



# GOLD RUSH

JAN. 2021

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

## FUEL NKU FOOD PANTRY FALL DONATIONS

23,484

pounds of food

2,545

visits to the pantry

400+

students served

## COLLEGE CORNER

NKU's Honors College became the first of its kind in the region to eliminate standardized test scores entirely from its admissions and scholarship processes. Rather than focusing on how well a student performed on the ACT or SAT, students are evaluated on civic engagement, extra-curricular and volunteer activities, and perseverance through short essays, in addition to their high school records.

The new approach led the Honors College to its third consecutive year of enrollment growth, welcoming nearly 200 first-year students this past fall.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/y6ym23u4>



## ENTREPRENEURS KEEP MOVING FORWARD, NAMED AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST

NKU's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) has been named one of the world's best in creating, advancing and enabling entrepreneurship educational opportunities. The Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers selected the CIE as one of three finalists for the Excellence in Entrepreneurship Teaching and Pedagogical Innovation Award. This is its third recognition in as many years.

"We're focused on keeping the momentum going for students. We understand the bumps and bruises that come with getting startups off the ground because we've been there before," said Dr. David Schneider, director of the CIE. "Entrepreneurship isn't something you can only learn in a classroom or lab. You have to learn how to recognize value and drive value where the vulnerable aspects are."

Housed in NKU's Haile/US Bank College of Business, the CIE allows students to take ownership of their future through innovation and entrepreneurial activities both inside and outside the classroom. Many students take these classroom concepts and start their own business through NKU's INKUBATOR program, an internationally ranked 12-week business accelerator.

CIE's guidance and access to capital create opportunities for businesses at all stages, a commitment distinguishing the center from its peers. CIE's hands-on involvement has helped launch 28 startups with student entrepreneurs like Jessica Wert, who recently became an inaugural vendor at the Newport on the Levee's Exchange Market.

Graduate student Isaiah Kelly continues his success story with his custom apparel business, Smoove Creations. For the second year in a row, he is one of the top 30 student entrepreneurs in the country and won the Entrepreneurs' Organization's Cincinnati Regional Competition.

Kelly is also one of the three teams of NKU students who won at this year's KY Pitch, a business pitch competition for college students across the Commonwealth. NKU is the only university to have three teams accepted and all win at the KY Pitch.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/yxn48m47>



## NKU SELECTS DR. DANIELLE MCDONALD AS INAUGURAL DIVERSITY FELLOW

Dr. McDonald will advance NKU's strategic goal of fostering inclusivity and global awareness throughout the university alongside Chief Diversity Officer Darryl A. Peal.

"Danielle is a talented civic leader, and her research is translatable across all disciplines," Peal said. "As our Diversity Fellow, she will lead our efforts to embrace diverse learners through new teaching strategies that create pathways for opportunities. One of the unique ways she promotes critical classroom discussions is by encouraging students to connect what they are learning with what they observe and experience in the community."

She serves as the assistant department chair for the Department of Political Science, Criminal Justice, and Organizational Leadership and has taught criminal justice at NKU for the past 12 years. Her courses examine how people experience the criminal justice system differently based upon their ethnicity, class and gender and discusses best practices to address these inequities. A well-renowned scholar, Dr. McDonald navigates round table discussions nationwide about teaching race and criminal justice. She also presents these topics to the campus and community through events, like the Six@Six Lecture Series and the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. In 2017, she published a textbook titled "Race, Class, Gender and Criminal Justice: Examining Barriers to Justice." **LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/y2yfc8ak>



## THE SCOREBOARD

Student-athletes rounded out 2020 with a 3.42 GPA, making the fall 2020 semester the 19th-straight semester the program has surpassed the 3.0 GPA benchmark.

Additionally, the 3.42 GPA marks the 13th-straight semester Athletics has achieved a 3.2 GPA or higher and the 7th-straight with at least a 3.37. Each team finished above a 3.0 GPA, with six recording GPAs at or above a 3.5.

## FACULTY FOCUS

Dr. Jitana Benton-Lee has received a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation fellowship to support her research project. The project focuses on the health disparities and inequities rural minorities in Kentucky face. A professor of nursing, she becomes the first faculty member in NKU's history awarded with the honor.

Throughout the three-year program, Dr. Benton-Lee will develop inclusive health care promotion and practices to educate communities on the health risk factors they face, such as diabetes and heart disease. Studies show the Commonwealth ranks as the worst state in preventable hospitalizations, and rural minorities lag further behind.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/yype2cht>

## BRIEFS

### SIMULATION EDUCATION ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST

The Society for Simulation in Healthcare recognized NKU as one of the world's top-tier learning environments for practicing real-life health care situations with a new accreditation. NKU is the Commonwealth's only university to receive full accreditation, a feat accomplished by 183 other simulation centers internationally.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/yxgtj6wu>

### US BANK AWARDS THREE CYBERSECURITY SCHOLARSHIPS

U.S. Bank awarded scholarships to three NKU College of Informatics students studying cybersecurity for the 2020-21 academic year. The scholarships went to sophomore Elise Stromberg as well as seniors Zebediah Gentry and Zackary McMurtry. This is the fourth year that U.S. Bank has honored NKU Cybersecurity students with scholarships.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/y3kx3fed>

### NKU FALL COMMENCEMENT

Nearly 1,700 NKU students were honored at NKU's fall commencement ceremonies. The celebration featured a special guest speaker, Galadriel Stineman Joy, a '07 alum and TV star. Along with the university-wide celebration, each college hosted its own ceremonies that included reading graduate's names.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/y63ml4ok>

### NKU PRESIDENT JOINS NATIONAL EDUCATION BOARD

Dr. Ashish Vaidya is joining the Board of Directors for one of the country's top higher education organizations, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Since taking over the reins at NKU, President Vaidya continues to challenge the university to become a more student-ready and regionally engaged institution.

He took a unique approach to strategic planning when he launched the university's strategic framework, *Success by Design*—a forward-thinking move that's caught the eyes of regional and industry leaders.

President Vaidya's AACSB Board appointment comes on the heels of accolades from two local news outlets.

Cincinnati's Business Courier announced President Vaidya as a 2020 C-Suite Awards finalist, recognizing him as one of the region's top-level executives. The Northern Kentucky Tribune also celebrated his community outreach and impact with its annual Newsmaker Award.

"For two regional partners to celebrate NKU's accomplishments over the past year amplifies our quest to serve the public good," said President Vaidya. "I may be the name recognized, but both awards showcase our faculty and staff's steadfast commitment to transforming our students and the surrounding community. I'm privileged to be NKU's president and to serve this incredible region."

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/y38qkoro>

## ALUMNI NEWS



### SEVERE LEARNING CURVE

A profession in teaching is one of uncertainty and controlled chaos, especially during the elementary years. Throwing a pandemic into the mix does not make the life of an educator any easier. Megan Louis ('17), a kindergarten teacher at Willowville Elementary in Batavia, Ohio, can attest to that.

Creating a virtual classroom that was age appropriate while also working to accommodate differing schedules and families without internet, computers or electronic devices was a challenge, to say the least.

It would be easy to feel hopeless during such a time, but with a little help from her kindergarten students, Louis was able to create a video that would uplift her class and eventually the entire state when Ohio Governor Mike DeWine featured them during one of his daily briefings.

**LEARN MORE:** <https://tinyurl.com/y4l52fvm>