



GOLD RUSH

FEB. 2017

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

GO FIGURE

6%

Increase in NKU's first-to-second-year retention rate since 2010, exceeding the national average

11

Straight semesters of a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher among NKU's student-athletes

1,412

Degrees conferred upon graduates at NKU's Winter Commencement exercises



NKU HONORS VETERANS WITH PURPLE HEART PARKING

Northern Kentucky University is saluting its military veterans in a unique way: with designated parking spots for combat veterans who have received the Purple Heart medal.

"NKU continues our commitment and support to those who courageously fought to protect our country and freedom through the dedication of Purple Heart Parking spaces across campus," said Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance Dr. Sue Hodges Moore.

The initiative was led by NKU students Jeremy Evans and Jared Clifton, who served together overseas in Iraq in 2008. University administrators enthusiastically approved the students' proposal, and the four spots across campus were dedicated on Veterans Day.

They are marked by purple and white signs provided through the nonprofit organization Wounded Warriors Family Support, with whom Evans and his family have worked for two years. NKU is the first campus in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky to participate.

NKU serves more than 500 veterans, active family members, National Guardsmen, Reservists, and ROTC students. NKU's Veterans Resource Station, established in 2013, provides seamless assistance with applications, financial aid, VA education benefits, advising, registration, career services and more.

For the past four years, NKU has been named among the top universities in the nation for military veterans by *The Military Times*.

LEARN MORE: <http://veterans.nku.edu>

COLLEGE CORNER

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

A few years ago, Dr. Abdullah Al-Bahrani set out to make learning economics fun by requiring his students to write a poem or haiku using economics concepts. Today, however, students are finding that economics and art can intersect on a much larger scale.

Econ Beats is a semester-long project where teams of macroeconomics, music, and electronic media and broadcasting students write and produce economics-themed music videos. Members of the campus community vote for their favorite, which is entered into a national competition, Rockonomix.

LEARN MORE: <http://cob.nku.edu/about/news/econbeats.html>



PRESIDENT GEOFFREY S. MEARNS TO DEPART NKU AFTER NEARLY FIVE YEARS

After nearly five years leading NKU to new heights, President Geoffrey S. Mearns will not renew his contract, which expires on July 31. He has been named president of Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

"It has been my privilege and honor to serve as the president of Northern Kentucky University and to work alongside our dedicated faculty and staff to achieve real and lasting change on behalf of our current students and all future Norse," he said. "I have also been honored to work with my colleagues from across the Commonwealth to lay the foundation for a brighter future for all Kentuckians."

Under his leadership, NKU has become an institution of first choice for students from across the region, the state, the nation, and the world for its cutting-edge academic programs, a personal education experience that ensures each student is given the opportunity to succeed, and a campus experience enhanced with a new Campus Recreation Center and the transition to NCAA Division I athletics. The NKU Board of Regents is expected to hold a meeting in the coming weeks regarding the upcoming transition.

NKU NORSE THE SCOREBOARD

In its first year of NCAA Division I tournament eligibility, the Norse men's basketball team is already setting records. At 14-9, including a 5-5 record in the Horizon League, the team currently holds its best record in NKU's Division I era. In December, NKU earned its first-ever ranking in the Collegelinsider.com Mid Major Top 25 Poll. And the Norse have combined to win six Horizon League weekly awards, more than any other team in the league, including Player of the Week honors for sophomore Drew McDonald and junior Lavonne Holland II.

BRIEFS

NKU EARNS NEAR-PERFECT CAMPUS PRIDE INDEX RANKING

NKU has earned a 4.5-star (of five) score from the national nonprofit Campus Pride Index for the services and support NKU provides to members of the LGBTQ community and its institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The 4.5-star rating is the highest in Greater Cincinnati and second-highest in Kentucky.

In 2013, NKU incorporated a specific commitment to diversity and inclusion in its strategic plan, Fuel The Flame, and created an Office of LGBTQ Programs and Services.

LEARN MORE:

http://www.nku.edu/news/_170123campusprideindex.html

NKU STUDENTS RAISE \$14,000 FOR NONPROFITS

More than a dozen nonprofit organizations in Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati received a funding boost just before Christmas, thanks to NKU's Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project.

More than \$14,000 was awarded to the organizations, funds raised through student-led fundraising and contributions from local foundations and companies.

In a typical Mayerson class, students receive \$2,000 to identify a community need, explore what nonprofits are addressing that need, and then, as a class, decide where to invest. The project has become a national model.

LEARN MORE:

http://www.nku.edu/news/_161129mayerson.html

FACULTY FOCUS

What does a 30-year research project look like? Ask John Metz, director of NKU's Geography program. Metz first visited Chimkhola, Nepal in 1986 to understand how villagers used surrounding forests to survive. Fast forward 30 years later, and Metz returned to Chimkhola last year for a comparative study. He found the village relies less on farming and much more on money sent by family members in surrounding countries.

"The village is becoming much more dependent on the global economy," he said. "As the price of oil goes down, there is less work in the Middle East; a global recession will hit harder. Over generations, the knowledge of how to farm and survive from the land will be lost."

READ MORE: <http://nku.edu/features/2017/January/john-metz.html>

NKU NAMES ALUMNUS LT. JOHN GAFFIN AS CHIEF OF POLICE

Lt. John Gaffin, an alumnus and 10-year veteran of the NKU Police Department, has been named Chief of Police. The accredited and fully-sworn department serves the campus 24/7.

Gaffin brings more than 10 years' experience in campus and community policing. He has implemented and led numerous initiatives during his time at NKUPD, including a field training program and oversight of safety and emergency management. He had served as interim police chief since July 2016.

LEARN MORE:

http://www.nku.edu/news/_161219policechief.html

MEXICAN CONSULATE GRANT HELPS NKU STUDENTS STAY IN SCHOOL

A longstanding partnership between NKU's Office of Latino Programs and Services and the Mexican Consulate in Indianapolis has resulted in a new scholarship program to help Mexican students or those of Mexican descent stay in school.

The NKU/IME Scholarship Program will provide \$1,000 scholarships to 20 continuing and incoming NKU students. The Mexican Consulate provided a \$9,050 grant, and NKU provided matching funds.

LEARN MORE:

http://www.nku.edu/news/_161213MexicanConsulateScholarships.html

ALUMNI NEWS

KAYLA PECCHIONI ('14) ISN'T ABOUT TO FAKE HER WAY TO THE TOP

Kayla Pecchioni, a 2014 graduate of NKU's School of the Arts, has been luckier than most aspiring actresses: since moving to New York City shortly after graduation, she hasn't been turned down for a role yet.

The 24-year-old actor and singer recently performed in the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, where she accompanied the Rockettes onstage at Radio City Music Hall, and will soon embark on a six-month-long tour of Dreamgirls in South Korea.

Pecchioni, a self-described introvert, credits her instructors at NKU's School of the Arts for transforming her from wayward student to a rising professional. Her advice to future generations? Trust your teachers, get involved – and be authentic. "People are looking for that unique quality in you. That's what they want. Stick with what makes you, you," she said.

LEARN MORE: <http://nku.edu/features/2017/January/kayla-pecchioni.html>

