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## Legislators discuss needs with leaders from WKU and MSU

Special to the Ledger  
Mar 3, 2022

**FRANKFORT** - House lawmakers are working closely with Kentucky's postsecondary education institutions since approving its budget proposal. Members of the House Budget Review Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education met with campus leaders from Murray State University and Western Kentucky University, where discussions remain focused on record funding for higher education.

Among the headlines in the House budget is providing \$350 million in each year to create asset preservation funds at each public postsecondary institution and Kentucky Community and Technical College System to maintain buildings and facilities. Both Murray State University President Dr. Bob Jackson and Western Kentucky University President Dr. Tim Caboni praised policymakers for this historic commitment to asset maintenance since the allocation includes funds dedicated to each school's most pressing capital projects for the first time since the recession.

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“Over many years, Kentucky colleges and universities have requested bonds and state appropriations to finance the cost of upgrading campus facilities, whether it's critical repairs or addressing space shortages,” said Rep. James Tipton, who chairs the subcommittee. “Through a sound, fiscal approach, we are in a unique position to use general fund dollars and make significant investments on all of our campuses.”

School leaders also commended legislators for their financial support of the state's performance-based funding model, which increases by \$50 million each year under the terms of HB 1 HCS. The model measures three outcome categories—student success, course completion, and campus operational support—for distributing the funds to these institutions. Additionally, the asset preservation funds will be available to institutions based on the square footage of facilities as established by this model.

“The model is a key way to hold our schools accountable and transparent with the increased resources, ultimately benefiting the taxpayer and students alike,” added Tipton, a long advocate for higher education. “By creating more educational opportunities for Kentuckians, we can develop the state's workforce, which in turn contributes to economic growth and a better quality of life. That's why this budget invests so heavily in our grant and scholarship programs.”

As part of the House budget's emphasis on higher education, an additional \$15 million each year is appropriated to funding Bucks for Brains. This endowment match program incentivizes research at the University of Kentucky and University of Louisville, as well as necessary support programs at Kentucky's

six comprehensive universities.

The subcommittee has already heard from the University of Louisville and Northern Kentucky University, the University of Kentucky, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, and Kentucky State University.

The House budget, HB 1 HCS, moved to the Senate for consideration on Jan 20. Visit the Legislative Research Commission website for more information.



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