



David T. McFaddin
President

TO: Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate

FROM: President David T. McFaddin

DATE: April 6, 2026

RE: Faculty Senate April Report

April 2026

Springtime is here, marking one of my favorite times of year. Our Campus Beautiful comes alive with buds and blooms and student activity. It's the time of year when we celebrate excellence with our President's Awards, student awards and several other events, like our annual Giving Day. Spring also means graduation is right around the corner, where we'll celebrate degree completion for thousands of ECU Colonels.

EKU Becomes Third-Largest Public Institution in Kentucky

Thanks to the hard work of our faculty and staff, ECU's admission numbers raised our ranking to the third-largest public university in Kentucky for student enrollment. The Fall 2025 enrollment reached 15,969 students and reflects a steady enrollment growth over the past few years. This ranking places us ahead of all state regionals including Western Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, Murray State University and Morehead State University.

EKU Named Number One Nationally for Military Friendly® Schools

After hovering for many years in the top five in the nation, last month, ECU was named the Number 1 large public university in the nation according to the 2026-2027 Military Friendly® Schools Rankings. More than 3,200 organizations across the country participated, including military schools. This ranking highlights our commitment to our over 1,900 veterans, active duty service members, Reserve/National Guard members and military spouses and children (Fall 2025). I want to recognize our excellent team in the Military and Veteran Programming Department: LTC Vin Thomas, Nick Wentzel, Madison Green, and Rae Caldwell.

Legislative Update

This session, ECU was well represented in Frankfort in more ways than one. First, I cannot express how proud I was of our 10 student interns who worked with various legislative members throughout the session. They not only gained a vast amount of experience but highlighted the quality education they are receiving at ECU. Second, this session our legislative team of Amy Scarborough and Jordan Smith managed more than 200 bills with potential impact to our institution. We are fortunate to have such expertise representing us at the State Capitol.

The General Assembly is currently in the veto period with the legislature reconvening April 14 and 15 to consider additional bills and potentially act on bills that were vetoed. As I mentioned in my email earlier today, most public universities, including ECU, will see a base fund reduction over the biennium to cover debt service for capital projects. For our campus, this represents a 6.3% reduction in recurring state support. This is a significant impact for campus that the Cabinet is currently evaluating to ascertain next steps. Once the session ends, we will provide an update on the budget preparation process.

During the Session, we did receive:

- \$50M Escrow for the D.O. School (\$42M for accreditation requirement and \$8M startup funds)
- \$8M to begin an Air Traffic Control (ATC) Program - this has been asked of us by the State Senate

Eastern Kentucky University is an Equal Opportunity

- \$10M to purchase aircraft for our Aviation Program
- \$18.1M for Asset Preservation
- We secured \$11.1 million in the Kentucky Road Plan for turn lanes on Lancaster Avenue to support the new Model Laboratory School and alleviate traffic congestion.

Giving Day

Giving Day is quickly approaching. The 2026 ECU Giving Day will be Wednesday, April 22, 2026. This year's goal is 2,134 donors representing the number of students who graduated from ECU last spring. There are many challenges planned throughout the day and I encourage you to participate in whatever way is best for you. Some suggestions from the Alumni Engagement are:

- Be part of the goal by making a gift
- Share on social media
- Reach out to friends and family

Commencement

My favorite time of year is finally here... commencement. There is nothing more rewarding than watching our students proudly walk across the stage, receiving their diploma to the applause of their friends and family.

The Spring 2026 Commencement ceremonies will be Thursday, May 7, and Friday, May 8, 2026, at the Baptist Health Arena at Alumni Coliseum. Ticket reservations open Monday, March 16, for graduates and their families to receive tickets.

Thursday, May 7, 2026

- 6:00 p.m.: Master's and Doctoral Graduates from all Colleges

Friday, May 8, 2026

- 9:00 a.m.: College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences and the College of Education and Applied Human Sciences
- 1:00 p.m.: College of Health Sciences and the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- 5:00 p.m.: College of Business and the College of Justice, Safety, and Military Science

March in the News

- ECU Graduates Drive Literacy Success in Kentucky Classrooms
- Kenton Buckner Honored with ECU's Distinguished Service Award
- Paige Williams Honored with ECU's Professional Achievement Award
- ECU Becomes Kentucky's Third-Largest Public University
- Mollie Harris Honored with ECU's Young Alumni Award
- AI is Another Tool in Higher Ed, Not a Threat to it, ECU Expert Says
- ECU No.1 for Military Friendly® Schools
- Mom of Three Finds a Path in Social Work Through ECU
- Amy Baumann Sapsford Honored with ECU's Professional Achievement Award
- Turn Experience Into a Degree With Credit for Prior Learning at ECU
- From Creek to Community: ECU Research Tracks Water Quality
- ECU Board of Regents Extends McFaddin's Contract Into 2029
- Humana to Invest \$125K to Benefit Students, School of Nursing at ECU
- Education: Aligning Degrees with Demand

Eastern Kentucky University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and Educational Institution

- ECU's Budget Request for the Proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine Advances Unanimously Through CPE Review
- ECU Teacher Recruitment Fair
- WKYT Kentucky Newsmakers 3/8
- Fall 2025 Graduate List / Fall 2025 Deans List, Deans Award, President's Award
- Ron House Honored with ECU's Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award
- Protecting the Skies Through Drone Detection Research at ECU
- ECU Occupational Therapy Celebrates 50 Years of Impact
- Dr. Maisha Jack Honored with ECU's Professional Achievement Award
- Building Kentucky's Healthcare Future at ECU
- Art with a purpose; ECU students create bowls to fight hunger
- ECU Powers Kentucky's Workforce

Upcoming Events

April 16-President's Excellence Awards

April 22-Giving Day

April 23-Foundation Scholarship Dinner

April 24-Foundation Spring Board Meeting

April 27-Colonels Choice Awards

April 28-Midnight Breakfast

April 29-Society of Foundation Professors Dinner and Induction Ceremony

May 7-8-Commencement at Alumni Coliseum

May 13-Board of Regents Meeting

May 25-Memorial Day

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Dr. David T. McFaddin
President