



# GOLD RUSH

JUNE 2021

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

## GO FIGURE SPRING COMMENCEMENT ACTIVITIES

5

commencement exercises

510

days between in-person ceremonies

5,000+

graduates



## FEDERAL FUNDS HARNESSING ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Thanks to a federal grant from the Economic Development Administration, NKU is building back the economy through small companies and scalable startups. NKU received \$750,000 to support its Collaborative for Economic Engagement, a one-stop innovation hub for businesses and entrepreneurs to accelerate economic growth and recovery throughout the region.

NKU launched the Collaborative last fall to play an essential role in helping the local economy move from recovery into growth. It serves as a front door for entrepreneurial engagement and provides the tools needed to thrive in the post-COVID world: access to data, access to talent and access to capital.

"This is an historic milestone not just for NKU but small businesses and startups alike," said NKU President Ashish Vaidya. "NKU offers expertise and access to resources that can build and sustain unique partnerships in the region. This funding further expands the Collaborative's ability to create jobs and value and to strengthen community connections."

The Collaborative leverages regional agencies and programs as well as NKU's expertise in data analytics, health, logistics and innovation. The federal funding advances the university's goal of building overall entrepreneurial capacity and competitiveness. The funding also helps NKU diversify the regional economy by developing a novel support model for rural and underserved entrepreneurs.

"We created the Collaborative to overcome the barriers that inhibit innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation in northern Kentucky," said Dr. Valerie Hardcastle, vice president for Health Innovation at NKU. "NKU is equipping entrepreneurs with the knowledge and resources needed to enter markets and scale businesses at all levels. We look forward to amplifying the opportunities and services in the region."

The Collaborative will be open and available for community members to visit this fall.

## COLLEGE CORNER

A third of law enforcement officers in the country have a four-year degree. The importance of education on law enforcement has long been recognized, and that's why NKU is creating an affordable pathway for officers to earn their degree easier.

NKU offers Police Academy graduates nationwide 20 credit hours—the equivalent of one semester—toward a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice. The program can be completed fully online, on campus or in hybrid format, allowing officers both in the Commonwealth and across the nation to take advantage of it.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/jatb5xt7>

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/emvhzd>



## MAKING COLLEGE ACHIEVABLE

A new partnership between NKU and the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Cincinnati ensures local youth have the clearest pathway to a more rewarding future. Speaking to the larger regional issue of increasing access to a college degree, the university brings its 'All Roads Lead to NKU' event to the Boys & Girls Club's Price Hill and Kenton County locations this summer.

"NKU is delighted to get involved with the Boys & Girls Club and its work to help deserving students reach their dreams. We are coming together to make a difference and open the doors to educational opportunities," said NKU President Ashish Vaidya. "It's never too early to learn what it means to be a Norse, and our goal is to ensure all roads lead to NKU." The open house experience presents prospective students with an inside look at what it's like being a student at NKU. They have the opportunity to learn more about getting involved on campus, residential housing and many different career pathways.

NKU's commitment to access and affordability aligns with the Boys & Girls Club's mission of changing lives and building great futures for of Greater Cincinnati's youth. To help break down barriers to pursuing an NKU education, the university is announcing a \$500 scholarship for a graduate from the class of 2021 and 2022 who enrolls at NKU attending the event. "This partnership is designed to empower learners to excel in school," Bill Bresser, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Cincinnati. "We're excited to see the engaging programs NKU will unwrap at the events." **LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/ns3xswxe>



## THE SCOREBOARD

Track & field star Kayla Thompson is this year's recipient of the Horizon League's Bobby Fong Award, which recognizes a student-athlete who best represents the conference and its core values of integrity, respect and stewardship.

After capitalizing on the opportunity to earn college credit in high school, she anticipates graduating early with a degree in psychological and behavioral sciences and boasts a 3.52 GPA.

## FACULTY FOCUS

There's nothing like the hardnosed rivalries in Major League Baseball. Fans, media and even players are incredibly passionate about their team and ready to debate until the benches clear. And at NKU, a team of faculty and students are breaking down the most intense and lopsided rivalries for each team—including the bitter Yankees-Red Sox and Reds-Cardinals—as part of the Know Rivalry Project.

"Sometimes fans don't feel the same towards one another. It's like a little brother versus big brother situation," said Dr. Cobbs, a professor of Sports Business. "Because the sports world reflects group affiliations and conflict in society, misinterpreting rivalry can lead to underestimating tensions and threats that manifest in anti-social behaviors, including violence against others."

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/p8n3tpj5>

## BRIEFS

### ESPORTS UNVEILS COMPETITIVE GAMING HUB

NKU's new varsity video gaming team now has a home with the official opening of The Sandbox—an innovation lab and dedicated environment for students to practice, play and compete in live events on campus.

The Sandbox features 11 state-of-the-art gaming stations and periphery equipment, as well as large monitors for fans to watch live competitions and game replays. The space houses a production studio for streaming matches and developing content to promote NKU Esports, such as student "shoutcasters" providing live play-by-play entertainment during games.

NKU Esports also joined Esports Collegiate Conference will now face off against regional schools such as Miami and Ohio.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/yptcu3w9>

### UPSKILLING PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

NKU and Campbell County Skills U launch the GED-Based Scholars program that helps students earn college credit at a fraction of the cost while completing their high school degree requirements.

The GED-Based Scholars program expands upon NKU's dual enrollment pathways. With the new program, students can begin working on their bachelor's degree while completing their GED at the same time. The program was developed as a way to keep the momentum for learners and provide a smooth transition to their post-secondary degrees.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/cvez263k>

### INCREASING VAX EQUITY

A new Gallop poll shows a quarter of Americans say they aren't planning to get vaccinated. Local health experts hope college students hold the key to cracking hesitancy. That's why NKU and regional collaborators set up the Vaccine Idea Challenge this spring.

Some of the creative ideas were having ice cream trucks deliver the vaccine or partnering with people in the community that they trust. The winning idea came from a group of NKU students. Their concept is to bring the vaccine to familiar places like grocery stores, churches and barbershops.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/jz6mfjst>

### TASTE OF INFORMATICS

Ready for a new career field but want an inside look before committing to significant investments in retraining? NKU collaborated with local industry practitioners to launch a set of initiatives to meet the needs of people seeking upskilling in the technology and communication professions. The College of Informatics new program provides you with hands-on, personalized overviews of key fields.

"We are inviting everyone to sample these new opportunities," said Dr. Kevin Kirby, Dean of the NKU College of Informatics. "The world needs more people who can analyze data, who can use media to tell compelling stories around that data, and who can build trustworthy technology to deliver it".

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/yux37nze>

## ALUMNI NEWS

### LEARN TO ADAPT



During the first crucial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Erin Kelley's career shifted dramatically. Kelley, a 2011 alumna of Northern Kentucky University and professor of nursing at NKU, has not only been teaching future nurses, but she was also a bedside nurse herself at St. Elizabeth Healthcare.

While working shifts that were "long and sweaty," Kelley had first-hand experience of the exhaustion and fear that comes with working in the medical field during one of the worst outbreaks in decades. Kelley and her team, despite the lack of resources early on, had to work together as a unit to assure their patients were safe and comfortable, even while the pandemic left everyone confused and concerned.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/56xxjwnw>