

EXINGTON, Ky. (April 30, 2019) — The University of Kentucky is launching a nationally recognized Smart Campus digital strategy over the next three years that focuses on the institution’s goals of increasing persistence and graduation rates, while preparing students for lives of meaning and purpose.

One way to achieve those goals, UK officials said in announcing the strategy, is to better leverage technology in new and innovative ways to:

- Improve mental, physical and financial wellness among students
- Jumpstart and ease the transition from high school to college before students step on campus
- Create a digital career portfolio and resume that will serve them throughout their four years and beyond
- Shrink the barriers of the digital divide in and outside the classroom
- Develop proficiencies in coding and app development
- Build communities and link students with each other

As part of a wider Smart Campus Strategy, the UK Board of Trustees Tuesday approved the first step with plans to provide all incoming, first-year students with iPad Air, Apple Smart Keyboard and Apple Pencil, starting this fall. UK will use \$1.5 million from campus efficiency projects to fund the initiative. For more information visit: <http://www.uky.edu/smartcampus/first-year-student-ipad-initiative> or email smartcampus@uky.edu.

“Placing student success at the center of all that we do guides our work,” UK President Eli Capilouto said in announcing the initiative. “We know students’ persistence is impacted by health and wellness, financial stability, academic preparation and belonging. Through leveraging the power of technology, we can address these obstacles across multiple platforms with a cutting-edge digital suite of tools — beginning with providing iPad to incoming students.”

UK evaluated the technology and verified iPad will provide the most secure and flexible learning platform for student success. The devices will be pre-loaded with iOS apps that are aimed at helping these students achieve a high level of academic success. The programs are designed to prepare them for college work and life.

Among the first to receive the technology will be about 700 incoming students who participate in transition programs over the summer before entering UK. The rest of the incoming class will receive the devices during K Week, the opening week of the fall term.

By providing every student with iPad, UK is acting to create a level playing field with technology for all students, given how important mobility is on campus and more broadly in society and, in particular, the workplace.

"iPad Air represented the best tool for students because it combines powerful hardware, the most robust app ecosystem and constant innovation, with best-in-class security and safety measures to ensure privacy," said Eric N. Monday, UK's executive vice president for finance and administration. "Our goal is to provide equal access to technology, and through this initiative we hope to create myriad opportunities for our students to become more innovative, creative and collaborative."

UK exploration and build-out of technology initiatives with Apple is part of a larger information technology [strategic plan](#) for the campus. UK has been laying the groundwork for months for the digital campus initiative. Tuesday's Board of Trustees action follows the announcement in February that UK is redeveloping the [Winslow property](#). The property is the former home of Kennedy's Bookstore and will now be transformed into space that will anchor an innovation alley — Winslow, the College of Fine Arts and the Reynolds Building, which is being reimaged by the College of Design.

In addition to campus parking and retail space, the developed property will also serve as a central point for UK's campus digital efforts, which could include iOS app development and an eSports initiative – a central location for technology strategy and program development. The new property is slated to be opened in 2020.

Provost David Blackwell added that in addition to classroom experiences, technology initiatives must examine ways to help improve financial literacy and wellness as well as support for efforts underway to enhance the overall well-being of students.

In addition, Blackwell said that as UK significantly expands its online academic offerings, there should be exciting ways to create “synergies” between the Smart Campus initiative and the growth in online courses with innovations in instructional design and digital teaching.

“Our students will use iPad Air throughout their four years and in virtually every aspect of their lives,” Blackwell said. “Our goal is to best maximize the effectiveness of that technology – in the classroom, in preparation for a first career or starting a business, and creating community for our students’ success.”

The University of Kentucky is increasingly the first choice for students, faculty and staff to pursue their passions and their professional goals. In the last two years, Forbes has named UK among the best employers for diversity and INSIGHT into Diversity recognized us as a Diversity Champion two years running. UK is ranked among the top 30 campuses in the nation for LGBTQ inclusion and safety. The Chronicle of Higher Education judged us a “Great College to Work for,” and UK is among only 22 universities in the country on Forbes' list of "America's Best Employers." We are ranked among the top 10 percent of public institutions for research expenditures – a*

*tangible symbol of our breadth and depth as a university focused on discovery that changes lives and communities. And our patients know and appreciate the fact that UK HealthCare has been named the state's top hospital for three straight years. Accolades and honors are great. But they are more important for what they represent: the idea that creating a community of belonging and commitment to excellence is how we honor our mission to be not simply the University of Kentucky, but the University **for** Kentucky.*