

KCTCS President Quarles rolls out bold vision and goals

Submitted by Sue Patrick

VERSAILLES, Ky. – With his sights set squarely on the future, Kentucky Community and Technical College System President Ryan Quarles is charting a bold course to ensure the 16-college system makes a greater impact on students, the workforce and the commonwealth in the year ahead.

Shifting from last year's focus on stabilization and compliance issues, Quarles unveiled a forward-looking vision with 27 goals, bringing together the results of the Huron study, SJR 179 and SJR 98 into one guiding document.

"Last year, we were focused on righting

the ship and multiple compliance issues. This year, we're focused on making a greater impact on all those we serve. A big-ticket item will be the development of a first in KCTCS history ability to manage and monitor multiple aspects of colleges across the system at once," said Quarles.

The monitoring instrument will be used to measure each college's three-year rolling averages for enrollment growth, financial soundness, any accreditation issues and the geographic footprint, which will also include space utilization by building and perhaps by classroom. Quarles said that other metrics could

be added in the future.

"This instrument will help us make better informed decisions with the General Assembly, manage our properties better, and help us make that hard decision when an asset might be underutilized.

Another key goal is a systemwide enrollment strategy to offset potential funding cuts and any enrollment declines. A third goal is the launch of KCTCS for Kentucky to expand partnerships with businesses, industry, state and local government, economic development authorities, and others to improve Kentucky.

Updates on the implementation of the goals will be presented at the September meeting.

"Thank you to all those who have been involved in the promulgation of all these ideas. And thank you for a wonderful last year, and

I'm excited for the year to come," added Quarles.

Chair Barry Martin commended Quarles for an exceptional year. "I just have to say, after 528 days, we really appreciate all your hard work and effort and bringing together the team that you have. For those of you here two or three years ago, it is such a transition from where we were and where we are now. We really appreciate all your leadership and direction."

In action items, the regents:

- Approved the 2024-25 Board Evaluation Report that measured board effectiveness and identified areas of improvement.
- Authorized a \$6 per credit hour increase in tuition for in-state students for the 2025-26 academic year, bringing total per credit hour cost to \$195. Out-of-state students will pay \$270 per credit hour. The increase is aligned with the tuition ceiling increases approved by the state's Council on Postsecondary Education.
- Approved a 2% salary increase for all regular full-time and regular part-time faculty and staff who were actively employed on or before March 31, 2025, and approved an additional allocation of 1% for addressing salary compression.
- Adopted the 2025-26 budget that directs the use of financial resources

to help achieve the mission and vision of KCTCS. The budget places emphasis on students and the effective and efficient use of available resources.

- Approved a one-year internal audit contract extension for Dean Dorton through fiscal year 2025-26.
- Approved the payment of up to \$950,000 for improvements to leased space for the Jefferson Education Center located at 200 W. Broadway, Louisville.
- Ratified personnel actions.
- Adopted a policy on viewpoint neutrality that prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's political or social viewpoint and promotes intellectual diversity within the institution.
- Authorized a revision to Board of Regents Policy, 4.12, Policy on Collaborative Program Development, to comply with House Bill 4.
- Approved revisions to the KCTCS 2022-2026 Strategic Plan to comply with House Bill 4.
- Revised the mission statements of Hazard Community and Technical College, Jefferson Community and Technical College and West Kentucky Community and Technical College to comply with House Bill 4.
- Accepted a resolution ensuring compliance with House Bill 4.
- Approved President Quarles' 2024-25 evaluation.
- Authorized setting

aside a 3.25% budget reserve for next fiscal year.

- Ratified the changes to the KCTCS president's contract.
- Elected Keith Hamilton as board chair, James Lee Stevens as vice chair and Brianna S. Whitten as secretary.
- Authorized naming the Learning Resource Center at Madisonville Community College the Dr. Judith L. Rhoads Learning Resource Center.
- Approved two new degree programs: AAS in additive technology for Bluegrass Community and Technical College and an AAS in automation, industrial and robotic technology for Elizabethtown Community and Technical College.
- Ratified 12,774 unduplicated candidates for credentials.
- Conferred credentials to student regents Audra Shouse and Robert Higdon.
- Made revisions to the KCTCS bylaws.
- Revised the voting procedure for establishing a quorum and voting.
- Approved the quarterly board meeting dates for 2026.

Prior to adjourning, the board met in executive session to discuss proposed or pending litigation.

Meeting materials and reports are available on the KCTCS website.

The next board of regents meeting will be Sept. 18-19 at Jefferson Community and Technical College.

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