



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost and
Senior Vice President for
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TO: Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate

FROM: Provost Sara Zeigler

DATE: April 6, 2026

RE: Faculty Senate April Report

Essential Education Implementation:

As part of the implementation of Essential Education, the Provost's Cabinet has created a steering committee and additional subgroups. While you should have received the information from your chairs, I have provided a summary document to Senate. The Faculty Senate representative on the Steering Committee is Erin Stevenson.

College of Business:

EKU's FBLA Collegiate Team:

- Delivered an exceptional performance at the FBLA State Competition in March
- Earned 43 top-three finishes across 42 events
 - Swept the category in five of the competitions
 - Thirty-five percent of all awards among the 10 competing state institutions went to EKU students.
- Team received the Largest Chapter Award
- Kara Bullock was elected State President
 - reflecting the strength of our students and the effectiveness of our business curriculum.

College of Business Community Engagement:

- Finance & Banking Meet-Up
- Financial Literacy Fair
- Dean's, Banking, and Risk Management Advisory Boards will be on campus
- Distinguished Alumni for 2025-2026, [Mr. Nick Bertram](#) ('02) the President and Chief Operating Officer of Michaels Stores

College of Health Sciences:

- Humana invested \$125,000 to support the School of Nursing <https://www.eku.edu/news/humana-to-invest-125k-to-benefit-students-school-of-nursing-at-eku/>
- 2026 is the 50th Anniversary of the Occupational Therapy Program at EKU. <https://www.eku.edu/news/eku-occupational-therapy-celebrates-50-years-of-impact/>
- Dr. Phyllis Bryden, MPH Director and Professor, received the 2026 Elbert "Al Austin, Jr Career Achievement Award at the annual Kentucky Public Health Association Annual Meeting on March 18th
- 2026 is the 60th year anniversary of operation of the Recreation and Park Administration program.
 - EKU's RPA program is the 6th longest accredited program in the country.
- The School of Nursing White Coat ceremony (03/26/26)
 - 31 AASN and 85 BSN students
- ESS faculty members Dr. Mike Lane & Dr. Annette DeLage collaborated with the EKU Ranger Company, Ranger Challenge Team.
 - The Team finished 7th out of 35 teams.
 - LTC James Plutt, Jr., AR, praised the collaboration and programming in physical programming and nutritional planning as having a significant impact on the team's performance.
- CHS Scholars Day – April 14th, Keen Johnson Building
 - There will be 82 research posters from CHS students
 - 4, Medical Explorers Academy student posters
 - for a total of 115 presenters.
 - Trena Stocker, Mercy Health Marcum & Wallace Hospital will be the keynote speaker

College of Education and Applied Human Sciences:

School of Education and Model Lab School faculty collaboration

- National Association of School University Partnerships meeting in DC in February
 - Four presentations
- Dr. Kellie Ellis, chair of Department of Clinical Therapeutic Programs,
 - Testified before Kentucky House Senate committees in support of HB 266
 - provide future speech language pathologists with access to more funding for training.
 - As of 3/30, this bill is awaiting the Governor's signature.

College of Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics:

The Department of Engineering & Technology

- Successfully wrote and secured a \$400,000 grant from Toyota
 - Matched by an additional \$400,000 from the state/CPE
 - \$800,000 total funds
 - Toyota Endowed Chair in Engineering & Technology
 - The award was announced on 3/23/2026 in Georgetown
 - Toyota celebrated its 40th anniversary in Kentucky.
 - ECU represented by:
 - President David McFaddin
 - Dean Tom Otieno
 - Department Chair Nilesh Joshi.

Honors Program:

ECU Honors delegation of 20 honors student presenters and four faculty

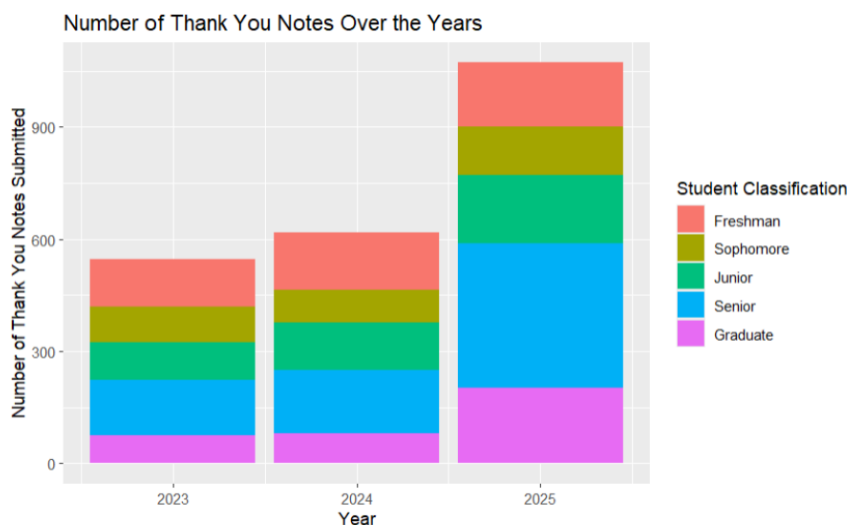
- Annual Southern Regional Honors Council
 - Montgomery, Alabama
 - March 26-28
- Largest student delegation of any university at the conference

Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning:

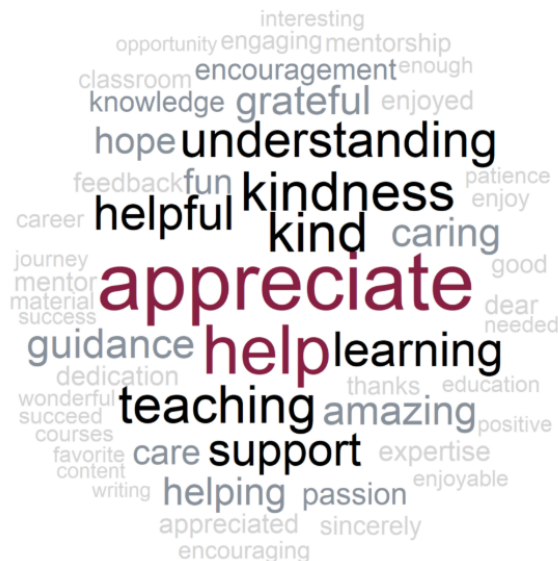
Data Initiatives

Data Initiatives provided the Thank-a-Professor Committee with initial analysis of 2023-2025 Thank-a-Professor data; more quantitative analysis in fall 2026. Qualitative analysis will be conducted by a research group now through fall 2026.

- Note Submissions (Significant increase for 2025)



- Word Cloud (Overall; frequency)



- Schedule consultations with the Data Initiatives program here: <https://www.eku.edu/in/guides/data-initiatives/>.

Faculty Research Showcase

The first session of the 2026 Faculty Research Showcase was held on March 27 in the New Science Building's STEM Center for Excellence. Presenters included:

- Pete Edwards – School of Education – Embedding Teacher Preparation in PK-12 Settings: Revitalizing a University-Lab School Partnership
- Stephanie Binion and Nicole Lavy-Joy – Department of Social Work – Rural vs. Urban: A Contextual Comparison of Law Enforcement Job Retention and Satisfaction Survey Data
- Jill Campbell - School of Music - Technology Provision and Access: Growing the ECU Student Experience through the Graduate Profile
- Reya Andrews – Department of Applied Human Sciences – If Food is Medicine, Why aren't we Prescribing It?
- Judah Schept – School of Justice Studies – “They’re Just Slinging Them Back Out to the Street”: Infrastructures of Confinement and Care in Central Appalachia
- Meg Gravit – Department of Applied Human Sciences – Children’s Agential Voices in a Climate Changed World
- Ozan Kalkan – Department of Government – Authoritarian Personality and Abortion Attitudes in the United States
- Laura Barthel, Associate Dean, College of Business Hosted the Session and Elizabeth Smith, Dean, College of Education and Applied Human Sciences provided the Welcome

The remaining sessions of the Faculty Research Showcase are April 17, 12:00-2:00 in the Library's Grand Reading Room, April 24, 1:00-3:00 in the Ravine, and May 1, 1:00-3:00 in Campbell Building 239.

Sara L. Zeigler, Ph.D.

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