

 International
Center

ANNUAL REPORT

2023





“This program has completely changed my trajectory. I see the world differently and now have the tools to be successful in a way I never thought possible.”

–Explore First: Careers, Cultures and Connections Participant

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FROM THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION



Colleagues and Friends,

It has been an exciting year for internationalization at the University of Kentucky; a year defined by growth in key areas and by successful launches of several pioneering initiatives.

The landscape of international education is constantly and quickly evolving. I can only speak for myself when I say that's part of what makes it so thrilling. In this dynamic landscape, UK International Center has established itself as a leader in international education. This is evidenced by two major awards received this year—the University of Kentucky was one of four institutions to receive the 2023 Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Campus Internationalization as awarded by NAFSA, and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities awarded UK the 2023 International Impact Award for Global Engagement.

These awards mean so much to us, as they recognize the totality of our work, and they are wonderful points of pride for everyone at the University of Kentucky.

Our efforts, as ever, are guided by Global UK, our strategic plan, and by UK's strategic plan, the UK PURPOSE. With these plans as roadmaps, we have continued to grow several existing programs, such as Shoulder to Shoulder Global, a Global Health Initiatives program that integrates academic and community partners to improve the health and well-being of an underserved community in Santo Domingo, Ecuador. This year, STSG was awarded a USAID grant for the expansion of the health care facility.

Elsewhere, our office continues its work with faculty and staff across campus to develop new, internationally-focused research opportunities. This includes the launch of UKinSPIRE, which stimulates high-impact research projects in any discipline. It links UK faculty and international collaborators, establishes collaborations with new international partner institutions and adds greater depth to existing institutional partnerships.

A recurring theme in our strategic plan, Global UK, is our commitment to underserved communities, both around the world and at UK. To that end, summer 2023 marked the launch of Explore First: Careers, Cultures and Connections, a one-of-a-kind education abroad opportunity for First-Generation students, which takes UK students to London or Dublin for a career-readiness course. The pilot year of the program has positively impacted so many First-Gen students already, and we look forward to Explore First continuing for years to come.

Finally, this October, we once again celebrated our [Global Impact Awards](#) which recognize faculty, staff, alumni and community partners who are making an impact on internationalization at UK. The awards reinforced the collaborative nature of our work. Truly, I am blessed with dedicated and thoughtful colleagues in the International Center, but we are also deeply grateful for the work of so many across campus who have helped us realize our goals. Whether it's our colleagues in Student Success who helped us make Explore First an unbelievable success or our colleagues in health care who support STSG, we commend you for helping our mission in internationalization. Thank you to our colleagues across campus and around the world in international education who continue to inspire and aid this important work.

Sue Roberts

Sue Roberts, Associate Provost for Internationalization, University of Kentucky



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY RECOGNIZED BY NAFSA AND APLU FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION EFFORTS

In recognition of its efforts to further internationalize campus and foster a more diverse community, the University of Kentucky was recognized in 2023 by both NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, a rare distinction in international education.

In March, NAFSA announced that the University of Kentucky was among four U.S. universities and colleges selected to receive a 2023 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Campus Internationalization.

Named after the late Senator Paul Simon of Illinois, the Senator Paul Simon award celebrates outstanding innovation and accomplishment in campus internationalization, defined by NAFSA as a conscious effort to integrate and infuse international, intercultural

and global mission, strategies, programs and results.

UK was among just four universities and colleges to receive the Comprehensive Award, which is granted to a limited number of institutions each year.

"Guided by our strategic plan, we are committed to bringing together people from around the world and building a more understanding, peaceful and inclusive community. This prestigious award embodies the hard work and dedication of so many at UK," said UK President Eli Capilouto. "I am tremendously proud of their efforts and everyone who calls the Big Blue Nation home."

The Simon Award recognizes the impact of UKIC's strategic plan, Global UK and several other key initiatives which have seen great success.

One of these initiatives is UKIC's Global Engagement Academy. Designed for UK faculty and staff, this professional development program has cultivated a growing, diverse community of practice and identified champions of comprehensive internationalization across the institution. The program launched in 2020, and since its inception more than 230 UK faculty and staff have participated in sessions.

The Simon Award also recognizes several new initiatives at UK to advance internationalization, including "Explore First: Careers, Cultures and Connections," an education abroad program designed for first-generation students to cultivate the transferable skills employers are seeking. UKIC's office of Education Abroad & Exchanges, in partnership with the Stuckert Career Center and the Office of First-Generation Student Services, enrolled the first cohort of students in this program in Summer 2023.

In November, the University of Kentucky was also recognized by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities for its global engagement.

This award recognizes an APLU member institution that demonstrates a high degree of global engagement on their campus, in their community and/or with international partners. This could include meaningful international collaborations, engagement with migrant, immigrant and/or international communities, and institutional commitment to developing sustained global engagement.

"Our campus is committed to global engagement because we know the impact it has on our students," said Associate Provost for Internationalization Sue Roberts. "Globally knowledgeable and engaged students are better prepared to contribute to their communities' economic and social vitality, and they are ready to tackle even the world's most intractable problems. In addition, fostering a more globally-aware and inclusive diverse community here at UK, has far-reaching effects on all our students and everyone here at the university."

The award specifically recognizes UK's work on two key initiatives: the Shoulder to Shoulder Global program and the university's work with refugee students.

Shoulder to Shoulder Global, a program implemented by the office of Global Health Initiatives in the University of Kentucky International Center, works with academic and community partners to improve the health and well-being of an underserved community in Santo Domingo, Ecuador. The heart of the partnership is transformative inter-professional experiential learning opportunities for students, staff, faculty and community members. These take place through a partnership with the Centro de Salud Hombro a Hombro clinical facility. Since 2007, this partnership has grown to encompass the core missions of education, service and research and has seen participation from all of UK's academic colleges. Over the last 16 years, more than 1,300 students, staff, faculty and community members have participated in Shoulder to Shoulder's programs in Ecuador. In that time, more than 40,000 patients in Ecuador have received medical consultations from participants.

The award also acknowledges UK's work helping displaced refugee students finish their education at the University of Kentucky.

In August 2022, the Kentucky General Assembly appropriated funds to provide college access and promote undergraduate student success for displaced students through a program called the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship Pilot Project. Additional funding was also provided by the Qatar Scholarship for Afghans Project, administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE) here in the U.S.

"These initiatives have not only shown UK's commitment to global engagement, they have also highlighted the importance of collaboration across campus," said Roberts. "The tremendous success of these programs would not be possible without partners at UK in several areas, all working to further internationalize our campus, helping create transformational experiences for our students and promoting a more diverse community at UK." ■

MAKING AN IMPACT

KUHAN RAJENDRAN '22 LEADS AS A STUDENT AND ALUMNUS

The decision to leave his home of Malaysia and travel halfway around the world to attend college was not one that Kuhan Rajendran '22 took lightly.

"I wanted to find a place where I felt comfortable that could also help me achieve everything I wanted to achieve," said Rajendran. "As soon as I started talking to people from UK, I knew I had found what I was looking for."

According to Rajendran, UK stood out due to the personal touch while trying to choose a university to attend. The care shown by staff was evident as he made this crucial decision.

"Other universities made me feel a little bit like just one of many," said Rajendran. "Like, purely a number. But everyone I talked to from UK made me feel like they had my best interests in mind. The process and communication was very personal and tailored to me. I knew that if I chose to come here, they would have my back and help me succeed. I wanted to find a place to call my second home, and the people I interacted with in the International Center made me feel like that before I even arrived on campus."

Once he made the decision to attend the University of Kentucky, Rajendran prepared for his time at UK with the help of International Student and Scholar Services, taking part in virtual sessions to ensure he had completed the necessary immigration steps and was aware of the tools needed to succeed at UK.

When he arrived, however, reality did not meet his expectations in one way. "As soon as I knew I was coming to UK, I started doing research on the university and Lexington, and for some reason, I had this idea of this place in the middle of nowhere, like just a dot in the country. So when I arrived in Lexington, it was far more urban than I anticipated. There was so much to do! There was a really cool downtown. And there was still that small town feel and atmosphere and beauty, but with an urban side too. It surprised me, but it was perfect."

A mechanical engineering major while at UK, Rajendran quickly got involved in various organizations on campus in order to make the most of his time in college. On campus, he held positions as vice president of the Investment Club and as a member of the International Student Leadership Team (ISLT).

Rajendran served on ISLT for three full terms from 2020-2022. According to him, joining ISLT shaped his journey in crucial ways. "It was the best decision I made during my time at UK," said Rajendran. "When things were tough during the pandemic, ISLT made me feel connected to campus. If it wasn't for that, I don't know how my time at UK would have gone. Knowing how important the organization was for me, made it all the more crucial for me to be part of that."



Rajendran graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering. After his time at UK, he knew he wanted to stay in the United States and begin his career.

After starting as an intern with Tiffany and Co. in Lexington, Kentucky, he now works as a quality engineer with the company.

Now in his career, he looks forward to giving back to UK and the university's International Center by serving on the board of directors of the International Hospitality Program, which helps connect international students with "first friends" in America and with families who become a "second family" while they are at their "second home" at UK.

"When I was a student, I felt like I was able to give back to the International Center, which gave me so much support while at UK, by serving on ISLT," said Rajendran. "Just because I'm no longer a student, that doesn't mean I can't still find ways to support. Having that initial welcome to UK made such an impact on me and made my time here so meaningful. I'm excited to now be on the other side of that and help new students have that same amazing experience." ■

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

1,267

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FALL 2023

from

96

COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD

336

NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FALL 2023

295

ALUMNI WORKING IN U.S. ON OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

Changing LIVES



UKIC HELPS DISPLACED STUDENTS FIND A SECOND HOME

In January of 2023, the University of Kentucky was proud to welcome 16 new undergraduate students from Afghanistan, supported as part of several new initiatives, including the Kentucky Innovative Scholarship for Displaced Students and the Qatar Scholarship for Afghans Project (QSAP).

The scholarships allow students like Husna Ahmadi to pursue higher education and use that education to impact the world. "Higher education has had a profoundly positive impact on my life, empowering me with the knowledge, skills and experiences that have shaped my professional and personal growth," said Ahmadi. "It has instilled in me a lifelong love for learning, a sense of purpose and the confidence to pursue my aspirations. I am immensely grateful for the opportunities these scholarships have given me, and I'm committed to utilizing my education to make a positive impact in my community and beyond."

Another new arrival, Ahmad Khalid Wardak was among a cohort of students from the American University of Kabul left in limbo when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021.

"I was unsure of what the future held, but I knew I wanted to finish my education," said Wardack. "I am so thankful to the University of Kentucky for that opportunity."

When he landed in Lexington, he didn't know what to expect, but he immediately felt at home thanks to a warm welcome from staff at the university.

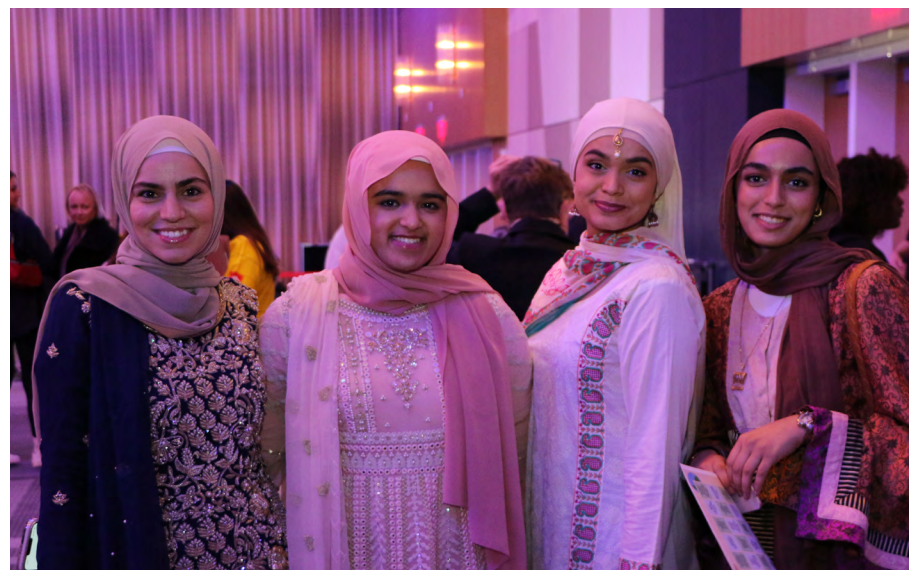
"We had people picking us up at the airport, taking us around campus, making sure we had everything we needed," he said. "It immediately made me feel like this was going to be a good place to continue my education."

Once classes started, his appreciation for being at UK only grew. "The professors are all amazing, both in their pedigree as academics but also in how they go the extra mile to help us," he said. "We were suddenly in this new place, and faculty were extremely understanding and helpful. As I have continued my studies, I have been so amazed by the support of faculty and staff, the academics, the facilities, everything at UK. I am proud to be a Wildcat."

This December, Wardack will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and is particularly interested in refugee and migrant populations. He also now works with Kentucky Refugee Ministries as a refugee services coordinator, helping people who are now in the situation he was in just last year.

"I want to make a difference in helping people like me," he said. "I know what it's like to be in a new place and not know things or have people supporting you. I was lucky to find that support here in Lexington and at UK, and now I want to be part of the solution."

With the arrival of students like Ahmadi and Wardack, the University of Kentucky International Center has worked to develop individualized programming and a community of care in order to ensure these students feel welcome and succeed at UK.



I am immensely grateful for the opportunities these scholarships have given me, and I'm committed to utilizing my education to make a positive impact in my community and beyond."

-Husna Ahmadi



In May, two full-time staff members and one student worker attended a three-day conference on working with refugee populations at Princeton University. At the conference, staff members collaborated with higher education colleagues across the country to discuss what's working and plan a successful path forward.

"I felt extremely encouraged," said Caitlin Johnson, UKIC's sponsored student and scholar coordinator. "We've begun several initiatives already, but interacting and brainstorming with colleagues gave us some fresh, new ideas for other initiatives, or connections we could make to better serve them."

Arshad also attended the conference at Princeton University, which energized her and impacted how she thought about her work. "It opened my eyes a bit to how people see refugees. There were student representatives at the conference who spoke about their experiences. Hearing from those students really made me consider how we talk about refugee populations, how we can better assist them, and how we can gather more support across campus and from the community."

"I love working with our students," said Arshad. "Seeing their personal and academic success at UK is wonderful, and I'm certain that this experience will help us make even greater strides towards ensuring their success."

28

DISPLACED STUDENTS ATTENDING UK THANKS TO THESE PROGRAMS

One of those initiatives previously enacted was to develop a student position to serve as a peer mentor for these newly arriving students. Refugee student support coordinator, Rija Arshad has been working closely with the new students since their arrival, setting up office hours for conversations, facilitating weekly orientation meetings and partnering in advocacy on matters like Halal dining options.

"Having Rija on board has been crucial to us serving these students," said Johnson. "As a prominent student leader on campus, Rija provided a level of peer mentorship and understanding of campus life from a student perspective."

For students like Ahmadi and Wardack, that success is now very tangible. "My future aspirations as a student majoring in international studies could include starting my master's degree, landing my dream job, and giving back to my community and beyond," said Ahmadi. "I am enthusiastic to look for new opportunities that can help me achieve all my future objectives."

There are currently 28 students at the University of Kentucky thanks to these programs, with the hope that UK can continue to be a second home for displaced students.

"UK has really become like a second home for me," said Wardack. "I hope more students can experience what I have." ■

A GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

The University of Kentucky International Center has launched the UK Global Footprint, which compiles and visualizes data on UK's global engagement to support existing activities and enhance strategic decision-making.

"The UK Global Footprint is a hub for international data at UK," said Associate Provost for Internationalization, Dr. Sue Roberts. "We foresee this being an incredibly useful tool for our entire campus community because it allows everyone to further explore UK as a global institution."

The UK Global Footprint brings together data on international student enrollment, international research activities and collaborations, international partnerships, scholarships and recognitions, and education abroad in one convenient location, making it easy for faculty, staff and the entire campus community to discover more about internationalization at the University of Kentucky. It also serves as a clearinghouse for web-based resources to support UK students, faculty and staff in exploring global engagement, through our many globally focused majors, minors and certificates, global dynamics UK core classes, library research guides, links to external global data sets and funding opportunities.

"UK is a global institution. So, it's vital to capture and make accessible information on the university's global reach," said Tim Barnes, executive director of international partnerships and research. "Global engagement is woven throughout all of our core missions and enterprises, and we believe this tool will be vital for anyone looking to discover more about these activities, on a broad or incredibly specific scale."

The UK Global Footprint website and underlying data is gathered, developed, and maintained by the office of International Partnerships and Research (IPR), in collaboration with other units of the UK International Center, as well as from other sources and data external to UK. For example, data related to UK faculty and staff global research and expertise is primarily gathered through a voluntary Global Engagement and Expertise Survey. This data can help faculty with shared interests in particular countries, regions or transnational research interests connect with one another. The UK International Center plans to continue identifying and documenting data to refine the UK Global Footprint, and it will provide an ever clearer picture of UK's global engagement and expertise. ■

**EXPLORE THE UK
GLOBAL FOOTPRINT**



**TAKE THE FACULTY/STAFF
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AND
EXPERTISE SURVEY**



INSPIRING INGENUITY

Launched in November of 2022, UKinSPIRE, an internal funding opportunity for University of Kentucky faculty jointly funded by the Office of the Vice President for Research and the UK International Center, is aimed at creating a strong foundation for sustained, globally engaged collaborative research. One year later, international collaborations and research projects are getting off the ground and making an impact.

Associate Professor of Music, Trumpet at UK, Jason Dovel, has spent years forming a partnership with Ionian University in Corfu, Greece, working with and training Ionian students and faculty. For Dovel, the UKinSPIRE funding was the perfect opportunity to continue and grow that partnership.

"It was really fortuitous," said Dovel. "I'd been looking to expand and continue to grow this collaboration when I saw this funding opportunity. It seemed like the perfect project and scope for it, so I was excited to be selected among the first cohort of UKinSPIRE fellows."

After initially connecting with Ionian University in 2015, Dovel spent the fall of 2021 on sabbatical at the university in Corfu teaching trumpet lessons, doing weekly studio classes and guest lecturing in other courses. He also spent his time forming connections with students and faculty at Ionian University and getting acclimated to life in Corfu.

"One of the challenges that's also incredibly exciting about being in another country is getting used to the different culture," said Dovel. "In this case, it meant getting used to how they work as well. I like things to be very structured, and I had to get used to things not being so structured in Greece. I found the people a bit more laid back than I can be. It was great, though, from a personal and professional standpoint. Experiencing a different culture of work has made me more adaptable in my own teaching and music."



Dovel (center) with students at Ionian University

After his sabbatical in 2021, Dovel looked to expand and continue the partnership with Ionian University. UKinSPIRE was the perfect avenue for him to go back to Corfu and continue building relationships while collaborating with music faculty overseas.

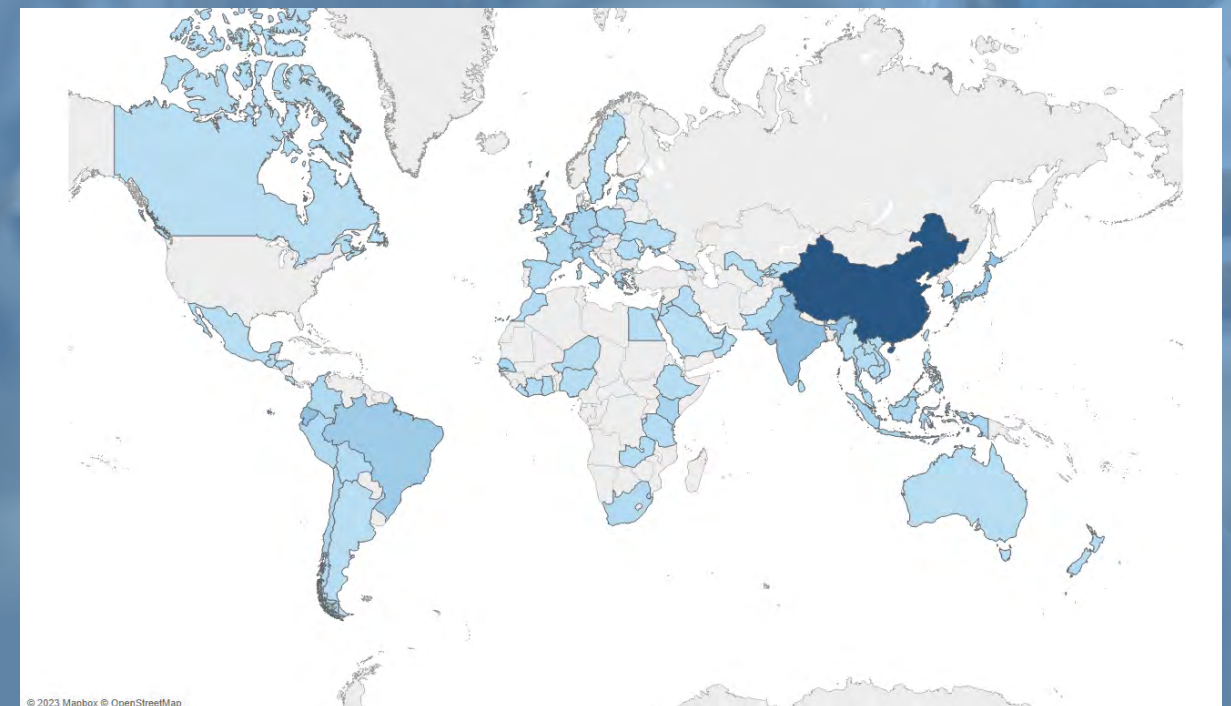
"The thing that's so inspiring about being in Corfu and at Ionian is that music is such a huge part of the culture," said Dovel. "There are so many local bands in town for such a small place. It seems like practically everyone is in a band! This cultural permeation inspires my own composition as well as how I teach music to students both abroad and here at UK."

Since his time in Corfu, Dovel has been working to bring students from Ionian University to UK to study and make music. "This kind of cultural exchange can really benefit students and both universities. I'm looking forward to continue working on expanding this relationship and creating enriching experiences for students at UK and in Corfu." ■

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & RESEARCH

289
PARTNERSHIPS

71
COUNTRIES



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IE IN THE
NWEALTH

University's
vaccination against
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A Collaborative **APPROACH**

UK HOSTS SEMINAR ON RISK AND REGULATORY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear to staff in the University of Kentucky International Center that one of the biggest challenges associated with re-starting international travel and education abroad programming would be to provide adequate support for students as they navigated a more complex international travel landscape and experienced living in an unfamiliar cultural context. Further, UK International Center staff were very aware that there are widely differing cultural attitudes related to student support in other countries around the world.

“We wanted to ensure that our students had the same level of support on programs abroad that they would have had here at home,” said Jason Hope, director of global risk and strategic operations. “As we initiated conversations about re-starting international travel with universities abroad, we discovered key differences in how they handle subjects like risk management and student well-being, with universities in the U.S. often having a ‘higher touch’ approach to these issues. This was an eye-opening experience for many of our partners too, who didn’t fully understand the student support culture at a university like UK until the pandemic forced some of those discussions.”

To capitalize on these evolving conversations, the German-American Fulbright Commission approached UK to host a weeklong seminar focused on risk and regulatory issues in international education – the first of its seminars held in the U.S. since 2019 and the first ever on this topic.

“We had never offered a program that was centered on these issues,” said Carolin Weingart-Ridoutt, program officer for Fulbright Germany. “But UK gained a reputation as a leader in this area during the pandemic, and we thought it would be an excellent place to explore these cultural differences in greater depth.”

In September, 15 administrators in international education from universities across Germany visited UK to engage in critical conversations on international education in the U.S. and the ways it differs from European models. These administrators have a wide range of professional backgrounds at their home institutions – from advising study abroad students to implementing broad internationalization strategies across their universities.

During their week on campus, administrators collaborated with leaders from the International Center, the Office for Student Success, UK Risk Management, the College of Education and the UK Police Department, as well as leading international education risk managers from universities around the U.S. In addition to exploring issues related to risk and regulations at UK, the group also spent a day at Centre College learning about how liberal arts colleges tackle these same challenges.

“It is clear that the world is becoming more and more connected every day, and mutual understanding is going to be critical to the increasingly complex ways in which we engage with our partners abroad,” said Associate Provost for Internationalization Sue Roberts. “We were proud to showcase UK to these visitors, and we’ve also used this as an opportunity to reflect critically on the work that we do and to see it through their eyes. This is the sort of cross-cultural collaboration that keeps us all moving forward.” ■



EXPLORE FIRST: CAREERS, CULTURES AND CONNECTIONS GLOBALLY ENGAGES FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

This program was life-changing.

Words cannot express how thankful I am.

What you learn here, you will take with you for the rest of your life.

I never could have imagined the gravity of what I just experienced.

Education abroad programs have incredible impacts on student participants. Students who study abroad consistently graduate and are retained at higher rates, have higher GPAs and go on to career success. With [Explore First: Careers, Cultures and Connections](#), Education Abroad & Exchanges, in partnership with First-Generation Student Services and the Stuckert Career Center in the Office for Student Success, has made these kinds of high-impact experiences accessible to more students.

Designed exclusively for First-Gen students at UK, defined as those students for whom neither parent or guardian has graduated from a four-year degree program, Explore First takes students to London, United Kingdom or Dublin, Ireland and offers them access and firsthand experience with some of the world's largest employers. With a focus on career-readiness, this program includes structured experiences for First-Gen students in order to help them build the skills to succeed after graduation from UK, no matter their career track.

Development of the program began in 2022, but the seeds of inspiration for the program go back further.

"We've been talking about ways to increase education abroad opportunities for underrepresented groups at UK for several years," said Executive Director of Education Abroad & Exchanges, Niamh Larson. "When we were crafting our strategic plan – Global UK –

we pushed to focus on underrepresented groups. These experiences have a profoundly positive impact on students, so we believe that all students should have access to them."

Thanks in part to funding from the Kentucky state legislature in late 2022, the dream to make these opportunities more available suddenly became real.

"We had this amazing opportunity all of a sudden," said Associate Provost for Internationalization, Sue Roberts. "We knew what we could do with this funding, but there was such a short timeframe in which to accomplish it. We also knew the nature and scope of the work would require collaboration with our campus partners."

Campus partners in UK's Office for Student Success, specifically First-Gen Student Services and the Stuckert Career Center came on board and helped make the program a reality.

"Getting this program off the ground in such a short space of time was a total team effort," said Larson. "Without our partners in Student Success, this program would not have been possible."

Planned and launched in a space of only six months, Explore First saw its first cohort of students depart for the United Kingdom and Ireland in early June 2023. A total of 60 students separated into four 15-student cohorts spent three weeks each in London or Dublin.

For the students, the program was truly life-changing.

Vendela Norris, from Louisville, Ky, is now a senior at the University of Kentucky. She first heard about Explore First from a staff member in First-Gen Student Services at the Spring 2023 Education Abroad Fair, who made the program feel real to her even if on the surface it may have seemed too good to be true.

Ireland Never Leaves You



"I was a little skeptical of an almost-fully funded program like this," said Norris. "But once I started digging and thinking about it a little bit, it just made sense. Why not take advantage of this opportunity?"

Like most of the students in Explore First, Norris had never traveled internationally before the program. Students spent the weeks and months leading up to their departure in small groups preparing for this experience. They discussed topics such as international travel, packing, local transportation, communication, budgeting and cultural differences.

When the time came to depart, Norris felt anxious about the experience, having never traveled abroad before.

"I didn't know what to expect," she said. "There was a little bit of anxiety about that, but at the same time, I was excited to be outside my comfort zone."

While on the program, students were exposed to work culture and career settings in large companies and firms. Employer partners included Alltech, Compass Group, LinkedIn, Gray Construction and Diageo, among others.

However, the site visits went beyond exposure to office and work life. Students had the opportunity to sit down with leadership from multi-billion-dollar companies and hear their personal stories.

"Talking with executives made me think more in terms of skills than my major," said Norris. "How can I use the skills developed during college in my career, rather than thinking narrowly about my degree. It made me feel like I have the capability to pursue whatever I want to pursue. The options feel limitless."

More than just a career-readiness course, though, the program was designed to empower First-Gen students, giving them the confidence to succeed in their academic careers at UK and beyond.

"Sometimes the best thing for us is to step outside our comfort zone," said Larson. "We wanted students to feel empowered, to have that confidence when they returned to campus. And I think we're certainly seeing that."

For Norris, the impact the program had on her became palpable once she returned to the states. "I definitely felt more confident when I got back," she said. "I'm going after the things I want. I have clear goals, and I am working hard to achieve them."

First-Gen students are often changing their family's trajectory by being the first in their families to go to college. For Norris, returning to her family after the program, is a memory she will never forget.

"No one in my family has ever been out of the country. Coming home and giving them their souvenirs and making them a traditional English tea and just telling them all my stories. It was so special. I'll never forget that." ■



1,042

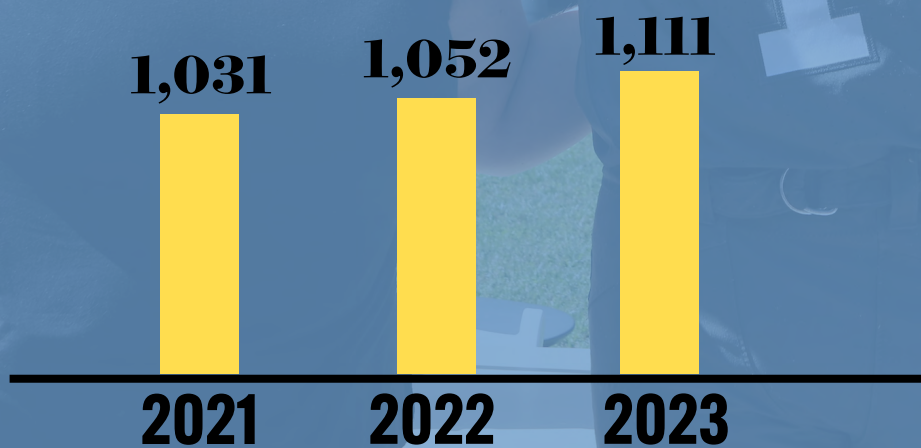
EDUCATION ABROAD PARTICIPANTS AY 2022-2023

33%

INCREASE FROM AY 2021-2022

40

TOTAL COUNTRIES VISITED



EDUCATION ABROAD FALL FAIR ATTENDANCE



NEW TEK ELECTIVE FOCUSED ON GLOBAL HEALTH TO BE OFFERED IN SPRING 2024

"In the field of global health, a transdisciplinary approach is vital and has been a key focus of our work," said Ryan. "So in a way, it felt like we had a head start. It's been incredibly exciting to develop this course with colleagues in various departments on campus. We often have global health events and programming that bring together different disciplines for one or two weeks at a time, shorter periods of time. So what's exciting about this course will be the ability for students to spend a longer period of time collaborating with students and faculty from different disciplines to study some of the world's biggest global health issues."

The new course will focus on some of the biggest challenges related to global health. The students' work will also be featured as the case for the annual Global Health Case Competition, which is a weeklong competition in which interdisciplinary teams of students develop a solution to one of the global health challenges.

"We saw with the pandemic, that global health challenges will continue to arise and require transdisciplinary collaboration to solve," said Ryan. "This course is ideal for students from all disciplines interested in using their expertise to make a positive difference in the health of communities around the world." ■

Developed as part of the University of Kentucky's new Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, "Transdisciplinary Educational approaches to advance Kentucky," is a new campus initiative focused on helping students understand that solutions to the world's most complex problems are often found through disciplinary collaboration, or a "transdisciplinary" approach to education, research and service.

In May of 2023, Assistant Provost for Global Health Initiatives, Melody Ryan, and Assistant Director of Global Health Initiatives, Joel Hamm were selected for the first cohort of TEK faculty fellows. They were tasked with creating new courses focused on a transdisciplinary approach. Ryan and Hamm, along Lindsey Fay in the School of Interiors and Jim Ballard in the Center for Interprofessional and Community Health Education, worked to develop a new course titled Independent Problems in Pharmacy: Design Thinking for Global Health Challenges.

A Different **APPROACH** TO CARE

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER GLOBAL CELEBRATES MILESTONE

The University of Kentucky Shoulder to Shoulder Global (STSG) program began in 2002, when Dr. Tom Young, in UK's College of Medicine, led the first medical brigade to Ecuador with a small group of six committed participants who wanted to make a difference.

Just four years later, the group had expanded to over 30 participants.

In 2006, after focus groups shared the need for a comprehensive health center, a planning team composed of UK faculty, staff, students and community partners began planning for a community development project in Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas, Ecuador. The first phase was the development of a primary care health center in the community of Carlos Ruiz Burneo (CRB), a very poor community on the outskirts of Santo Domingo.

In April of 2007 the health center was opened and named Centro de Salud Hombro a Hombro (Shoulder to Shoulder Health Center). Now, more than 16 years later Shoulder to Shoulder Global continues to grow and change lives, both of the participants and the patients. In total, more than 100,000 medical consultations have been provided since the program's inception by the more than 1,300 participants.

"The growth of the program has been amazing to witness," said Melody Ryan, associate provost for Global Health Initiatives. "The work done before by Dr. Young and all those who pioneered this program laid a strong foundation to build on. The growth of the program allows us to make even more of an impact in Santa Domingo."

In addition to making a positive impact in the community in Ecuador, the program has also impacted how participants think of and practice health care, thanks in part to the program's transdisciplinary nature.

Abby Guest, a junior majoring in human nutrition, participated in Shoulder to Shoulder Global in March of 2023. She noted how the program changed her outlook on her future career.

"Seeing the contributions that fields other than my own have towards the medical field has given me a more holistic outlook on health care," said Guest. "I will take that with me throughout my career as a provider."

In March, UK celebrated the 16th anniversary of the health center, along with a recent USAID grant for the expansion of the Centro de Salud Hombro a Hombro health center. As part of the USAID American Schools and Hospitals Abroad award, the grant will allow construction of a new building and durable commodities to house an onsite



medical laboratory, an adult and pediatric physical rehabilitation center, a new primary care ultrasound program, a women's empowerment center that fosters gender equality, and space for refugee support.

In 21 years, what started as six participants traveling to Ecuador has grown into an impactful interprofessional program making a major difference in the health of a community. And there's no sign of that growth slowing down any time soon.

"We're always looking to grow and expand this program" said Ryan. "We want to see as many students participating as possible. This is an experience that will travel with health care professionals long after the program ends. It makes a huge difference in the lives of the people in this community, the mindsets of our students, and also impacts the care those students will provide once they begin their careers in health care." ■



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER GLOBAL

139
PARTICIPANTS
IN 2023

2,259
MEDICAL
CONSULTATIONS
PROVIDED

GLOBAL HEALTH CASE
COMPETITION

147
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS
IN 2023

54%
OF PARTICIPANTS
IDENTIFY
AS NON-WHITE

GLOBAL UK

Our work this year has been, and will continue to be in the years to come, guided by Global UK, our strategic plan for campus global engagement. Developed over the course of 2020-2021 with the collaboration of partners across campus, Global UK is shaped by our vision of a University of Kentucky where a global mindset is integral to our teaching, research, service and operations; where diverse cultural perspectives are included and valued; and where global learning is broadly accessible. We are committed to the strategic plan's core priorities to inspire global learning and discovery, foster a globally engaged Kentucky and create a UK global hub.

Throughout this year, significant progress has been made in completing specific strategic plan goals and furthering the progress of many others. Our progress would not be possible without the collaboration of many UK colleagues and community partners. To our partners and colleagues, thank you for your continued support and investment. We believe that internationalization is vital to advancing Kentucky and producing global citizens ready to tackle new problems in an ever-changing world.

LEARN MORE ABOUT
GLOBAL UK



VISION

We envision a University of Kentucky where a global mindset is integral to our teaching, research, service, and operations; where diverse cultural perspectives are included and valued; and where global learning is broadly accessible.

MISSION

Through our collective expertise and shared advocacy, the UK International Center cultivates and advances global learning, understanding, and connection by leading, supporting, and inspiring global engagement.