

**Kentucky Board of Education**  
**October 8, 2013**

**Report from the President of the  
Council on Postsecondary Education**

**Outstanding alumni, faculty honored at Governor's Conference on Postsecondary Education Trusteeship**

The postsecondary education community honored five distinguished alumni and faculty at a luncheon held today during the 2013 Annual Governor's Conference on Postsecondary Education Trusteeship. The awards followed luncheon remarks by Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson.

Recipients of the Oak Award presented to outstanding alumni include:

- Virginia Gaines Fox, 1961 graduate of Morehead State University and former executive director of Kentucky Educational Television and former secretary of the Kentucky Education Cabinet.
- Dreama Gentry, 1989 Berea College graduate and executive director of Partners for Education at Berea College.
- Thomas T. Hammond, 1967 University of Kentucky graduate and longtime NBC sportscaster.

The Acorn Award goes to outstanding faculty at Kentucky's colleges and universities. Recipients include:

- Dr. William J. Loftus, psychology professor, Big Sandy Community and Technical College.
- Dr. Jeffrey P. Okeson, professor and chair, Department of Oral Health, University of Kentucky College of Dentistry.

The Oak and Acorn awards are sponsored by the Council on Postsecondary Education and Kentucky's colleges and universities.

Faculty honorees are chosen based on recommendations by faculty and students, as well as self-written essays about their philosophy of teaching. Recipients receive a \$5,000 honorarium.

## **BIOS**

### **Virginia Gaines Fox**

Fox is the former secretary of the Education Cabinet and former executive director and chief executive officer of KET. She has served on the Board of Regents for Morehead State University and on the Council on Postsecondary Education.

Morehead State University President Wayne Andrews, who nominated Fox, described her as a “catalyst for positive change” throughout her career as an educator, visionary and public servant. She has received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education, as well as the Vic Hellard Jr. Award.

### **Dreama Gentry**

A first-generation Berea College graduate from rural Appalachia, Gentry is executive director of Partners for Education at Berea College. She is also a volunteer coordinator for Project Meet Me Halfway, a mentoring and support service for former foster care children, and an advocate for several women’s organizations.

For almost 20 years, she has supported college access efforts in central Kentucky through her grant-writing efforts, including the recent \$75 million GEARUP grant that support efforts to increase college attainment in low-income and rural communities. In 2011, Gentry was awarded the GEAR Up College Advocate of the Year award.

### **Thomas T. Hammond**

Hammond is one of the most recognized sportscasters in the South and the nation. Known for his excellent play-by-play coverage, Hammond’s achievements include college and NBA basketball games, college and NFL games, thoroughbred horse racing and coverage of the Olympic Games.

Hammond was the recipient of the annual Outstanding Kentuckian Award, as well as several Emmy Awards. He is a member of the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame, the Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame, and has an award named after him: the Tom Hammond Lifetime Achievement Award in Sports Broadcasting, given by the Bluegrass Sports Commission. He is the grandson of Thomas Poe Cooper, a former dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky, who also served a short stint as acting president.

### **Dr. William Loftus**

Loftus, a psychology professor for more than 20 years at Big Sandy Community and Technical College (BSCTC), is a well-known campus mentor and the Phi Theta Kappa advisor. He has been

the recipient of multiple BSCTC Great Teacher awards, the Phi Theta Kappa Mosal Award and was named the 2013 Phi Theta Kappa Kentucky Region Advisor of the Year. Loftus is an active member of the Faculty Council and was named one of the first Master Teacher award recipients. He also participated in the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning Implementation of the Content Literacy Model and conducts professional development workshops at the college for faculty and staff.

### **Dr. Jeffrey Okeson**

Okeson is chair of the Department of Oral Health Science at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry and director for the college's post-graduate program in orofacial pain. A member of the faculty at UK for 39 years, Okeson has written more than 220 peer-reviewed articles, and is the author of two textbooks, which are in their seventh edition and are considered standard in most dental schools.

Okeson was awarded UK's "Great Teacher Award," the Distinguished Alumnus Award by the UK College of Dentistry, and the "International Dentist of the Year," the highest award recognized by the International Academy.

### **Student Success committees formed**

Two new committees have formed to help achieve the student success objectives outlined in *Stronger by Degrees*, the state's strategic agenda for postsecondary and adult education. Created by CPE staff, the committees are made up of campus representatives, and a CPE member serves on each committee.

- The Committee on Academic Quality focuses on the implementation of best practices related to continuous improvement of student learning, the creation of a culture of assessment, and the assessment of core academic competencies. The July 12 meeting featured a presentation on liberal education by Susan Albertine of the American Association of Colleges and Universities. CPE member Joe Graviss serves on this committee.
- The Committee on Persistence and Retention is directing its attention on the implementation of institutional best practices that help students persist from semester to semester and ultimately graduate with a degree or credential. More specifically, the committee will examine the root causes of student attrition and identify strategies to increase academic and social engagement. The committee has met twice. The kickoff meeting in May included a discussion of persistence trends at our public institutions and a discussion of how to use Deliverology to meet campus goals. The second meeting in July focused on financial aid and featured a presentation on completion management by Nate Johnson of HCM Strategists and Michelle Ware of MDRC. CPE member Donna Moore serves on this committee.

## **Tuition Reciprocity update**

At the June 20 meeting, the Council approved a six-year tuition reciprocity agreement with the state of Tennessee. In the weeks following that meeting, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) staff contacted Council staff and indicated that they preferred a one-year agreement instead, allowing them more time to study student migration patterns. THEC staff agreed to enter into the six-year agreement, but indicated in writing that they would be exercising the option to cancel without cause after one year as permitted by the terms of the agreement. To lessen any potential confusion regarding the Kentucky-Tennessee Reciprocity Agreement, the term of the agreement was changed to one year and signed by the parties. During the coming year, Council and institution staff will work with Tennessee in hopes of securing a longer term agreement, which will be brought back before the Council for approval at the appropriate time. If you have any questions about this agreement, please contact CPE staff members Travis Powell or Shaun McKiernan.

## ***15 to Finish Kentucky* campaign planning in full swing**

A statewide, strategic communications and marketing campaign to promote on-time graduation will kick-off later this fall. Coordinated by Council staff and in conjunction with campus staff, the *15 to Finish Kentucky* campaign will encourage students to complete 15 credit hours per semester, or 30 credits per year. Part of this effort involves changing the longstanding perception that taking 12 credits per semester is enough. A critical component of the *15 to Finish* message is informing students, their parents and families, and the entire education community of the benefits of on-time graduation, including:

- Increase the likelihood of graduation
- Lessen opportunity cost (get a job earlier, earn income sooner)
- Lower cost for students (pay less tuition overall for a college degree and incur less debt)
- Lower cost for campuses in support services
- Lower cost to the state and taxpayers

The integrated campaign will consist of public service TV and radio ads through the Kentucky Broadcasters Association, a strong web and online marketing component, campus campaigns with direct messaging to students, and a high-profile kick-off event. This is a provost-led initiative and brings together campus representatives appointed by the provosts as well as campus PR and marketing representatives, and staff at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority. More details to follow.