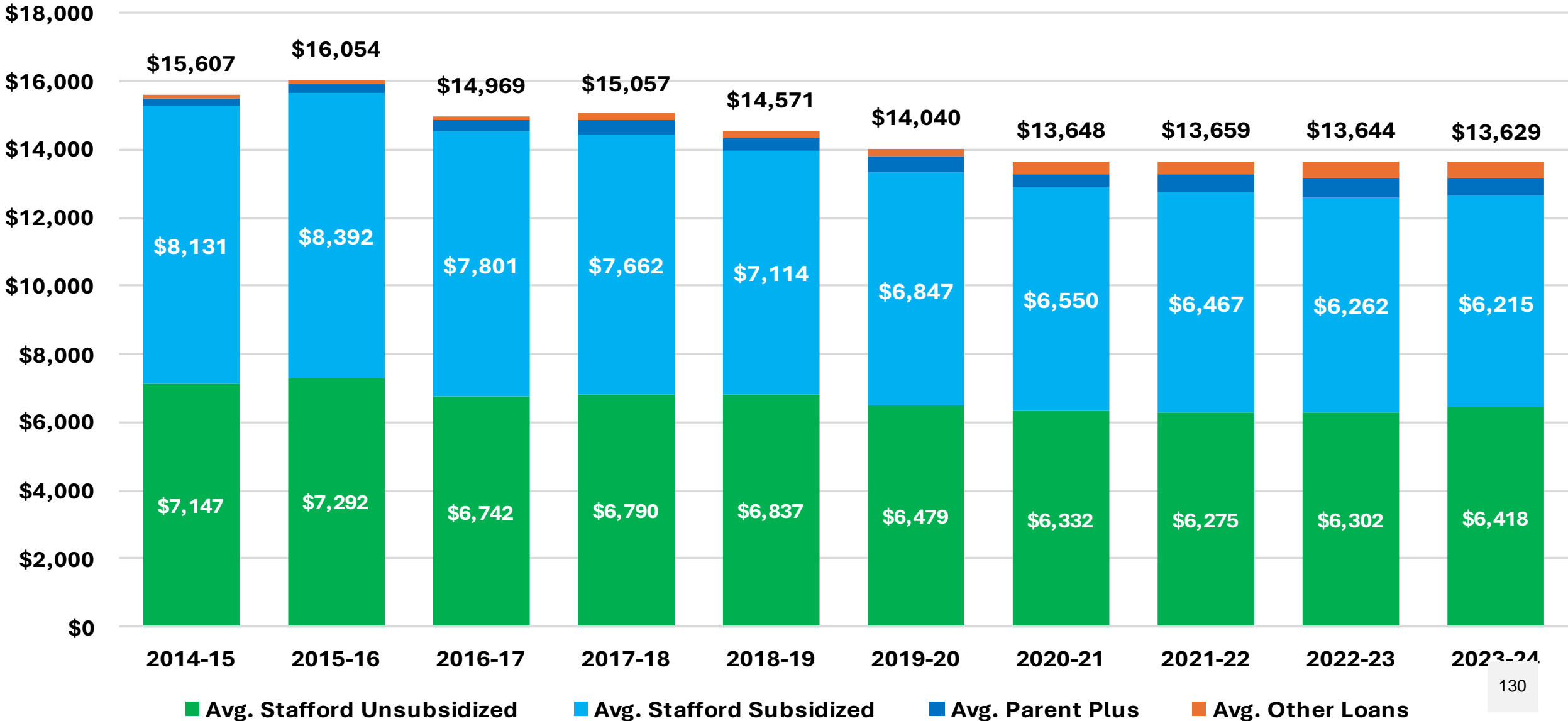


# KCTCS – Proportions of Grads with Debt

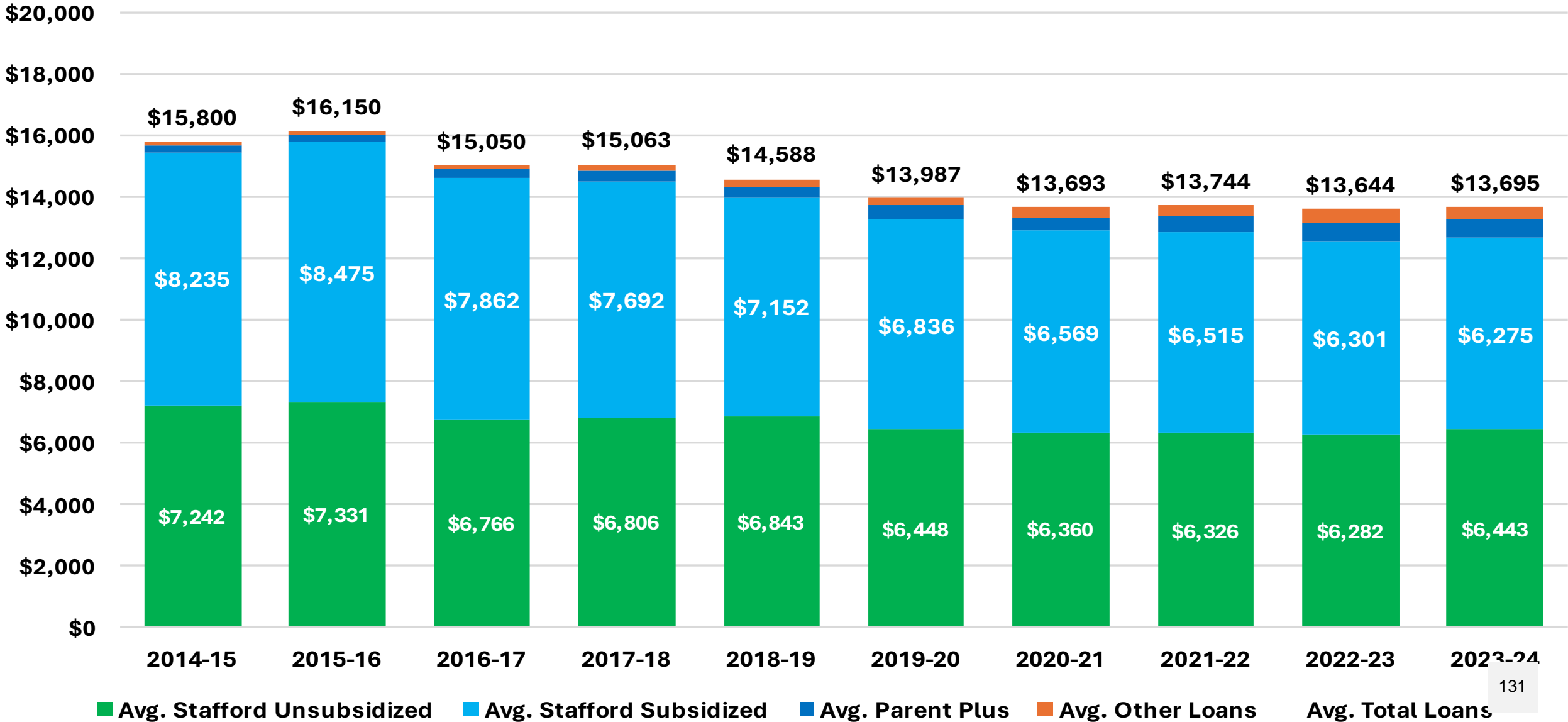


- All Two-Year Public Completers
- All Two-Year Public In-State Completers
- All Two-Year Public Out-of-State Completers
- All Two-Year Public URM Completers
- All Two-Year Public Low Income Completers

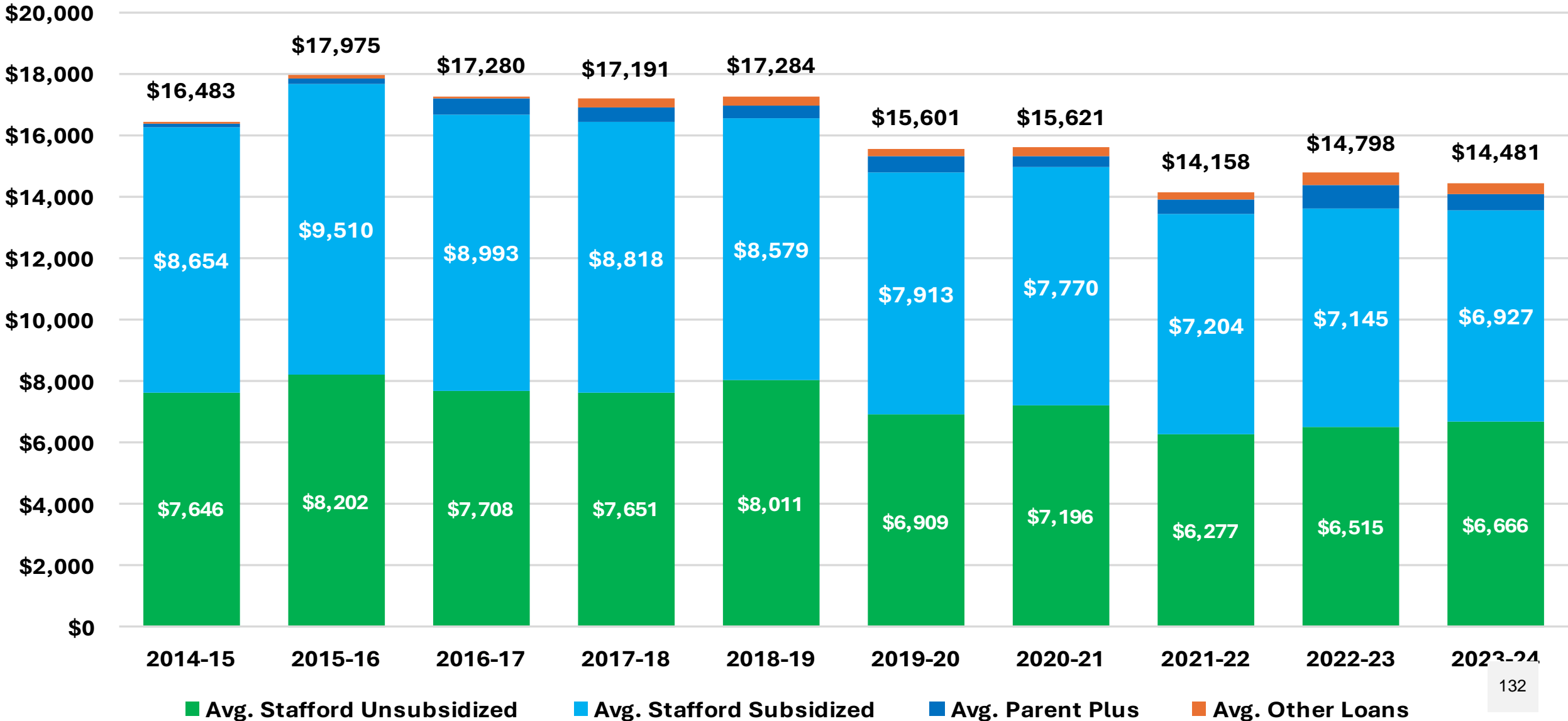
# KCTCS – All Grads with Debt



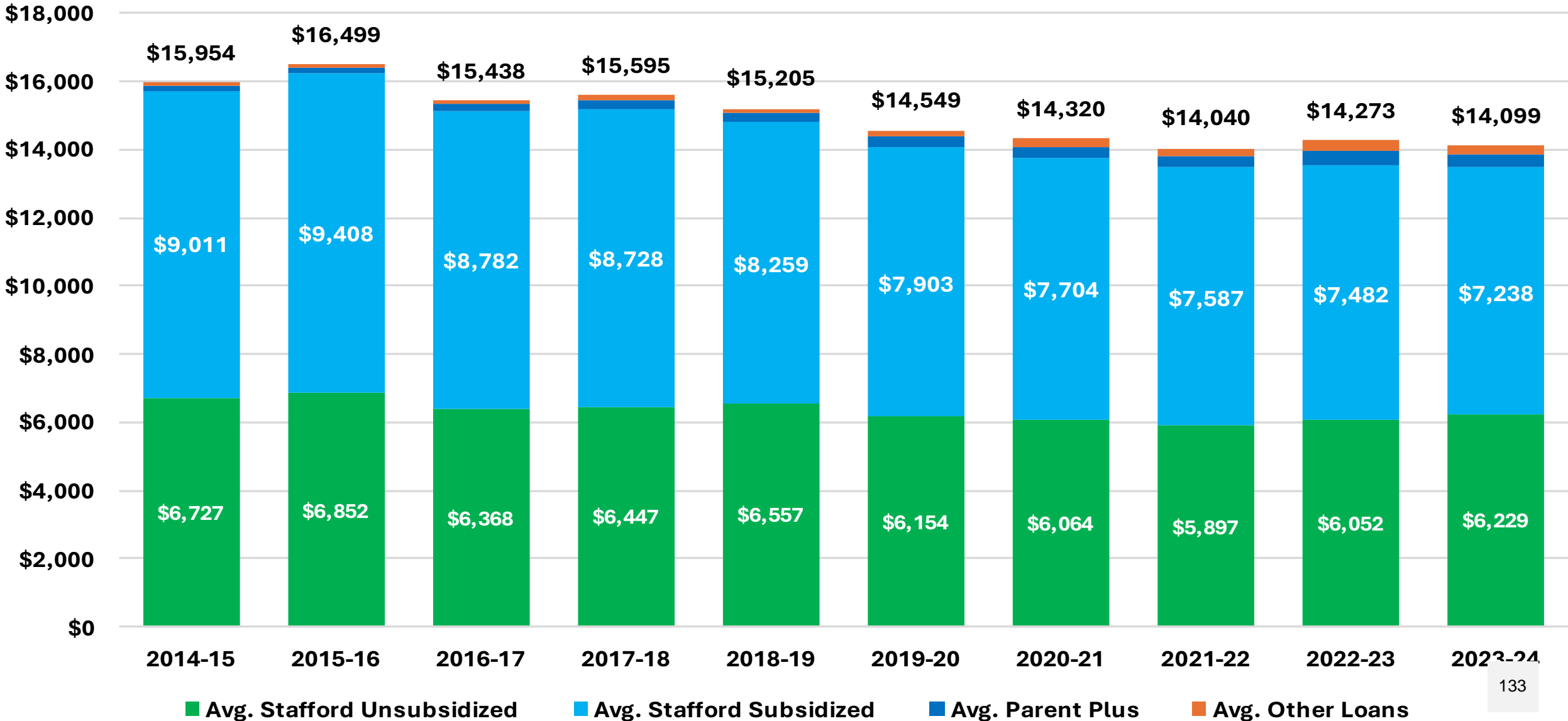
# KCTCS – In-State Grads with Debt



# KCTCS – URM Grads with Debt



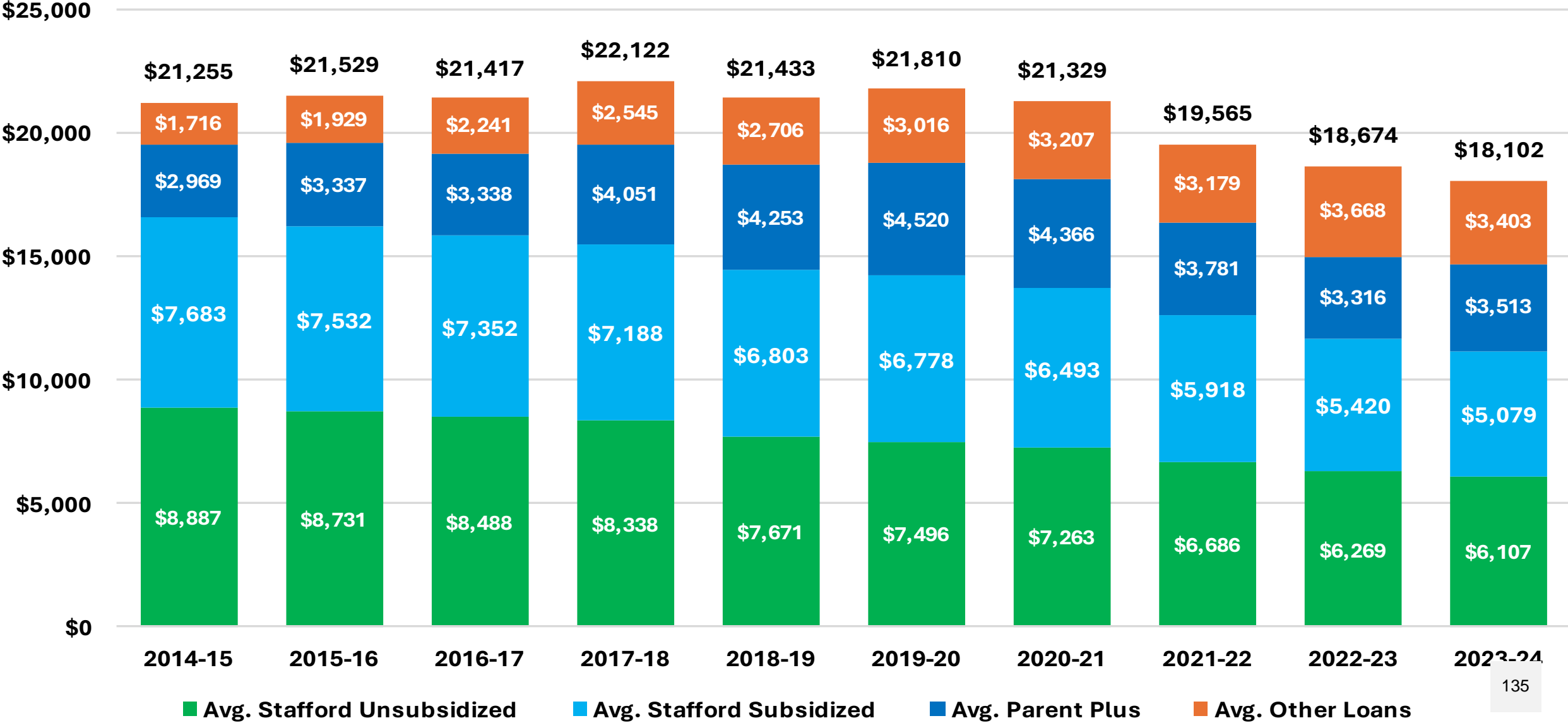
# KCTCS – Low Income Grads with Debt



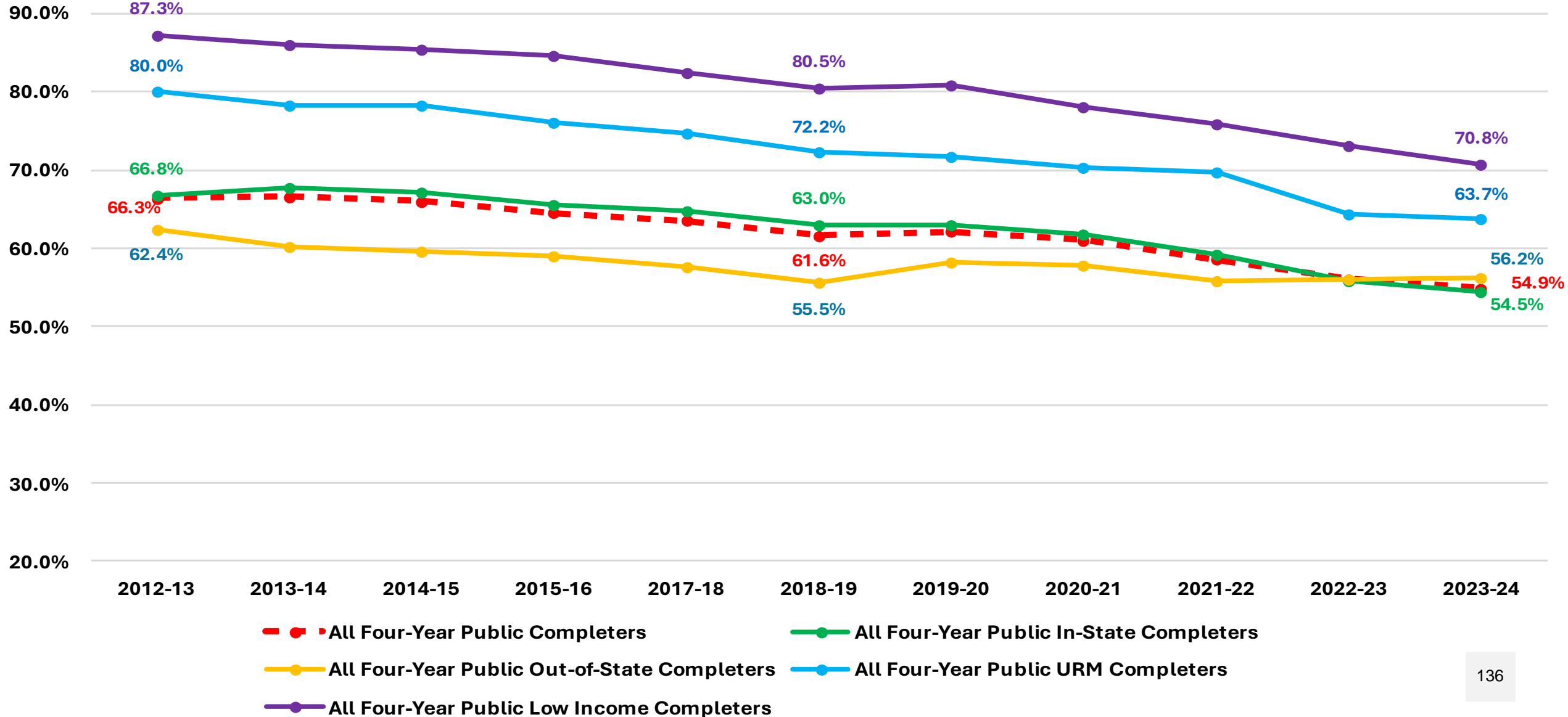
# Four-Year Undergraduate Completers

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# Four-Year Publics - All Grads

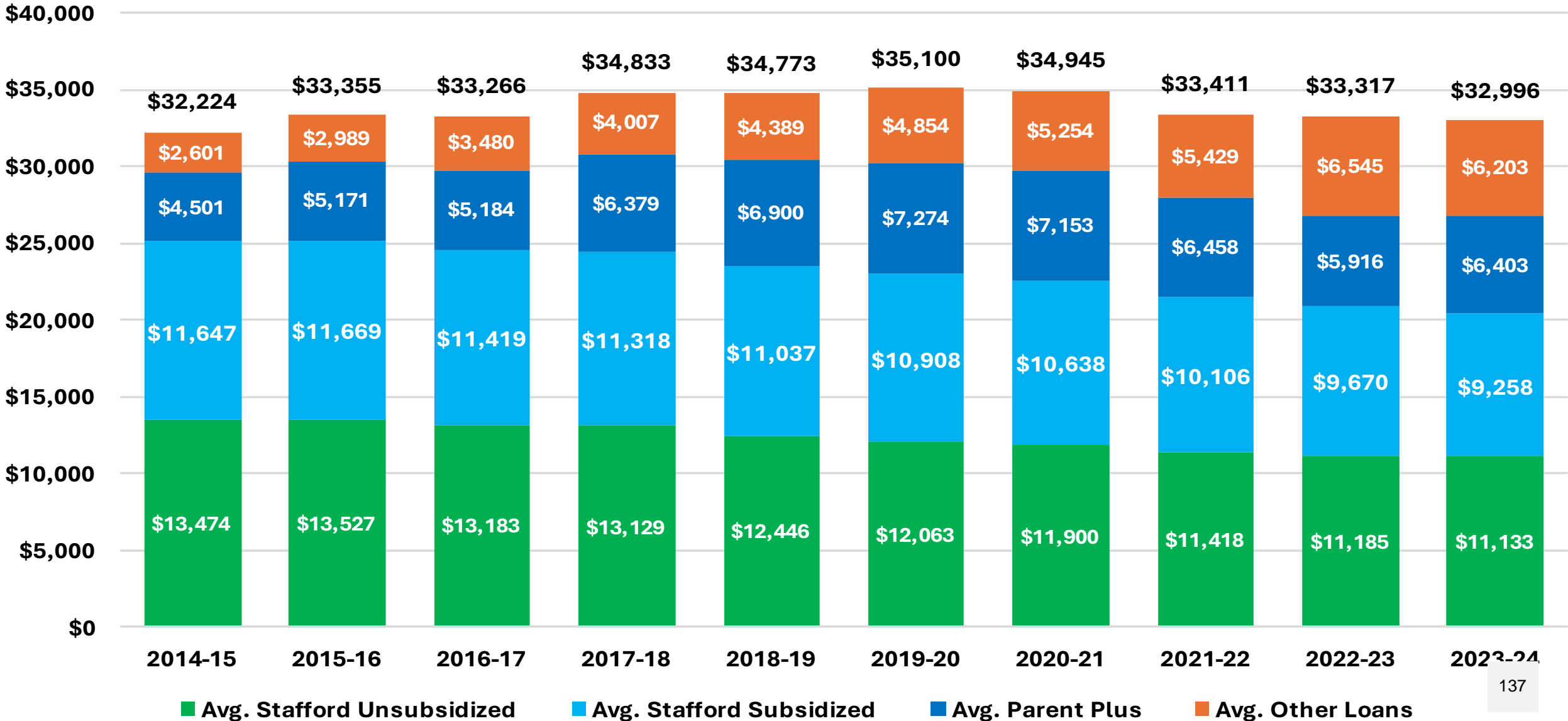


# Four-Year Publics – Proportions of Grads with Debt

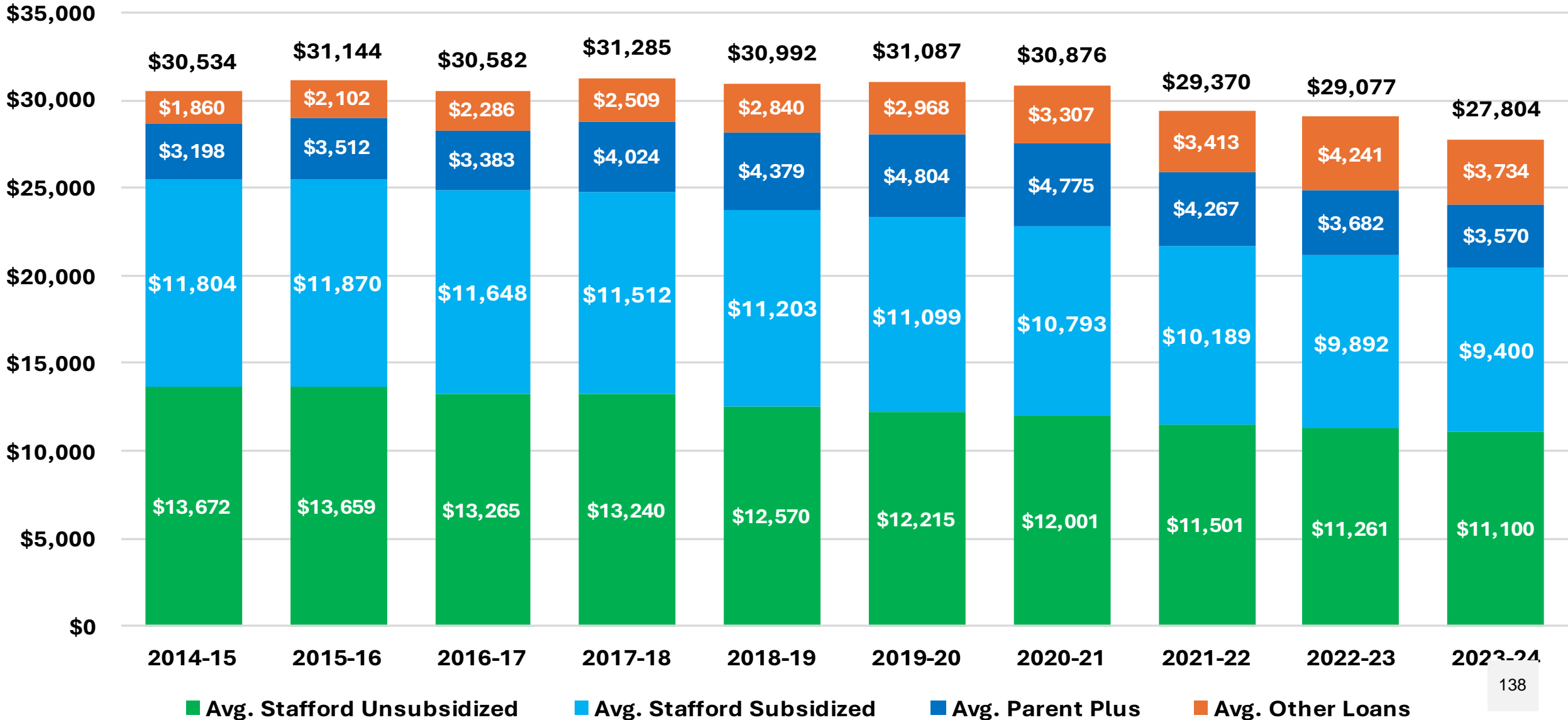




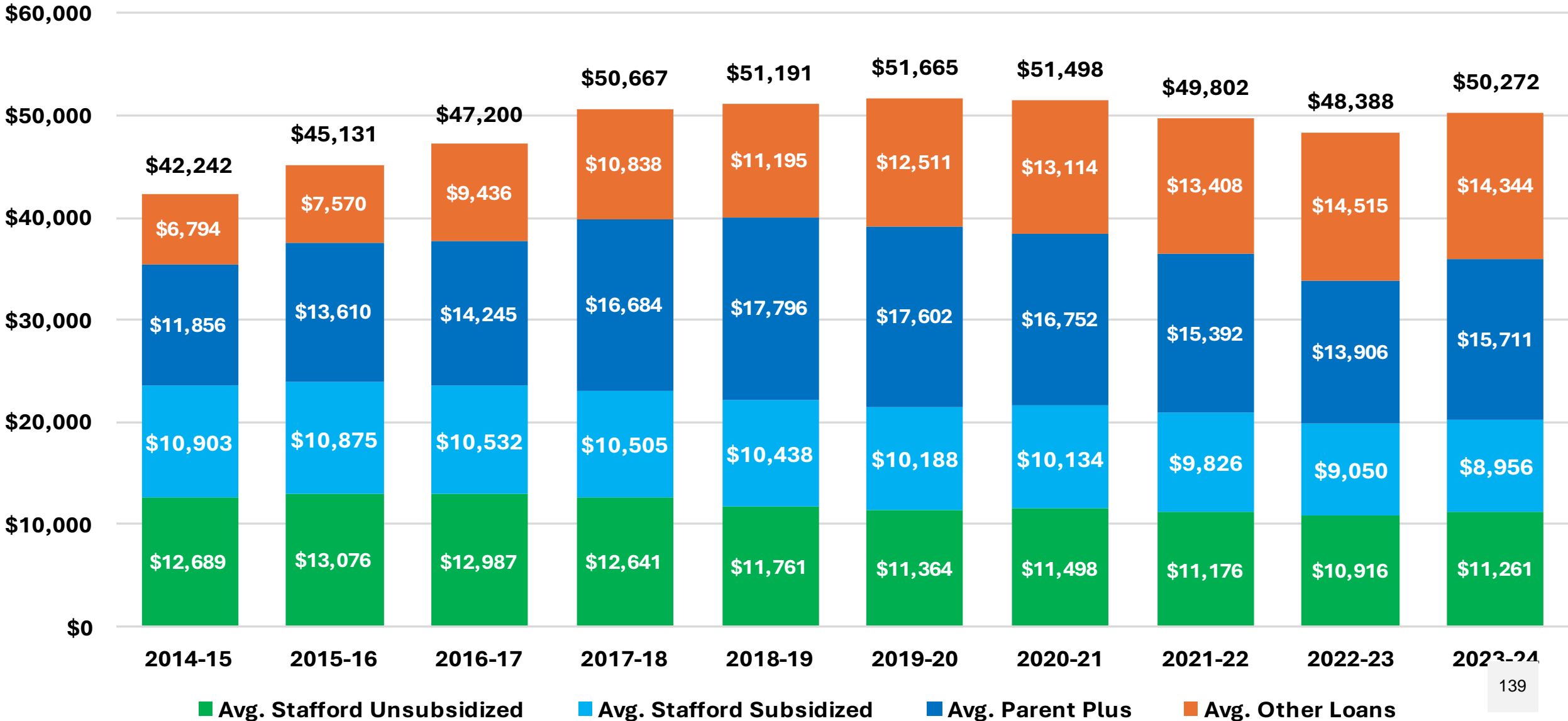
# Four-Year Publics – All Grads with Debt



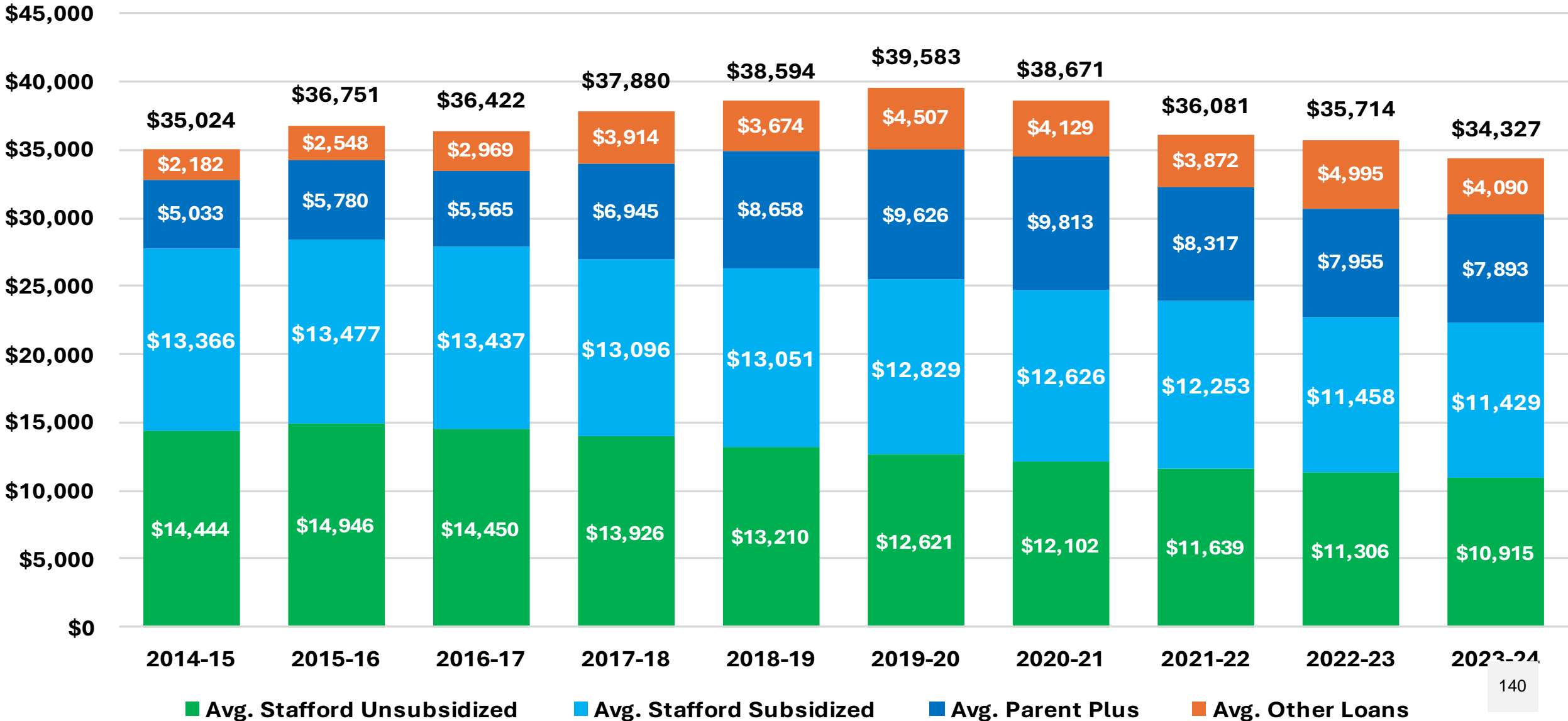
# Four-Year Publics – In-State Grads with Debt



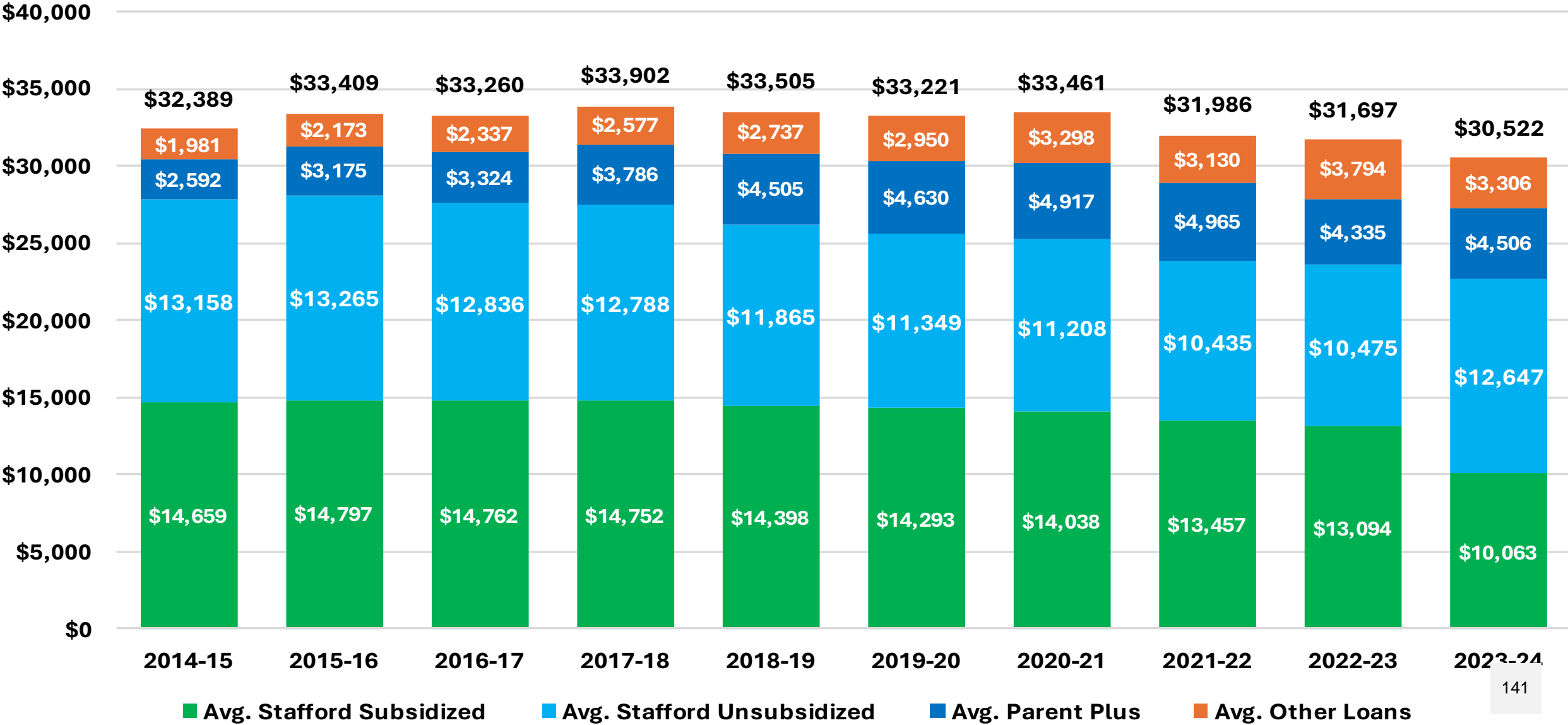
# Four-Year Publics – Out-of-State Grads with Debt



# Four-Year Publics – URM Grads with Debt



# Four-Year Public – Low Income Grads with Debt



# Opportunity and Future Research

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# Opportunity and Future Research

- Low-income enrollment is on the rise in Kentucky. It will be important to monitor debt levels among this vulnerable student subgroup.
- We're excited about the explosive growth in interactions with the new Futuriti site since its launch. This site should be a game-changer in helping students select academic programs that fit their needs with transparent financial and post-graduate information.
- We have established FAFSA completion rates and unmet need among first-time college students as statewide key performance indicators. These are top research priorities for CPE as we want to ensure that students are getting as much aid as possible and keeping out-of-pocket costs (or the need to rely on loans) low.

# Thank You

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# Stay Connected



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Data Center: **[cpe.ky.gov/data](https://cpe.ky.gov/data)**



Newsletter: **[cpe.ky.gov/news/subscribe](https://cpe.ky.gov/news/subscribe)**

<b>TITLE:</b>	Kentucky Virtual Library and Affordable Learning Kentucky
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	Staff will provide an update on the work of the Kentucky Virtual Library and one of its key initiatives, Affordable Learning Kentucky.
<b>STAFF CONTACTS:</b>	Ilona Burdette, Executive Director, Kentucky Virtual Library Leah Holliday, Associate Director, Affordable Learning Kentucky

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**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

One of CPE's key duties is managing the Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL), which is a collaboration of over 350 Kentucky libraries and institutions, including colleges and universities, public libraries, K-12 schools, hospitals and the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA). KYVL services include research databases, a courier service, the Kentucky Digital Library, and Affordable Learning KY.

KYVL's shared services and collaborative purchasing result in annual savings of approximately \$10 million for Kentucky's postsecondary institutions. In 2023-24, members searched KYVL databases over 68 million times and downloaded or viewed more than five million full-text articles, images or videos. KYVL's courier service transports over ten thousand items per month throughout the state to facilitate resource sharing among public and academic libraries. Additionally, over 20 partner libraries and institutions have published more than 50 local archival collections in the Kentucky Digital Library, making this unique content available online for scholarship, research and lifelong learning.

Dedicated to promoting student success and educational equity through Open Educational Resources (OER), Affordable Learning Kentucky (ALKY) is a key initiative of KYVL. ALKY champions the adoption, adaptation, and creation of OER and other open access resources. ALKY recently celebrated Open Education Week, convening state and national leaders, faculty, and students to explore OER and open educational practices. Currently, ALKY is conducting its second biennial Student Textbook Survey to gain critical insights into the impact of textbook costs and access on students' academic journeys. Through statewide and national presentations, ALKY leaders are expanding the reach and benefits of OER learning and development through cooperation and collaboration.

KYVL & ALKY:  
Consistency,  
Value, &  
Affordability  
for the  
Commonwealth



Ilona Burdette, Executive Director, KYVL

Leah Halliday, Associate Director, Affordable Learning KY



25 YEARS OF SERVICE

K

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KENTUCKY VIRTUAL LIBRARY

KYVL's **mission** is to provide all Kentuckians a **common** foundation of high-quality **resources**, and **support** in their use, to enhance lifelong learning, working and living.

Statewide collaboration of

350+

member institutions

# Work groups

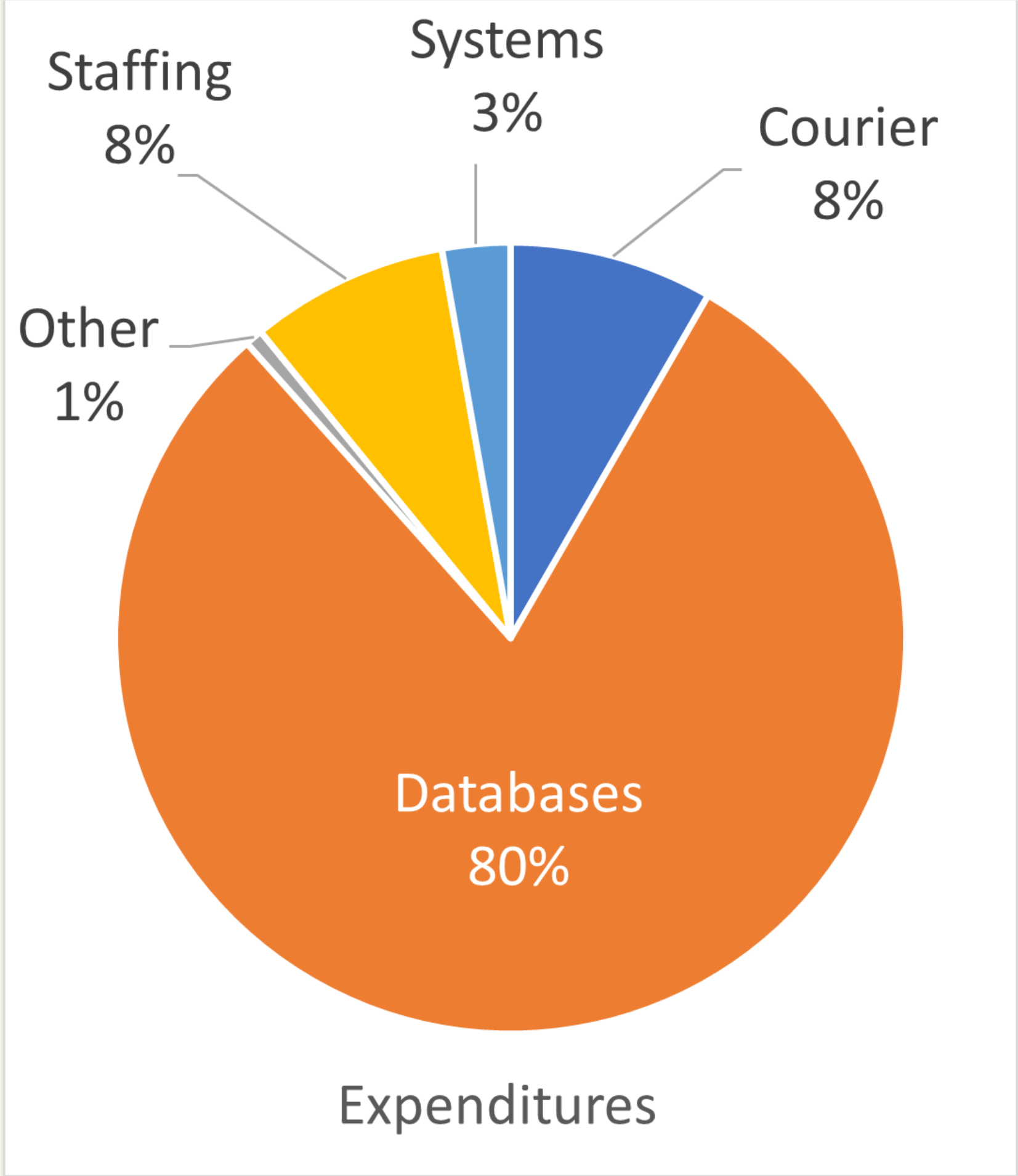
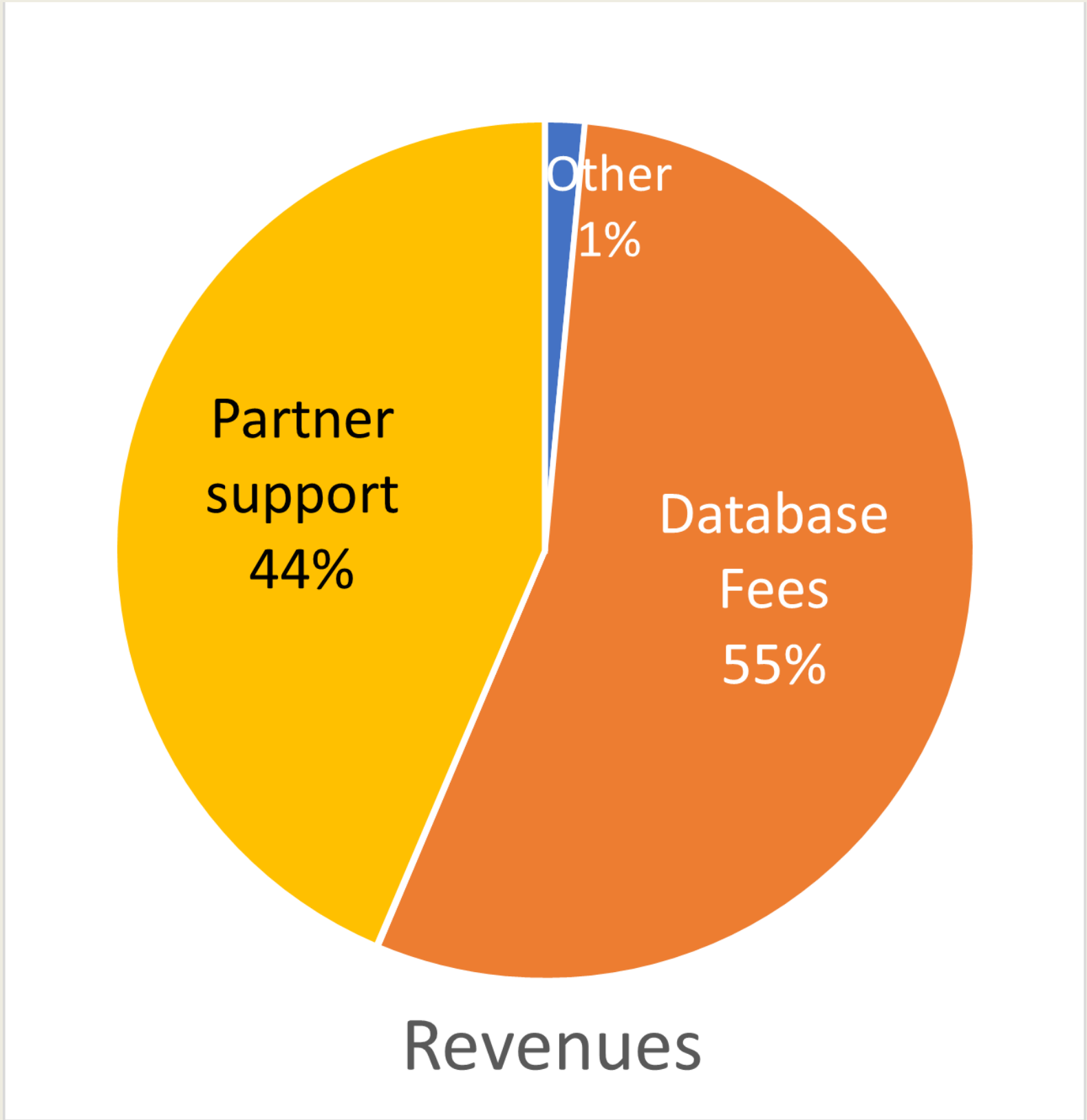
- Affordable Learning
- Collections
- Funding
- Information Literacy
- Kentucky Digital Library
- **Leadership Team**

**Three** full-time staff in KYVL / ALKY

- **Databases** for all Kentuckians
- **Courier** for resource sharing
- **Kentucky Digital Library**
- ***Affordable Learning KY***



# Budget: \$4.5M



# Databases



[kyvl.org/az](http://kyvl.org/az)

Find articles and more ... For Kids

A to Z Resources Database Toolbox Access Work Groups Other KYVL Sites

## A-Z Databases

Find the best library data

Database Title / Keyword

67 Databases

All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z #

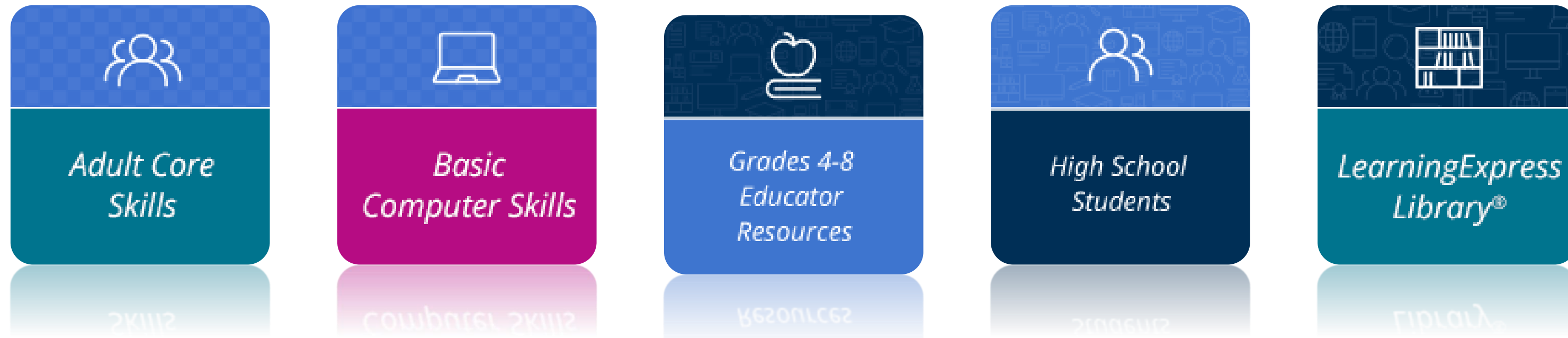
Kids  
Middle  
High  
Adult Ed  
College  
Public Libraries - Youth  
Public Libraries - Adults  
Business  
Career  
Consumer Health  
Health Professionals  
Spanish Language Resources  
A to Z All

Types Vendors Search

Office hours  
Monday - Friday



# Test prep and skills building



*She got a fine education without any debt thanks to her hard work and the support she got from Learning Express through KYVL.*

*Parent and librarian*

# Collaboration and support



# KYVL Databases by the Numbers

- **57 million** database searches
- **5.5 million** full-text
- **\$10 million** annual savings  
for academic libraries alone
- **\$930K total cost** to academic libraries

# Fan Faves



**Britannica**<sup>®</sup>  
**EDUCATION**



 **ancestry** Library<sup>™</sup>

# Collaboration and support

*Because we have access to this application, we can ensure that families are able to take care of each other rather than the state whenever possible. This is the best outcome for the individual who is disabled and for the state as it helps ensure the best use of taxpayer funds.*

*CHFS Regional Prevention Specialist*



# KYVL Courier Service

- Over **10K** items per month  
@ < \$3 per item
- Over **4K** containers per month  
@ \$7.30 per container
- **125K** items this year



Home

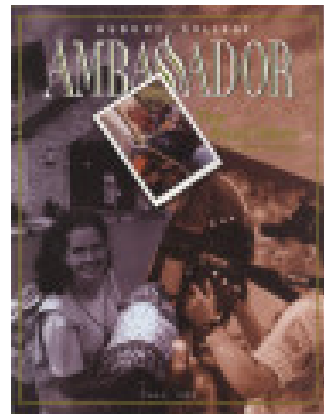
Browse

About

★ Saved Items

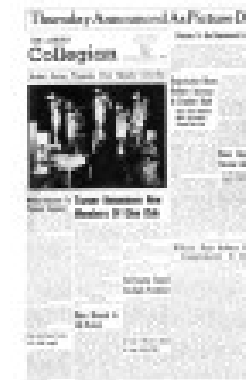


Collections 1-30 of 56



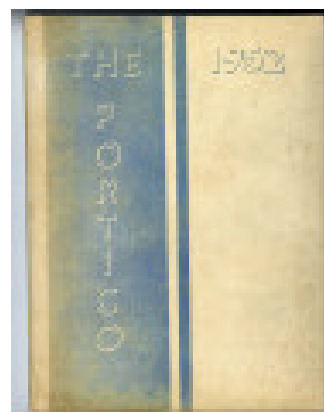
### Asbury Alumni Publications

Asbury University has produced several publications over its history to inform alumni of campus news, graduates' recent accomplishments, and the institution's goals and...



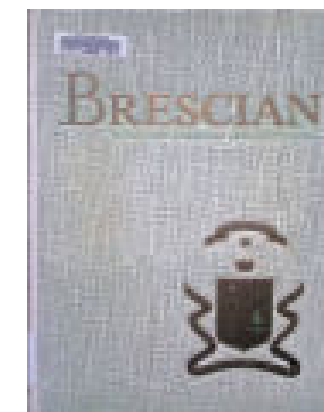
### Asbury University Collegian

Student newspapers at Asbury College began as early as 1915. Filled with lively articles about school events and national issues, this collection of The Collegian contains...



### Ashland CTC - Ashland Junior College Yearbook Collection (The Portico)

Ashland Junior College Yearbooks, also known as The Portico, from the 1940s and 1950s.



### Brescia University Yearbook Collection

This is a collection of all volumes of the Brescia University yearbook.



### Centre College - Digital Archives

From 1816 to 1916, Centre College has a rich history...



### Georgetown College Catalogs

This collection includes historical catalogs from Georgetown College...



[kyvl.org/affordablelearningky](https://kyvl.org/affordablelearningky)

# Recommendations



*The task force concludes that a **statewide initiative** provides the greatest likelihood of improving affordability and increasing opportunity for all Kentucky students.*

# Recommendations



*The task force concludes that a successful project will require a full-time **project coordinator** and **funding**.*

Affordable Learning Ky. promotes **student success** and fosters **educational equity** by supporting the adoption, adaptation, and creation of **affordable and open educational resources** in the Commonwealth and by sharing best **open educational practices** with Kentucky educators.



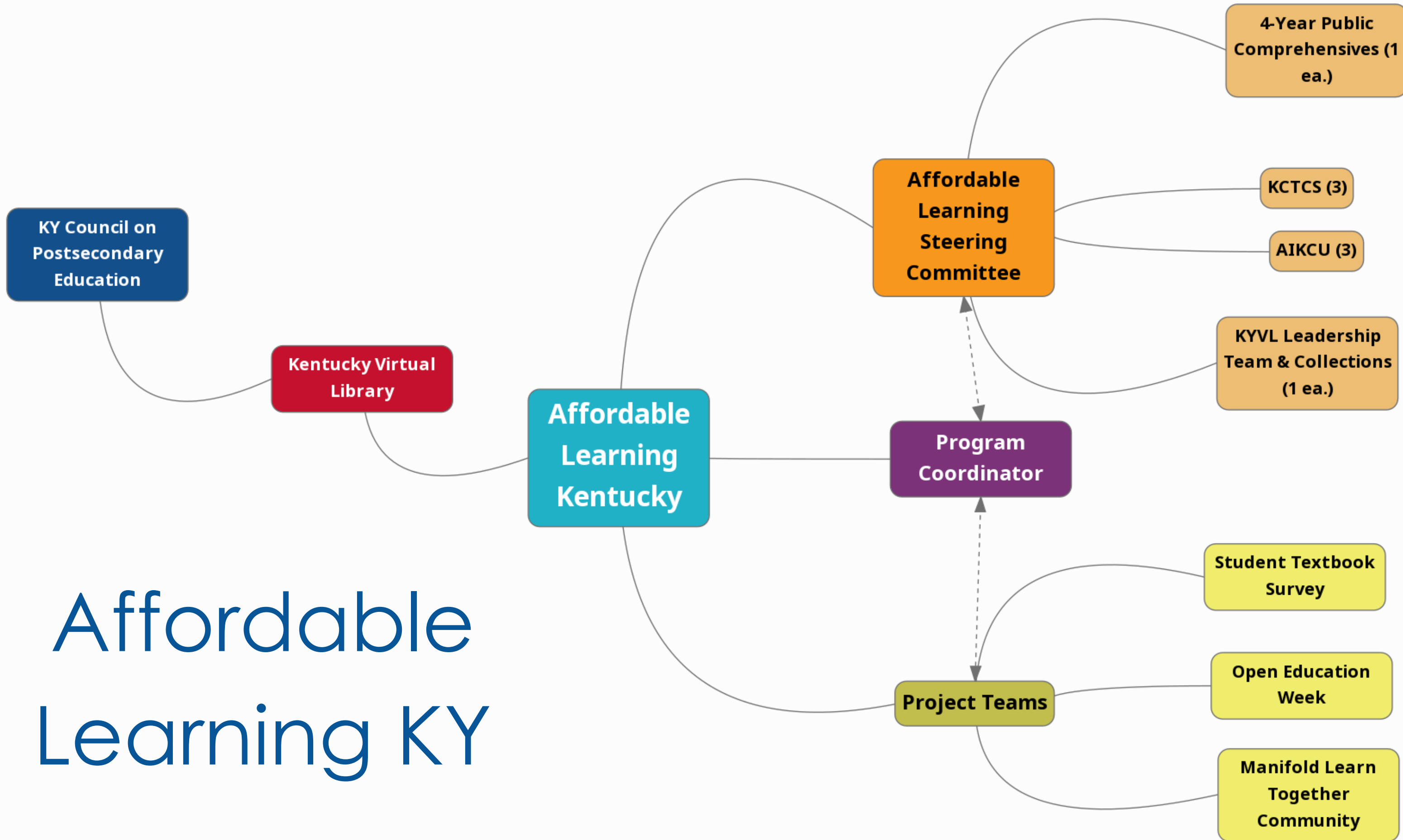
# HIGHER EDUCATION *Matters*

A Statewide Strategic Agenda for  
Kentucky Postsecondary Education

**2022-2030**



# Affordable Learning KY







# In Practice

**Coordinate**, **support**, and **celebrate** efforts to expand Open Education and affordable learning initiatives throughout Kentucky.



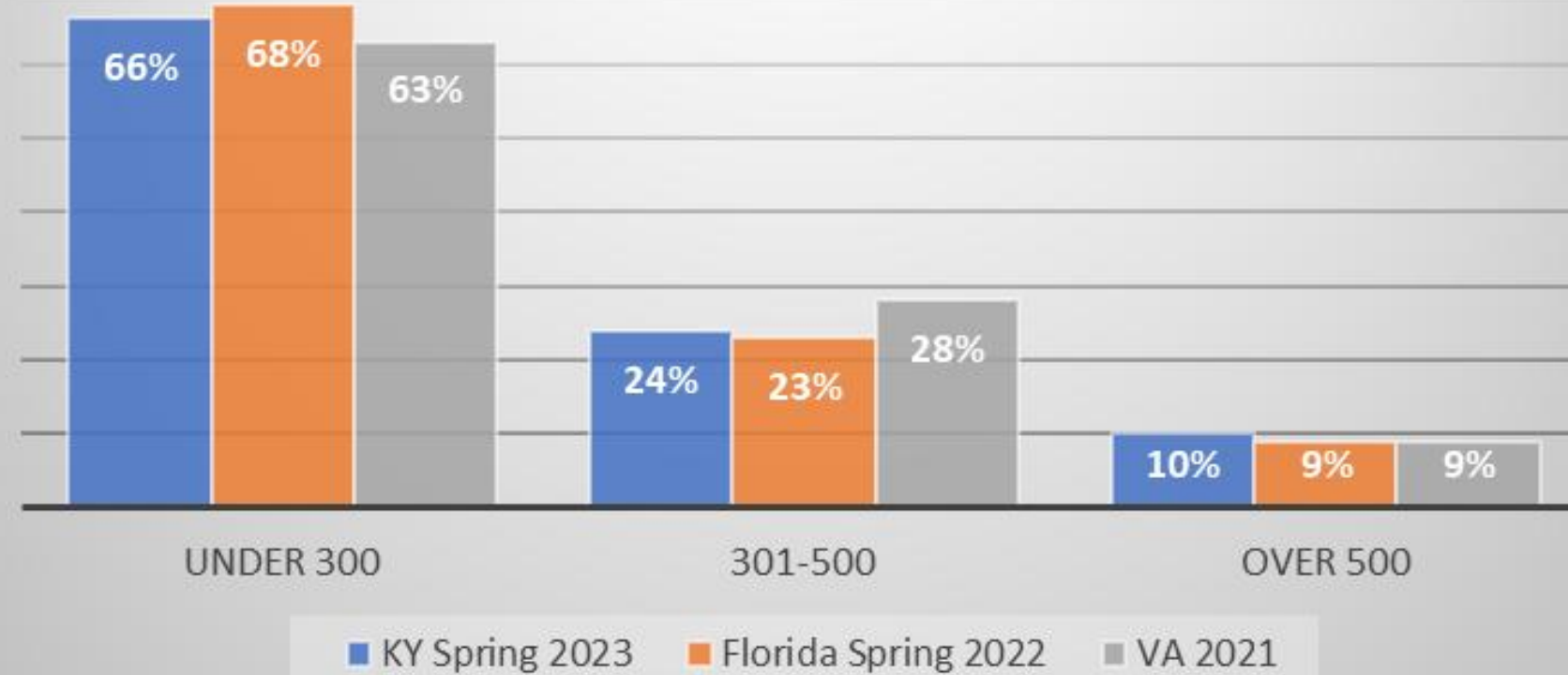
# OPEN ED WEEK 2025

- March 4, 2025 Symposium
- [Recorded Sessions](#)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual OE Week Event
- 268 Participants since 2022

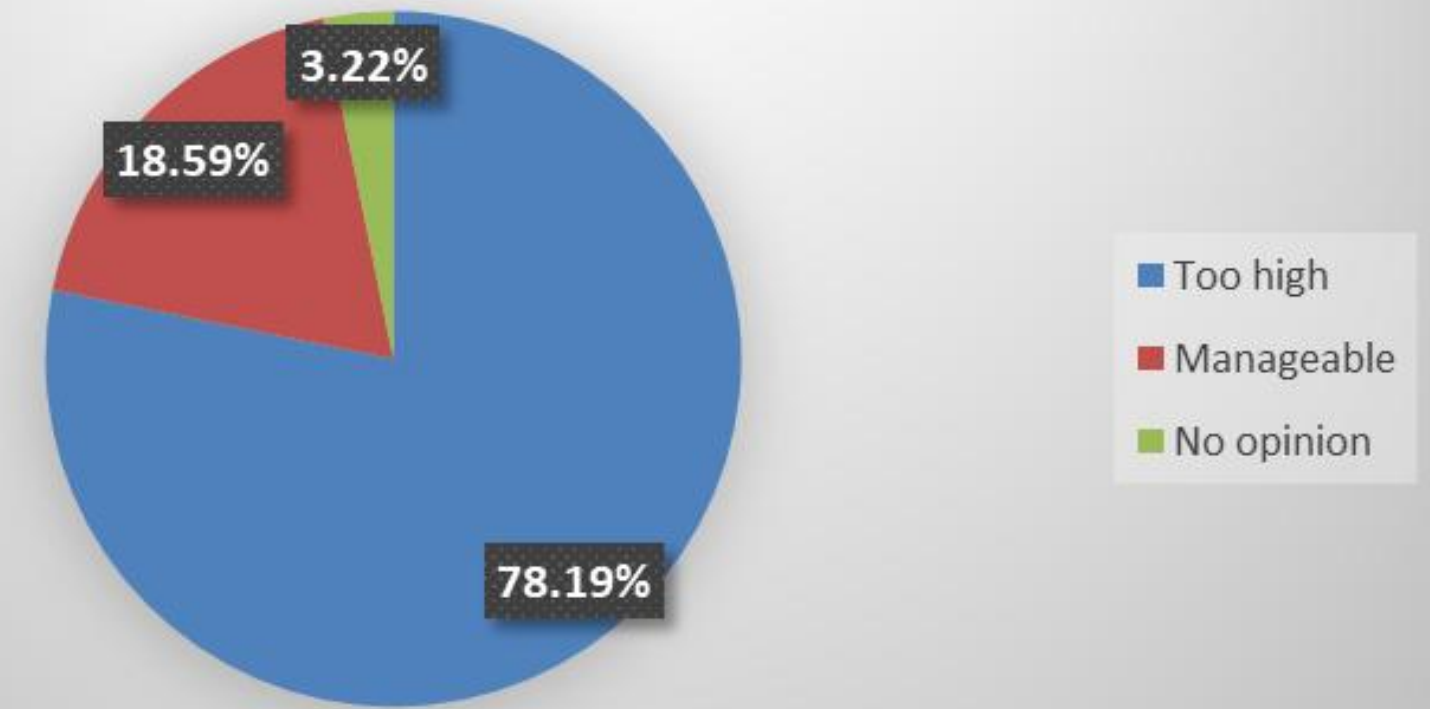
# Student Textbook Survey - Cost Impacts & Perceptions

## 2023 Results

### Student Textbook Costs



### Perceptions of Textbook / Course Materials Costs



# Textbook Costs Impact Degree Pathways

- 16% - Chose a different course or major
- 28% - Avoided or dropped courses / took fewer courses per semester
- 53% - Received a lower assignment or course grade



# Students See Value as More than Cost

“I prefer a hard copy of a book. Therefore, I have to **pay double** for the material.”

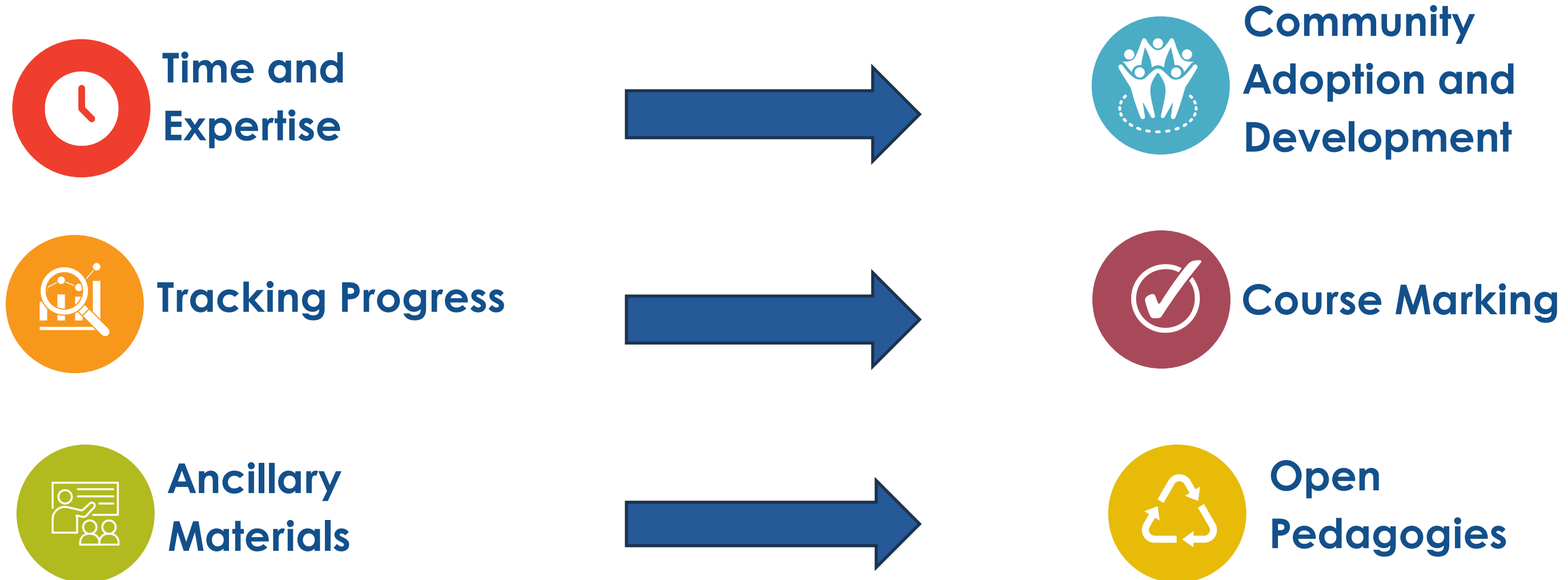
I have been **confused every semester** and nearly opted in last semester on accident, while trying to opt out.

“Some classes don't even have textbooks, but I **still have to pay** for one because the program is paid per credit hour not per book.”





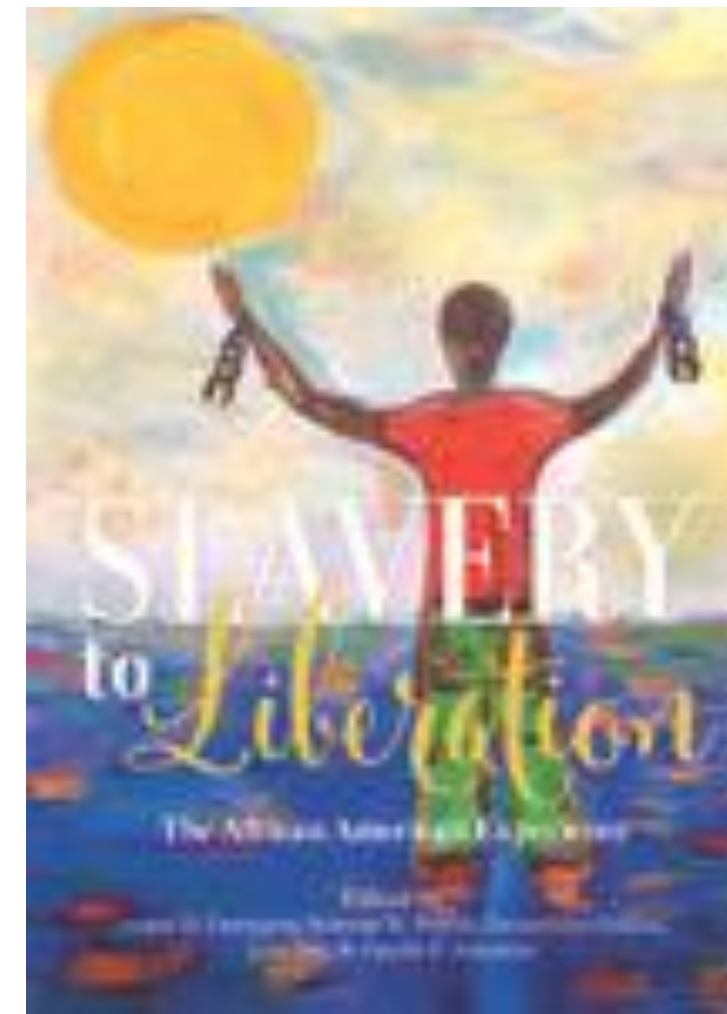
# From Challenges to Opportunities





## Building on Excellence thru Collaboration

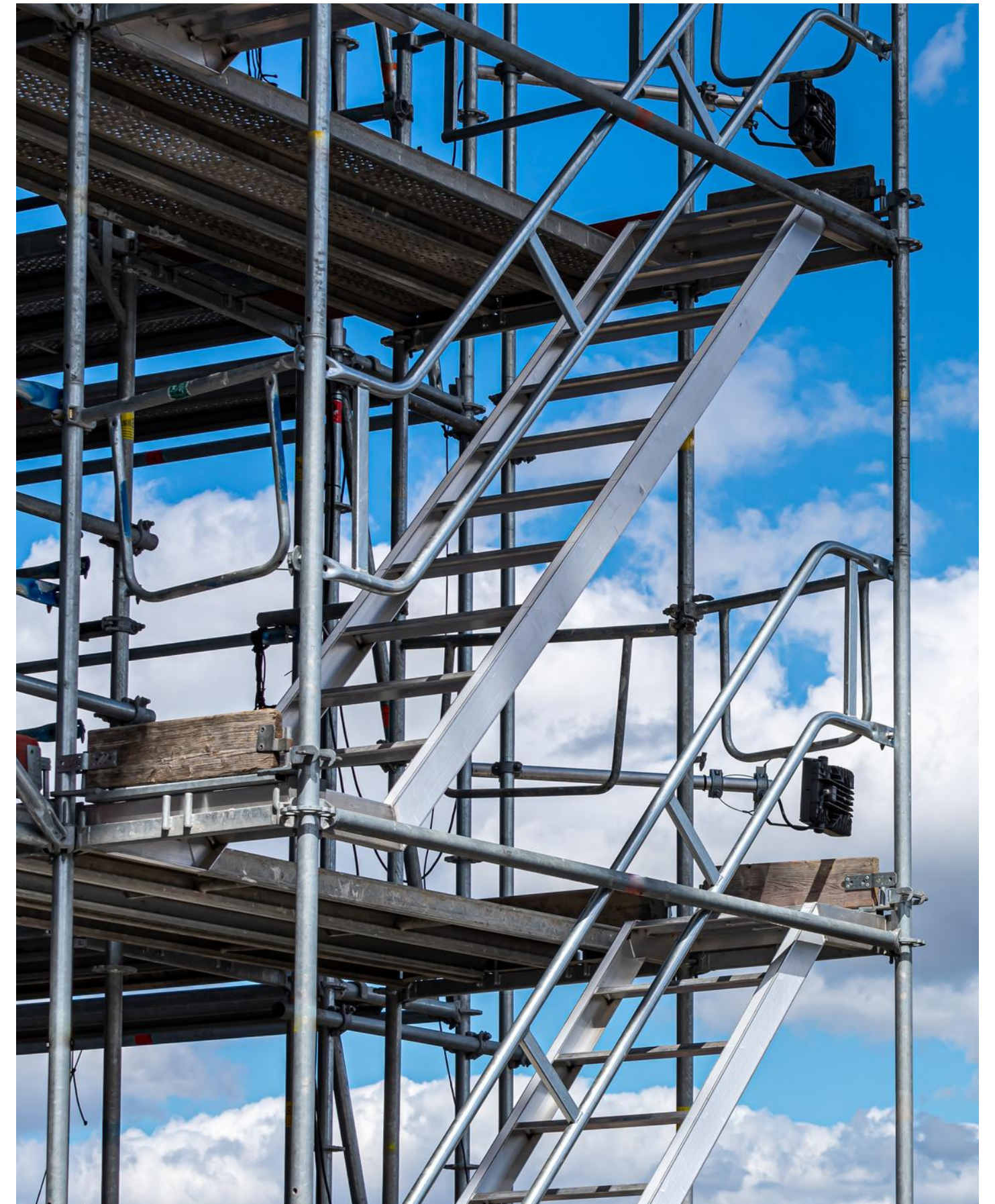
- Building curricular sequences
- *Slavery to Liberation* features a chapter by Dr. Thompson





# Scaffolding Support for OER Development

- Immediate support
- Guided collaborative development





# UNIVERSITY of LOUISVILLE<sup>®</sup>

## Celebrating \$1 Millionth Dollar Saved

- Collaborative Development & Adoption
- Course Marking



Kristen Lucas  
Jacob D. Rawlins  
Jenna Haugen

## BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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Five Core Competencies



## Raising the Bar for Course Marking in KY

- Broad Institutional Support
- Course Marking in SIS course attributes at the system level

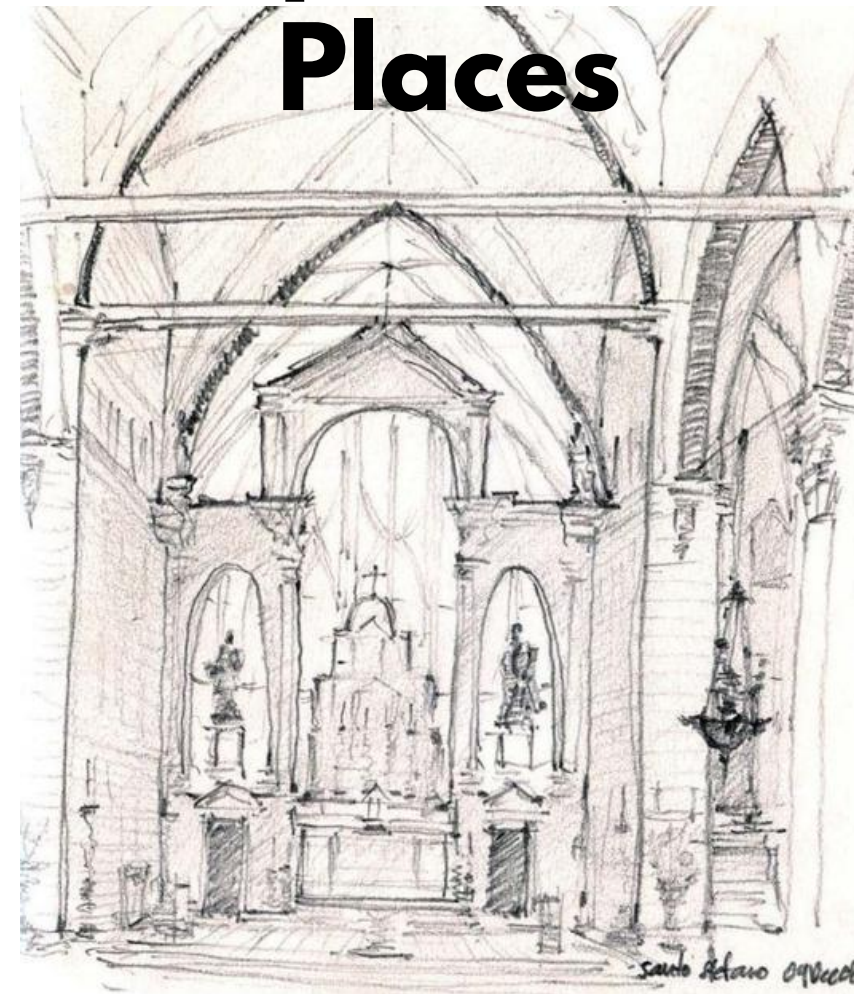




# Co-creating Content with Students

- Renewable assignments, or Open Pedagogies, invite students to co-create texts & course materials.
- Student-authored OERs facilitate both authentic teaching and deep learning.

## Spaces + Places



**LIN 175: INFORMATION  
LITERACY**



**A collaborative student  
textbook project**

# Looking Ahead

- Leveraging KYVL & ALKY networks to connect & extend CPE's Strategic Agenda.
- KYVL Resources + Futuriti
- OER / OAR + the Kentucky Graduate Profile



**Thank you!**

**Any Questions?**





# CPE REPORT

Eastern Kentucky University News for the Council on Postsecondary Education



## EKU AND ANTHEM BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD ANNOUNCE CONTINUATION OF ANTHEM RURAL MEDICINE SCHOLARSHIP

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Kentucky recently announced a continuation of their work together to grow the number of frontline healthcare workers in the eastern region of the state, increase access to care and improve health outcomes for more Kentuckians. The Anthem Rural Medicine Scholarship is a fellowship for graduate students, building upon the four-year partnership between Anthem and EKU to support students seeking higher levels of medical education.

Anthem committed an additional \$100,000 to the scholarship endowment, increasing the total investment at EKU to nearly \$400,000 since the establishment of the partnership in 2021. This expansion not only enriches EKU's health science program, but also empowers students to provide care in underserved, rural communities. Including this year's three recipients, 16 EKU students have been awarded the Anthem Rural Medicine Scholarship.

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Anthem to offer students educational opportunities through the Anthem Rural Medicine Scholarship," said EKU President David McFaddin. "The impact of the Anthem Rural Medicine Scholarship cannot be overstated.

The initiative improves college access and affordability as well as brings more local providers to Eastern Kentucky."

According to the Kentucky Hospital Association's 2024 Workforce Survey Report, Kentucky hospitals reported more than 8,000 vacancies across 14 professional groups in 2024. Nursing topped the list with 16.5% of all nursing positions unfilled. Staffing shortages, coupled with the state's high prevalence of multiple chronic conditions, reinforce the need to expand the healthcare workforce in the Commonwealth.

State Representative Deanna Frazier Gordon (R-KY) said, "As a proud Colonel alumna, Anthem's ongoing support and investment in EKU's health science program and its students is extraordinary. Healthcare education ensures not only access for the future but job security for so many young people. It's an exciting time to watch our community grow and for Eastern Kentuckians to get the healthcare they deserve."

The recipients of the 2025 Anthem Rural Medicine Scholarship are Christa Ann Carlin, Chassidy Paige Keeton and Morgan Elizabeth Hamilton.



## EKU'S CLASSROOM IN A BOX INITIATIVE SUPPORTS FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

Eastern Kentucky University's College of Education and Applied Human Sciences (CEAHS) launched an innovative initiative to support graduates as they embark on their teaching careers. "Classroom in a Box" provides essential classroom supplies to new teachers, many of whom are the first in their families to graduate from college.

The Kentucky Department of Education's School Report Card reported a 22.5% teacher turnover rate for the 2023-24 school year. Recognizing the financial strain often faced by first-year educators, ECU aims to eliminate the barriers encountered when beginning a career in the field and further address the ongoing teacher shortage.

"Across the U.S., teachers spend about \$250 annually on supplies for their students," said Dr. Elizabeth Smith, dean of the College of Education and Applied Human Sciences. "With the help of College staff, faculty, alumni and friends, our future teachers will enter their classrooms with a head start on the supplies needed to support their students. Our graduates are highly prepared and ready to teach on day one—and now they have the supplies they need that first day, too!"

The program provides a box of classroom essentials, such as pencils, pens, markers and notebooks, given to new teachers when they graduate from ECU. For the December 2024 graduates, 27 education majors received a supply box, each accompanied by a heartfelt note from the donor who made it possible. With approximately 150 education graduates expected in the spring, CEAHS in collaboration with University Development and Alumni Engagement continues fundraising efforts to meet the demand.

## STUDENTS TAKE THEIR RESEARCH TO HARVARD, REPRESENTING ECU AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In January, Eastern Kentucky University students traveled to Harvard University and presented their research at the National Collegiate Research Conference (NCRC). This marked the second time students from ECU attended the conference, following recommendations from faculty mentors.

Students from more than 100 universities worldwide participated in the conference. The NCRC aims to build a cohesive undergraduate research community and encourage students to engage in research early in their careers—making significant contributions to all fields of study.

"This allowed me to connect with talented undergraduate students from across the country," said Kylee Phillips, an ECU student from Belfry, Kentucky. "This was my first time flying and presenting my research to an audience, which made this a very memorable experience for me."

Phillips' research focuses on comparing E.coli identification methods. After attending the NCRC, Phillips said she looks forward to continuing her research as she prepares to pursue a career as a physician in rural Kentucky.

"I want to ensure that communities like mine have access to cutting-edge medical tools and services, from faster diagnostics to more accessible healthcare services," she said.

*The following ECU students presented their research at this year's NCRC:*

- Isabella Bailey-Sims, biomedical sciences major
- Selicity Broaddus, pre-physical therapy major
- Kyle Miller, pre-physical therapy major
- Toluwanimi Olatoye, health services administration major
- Kylee Phillips, biomedical sciences major
- Demi Watson, psychology major





# GOOD NEWS

APRIL 2025

## Professional Development Program Held by Farm Credit Mid-America



Seven students attended the Farm Credit Mid-America Success Program for MANRRS Leaders, impressing attendees with their professionalism and engagement. Held in Louisville, KY, the two-day event brought together students from KSU, University of Kentucky, Tennessee State University, and Purdue for workshops, networking, and insights. Participants included Alecia Daniels, Sienna Stewart, Jade McCargo, Eric Taylor, Jaiya McCargo, Jasin Burnam, and Javan Crute, supported by faculty Kristel Smith and Darius Adamson.

## Historic Agreement Signed Between KSU and Injibara University

KSU welcomed Ethiopian university representatives to explore collaborative opportunities. Guests included Injibara University (INU) President Dr. Gardachew Worku Fekadu, INU Academic Vice President Dr. Aemiro Tadesse Tiku, and Dambi Dollo University's Dr. Delessa Bulcha Neger. KSU and INU signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to foster academic exchanges, research, and partnerships in fields like aquaculture, education, and business.

## Inaugural HBCU National Indoor Track and Field Championship

At the inaugural HBCU National Indoor Track and Field Championship, Kentucky State's women's team won the small school title, and the men's team placed second. The Thoroughbreds earned multiple individual titles, relay victories, and recorded 11 personal bests throughout the competition.



## KSU Team to Compete in the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge



KSU's Honda Campus All-Star Challenge (HCASC) Team qualified for the National Championship Tournament in Torrance, California. The annual trivia competition highlights HBCU academic excellence. KSU will be represented by Ciara Robinson, senior political science/criminal justice major; Mylah Smith, senior nursing major; Debrianna Smith, sophomore nursing major; and De'Aira Watts, junior agriculture major.



## KSU Welcomes Dr. Nyrèe McDonald



KSU is excited to announce the appointment of Dr. Nyrèe McDonald as the new Vice Provost of Academic Affairs. Dr. McDonald most recently served as the Associate Dean for Graduate Enrollment at the University of Notre Dame, where she played a pivotal

role in shaping the graduate admissions process and enhancing the experiences of the graduate student body. Dr. McDonald earned her Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Tuskegee University and a Master of Science in Environmental Quality Engineering from the University of Alaska. Additionally, she pursued further studies and earned both her Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Chemical Engineering from the University of Notre Dame.

We are excited to see the remarkable impact Dr. McDonald will undoubtedly have across the University and the Commonwealth.

## Pawpaw Study Takes Second Place at SRASHS Annual Meeting



At the 2025 Southern Region American Society for Horticultural Science (SRASHS) meeting in Irving, Texas, KSU graduate students and faculty presented pawpaw research. Subas Thapa Magar earned second place in the “3 Minute Thesis” competition for his work on pawpaw pollinators. Kshitij Shahi presented on shelf-life extension, and Dr. Kirk Pomper discussed production advancements. Dr. Srijana Thapa Magar shared insights on ethnic vegetables in Kentucky. KSU’s participation reflects its commitment to sustainable agriculture and research excellence.

## Grand Reopening of Bert T. Combs Hall

KSU completed its renovation of Bert T. Combs Hall, marking the first step in broader efforts to improve campus housing. The renovated residence hall features upgraded bathrooms, redesigned laundry rooms, new kitchen and reception areas, and ADA-compliant walkways. In partnership with Schmidt Associates, CMTA, KPFF, Element Design, and Devere Construction, the redesign prioritizes durability, sustainability, and student well-being.



## Annual Legislative Fish Fry



Kentucky legislators, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members gathered for the annual Legislative Fish Fry, celebrating Kentucky’s elected officials and highlighting KSU’s programs and achievements. The event featured a southern-inspired menu crafted by James Beard Award semifinalist, Chef Isaiah Screetch, with locally sourced ingredients supporting Kentucky’s small aquaculture and agricultural producers.

“KSU is leading for impact both on and off campus. This event offered just a glimpse of the many innovative programs and advancements happening here every day,” said President Akakpo.



APRIL 2025



## EAGLE BOOKS

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY



## New Eagle Books program saves students money, ensures success

Morehead State University is excited to announce the launch of the Eagle Books program, a new initiative designed to save students money and ensure their academic success. This innovative, worry-free program provides students with all required course materials at a low, fixed price.

### BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

**Affordable Course Materials:** With Eagle Books, students will receive all their textbooks and electronic materials at a set, affordable price. Eagle Books helps reduce the financial burden and stress of purchasing individual textbooks.

**Convenience and Preparedness:** Students will automatically receive their course materials by the first day of class, ensuring they are fully prepared for the start of each semester. This program supports student success by reducing the hassle of obtaining textbooks and allowing students to focus on their studies.

**Flexibility:** The program includes digital and print materials, depending on each course's format. Additionally, students can opt-out if they prefer to obtain their materials independently.

"Receiving quality and convenient products at a lower cost is a win-win for Morehead State students," said SGA President Brady Lawson, senior political science major from Ezel.

"With the unanimous support of SGA and an overwhelming majority of responding students in favor of the program, it was clear that students wanted this to move forward. Morehead State SGA is proud to support Eagle Books as an affordable, convenient, and consistent option for students."



#### Office of the President

202 Howell-McDowell Admin. Bldg. | Morehead, KY 40351

Phone: 606-783-2022 | [president@moreheadstate.edu](mailto:president@moreheadstate.edu)

[www.moreheadstate.edu/president](http://www.moreheadstate.edu/president)

## MSU Online provides flexible, affordable learning

Morehead State University prioritizes affordability and convenience for current and future Eagles.

MSU is proud to launch MSU Online, offering a wide range of fully online degree programs and certificates for undergraduate and graduate students. This new initiative shows MSU's dedication to making the programs of the #14 best public regional university in the South available to students everywhere.

"With several of our high-quality programs being made available completely online, we will extend our mission to be a light to the mountains and our goal to be the best educational experience in Kentucky," said Dr. Chris Schroeder, associate provost for undergraduate education and student success.

Through MSU Online, MSU opens doors to a brighter future for students everywhere. Whether you want to start your undergraduate journey or advance your career with a graduate degree, MSU Online provides the tools and support you need to succeed.

"MSU Online aligns seamlessly with our mission to provide accessible, high-quality education that empowers students to reach their full potential," Timmermann said. "Through these programs, we can expand our impact and continue to uphold our mission of academic distinction and student success."

## MSU hosts ribbon-cutting ceremony for updated Cooper Hall

Morehead State University is updating and re-opening a long-standing residence hall as part of its campus revitalization plan.

MSU hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for Cooper Hall on Friday, March 28.

Cooper Hall, the 35,000-square-foot facility built in 1965 and named in honor of former U.S. Senator John Sherman Cooper, has 177 beds and collaborative spaces, and has undergone a \$10.8 million renovation. The hall opens to students in August 2025.

Kim Oatman, chief facilities and operations officer and associate vice president, said re-opening Cooper Hall will have many nice amenities and provide a better living and learning environment for students in the heart of campus.

MSU President Dr. Jay Morgan said an improved and modernized Cooper Hall is another big step in moving the campus forward. With updates to other halls and two new residence halls set to be added in the coming years, current and future Eagles will be even happier with their housing options.

## Morehead State to upgrade Veterinary Technology program facilities

As part of Morehead State University's campus revitalization plan, its nationally ranked veterinary technology program will be getting an improved space for students and faculty.

MSU is updating veterinary technology facilities at the Derrickson Agricultural Complex. The University is expanding the building to improve the laboratory and classroom spaces. The renovations should be completed by December 2025.

"The project will add two new classrooms, restrooms and a common lobby for student gatherings. The existing facility will also get a new exterior skin to match the new additional exterior," said Kim Oatman, assistant vice president for facilities and operations. "There are also some necessary upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems, but the administration made it a top priority to renovate and add new space onto the existing facility."

**Dr. Amy Staton (Class of 2003, 2004, and 2013)**, associate professor of veterinary technology, said the addition of two classrooms will allow the program's existing building space to be used solely for clinical experiences, like small animal dentistry and surgical prep, and potentially accept more students each fall. The new and improved facilities will help the program continue its reputation as the top-ranked program in the state and one of the best in the country.

### Dr. Ron K. Patterson named Murray State University President

The Murray State University Board of Regents Presidential Search Committee has announced Dr. Ron K. Patterson as Murray State University President. Dr. Patterson will commence his role as the 15th President of Murray State on July 1, 2025. He will succeed President Dr. Bob Jackson, who will retire on June 30, 2025. The selection of Patterson follows an extensive process and national search.

Currently, Patterson serves as president of Chadron State College, one of three state college institutions within the Nebraska State College System and an institution with approximately 2,300 students and 600 full-time faculty and staff. In his role, Patterson launched and chaired the college’s new five-year strategic plan; established strategic enrollment partnerships; commenced new academic programs and partnerships; furthered external relationships with federal, state and local government leaders; and fostered an environment of success within the college’s Division II athletic programs.

With 25 years of higher education experience, Patterson has developed a collaborative, servant leader approach which values accessibility and affordability, education and innovation.

Patterson earned a Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration and Leadership at Creighton University, an Education Specialist degree with a concentration in Community College Administration at Arkansas State University, a Master of Arts at Marietta College, a Bachelor of Science at the University of Tennessee – Southern and an Associate of Arts at Northeast Mississippi Community College. He recently completed professional



development offered by the American Academic Leadership Institute and Penn State University’s Academic Leadership Academy for Academic Administration.

Patterson hails from Corinth, Mississippi. He and his wife, Jenny, have two children, Olivia and Braylon.

“I am truly humbled and honored to be selected as President of Murray State University,” Patterson said. “I would like to thank the Presidential Search Committee, Board of Regents, campus community and alumni for entrusting me to lead this historic university.

“My family and I are honored and privileged to join the excellent students, faculty and staff of Murray State University and the city of Murray to continue the great momentum of Dr. Bob Jackson and the leadership team, capital improvement projects and rich tradition of Murray State University in its second century.”

### 2025 Kentucky legislative session includes continued support for Murray State University to pursue a School of Veterinary Medicine



Murray State University’s efforts to explore a School of Veterinary Medicine received a strong showing of support in the 2025 Kentucky legislative session.

Senate Bill 77, which was passed unanimously by both chambers in a bipartisan manner and was signed into law by Governor Andy Beshear, continues to provide a path forward for the University to work with others, including the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, to establish a new Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at Murray State.

Murray State President Dr. Bob Jackson said, “Countless individuals worked extremely hard over the past two years to further this important initiative. Representative Mary Beth Imes, Majority Leader Steven Rudy, Senator Jason Howell, Speaker David Meade and other legislative leaders, along with Congressman James Comer and Senator Rand Paul, assisted with the passage of this bill.

“I would also like to thank our Board of Regents, Dean Brian Parr of our Hutson School of Agriculture, Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs Jordan Smith, our alumni, friends, supporters, agricultural groups, faculty, staff and students along with many others, all of whom were instrumental in advancing this key initiative to benefit our multi-billion dollar agricultural industry.”

Eighty of 120 counties across Kentucky have a veterinary shortage or are deemed underserved rural areas with low ratios of practicing veterinarians to livestock.

Murray State holds multiple existing assets on its campus, as well as a new \$60 million Veterinary Sciences Building to be constructed.

The University also has the largest pre-veterinary medicine/veterinary technology student enrollment in Kentucky and is committed to addressing the veterinary shortage and assisting the animal agriculture economy in the Commonwealth.

## Murray State University and the SSC Services for Education grounds department recognized nationally

Murray State University and the SSC Services for Education grounds department has been honored as a Grand Award Winner for a Green Star Award by the Professional Grounds Management Society, in recognition of their outstanding work on Murray State's campus. SSC has partnered with Murray State since 2020, providing custodial and grounds maintenance services for its campus. This is the second consecutive year that SSC has achieved a Grand Award.

The award was given in the University and College Grounds (mid-size: 201-499 acres) category for exceptional grounds maintenance and is the highest award given. Winners were honored during the society's 2024 Awards Celebration, in conjunction with the Annual Conference and Equip Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky.

As part of the recognition, it was noted that "Murray State University's campus is unique in its geographical location which provides the energy of an exciting, state-of-the-art university with the feel of a welcoming hometown college. Murray State's athletic complexes coupled with a vibrant landscape, draws in the eye



and invites the onlooker to explore the campus' never-ending natural beauty."

The Arbor Day Foundation also recognized Murray State University as a 2024 Tree Campus for its dedication to enhancing community well-being through tree education, investment and community engagement.



### Professor of Wildlife and Conservation Biology Dr. Howard Whiteman presents climate change research at Carnegie Science Center

Murray State University Professor of Wildlife and Conservation Biology Dr. Howard Whiteman presented his work on how salamanders can signal climate change at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on February 24.

Whiteman, who has been studying salamanders for almost four decades, said he chose to work with salamanders because they are both fun and good environmental indicators.

"Salamanders are shifting their biology in response to climate change, and those at high elevations are changing to be more like those at low elevation," said Whiteman. "They are functionally adapting to a changing environment, which is something we have to do as well—adapt to how the climate is changing."



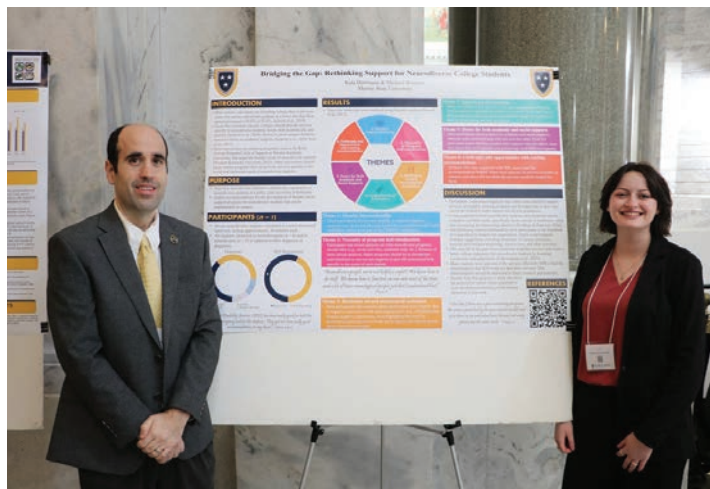
Access the research Whiteman presented at [bit.ly/SalamanderResearch](https://bit.ly/SalamanderResearch).

### Student delivers talk at 23rd annual Posters-at-the-Capitol

On March 6, Kate Herrmann, a junior from Mount Vernon, Illinois, presented her research on support services for neurodiverse college students at the Kentucky Capitol Building in Frankfort, Kentucky. Herrmann's presentation was one of nine Murray State University student projects selected for the 23rd annual Posters-at-the-Capitol event.

With unique research projects on display, the event's efforts are to help increase understanding of the important role undergraduate research plays in the education of college students among those responsible for higher education funding in the state of Kentucky. The event provides undergraduates the opportunity to engage in scholarly research and creative works helping to promote an educational experience and professional development.

Program coordinator AJ Boston introduced Herrmann, noting that the Illinois native was drawn to Murray State for its smaller class sizes, undergraduate research opportunities and "amazing faculty members." Herrmann, a Presidential Fellow double majoring in Communication Disorders and Psychology, was accompanied by her faculty mentor, Dr. Michael Bordieri.





# GOLD RUSH

MARCH 2025

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

## GO FIGURE

FOUNDERS' DAY 2025

57<sup>TH</sup>

birthday of NKU

\$345K+

raised

1,000+

donors



### NKU CELEBRATES 57TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY WITH ANNUAL 1,968 MINUTES OF GIVING

Northern Kentucky University celebrated its 57th anniversary with a **Founders' Day celebration and 1,968 minutes of giving**, in recognition of the university's founding year. Founders' Day is an occasion focused on all things Norse, when students, alumni, faculty and staff can share their pride and give back to NKU. Founders' Day began at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, March 12 and ran through 4:48 p.m. on Thursday, March 13 for a total of 1,968 minutes.

This year's celebration featured a series of matches and challenges for alumni, faculty, staff, students and community members to maximize their impact through donations to their favorite department, scholarship fund, Norse athletics team or student-support service.

"Founders' Day is a time to reflect on the vision, dedication, and resilience that built NKU into the institution it is today. It is a celebration of our past, a recognition of our present achievements and a recommitment to our future," says President Dr. Cady Short-Thompson. "The impact of NKU extends far beyond our campus—through our students, faculty, alumni and community partnerships. As we honor those who laid the foundation for NKU, we also embrace the responsibility to shape the next generation of leaders, thinkers and changemakers."

This is the fifth year NKU is celebrating Founders' Day. In 2025, thanks to the generous contributions of more than 1,000 donors, the university raised more than \$300,000 to benefit academic programs, scholarships, student support services, student opportunities and more.

"This year's theme, Home, gave the larger NKU community even more opportunity to celebrate all things Norse," says Judy Caldwell, Director of Annual Giving. "It is exciting to see the impact of Founders' Day on our students' success year after year."

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkufoundersday2025>

## COLLEGE CORNER

Northern Kentucky University's **Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program** was ranked as one of the top online programs in the state of Kentucky for 2025.

**LEARN MORE:**

<https://tinyurl.com/nkumsnranking2025>





## NKU'S INKUBATOR PROGRAM RECOGNIZED WITH NATIONAL AWARD

Northern Kentucky University's **INKUBATOR accelerator program** has been recognized by the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) with the National Model University Accelerator/Incubator Program Award.

NKU's INKUBATOR is part of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) and supports student and alumni entrepreneurs, providing the education, mentorship and resources to turn their business ideas into reality. The program aims to increase the competitive advantage of start-ups and, since its foundation in 2012, has resulted in the launch of 43 businesses.

"Winning the USASBE Model Accelerator Award is a testament to the outstanding work of our faculty, mentors, students and community members in driving innovation and entrepreneurship," says Dr. Hassan HassabElnaby, dean of the Haile College of Business. "For years, INKUBATOR has been preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs, and this award affirms our commitment to fostering a world-class program right here in the Greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky region."

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkuhaileinkubatoraward>



## THE SCOREBOARD

**Courtney LeMay** has returned to her alma mater as an assistant coach of Northern Kentucky University's STUNT team. LeMay is no stranger to NKU, having cheered from 2009-13. During her time as a student-athlete, LeMay participated in four national championship events. She was named hardest worker in 2010 and team captain in 2012-13. She was also a three-time Academic All-American. LeMay graduated from NKU in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in integrative studies with focuses in exercise science, organizational leadership, sports business and education.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkucourtneylemay>

## BRIEFS

### DR. BRANDON THOMPSON NAMED NKU'S NEW VP OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Northern Kentucky University is excited to share that **Brandon Thompson, Ed.D.**, will be the university's new vice president of student affairs. With a career in higher education spanning 15 years, Dr. Thompson brings a wealth of knowledge that will enhance the college experience for students across campus, whether in-person or online.

"I am honored to join NKU in building on the incredible work being done to create a student-ready institution, and I look forward to collaborating across the campus to further this mission," he says. "As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, I am committed to providing strong leadership that prioritizes student success and well-being—drawing inspiration from the mentors and family members who have guided me and recognizing the invaluable role of support and collaboration in achieving our goals."

Dr. Thompson earned his Doctor of Education in educational leadership and policy studies from Eastern Kentucky University, and his M.S. in college student affairs and B.A. in communication studies from Eastern Illinois University.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkubrandonthompson>

## FACULTY FOCUS

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center will host a screening of a film created by three Northern Kentucky University faculty. **Dr. David Childs, Professor John Gibson and Dr. Brian Hackett** collaborated with NorseMedia, NKU's student-staffed audio and video production house, to create "Underground: Freedom Stories Along the Borderland," a documentary that explores the rise of abolitionism in Cincinnati and northern Kentucky. By examining key events and conversations at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati's Walnut Hills neighborhood, as well as on the streets of Augusta, Kentucky, and other river communities in the 1800s, the feature-length film offers valuable context for understanding modern discussions on race and equality.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkufreedomcenterdocufilm>

### NKU NAMES DR. BETHANY BOWLING DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Northern Kentucky University is proud to announce **Dr. Bethany Vice Bowling** as the new permanent dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Bowling has served as interim dean of the college since January 2024.

"I am so proud to be able to serve the university and its students as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences," says Dr. Bethany Bowling. "Over the past year, in my capacity as interim dean, I have witnessed the dedication and passion of our students, faculty and staff, and I'm excited to continue building on our shared success."

Dr. Bowling is a native northern Kentuckian. She earned her Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies – biology education and her M.S. in biology from the University of Cincinnati. She earned her B.A. in biology from Thomas More College. She will officially begin her tenure as dean on July 1, 2025.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkubethanyvicebowling>



## ALUMNI NEWS

### A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

When **Melissa Arthur, dean of Nursing, Allied Health and Natural Sciences at Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC)**, decided to pursue her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) at Northern Kentucky University (NKU), she didn't do it alone. Arthur was part of a group of six colleagues from her college who all applied to the program together.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/nkumelissaarthur>

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT APRIL 2025

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY



## JAMES F. HARDYMON RECEIVES UK FOUNDERS DAY AWARD

The UK Alumni Association has named James F. Hardymon the recipient of the UK Founders Day Award. Hardymon was honored for his civic engagement with the U.S. Army and dedication to the Bluegrass through his outstanding contributions to engineering and education. After earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from UK's Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering, Hardymon continued to grow in his field as an engineer. His career and impact spanned companies that shaped Kentucky, such as Browning Manufacturing Co., and multinational corporations like Emerson Electric Co. Beyond engineering, Hardymon's dedication has left a lasting impact on his community, particularly at his beloved alma mater. The James F. Hardymon Building, the James and Gay Hardymon Center for Student Success and the James and Gay Hardymon Patient Care Unit at the Markey Cancer Center are concrete examples of his footprint and commitment to giving back. Hardymon's legacy for the new generation of engineering students reflects a remarkable journey — from a Wildcat to a national leader.





## DANCEBLUE CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNUAL MARATHON

DanceBlue is a UK student-run philanthropy dedicated to raising funds to support children and families in the fight against pediatric cancer. This year's marathon — held at Historic Memorial Coliseum, March 29-30 — broke last year's record, raising \$2,305,274.20. The funds go to the DanceBlue Kentucky Children's Hospital Hematology/Oncology Clinic. For 20 years, students have come together to dance and participate in interactive activities during the non-stop, no-sitting marathons. Since 2006, DanceBlue has raised more than \$25 million. In 2024, the organization also broke its record for the largest fundraiser in its history, raising \$2,129,953.87. In addition to its significant financial impact in supporting families and children across Kentucky, DanceBlue has built a legacy of raising awareness about pediatric cancer's challenges and victories.



## FROM THE WHITE HOUSE: UK RESEARCHER RECEIVES 2025 PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

Matthew Bush, M.D., Ph.D., chair of UK HealthCare's Department of Otolaryngology, has received the 2025 Presidential Award, the highest commendation by the U.S. government to an early career scientist. Bush was nationally recognized for his groundbreaking research on improving access to hearing-related health care in rural Kentucky communities. His work highlights the challenges faced by these groups, including delayed access to hearing aids and cochlear implants, and identifies potential measures to expand quality care. Bush's research has substantially demonstrated that community-based interventions are a pivotal path to improve access to health services for historically overlooked rural communities. Bush's research is funded by the National Institutes on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.



# THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ISSUE 131  
FEBRUARY MARCH 2025

Dear Colleagues,

The University of Louisville wraps up the winter months with several noteworthy achievements that reflect our efforts to be a premier higher education institution – one that produces an outstanding education for all students in Kentucky and beyond and serves as a key resource for our commonwealth's businesses and industries.

Strategic partnerships remain critical in helping Kentucky's economy thrive. UofL's Kentucky Manufacturing Extension Partnership recently secured \$8 million in state appropriations to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers acquire capital equipment and next-generation technologies. Our university is proud that we can offer this support and drive these firms and Kentucky's economy forward.

UofL is pleased to once again be recognized as a "Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production" university by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. This designation is a testament to our enduring success in biomedical, engineering, scientific and creative activities.

Of course, there are many on our campus who contribute to our university's ongoing success. Six UofL faculty members were recognized by Louisville Business First for their contributions to health care innovation.

Speaking of positive and powerful contributions, it is with immense pride I recognize our student body who, through the annual raiseRED initiative, raised \$533,902.79 for the fight against pediatric cancer. This year's effort engaged more than 750 people from students to doctors and brought the cumulative amount raised by the campaign to over \$5.5 million since its inception 12 years ago.

Finally, I want to thank the University of Louisville Board of Trustees and the university community for entrusting me with the responsibility of serving as UofL's next president. Our recent successes combined with our rich academic history will help us build a community where all students, faculty and staff can succeed.

**Gerry Bradley**  
**President,**  
**University of Louisville**



## Gerry Bradley named UofL's 20th president

The University of Louisville Board of Trustees at a special meeting March 26 appointed Gerry Bradley, formerly executive vice president and university provost, as UofL's 20th president. The appointment is effective immediately following the board's decision to accept the resignation of President Kim Schatzel at that same meeting.

Bradley served as EVP/UP since February 2024 and was interim provost on two occasions—from January 2022 to February 2023 and from July 2023 to February 2024. Under Bradley's leadership, UofL has made a strong commitment to enrollment growth, student success and academic excellence. Last fall, UofL experienced record first-year enrollment, record first-year fall-to-fall retention and a record overall enrollment of 24,123 students.

Bradley has hired eight deans, overseen several successful accreditation reaffirmations and fostered the development and launch of several new academic programs.



## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION POWERHOUSE

### Carnegie Foundation reaffirms UofL as a research leader

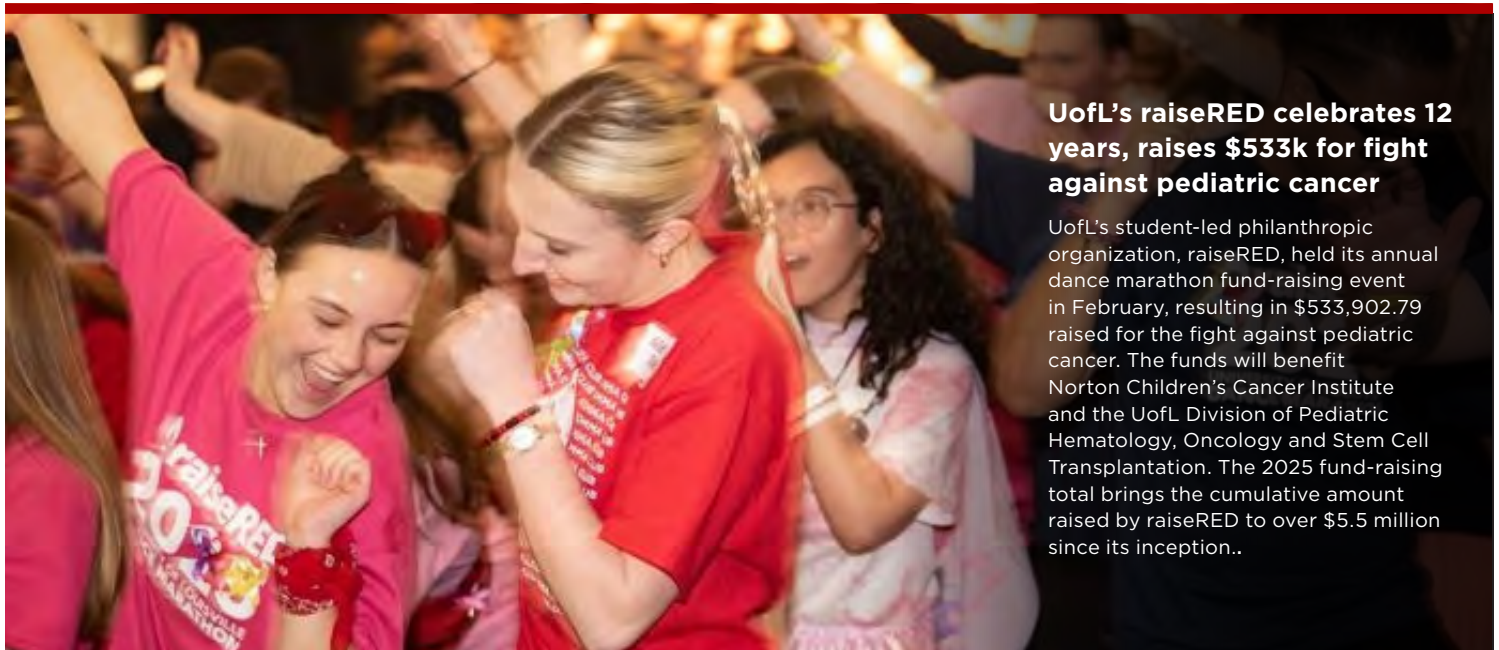
The University of Louisville remains a top research institution in the nation, recognized again by the Carnegie Foundation as a "Research 1" university. The designation highlights its elite status among U.S. universities.

Specifically, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education 2025 has named UofL a "Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production" university. UofL is one of only 187 universities receiving this distinction as part of the new research activity designation introduced this year, and one of only two in the state. The 2025 designation was based on nearly \$221 million in research expenditures UofL made in fiscal year 2023 and 159 research doctorate degrees UofL awarded in 2022-2023.

UofL also holds a Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, which recognizes institutions that work with community partners to exchange knowledge and resources for public benefit. UofL is one of only 102 universities nationally that hold both recognitions.



UofL researchers Kavitha Yaddanapudji, (left) and Chuanlin Ding, use a mass cytometer to help improve the effectiveness of cancer immunotherapies.



**UofL's raiseRED celebrates 12 years, raises \$533k for fight against pediatric cancer**

UofL's student-led philanthropic organization, raiseRED, held its annual dance marathon fund-raising event in February, resulting in \$533,902.79 raised for the fight against pediatric cancer. The funds will benefit Norton Children's Cancer Institute and the UofL Division of Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Stem Cell Transplantation. The 2025 fund-raising total brings the cumulative amount raised by raiseRED to over \$5.5 million since its inception..

**PREMIER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

**U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor awarded highest honor from UofL Brandeis School of Law**



2025 UofL Brandeis Medal presentation to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

The University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law presented the Brandeis Medal to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on Feb. 5. The Brandeis Medal honors recipients for their devotion to economic, social or political justice and for advancing the cause of public service in the legal profession. Sotomayor is the seventh Supreme Court justice honored with the medal, following Harry Blackmun, Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan, Sandra Day O'Connor and John Paul Stevens.

**UofL partnership secures \$8M to support state's small- and mid-sized manufacturers**

The University of Louisville's Kentucky Manufacturing Extension Partnership (KY-MEP) secured \$8 million to help the state's small- and medium-sized manufacturers generate business results and thrive in today's technology-driven economy.

With the funding, which comes via a state appropriation, KY-MEP has launched the Catalyst Equipment Match program. The program provides an up to 50% match for manufacturers (up to \$200,000) for investments in capital equipment and next-generation technologies, such as automation, robotics and additive manufacturing.

KY-MEP, housed at UofL, helps manufacturers implement waste-reducing systems and processes, grow revenue streams and customize culture models that support the talent pipeline and a sustainable workforce. In the past 12 months, KY-MEP supported more than 600 companies throughout Kentucky and drove more than \$131 million in economic impact by way of retained or added jobs, improved efficiency and more.

**2025 Health Care Heroes include six with UofL ties**

Each year, Louisville Business First (LBF) recognizes 25 Health Care Heroes — medical professionals who demonstrate outstanding excellence in their work and who are taking the field to new levels. This year's Health Care Heroes from UofL are:

- **Jeffrey Bumpous:** executive vice president for health affairs and dean, School of Medicine
- **Jason Chesney:** director and chief administrative officer, UofL Health Brown Cancer Center
- **Jennifer Porter:** associate professor, pediatrics
- **Adam Gaweda:** associate professor, Department of Medicine
- **Bridgette Hittepole:** assistant professor and associate director, MD/PhD Physician Scientist Training Program
- **Deborah Kozik:** associate professor, Department of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery



**UofL Health CEO among those honored as Louisville influencers**

UofL health CEO Tom Miller has been recognized as a Louisville Business First Power 50 professional. The Power 50 list identifies the city's most influential people in business and related communities. Louisville Business First selected honorees from individuals nominated by the public and those covered in the publication's own reporting and sourcing and did not include elected officials. Also making the Power 50 list are numerous Cardinal alumni and donors, along with current and past members of UofL boards.



Tom 195

# NEWS FOR THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

APRIL 2025



## WKU online programs earn top national rankings in 2025 U.S. News & World Report

U.S. News & World Report has once again recognized Western Kentucky University among the top institutions for online learning, ranking WKU's online bachelor's programs No. 71 in the nation.

The 2025 rankings were determined based on factors such as program engagement, services and technology, faculty credentials and training, and expert opinion. According to the report, "U.S. News chose factors that weigh how these programs are being delivered and their effectiveness at awarding affordable degrees in a reasonable amount of time."

"It is truly exciting to see how innovation and collaboration between the WKU Online team and our academic programs have delivered such remarkable results," said Dr. Jay Carroll, Assistant Director of WKU Online.

WKU's Online bachelor program climbed from 90th to 71st this year, reflecting the university's commitment to accessible and high-quality education. Designed to accommodate busy schedules, WKU's online courses allow learners to earn a degree without putting life on hold. Courses are taught by experienced faculty who also teach on campus, ensuring that online learners receive the same exceptional education as in-person students.

Several individual programs also earned impressive rankings this year. WKU's online undergraduate business program ranked No. 41 in the nation. The veteran's bachelor's program rose to No. 37, the veteran's MBA program climbed to No. 49, and veteran's graduate education was ranked No. 31. Additionally, the MBA program earned a ranking of No. 75, and graduate education secured No. 104.

WKU offers over 80 online degree options, including certificate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs. All programs are regionally accredited.



## 7 WKU Students and Alumni Named Semi-Finalists for Fulbright US Student Program

Seven WKU students and recent graduates have been recognized as Semi-Finalists in the 2025-26 Fulbright U.S. Student Program competition. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program is one among a suite of exchange programs in partnership with more than 160 countries around the world supported primarily by an annual appropriation from the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It funds an academic year of research, study, or English teaching for approximately 2,200 grantees annually in more than 140 countries worldwide.

Over 11,000 graduating seniors and recent graduates nationwide submitted applications last fall that were evaluated by panels of American university faculty based on academic and professional achievement as well as record of service and leadership potential in their respective fields. Additional evaluation committees at American embassies and Fulbright Commissions worldwide will select Finalists throughout the spring and notify on a rolling basis. Once Finalists accept their awards, they are designated Fulbright Grantees or Fulbright Students.

WKU's Semi-Finalists for the 2024-25 award year are:

**Autumn Howard** ('24 *English and Spanish*), who applied for an English Teaching Assistant award to Spain.

**Nguyen Nguyen** ('24 *Chinese*), who applied for an English Teaching Assistant award to Taiwan.

**Htee Shee Paw** ('25 *Corporate & Organizational Communication, Professional Legal Studies*), who applied for an English Teaching Assistant award to Thailand.

**Parker Raybourne** ('22 *Political Science, Public Relations, and Advertising*), who applied for a Fulbright research award in Italy to study the efficacy of public-private partnerships to address rural "brain drain."

**Manzar Rzayeva** ('22 *Biology*, '24 *Master's in Public Health*), who applied for a Fulbright research award in Germany to study access to maternal healthcare services among migrants.

**Shwe Win** ('23 *Public Health*, '25 *Master's in Public Health*), who applied for an English Teaching Assistant award to Thailand.

**Sydney Windhorst** ('25 *International Affairs*), who applied for an English Teaching Assistant award to Italy.

## WKU President named KMEA Administrator of the Year

Western Kentucky University President Timothy C. Caboni was named the Kentucky Music Educators Association's (KMEA) 2024-25 Administrator of the Year.

The award was presented Friday, February 7, at the KMEA 2024-25 Awards Ceremony at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville.

KMEA is an organization of over 2,000 professional music educators from kindergarten to the university level dedicated to the cause of music education in Kentucky. Associated with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), it serves as a voice for Kentucky's music educators.

The KMEA award recognizes and thanks administrators for emphasizing and valuing their institution's music programs.

"I'm so thankful for my experiences in band that created opportunities to practice leadership from middle school through college. As a musician, section leader and drum major, I am indebted to the educators who created those opportunities and challenged me to be a better and more excellent version of myself — and those lessons still resonate and echo today as a university president," said President Caboni.

President Caboni affirmed that music is an important part of the WKU experience. "We need more young people to learn the lessons that band and music can teach them, lessons that translate beyond the concert hall and football field. Each lesson prepares them for success, in making a good living and a good life, for themselves and their families well after their time studying in college."

"We are creating those opportunities every day for young people at WKU. I'm proud that we are accomplishing some amazing things and reaching goals we have set for ourselves as an institution," he said.

When President Caboni, who earned a graduate degree from WKU in 1994, returned to campus in 2017 as the university's 10th president, he set forth a personal priority to ensure institutional support of WKU's music programs.

The work began by increasing athletic band scholarships, opening doors for more students to pursue a degree at WKU. Since 2017, WKU's Big Red Marching Band grew from 240 to more than 300 members, taking the helm as the largest marching band in Kentucky.

One of the marching band's most notable challenges has been the absence of a dedicated practice space. In fall of 2023, WKU broke ground on the new 120,000-square-foot Hilltopper Fieldhouse. In addition to supporting the athletics program with space for athletic teams to train and prepare for competition, the new fieldhouse at WKU will serve as the primary rehearsal facility for the Big Red Marching Band, providing a permanent place for the band to hold practices.

In addition to President Caboni's award, Dr. Gary Schallert received the prestigious 2025 Phi Beta Mu Outstanding Bandmaster award; Dr. Matthew McCurry was inducted into Phi Beta Mu, the International Bandmasters Fraternity; and Dr. Lauren Whitham and the University Singers were chosen to perform at the KMEA Conference.



## WKU's 11th annual Dance Big Red breaks record, surpassing \$105,000 for Norton Children's Hospital

More than 700 WKU students raised over \$105,000 through Dance Big Red, an annual student-led dance marathon that benefits Norton Children's. The marathon took place in March at Raymond B. Preston Health & Activities Center. Additionally, more than 200 special guests, including sponsors, families and community members, attended the Community/Dance Little Red Hour to support the student dancers.

"We are beyond grateful for the overwhelming response from students, donors and sponsors," said Larkin Jarboe, Dance Big Red Co-Chair. "Thanks to the support of everyone pulling together, we surpassed goals and broke records. Dance Big Red raised \$105,571.80 for Norton Children's Hospital, directly impacting pediatric heart care and pediatric cancer care for patients from across the state. The result of this event is a dream come true."

Dance Big Red has held various fundraising events over the past year and worked in partnership with Warren County Public Schools' Dance Little Red and various Dance Mini Reds. The student members planned various campus outreach opportunities to donate and get involved. They also met with Norton Children's patients and their families to learn about their journeys.

"The continued success of the event is a testament to the strength of leadership and compassion found at WKU," said Dana Warder, Norton Children's Hospital's Western Kentucky PR/Communications Manager. "Since the inaugural event, Dance Big Red has raised nearly a million dollars for Norton Children's through Norton Children's Hospital Foundation. It was an amazing night of stories that inspire and give hope."

Western Kentucky University President Timothy C. Caboni said, "I'm incredibly proud of our WKU students for volunteering their time and energy to support Norton's Children's Hospital. Their dedication to making a difference reflects the spirit of Hilltoppers — compassionate, driven and committed to serving others."

"The WKU community and spirit showed out to support Norton Children's Hospital," said Lilly Pollitzer, Dance Big Red Co-Chair. "Together, we are making a direct impact to families in this region. Our executive board is ready to start planning Dance Big Red 2026."



## BY THE NUMBERS:



**7.9%**  
INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT

AS OF THE END OF MARCH, THE KCTCS HEADCOUNT IS 74,673, AN INCREASE OF 5,438 STUDENTS OR 7.9% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR AT THIS TIME.

### KCTCS, KDE launch statewide 'Going Pro' Day to celebrate students who sign on to high-demand careers

Every day, student athletes sign contracts to "go pro" in their sports and are celebrated across the country. The "Going Pro" Signing Day, launched by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and held in the Capitol rotunda, celebrated students and graduates of Kentucky high schools, area technology centers, and KCTCS who are "going pro" and committing to high-demand careers.

The Kentucky Department of Education joined KCTCS in sponsoring the event this year.

During 2023-24, nearly 95% of all KCTCS credentials awarded were in programs aligned to the state's top five targeted industry sectors – advanced manufacturing, business/IT, construction/skilled trades, healthcare, and transportation/logistics – or designed to transfer to a four-year university.

KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education reports high school students in the 2023-24 12th grade cohort earned more than 26,000 postsecondary credentials.

### KCTCS Establishes New Student Leader Peer Team to Encourage Student Collaboration and Innovation

Academic Collaboration and Excellence (ACE) was established to facilitate engagement between the two KCTCS Student Regents and student leaders across KCTCS. Requested by Regent Shouse and Regent Higdon, ACE held its first meeting in February, which was attended by 11 students representing eight colleges. Six of the students who attended are current SGA presidents and all hold leadership roles with their college community. The group discussed several emerging priorities for the student population and concerns specifically expressed by the Student Regents. ACE members agreed to continue meeting monthly and will collaborate throughout the year.

**42,910**  
CREDENTIALS AWARDED  
IN 2023-24

KCTCS AWARDED A TOTAL OF 42,910 CREDENTIALS TO 22,645 GRADUATES IN 2023-24, BOTH ALL-TIME HIGHS.



## KCTCS Reaffirms Statewide Transfer Agreements with WKU and Murray State

In the beginning of 2025, KCTCS reaffirmed transfer agreements with Western Kentucky University and Murray State University that will help more students from across Kentucky easily transfer from a community and technical college to these universities to earn four-year degrees.

Each of the universities had transfer agreements in place with specific community colleges and in specific degree pathways. Both agreements expand access to the pathways to students in all 16 colleges.

At WKU, transfer students will have access to automatic transfer scholarships up to \$4,000 and numerous support services through the WKU Transfer Center designed to ease the transition and provide guidance and support.

At Murray State University, new, first-time transfer students are eligible for a scholarship when they are admitted to Murray State. The GPA-based scholarships are up to \$4,000 and are awarded for three years or until a bachelor's degree is received. One important facet of the agreement is that any KCTCS student who follows one of Murray State's transfer pathways will receive dedicated advising through the university's regional campuses or their transfer center.

Each year, about 14,000 KCTCS students transfer to a four-year college or university.



## KCTCS Partners with Boys and Girls Club to Award Scholarships to Youth of the Year Finalists

KCTCS formalized a partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs Kentucky Alliance to provide scholarships to the finalists of the state Youth of the Year program. This program has been Boys and Girls Club of America's premier recognition and character development program since 1947, representing the culmination of the work that happens in each club every day. Youth of the Year distinguishes and celebrates the extraordinary achievements of club members who embody the values of leadership, service, academic excellence, and healthy lifestyles, and provides opportunities for club members to build critical skills and experiences and celebrate their accomplishments among their peers. While one club member is named the state Youth of the Year each year and advances to the national competition, the other state finalists are very accomplished. KCTCS awarded \$2,000 scholarships to each of the state Youth of the Year finalists. Many of the KCTCS colleges are involved with their local Boys and Girls Clubs and several host clubs on campus. This builds on those great relationships and provides resources to families whose youth are focused on continuing their education.

## KCTCS Enrollment Taskforce Begins to Address Enrollment Cliff and Strategic Enrollment Management

In January, Dr. Quarles created the KCTCS Enrollment Taskforce to develop strategies and metrics to grow enrollment and mitigate the impact of the possible impending enrollment cliff on KCTCS. This taskforce is also working to establish a strategic enrollment management planning framework for the KCTCS colleges and the System Office. The task force is made up of 19 representatives from the colleges and the System Office from student affairs, financial aid, advising, online learning, marketing, admissions, academic affairs, Workforce Solutions and more. The taskforce will have recommendations in the coming months.

## Serving Up Solutions Raises \$65,000 for Food Pantries Benefitting KCTCS Students

KCTCS is taking steps to address food insecurity at our colleges and across Kentucky. In February, we partnered with Feeding Kentucky to host the 8th annual Serving Up Solutions, which raised more than \$65,000 for food banks that supply food for organizations throughout the Commonwealth, including the food pantries at all 16 colleges. In a study conducted by Trellis Research last year, 48% of KCTCS students who responded reported they didn't know where their next meal was coming from. Around one in six Kentuckians are suffering from food insecurity and almost 16% don't know where their next meal will come from. Each year, Serving Up Solutions invites state legislators to show their commitment to addressing food insecurity in Kentucky by donning aprons and serving food to event attendees.





## AIKCU announces ‘remarkable’ economic impact of Kentucky’s 18 independent colleges and universities

Kentucky’s independent, nonprofit colleges and universities contribute **\$2.06 billion** to the state and local economies, according to a recent economic impact study released by the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities.

More than 59,000 students attend AIKCU’s 18 member institutions, which award one in five bachelor’s degrees in Kentucky.

“In addition to providing widespread access to higher education and helping develop Kentucky’s skilled workforce, AIKCU’s member colleges and universities are anchor institutions in communities throughout the commonwealth,” said Mason Dyer, AIKCU president. “They serve as hubs for the arts, culture, athletics, and community engagement, and are uniquely positioned to enhance the quality of life in their regions.”

Dyer added, “While these institutions are widely recognized for contributing to the well-being of their communities, these numbers reinforce our long-held belief that the investment in state aid for students attending independent colleges and universities represents one of the best rates of return on investment for the commonwealth.”

In addition to measuring the overall impact of the independent college and university sector in Kentucky, the report also drills down to estimate the local impact of each institution, which ranges from \$19 million to more than \$300 million.

Calling the \$2.06 billion contribution to Kentucky’s bottom line “remarkable,” Dyer explained that this total is the sum of \$1.5 billion in direct spending and \$546.5 million in induced spending.

“Kentucky’s private colleges and universities are important economic drivers throughout the state, serving both rural and urban students and communities. The financial health of our institutions contributes directly to the state’s economy, and we play a critical role in educating the future workforce of Kentucky.”

– Dr. John P. Marsden  
Midway University President & AIKCU Board Chair







### Alice Lloyd College

Pippa Passes · Est. 1923 · alc.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$33 million



### ASBURY UNIVERSITY

Academic Excellence & Spiritual Vitality

### Asbury University

Wilmore · Est. 1890 · asbury.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$84.7 million



BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY

### Bellarmino University

Louisville · Est. 1950 · bellarmine.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$177.7 million



### Berea College

Berea · Est. 1855 · berea.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$202.8 million



### Brescia University

Owensboro · Est. 1925 · brescia.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$33 million



### Campbellsville University

Campbellsville · Est. 1906 · campbellsville.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$295.6 million



### Centre College

Danville · Est. 1819 · centre.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$142.9 million



### Georgetown College

Georgetown · Est. 1829 · georgetowncollege.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$53.8 million



### Kentucky Christian University

Grayson · Est. 1919 · kcu.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$19.2 million



### Kentucky Wesleyan College

Owensboro · Est. 1858 · kwc.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$54.7 million



### Lindsey Wilson College

Columbia · Est. 1903 · lindsey.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$91 million



### Midway University

Midway · Est. 1847 · midway.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$36.5 million



### Spalding University

Louisville · Est. 1814 · spalding.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$105.4 million



THOMAS MORE UNIVERSITY

### Thomas More University

Crestview Hills · Est. 1921 · thomasmore.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$160.8 million



### Transylvania University

Lexington · Est. 1780 · transy.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$66.3 million



### Union Commonwealth University

Barbourville · Est. 1879 · unionky.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$34.4 million



### University of Pikeville

Pikeville · Est. 1889 · upike.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$128.4 million



### University of the Cumberland

Williamsburg · Est. 1888 · ucumberland.edu

Total Economic Impact: \$337.6