



# President's Report

Fall 2025

THOROBREDS LEADING for *Impact*

# A Message from the PRESIDENT

Greetings,

As we reach the midpoint of the academic year, I am pleased to share a snapshot of the energy, achievement, and forward momentum at Kentucky State University as we continue to lead for impact.

Two key events this fall brought thousands of people to our beautiful campus on The Hill. Our 139th Homecoming celebration in October 2025 featured a parade down Capitol Avenue and welcomed alumni, students, families, and friends back to campus, strengthening our sense of community and celebrating Thorobred pride. In early September, the Third Annual Ag Roundup drew nearly 4,000 participants — including more than 1,000 middle and high school students — for hands-on learning that showcased our land-grant mission and deepened our ties across the Commonwealth.

This fall was also historic for Thorobred athletics. Kentucky State football completed its best season since 1935, finishing 9–3 overall and 7–1 in Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play and earning the program's first-ever NCAA Division II Football Playoffs berth. While the season ended with a hard-fought first-round loss, its impact has been felt far beyond the scoreboard, elevating the profile of Kentucky State and inspiring Thorobreds everywhere. Head Coach Felton Huggins Jr. was named 2025 SIAC Coach of the Year, and four student-athletes received All-SIAC honors.

Academically, we are expanding opportunities for our students with four pending new programs: the Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy, the Bachelor of Science in Aquatic Sciences, the Master of Science in Public Health, and the Master of Science in Sport Analytics. These degrees reflect Kentucky State's commitment to innovation, workforce readiness, and emerging fields that serve the Commonwealth, our region, and the nation.

Strategic partnerships amplify this work. Our recent Pawpaw Ale-8 collaboration with Ale-8-One and the "1886 Select" bourbon collection with Brough Brothers Distillery translate Kentucky State's research strengths into real-world solutions for Kentucky's communities and economy. Both demonstrate the multiplier effect of such efforts, turning areas of expertise into new products and broad media coverage.

Philanthropy also remains strong. The inaugural Sam and Cleo Coleman Fundraiser at Coleman Crest Farm raised \$30,000 to support scholarships, programs, and initiatives that enhance the student experience, while the KSU Thorobreds Foundation, Inc. continues to secure critical private support for the University's priorities. Kentucky State's recent Giving Tuesday effort raised more than \$112,000, a total that will increase once generous matching gifts are calculated in January 2026.

These milestones and collaborations underscore the dedication of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partners to advancing the mission of Kentucky State University. I am grateful to all who contribute to our continued growth and success, and I look forward to building on this momentum in the months and years ahead.

Warm Regards,



Koffi C. Akakpo, Ph.D., President

# Homecoming 2025





## Thorobreds Football: Season of Firsts

The 2025 Thorobreds raised the bar for Kentucky State football. Led by head coach Felton Huggins Jr., the team stacked statement wins throughout the fall, including an eight-game streak that carried Kentucky State into November as one of the hottest teams in Division II. Along the way, the Thorobreds earned a reputation for toughness, balance, and resilience—competing on the road, closing out tight contests, and energizing alumni and fans across the country.

Their body of work earned Kentucky State its first NCAA Division II Football Playoffs berth, capping a 9-3 campaign and a 7-1 run in Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play.

### 2025 at a Glance

9-3 overall • 7-1 SIAC • eight-game winning streak • first NCAA Division II playoff appearance in program history

Multiple Thorobreds collected All-SIAC honors, and Head Coach Felton Huggins Jr. was named 2025 SIAC Coach of the Year, recognized by his peers for the program's remarkable growth and trajectory.



## Ag Roundup Welcomed Nearly 4,000 Participants

The Third Annual Ag Roundup brought nearly 4,000 participants—including more than 1,000 middle and high school students—to campus and community sites for three days of hands-on learning in aquaculture, forage quality, drone mapping, food science, and more. Students, families, and educators engaged directly with faculty, Extension specialists, and current majors, strengthening recruitment pipelines into agriculture, health, and natural resources programs while showcasing the University's land-grant mission in action. The 2025 Ag Roundup also coincided with the 135th anniversary of the Second Morrill Act of 1890, which created 19 additional land-grant institutions, of which Kentucky State is a proud member.



## New Academic Programs

## Fall 2025

- Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy (*pending CPE approval*)
- Bachelor of Science in Aquatic Sciences (*pending CPE approval*)
- Master of Science in Public Health (*pending CPE approval*)
- Master of Science in Sport Analytics (*pending December SACSCOC approval*)

## Second Annual Frankfort Police Department Citizens Police Academy

Kentucky State University celebrated the graduates of the second annual Frankfort Police Department Citizens Police Academy, an eight-week program designed in partnership with the University's Criminal Justice Studies program—one of Kentucky State's top majors. The academy gives students hands-on experience in patrol operations, investigations, community policing, and specialized units. Through classroom sessions, practical exercises, and K9 demonstrations, students gain valuable skills, professional contacts, and a certificate of completion. The program further strengthened Kentucky State's partnership with the Frankfort Police Department, and both institutions plan to expand experiential learning opportunities in the coming academic year.



## Fellow of the Heart Failure Society of America

Dr. Joy Coles was inducted as a Fellow of the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA), one of the most distinguished designations the Society confers. This fellowship recognizes exceptional professional achievement and contributions to the field of heart failure medicine. HFSA Fellows demonstrate a sustained commitment to providing high-quality care and advancing heart failure research, education, and practice.





## MOBILE ADVISING

### WHAT IS MOBILE ADVISING?

We're taking advising out of the office and bringing it to you! Meet with an advisor in different campus locations.

- ✓ General Check-ins for encouragement and connection
- ✓ Concerns about academic performance
- ✓ Clarification on degree requirements or pathways
- ✓ Help navigating KSU

QUESTIONS? 

 [advising@kysu.edu](mailto:advising@kysu.edu)

## Adult Learner Data

Kentucky State University is making significant progress in expanding access for adult learners through targeted outreach, strategic partnerships, and enhanced online offerings. KYSU Online is actively re-engaging students who previously left college without completing a degree by offering clear pathways to return and finish their studies at Kentucky State. As part of this effort, students with a minimum 2.0 GPA and a prior outstanding balance of \$1,500 or less remain eligible for the Welcome Back Scholarship, which waives that remaining balance. This initiative underscores the University's commitment to affordability and student success.

Adult learner enrollment has continued to rise, reflecting the impact of these efforts:

### 2023–2024 Academic Year:

494 adult learners enrolled

### 2024–2025 Academic Year:

590 adult learners enrolled

### Current Fall 2025:

703 adult learners registered

## Prison Education Program (PEP)

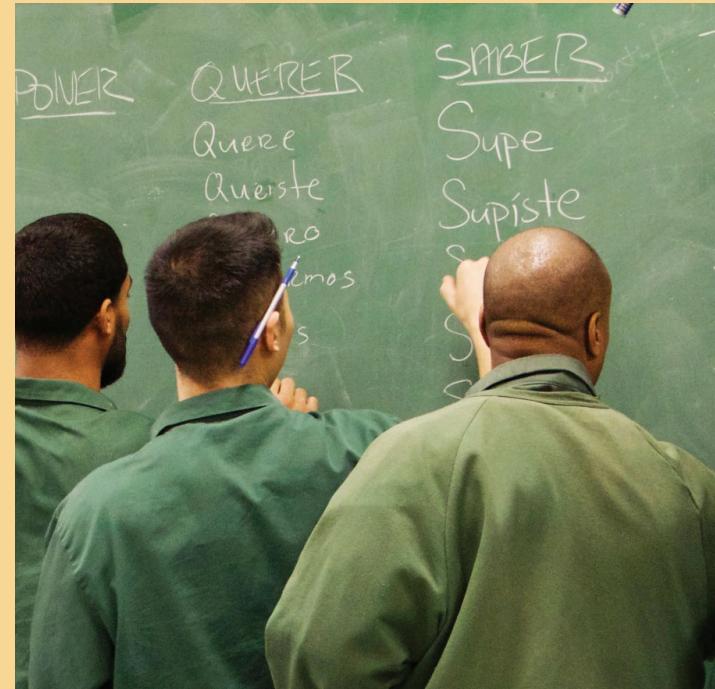
Extensive research continues to demonstrate the impact of prison education programs, showing significant reductions in recidivism and improved outcomes for individuals reentering society. Through PEP, Kentucky State University is advancing its mission of access, opportunity, and lifelong learning for all.

Kentucky State is currently offering three degree pathways through PEP:

- Associate of Arts in Liberal Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration

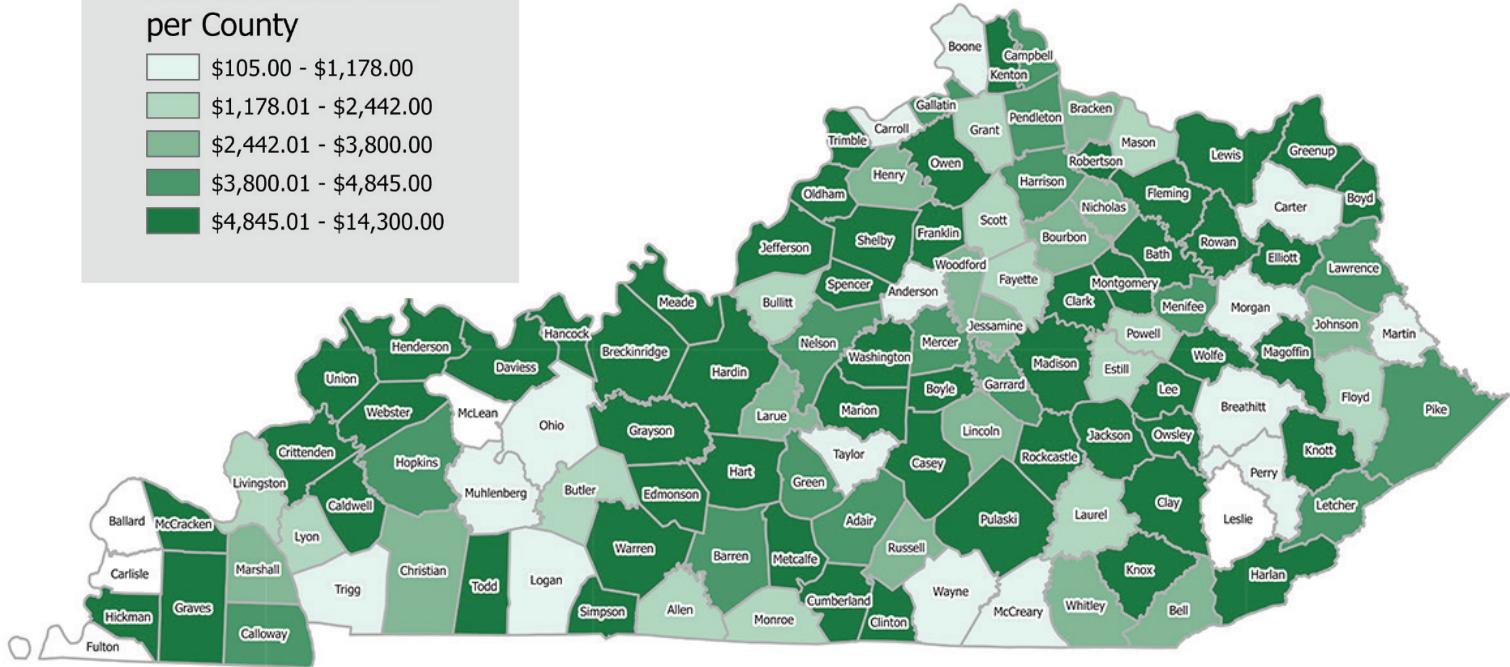
At present, the program has approximately 70 students enrolled, with projections to expand to 200 students by next year.

Kentucky State is also moving forward with plans to broaden its reach. A third site—Luther Luckett Correctional Complex—is scheduled to launch in Spring 2026, further strengthening educational access for incarcerated learners across the Commonwealth.



## Award Amount Totals per County

- \$105.00 - \$1,178.00
- \$1,178.01 - \$2,442.00
- \$2,442.01 - \$3,800.00
- \$3,800.01 - \$4,845.00
- \$4,845.01 - \$14,300.00



## Small-Farm Grants Strengthen Local Food Systems

Since 2012, Kentucky State University's Center for Sustainability of Farms and Families has invested \$5.06 million to modernize small-farm operations across 115 counties, backing 1,450 on-farm projects in aquaculture, beekeeping, organic agriculture, agroforestry, value-added processing, and ag technology. In 2025, the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund approved an additional \$1.4 million to expand education, training, and the Mini-Grants Program—helping producers adopt practical upgrades, broaden production, and increase profitability while keeping more Kentucky-grown products close to home. Awards of up to \$5,000 per application (lifetime cap \$10,000 per farm) are issued upon contract, with companion \$500 farmer-education mini-grants for approved workshops and conferences. Through county-by-county outreach and hands-on demonstrations, the program is building smarter infrastructure, stronger markets, and more resilient local food systems across the Commonwealth.

## Mini-Grant Opportunity for Healthy Food Producers

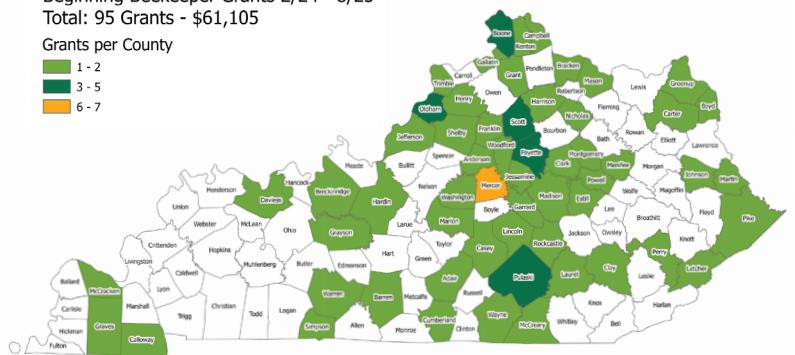
This program supports the production, sale, and consumption of healthy foods across Kentucky, especially in areas with high food insecurity. Farmers can apply for a mini-grant to enhance crop or livestock production and develop value-added products. Eligible projects include fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, poultry or eggs, and small ruminants. (Note: meat cattle and dairy cattle are not eligible.)

### Beginning Beekeeper Grants 2/24 - 8/25

Total: 95 Grants - \$61,105

Grants per County

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 7



## Pawpaw Ale-8 Launch Showcases Kentucky Innovation

Kentucky State University turned decades of pawpaw research, cultivation, and Extension leadership into a consumer product through its partnership with Ale-8-One. The limited-edition Pawpaw Ale-8, announced in July and launched in August, made Kentucky's native fruit a statewide story of value-added agriculture and "research to market" impact. Earned media coverage was exceptional, generating \$21.32 million in advertising value equivalency (AVE), an estimate of what comparable paid advertising would cost for the same placement or visibility. This collaboration showcases how the University's distinctive research strengths can be transformed into tangible, real-world value for Kentucky's economy.



## Brough Brothers "1886 Select" Elevates the Brand

In collaboration with Louisville-based Brough Brothers Distillery, Kentucky State introduced 1886 Select, a co-branded bourbon collection honoring the University's founding year. Supported by a USDA grant to expand student involvement in distillation and fermentation research within the University's growing certificate program, the partnership applied research on wood stave flavor finishing to real-world product development and workforce training. Announced in July with a presale in late September, the collaboration connects academic research, industry innovation, alumni pride, and Kentucky's signature bourbon sector. Launch moments, tastings, and storytelling deepened relationships with community and industry partners while broadening philanthropic and workforce touchpoints—reinforcing Kentucky State's role as a convener of innovation across agriculture and value-added food and beverage.



## Auburn Partnership Advances Forage Solutions for Cattle Producers

When Kentucky's bluegrass slows in the summer heat, Kentucky State University looks south for solutions. A Kentucky State team partnered with Auburn University's Wiregrass Research and Extension Center in Alabama to harvest warm-season hay, which was brought back to the Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm. Led by Dr. Abbigail Hines, the project studies how forages such as crabgrass, pearl millet, and prussic acid-free sorghum-sudangrass can supplement cattle diets when pastures slow and feed costs rise. Early results show strong yields and high-quality nutrition. Through this collaboration, Kentucky State is delivering practical, farm-ready forage solutions to help keep herds healthy and productive year-round.



# CAPITAL AND GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS

## The Health Sciences Center

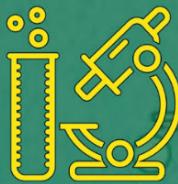
A new facility for serving the needs of our Nursing Program and Clinical outreach has been initiated with the design consultants.

Construction is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2026, pending approval.



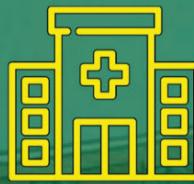
### CLASSROOMS

20,820 sq ft  
~20 classrooms at  
1,000 sq ft each



### LABS

13,200 sq ft  
11 labs at  
~1,200 sq ft each



### CLINIC

6,000 sq ft  
Health, Nutrition  
& Wellness Clinic



### OFFICES & ADMINISTRATION

13,800 sq ft  
Faculty, staff,  
conference/admin areas

**TOTAL SQUARE FEET**  
**69,000**



### CIRCULATION/COMMONS/ MECHANICAL

15,180 sq ft  
Hallways, lobbies, HVAC,  
restrooms, etc.

## Shauntee Hall Renovation

has been initiated to address the needs of  
our growing School of Engineering.

**18,600**  
**Square Feet**  
existing building

phased construction set to  
begin in **Fall 2026**

**Asset Preservation Projects in Design/Construction:**  
22 total projects accounting for just over \$50 million in  
Commonwealth of Kentucky funding support.

# KSU THOROBREDS FOUNDATION, INC.

## Philanthropy in Action: Jade and Jaiya McCargo

Sisters Jade and Jaiya McCargo each came to Kentucky State University looking for a place where they could truly thrive. Jade, a junior majoring in agricultural business, and Jaiya, an environmental systems major, transferred to Kentucky State and quickly immersed themselves in campus life—serving in organizations such as MANRRS, SGA, Spectrum, NAACP, Collegiate Farm Bureau, and Girls Rock—while seizing hands-on learning opportunities in and beyond the classroom.

Support from alumni and friends helps make stories like theirs possible. During Giving Tuesday 2025, donors leveraged more than \$50,000 in matching gifts—augmented through a partnership with Blue Grass Community Foundation—to expand scholarships, strengthen student programs, and fuel transformational experiences for Thorobreds like Jade and Jaiya.

"KSU gives you the chance to expand, get involved, and flourish. Don't be afraid to step outside your box!" – Jaiya McCargo



**Bluegrass GIVESili**  
BLUE GRASS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# Thank You

***to all the donors who together, raised over \$112,000\* on Giving Tuesday.***

\*Final amount will be announced January 2026 when all matching funds are calculated.

## Inaugural Coleman Fundraiser Raises \$30,000

Inaugural Coleman Fundraiser Raises \$30,000 Kentucky State University supporters gathered September 16 at Coleman Crest Farm for the first Sam and Cleo Coleman KSU Fundraiser, cohosted by Jim Coleman. The event raised \$30,000 for student scholarships and celebrated the legacy of KSU alumni Sam and Cleo Coleman.

A big thank you to partners, guests, and Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman for making the evening a success. We look forward to continuing this tradition next year!



# Homecoming 2026: 140 Years on The Hill

Throughout the 2026–27 academic year, Kentucky State University will mark 140 years since its founding in 1886—a milestone for our students, alumni, and friends across the Commonwealth and beyond. From our humble beginnings in 1886 to today's vibrant, student-centered campus, Kentucky State has remained a place of access, opportunity, and impact.

Homecoming 2026 will anchor this anniversary year. Alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends will come together on our historic campus to honor 140 years of excellence, celebrate today's achievements, and look ahead to the next generation of Thorobreds.

We invite you to be part of this moment in Kentucky State's story—reconnecting with classmates, supporting our students, and helping us shape the University's future.

# *Homecoming 2026*

will mark a historic milestone as we  
celebrate **140 years** of excellence at  
Kentucky State University

1886



KYSU.EDU  
ONWARD. UPWARD.