

Ky. higher ed students make strides in persistence and retention

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) issued a report saying Kentucky’s one-year gains in undergraduate persistence and retention were the highest in the nation from 2023 to 2024, increasing 9.8 and 7.9 percentage points, respectively.

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) says thanks to these increases, the state now surpasses the national average in both persistence and retention, marking a significant rebound from the pandemic period, when the state lagged on both measures. Kentucky’s current persistence rate is 85.3%, and its retention rate is 74%, compared to national averages of 77.6 percent and 69.5 percent, respectively.

Persistence rates measure how many undergraduate students (at both two- and four-year public and private institutions) beginning in the fall are still enrolled at any college or university the following fall. Retention rates, on the other hand, reflect undergraduates starting in the fall who are still enrolled at their native institution one year later.

The 2024 rate reflects students who started in 2023, while the 2023 rate reflects students starting in 2022.

“Kentucky’s postsecondary institutions have done a lot in recent years to reduce student attrition, which is reflected in these gains,” said Dr. Aaron Thompson, President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. “One of the most impactful changes was eliminating non-credit bearing remedial courses and mainstreaming these students into regular courses with supplemental supports. Providing more dual credit experiences in high school also has increased academic readiness, leading to better student outcomes.”

Other than Kentucky, the states with the largest gains in persistence and retention were Delaware, Mississippi, North Carolina and Arkansas. The District of Columbia had the highest persistence and retention rates overall (at 92.1% and 86%) from 2023 to 2024.

The entire report can be accessed at <https://nscresearchcenter.org/persistence-retention/>.

The Council on Postsecondary Education serves as the state’s higher education coordinating agency.

KSP warns of scam where caller impersonates troopers

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – The Kentucky State Police (KSP) are warning Kentuckians of a telephone scam that is affecting residents in at least two of the 15 KSP post areas, in which the scammers are using the name of a trooper who is assigned to the local post.

At KSP Post 15 in Columbia, Trooper Jonathan Houk, the public information officer, says individuals have reported receiving phone calls from someone falsely claiming to be Houk and other KSP troopers. The caller threatens arrest unless money is sent to them immediately.

It’s a similar case at KSP Post 6 in Dry Ridge. Someone is calling residents in northern Kentucky, identifying themselves as Trooper or Lt. David Jones, and advising them that they will be arrested if they do not turn themselves in

or send money. Jones is the Post 6 public information officer.

The KSP in both post areas warns that this is a scam.

Houk says, “We want the public to know that KSP will never contact anyone by phone to demand money by threatening legal action or arrest. These tactics are fraudulent and intended to intimidate people into sending money under false pretenses. If you receive a phone call like this, hang up immediately.”

The KSP states that anyone who is receiving suspicious scam calls similar to this tactic is being urged not to provide personal or financial information to the caller, and to not send them any money. Individuals can report these or any other scams to the Kentucky Attorney General’s office at (888) 432-9257, online at <http://ag.ky.gov/scams> or by contacting their local KSP Post.

Looking back to July 10, 2019

Written by Christy Hoots

The following information was entered into the July 10, 2019, edition of The Ledger Independent:

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Comprehend expansion moving forward

Dr. Pamela Vaught and David Green, with Comprehend, spoke to the Maysville Rotary Club about the expansion on Forest Avenue in Maysville.

According to Vaught, the anticipated move in date for the expansion is Sept. 3.

Comprehend is in the process of building 25,000-square-foot addition to its Forest Avenue headquarters in the city’s East End.

“The building we chose to build came about as a result of no space. We were expanding programs, building services and we had no place to do it,” she said. “People were on top of it each other and there were multiple people in offices.”

Vaught said the total project will cost about \$8 million and Comprehend researched several funding options.

“When I first began looking at what we were going to do, we talked to local community banks an ADD districts and found some of the funding through the federal government was restricted and while some was applicable for us, the best bet was to research and do some other kinds of funding for our programs and we’ve done that.”

“The construction cost of that is a little over \$7 million,” she said. “And \$3.3 million of that came from federal and state tax credits. We don’t pay those back. For seven years, someone has bought our tax

credits because we’re a non-profit. In order to get those tax credits, we had to come up with the full cost of the building. So, to get that, we went to the bank and took out a mortgage loan.”

According to Vaught, money still needs to be raised to pay off the loan.

“Because of the obligations over our head, we break even each year,” she said. “We took out a mortgage for \$3.9 million and we’ve gone out to the community and we’re doing a capital campaign to pay off the \$3.9 million mortgage.”

According to Green, one of the changes includes the entryway being relocated to the parking lot behind the building. It also includes a parking garage — the first for Maysville.

“There is more security and move privacy,” he said. “That was one of the things we heard from people — they didn’t like coming in off Forest Avenue, because they didn’t want people to see them coming into Comprehend. It’s part of that stigma we’re trying to fight.”

Green said a survey of staff was conducted before construction began.

“We did a survey of staff to see what they wanted and needed,” he said. “They wanted bigger bathrooms, more bathrooms, more space, a place where they could get away from clients to eat lunch and get away from the office and more security.”

The building will house office space and community space and provide space for employees to eat their lunch or just take a break, according to Green.

According to Green, the medical

building will house a primary care facility headed up by Maysville native Dr. Peter Kambelos. The goal is a model of wrap around mental health service, Green said, using a team approach.

“We’re adding primary care services, because usually when someone has a mental health issue, they have a physical health issue,” he said. “We’re trying to wrap all of our services around our clients when they come in. This way, the doctor and counselor can meet with the client together to create a plan of action. We’re not stopping people from seeing their doctors — this is just another option available.”

Vaught said no one is being encouraged to leave their current providers.

“Our intention is not to compete, but to add a service to the people of East End,” Vaught said.

Comprehend employs 180 people across the five-county BTADD, Vaught said. The agency offers more than 70 programs for adults and children ranging from psychiatric services to addiction services and programs for intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The building is being named the Harriett Hord Cartmell Medical Building, named for Harriett Cartmell who founded Comprehend more than five decades ago.

In the early 1960s, she was president of the Maysville Planning Commission and met with local leaders and communities to discuss the mental health needs of the area. The end result was Comprehend Inc.

Anyone interested in touring the facility or contribute to the campaign can contact Comprehend.

A head start on higher ed: ECU’s Dual Credit program saves students time and money

Submitted by Eastern Kentucky University Media

RICHMOND, Ky. — On a typical day of school and homework, many high school students across Kentucky earn college credit while completing their regular coursework, an opportunity made possible through Eastern Kentucky University’s (EKU) Dual Credit program. Through EKU Dual Credit, eligible high school juniors and seniors take college-level courses for both high school and college credit, saving both time and money on their journey to a degree.

Recent data from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) underscores the importance of programs like Dual Credit in helping students graduate with less debt and in less time. According to their 2024 report, the average student loan balance for graduates of public institutions in Kentucky has dropped nearly 33 percent over the last five years. Nearly 60 percent of undergraduates completed a credential in the 2023-24 academic year without taking out any student loans. Additionally, Kentucky’s six-year completion rate has increased to 62.2 percent, now exceeding the national average.

“Dual credit gives students a powerful head start. By completing up to two semesters of college before even graduating high school, they’re not just getting ahead academically—they’re saving thousands of dollars and shortening the path

to a degree,” said EKU President David McFaddin. “At EKU, we’re committed to expanding access and opportunity, and the growth of our Dual Credit program is helping Kentucky families make college more affordable.”

EKU’s Dual Credit program has seen a 44 percent enrollment increase over the last four years, now serving more than 1,300 students across nearly 100 high schools in Kentucky. Students can take courses online, on EKU’s Richmond campus, at regional sites in Corbin and Manchester, or directly at their own high schools. Dual credit tuition is about one-third the cost of traditional tuition, and additional financial assistance is available through the KHEAA Dual Credit Scholarship and Work Ready Dual Credit Scholarship.

All EKU Dual Credit students have access to a full range of support services, including free tutoring, academic advising and career exploration. These resources empower students to explore potential majors and make informed decisions about their futures. For those who have already chosen a path, EKU offers Dual Credit coursework in several key academic areas, including Aviation, Accounting and Finance, General Business, Management and Entrepreneurship, Criminal Justice, Emergency Medical Care and Teacher Education.

One in three students who participate in EKU’s Dual Credit program ultimately enroll at EKU to finish their degrees. Sadie Peavler, a recent graduate of

Mercer County High School, is one of those students. Thanks to Dual Credit, she will enter EKU this fall with 30 college credit hours already completed.

“I knew that the earlier I started classes, the less money it would cost me and the earlier I would get to start my career,” said Peavler. “The EKU Dual Credit program has taught me the power of independence and helped me gain the responsibility I will need throughout my higher education journey.”

EKU’s Associate Director of Dual Credit Aaron Baker and Assistant Director Rodney Tucker work closely with high schools to build strong partnerships and ensure that students succeed. Mercer County High School Counselor Stacy Davis said the Dual Credit program at her school has grown significantly in recent years, thanks in large part to EKU’s personalized support.

“EKU Dual Credit coordinators have visited our school multiple times to deliver textbooks, meet with students one-on-one to schedule classes, and respond to countless student questions,” said Davis. “Because of their guidance and dedication, our students are gaining valuable college credits and building the confidence to succeed in higher education.”

As Kentucky continues to see progress in college completion and reduced student debt, EKU’s Dual Credit program stands out as a vital tool for preparing the next generation of college students.

For more information about

THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT

JENNIFER DONAHUE, Publisher
jdonahue@cmpapers.com, ext. 1240
PEYTON DUNAWAY, Editor
pdunaway@cmpapers.com, ext. 1270
DANIEL MILLER, Sports Editor
dmiller@cmpapers.com, ext. 1273
CHAD SHELTON, Production/IT Manager
cselton@cmpapers.com, ext. 1224
MELODY EVANS, Graphics/Pagination Manager, melodyevans@championcarolinass.com

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Delivery Problems
Circulation Customer Service:
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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