



# Community Newsletter

March 2024



## Fostering Inclusion through the Safe Pledge

In 2019, findings from the Diversity Engagement Survey indicated that over 11% of respondents identified as LGBTQ+, yet there was a lack of institutional support for this community. Dr. Stephanie White, who served as our associate dean for diversity and inclusion at the time, took action by establishing the LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee within the College of Medicine (COM). This committee was tasked with exploring ways to make College policies and procedures more inclusive for faculty, staff, and learners. One of their initial endeavors was the introduction of the Safe Pledge, which was launched in Fall 2020.

While employed at UK HealthCare, Emily Conley, previous member of the Corporate Communication team had the opportunity to encounter the Safe Pledge while recording an episode of The Loop Podcast with Tukea Talbert and other hospital leaders. In April 2023, Emily transitioned to the campus side and noticed that the Safe Pledge appeared to be primarily utilized by hospital and clinical staff at UK. She made it her duty to ensure that all campus staff, faculty, and students who wished to demonstrate support and be recognized as Safe individuals had the opportunity to do so.

With the backing of her new leadership team in the Auxiliary Services Department, Emily collaborated with the LGBTQ office at the Gatton Student Center and connected with the College of Medicine team that spearheaded the original campaign.

Thanks to the efforts of Glenn Means III, Associate Student Program Director for the LGBTQ Resource Center, and Emily Conley, Marketing Communication Specialist for Auxiliary Services, the Safe Pledge has now been officially launched on the campus side. Emily reflects, “My experience at UK HealthCare provided valuable insights into our organization’s goals and DEI initiatives. As someone who aligns with the LGBTQ community, it was essential to me that students and staff felt acknowledged and could easily identify individuals they could turn to in case of crisis or personal concerns. This initiative, whether through wearing a badge, using an email thumbnail, or signing the pledge, is not about labeling individuals but fostering a sense of community and creating a safe space.”

Information about the pledge can be found through the LGBTQ Center or the Gatton Student Center. Badges can be obtained from the LGBTQ Center or the Student Administration suite at the Gatton Student Center. Glenn, the Center’s director, adds, “Taking the Safe Pledge is more than a statement; it’s a commitment to fostering a campus culture where everyone, regardless of their identity, is nurtured and protected. It is the recognition that higher education



## Developing Partnerships of Student Creativity to the Gatton Student Center

The University of Kentucky exemplifies the power of partnerships in fostering innovation and creativity. In Spring 2023, UK Auxiliary Services, the School of Art & Visual Studies (SAVS), and the UK Arts in HealthCare Program joined forces to introduce the Gatton Student Center with a flourish of artistic expression. A year later, The Great Hall Gallery has emerged as a vibrant testament to this collaboration, serving as a dynamic showcase for the artistic endeavors of UK students and becoming a hub for student ingenuity.

With the assistance and direction from Jason Akhtarekhavari, Arts in HealthCare Program Manager and his team, The Great Hall Gallery isn't just a space for student art; it's a platform for emerging talents to share their creative journeys with the world. As each semester brings forth a new exhibition curated by student, Katherine Gemperline, from the UK College of Fine Arts' M.F.A. in Curatorial Studies program, it becomes a testament to the diversity of perspectives and mediums explored by young artists.

Katherine shares, “The Great Hall Gallery is a great space to show student art. Right outside the Harris Ballroom, many people from different fields can see and enjoy our own students’ artwork. This becomes a great place for our students to start their career and for others to experience how creative our students are.”

Both art programs share a common goal; to inspire and enrich the lives of those they touch. Keegan Rose, artist of *Dysmorphic Night*, a digital collage, shares, “My goal was to create a dream-like landscape, utilizing physical tension in the figure’s body and mental tension in the figure’s perceived reflection...the emotional tension of the figure looking in the mirror and seeing something different looking back... it is the same as the ominous feeling that occurs in real life.” Her artwork evokes and stirs a complex mix of self-acceptance and inner conflict. It’s seen that her pieces reflect the deeply personal struggles with one self. Just like patients, visitors, or students, we all experience periods of transformation where we may feel disconnected from ourselves, even when facing our reflections in the mirror. The Great Hall Gallery gives the opportunity for this partnership to flourish with the emotional doorway that we all are tied to.

The partnership between Auxiliary Services, SAVS, and UK Arts in HealthCare Program serves as a compelling illustration of how collaborations can enhance the student experience. By establishing a platform to exhibit student artwork within the Gatton Student Center, we not only provide a space for creative expression but also offer invaluable hands-on experience for graduate students in the curatorial studies program, under the mentorship of the UK Arts in HealthCare Program Manager. Through this collective effort, the University and UK HealthCare demonstrate how art can bridge divides, foster connections, and ignite creativity.

Artwork within the Gatton student Center will be removed towards the end of each semester, allowing a new line of work to be introduced in the coming Fall. Take the time to explore the gallery before the end of the semester. To submit work or learn more about the student program, please visit the Art Curation | Gatton Student Center.

## Cell and Mobile | Employee Discount Program

This initiative presents a variety of discounts and incentives to UK employees. It encompasses an array of businesses spanning entertainment, housing, automotive, dining, and other various essentials.

For this month's highlight, we want to emphasize the partnership between the University of Kentucky and cell and mobile services in the area. Appalachian Wireless offers 20% off their pricing plan and data featurediscount, Cell Phone Repair offers 10% off repairs and computer services, and T-Mobile users save 15% on Magenta MAX with premium unlimited Talk, Text, and Data.

## Order your UK Employee Appreciation Day T-Shirt

Employees can submit their t-shirt orders by 5 p.m. Friday, March 22, using the online form available [HERE](#).

For more information and updates regarding UK Employee Appreciation Day 2024, please visit the Staff Senate website or contact [UKAD@uky.edu](mailto:UKAD@uky.edu).

## YOUR UK HEADSHOT

UK Brand Strategy offers a free headshots for staff. This headshot service is provided from 9:30 am – 11:30 am on the first Tuesday and third Wednesday of each month.



## Share the News

Have information or an event you want featured in the next newsletter?

[SUBMIT CONTENT](#)

# What's Happening

## SPORTS | FIND MORE

**Men's Tennis | VS Texas A&M**  
March 22nd

**Women's Soccer | VS Louisville**  
March 23rd

**Men's Soccer | Saint Louis**  
March 23rd

**Men's Tennis | VS Auburn**  
March 24th

**Softball | VS Dayton**  
March 26th

**Baseball | VS Miami University**  
March 26th

**Softball | VS Alabama**  
March 28th

**Women's Tennis | Vs. Missouri**  
March 29th

## EVENTS

**UK Employee Appreciation Day**  
May 23

**CBMI 2024**  
July 21 – 26

# Have a Cat-tastic Birthday!

Amy Terry  
Kevin Keeling  
Mary Strong  
Joanne Liu  
Myrin Roberts

Andrew Smith  
Dustin Adams  
John Parnell  
Andrew Lurace  
Darren Atkins