



A Message from University of Kentucky
PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO

Dear Campus Community,

It is a season of thanks and reflection. And as I reflect on the past few months, this special community is among those things for which I am most thankful.

We have persevered. We have overcome challenges that were neither expected nor fair. We sought new ways to do our jobs, always putting the needs and success of our community and students first.

We taught in traditional formats in anything but a traditional way, with masks and face shields, desks spread apart and yards of protective plexiglass.

We utilized new technologies to teach, while relying on the same commitment to quality in instruction that makes us distinctive.

We continued our commitment to research, re-arranging labs to ensure that we continue meeting the biggest challenges facing Kentucky and our world – from clinical trials to develop a vaccine to our goal of eradicating cancer and opioid use disorder.

We worked throughout the night to ensure students overseas could return quickly and safely home. We made 30,000 calls to our students, to check in and make sure they knew how much we cared.

We kept our campus immaculate, re-wired classrooms and re-engineered spaces to maximize safety. We supported students in advising and counseling, in residence halls and dining facilities, in classroom spaces and virtual internship opportunities.

We are the heroes on the frontlines – committed time and time again to meet this moment, ensuring the health of others and the well-being of families across our state. It is the power of advanced medicine. It is the power of advanced research and education.

We worked in every county and corner of the state, extension agents helping farms, repairing communities, extending financial literacy and appreciation for the arts in ways that continued to connect our Commonwealth.

Even when so much seems so different, there is still us. There is this university.

That is power of this special place – the power of we – in serving the Commonwealth.

Of course, there are many on our campus for whom Thanksgiving will be a continuation of – rather than a break from – work. Healing must go on. Police and safety officers will be here to vigilantly safeguard our campus. Our Health Corps and Residence Life teams will extend the work of tracing and screening as well as supporting the needs of our students, some of whom will remain on campus for the break.

We must continue. That is always the case.

We must also acknowledge that global recessions and pandemics have disrupted the lives of our students in ways previously unimaginable. Rites of passage such as graduation and prom vanished overnight; family gatherings and small-group classes and interactions that make college life so meaningful were delayed or deferred.

And, at the same time, we all have been asked to take on, with a sense of renewed commitment, the unfinished work of making our community fairer, more equitable and more just – and to do so in a world physically distanced and disconnected – one seemingly so riven with disputes and division.

Our students have taken all of this on, with a sense of grace and grit that continually fills me with hope.

As you leave this community for a few days, my wish for all of you is a time of rest and renewal.

I know, though, that for so many of our students and other members of our community, leaving campus doesn't always bring happiness or reprieve, but only increases anxiety and uncertainty. Over the next few weeks – as students finish the semester remotely and as so many of you continue to balance work, life, family and other expectations – we will be communicating about resources here on our campus, available no matter the time and place, that we hope to offer to support and reinforce our commitment to you and to this community.

That's because now, more than ever, we must be a community that cares. This semester has demonstrated for me so many times, and in so many ways, that we are that community.

I am thankful for you.

Eli Capilouto
President