



T. W. Lewis Dean, Lewis Honors College

Leadership Profile

December 2025



The Opportunity

The University of Kentucky (UK) invites nominations, inquiries and applications in the search for the next T. W. Lewis Dean of the Lewis Honors College (LHC).

In October 2015, the University of Kentucky received the then-largest single gift in its history — \$23.5 million — from alumnus, longtime donor and successful entrepreneur Thomas W. Lewis and his wife, Jan, to create LHC from the previously existing Honors Program. From its humble beginnings with 25 students in 1960, its first cohort, honors education at UK has historically sought to challenge and inspire future leaders, thinkers and innovators by incorporating close faculty collaboration. That commitment continues today.

The mission of the Lewis Honors College is to improve the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the world by helping students to explore their purpose, develop intellectually and lead with integrity.

For over eight years, LHC has educated, counseled and guided Honors students by providing an enhanced course of instruction for outstanding, highly motivated students from all programs of study. Honors education is, at its heart, a liberal arts education that, coupled with the resources available at a major research, land-grant university, provides a unique experience. Honors education at UK combines the opportunities of a campus performing robust research and experiential education with small honors classes and personalized guidance in career and self-development. Regardless of major, the fundamental goal of honors education is to provide all students with a broad, critical intellectual base from which they can engage more deeply and thoughtfully in their chosen fields.

Honors students are innovative, intellectually engaged and interested in creative thought, which is integral to advancing Kentucky. As they lead lives of meaning and purpose, they improve the quality of life for the people of the Commonwealth. They are expected to be citizens of UK and their world, and to possess an inquisitive attitude toward a wide range of ideas and intellectual concepts. Since the establishment of the Honors Program in 1959, LHC has built a network of more than 15,000 Honors alumni and students.

LHC students and graduates consistently earn top honors and are highly sought after in their respective fields. Over the last seven years, the top 10 programs in which LHC graduates earned degrees were Biology, Psychology, Finance, Neuroscience, Management, Human Health Sciences, Mechanical Engineering, Marketing, Computer Science and Political Science. The top UK master's programs in which those graduates enrolled were Business Administration, Physician Assistant Studies, Public Health, Civil Engineering, Social Work and Mechanical Engineering. Further, students are taught by a breadth of experienced, well-respected and award-winning faculty and are guided by a dedicated support staff with expertise in navigating many of the challenges facing society. LHC provides access to all five primary modes of learning as defined by the National Collegiate Honors Council and adapts the requirements to meet the needs of various majors. The five modes are:

- Research and Creative Scholarship
- Breadth and Enduring Questions
- Service Learning and Leadership
- Experiential Learning
- Learning Communities

LHC provides a holistic education both inside and outside of the classroom. The Center for Personal Development (CPD) and the Honors Residential Experience (HRE) provide opportunities for personal growth outside of the major, while LHC academic advisors and faculty collaborate with academic administrators and other faculty across the university to provide the highest level of intellectual and critical engagement in their chosen fields of study. Additional information about the college can be found in its most recent [annual report](#).

Reporting to the provost, the dean will administer all aspects of the college's mission as it pursues its goal to provide a world-class honors experience that is known for the success of its students, the quality of its faculty and curriculum, the respect of its peers and its commitment to advancing UK communities at all levels. The college is advancing its mission through its current [strategic plan](#), which aligns with and supports the university's strategic plan: [UK-PURPOSE](#). The next dean will be expected to assess the college's strategic plan, ensuring continuity where existing strategies are effective while also pursuing thoughtful innovation to address emerging opportunities, including artificial intelligence and enhanced collaborative opportunities across multiple colleges.

The deanship requires a visionary and collaborative leader of people and programs with outstanding communication and interpersonal skills. The dean will be responsible for all aspects of the college's academic programs, operations, financial and faculty resources, fundraising efforts and student recruitment in partnership with the Office for Student Success. To be successful, the dean must possess the capacity to articulate and implement a shared vision in collaboration with faculty and peer deans, successful administrative experience and an aptitude for fundraising. This individual must be able to effectively engage a wide range of faculty from across the university and identify interdisciplinary opportunities that will enhance honors education. The successful candidate will possess a terminal degree in their field, as well as a distinguished record of teaching, research and service sufficient to qualify for appointment as a professor with tenure in a UK academic department.

UK is a leading land-grant and public research university located in Lexington, Kentucky. Its mission is to advance Kentucky through outstanding education, research, service and care. Counted among the highest levels of Carnegie Research institutions, the University of Kentucky is continuing its ascent as one of the nation's premier public research universities with expectations that LHC will continue to grow significantly in stature across all dimensions of the institution's mission.

UK consists of 16 academic and professional degree-granting colleges where students can choose from more than 200 majors and degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The student body comprises a wide range of experiences and views, representing more than 100 countries, every state in the nation and all 120 Kentucky counties. UK students compete successfully for prestigious scholarships and awards, such as the Fulbright, Astronaut, Truman, Goldwater, Marshall, Udall, Gates and Rhodes.

Lexington, in the beautiful Bluegrass region of Kentucky, has a population of more than 323,000, and the larger metro area is home to more than 517,000. The community is often ranked among the best places to live in the country by numerous outlets. Its busy, but accessible, airport is served by multiple airlines. Approximately 70 miles from Cincinnati and Louisville, Lexington is an important part of Kentucky's "Golden Triangle" — a region of the state noted for its healthy economy and outstanding quality of life with easy access to a wide variety of arts, culture, sporting events, educational opportunities and entertainment.

By the Numbers

For Fall 2025, LHC is composed of 2,402 students representing 8.7% of the UK student body, 12 full-time faculty, five advisors, five CPD counselors and approximately 10 staff members.

An annual budget of approximately \$4.5 million supports college functions and initiatives.

- 2,402 total students
 - 335 graduates received 398 degrees in 2024-2025
 - 80.4% in-state
 - 1.8% international
 - 14.6% first-generation
 - Top three colleges enrolled: College of Arts and Sciences (29%), Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering (22%) and Gatton College of Business and Economics (17%)
- Second largest ever incoming class for Fall 2025 (781 students)



Programs and Departments

The LHC student body represents 8.7% of the UK undergraduate population from every discipline and academic college. In addition, LHC partners with the Stanley and Karen Pigman College of Engineering and the Gatton College of Business and Economics to offer two distinct pathways: Scholars in Engineering and Management and Global Scholars. LHC includes up to 25 [Otis A. Singletary Scholars](#) from each first-year class.

LHC also partners with the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration through the Leadership Development Collaborative. This initiative seeks to build a transdisciplinary approach to leadership development across the institution.

Position Summary

The dean serves as the academic and administrative head of the Lewis Honors College and is responsible for the leadership and administration of all aspects of the college. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Communicating with prospective and current LHC students;
- Promoting engagement and success of honors students;
- Leading enhancements to the curriculum and ensuring appropriate instructional resources for college programs;

- Developing cocurricular activities suitable for honors students, including undergraduate research, service-learning, internships, co-ops, and study abroad;
- Integrating LHC with the other academic colleges and departments to ensure coordination among the deans to promote honors education and engage faculty from across the university;
- Maintaining strong working relationships with other deans and department chairs to continue to build a portfolio of challenging and engaging classes for UK's honors students;
- Collaborating with the vice president for student success on student recruitment, admissions and retention;
- Managing the budget and its various funding sources;
- Collaborating with the Office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement to enhance private funding and alumni relations;
- Overseeing the annual performance evaluations of all faculty and staff;
- Maintaining strong relationships across honors organizations, such as the Council on Honors Education, National Collegiate Honors Council, Honors Education at Research Universities and Southeastern Conference (SEC) Honors; and
- Assuming such other duties and responsibilities as may be requested by the provost.



Candidate Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The successful candidate should have the following qualifications and qualities:

- Ph.D. or equivalent degree;
- At least five years of significant academic administrative experience in higher education at the level of department chair, department head, director, associate dean or higher (leadership experience in an honors college or honors program is desirable but not required);
- A solid record of visionary, innovative leadership in higher education;
- Experience integrating curricular and co-curricular experiences to create an exceptional educational experience for students;
- An established background as an exceptional scholar and teacher, including excellence in undergraduate instruction, sufficient to qualify for an appointment as a professor with tenure in one of the university's academic departments;
- Outstanding communication and leadership skills;
- Demonstrated administrative, budgeting and governance skills;
- Interest and ability in fundraising and other activities to enhance the academic and financial strength of LHC; and
- Proven ability to effectively collaborate across campus and relate effectively to a variety of internal and external constituencies.



The Community

Lexington, Kentucky

The city of Lexington is a wonderful place in which to live, work and study. Lexington recently appeared on USA Today's list of the top cities in which to live, Vogue's list of destinations to visit and Forbes' "Top 20 Cleanest Cities." In 2019, Lexington was ranked in the top 30 of U.S. News & World Report's "Best Places to Live." It was also named as one of Condé Nast Traveler's "Top 5 Best Small Cities in the U.S." and as one of Southern's Living's "The South's Best Cities" in 2025. With a population of roughly 323,000, anchoring a metropolitan area of more than 517,000 people, Lexington offers both the warmth and hospitality of a small city, alongside the amenities typically found in a large city. Lexington describes itself as having "a fortified economy, strong in manufacturing, technology and entrepreneurial support, benefiting from a diverse, balanced business base." Leading employers in the metro region include Amazon, IBM, Lexmark, Lockheed-Martin, Toyota and UPS. Lexington also has a convenient regional airport.

Lexington is also home to great sporting traditions, including horse racing and Kentucky Wildcat athletics. In the spring and fall, one can spend a beautiful afternoon watching thoroughbred racing at Keeneland, which hosted the Breeders' Cup in 2022 and looks to host again in 2026. The Kentucky Derby, run in nearby Louisville, is known as one of the world's premier racing events. The region also boasts excellent parks and natural wonders, including Red River Gorge and Mammoth Cave, the longest underground cave system in the world.

The food scene is filled with Kentucky originals, southern classics and creative fusion. City residents benefit from a great local farm-to-table food environment with reimagined southern staples coupled with inventive bourbon-infused creations. In the heart of bourbon country, one of Lexington's most exciting hotspots, the Distillery District, offers creative cuisine, craft beers, local bourbons and premium ice cream on a revitalized 25-acre historic property.

Lexington has a vibrant arts scene with offerings in music, dance, theater and visual and literary arts. The Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra provides more than 100 concerts, educational events and community programs each year. The Lexington Opera House is a premier cultural destination in downtown Lexington that serves an average of 85,000 patrons every year, offering ballet, opera, children's productions, family shows, comedy, music and professional national Broadway tours.

The city is also composed of a rich cultural tapestry. The international population grew 300% in the last decade, and more than 150 languages are spoken in Lexington. International investment, students, academics and visitors from around the world bring a wealth of economic and cultural viewpoints to Lexington. 14.5% of the population identify as black or African American and 7.4% as Hispanic.

The true charm of Lexington lies in the fact that it has all the amenities of a big city while maintaining that special small-town feel. In mere minutes, drivers can see spectacular horse farms, go through downtown and return to the expansive, rolling countryside. While many cities insist on saying it, Lexington truly offers something for everyone.

For more information about Lexington, see [VisitLEX](#).





Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile and a CV or resume. WittKieffer is assisting the University of Kentucky in this search. For full consideration, candidate materials should be received by February 16, 2026. Application materials, nominations and inquiries can be directed to Ryan Crawford and Jenna Brumleve at UK-LHCDean@wittkieffer.com. Candidates will also need to apply through the employment website at the University of Kentucky. The posting can be found by searching for requisition # FE04765, or via the quick [link](#).

The University of Kentucky is committed to an inclusive workforce by ensuring all our students, faculty, and staff work in an environment of openness and acceptance. We strive to foster a community where people of all backgrounds, identities, and perspectives can feel secure and welcome. We also value the well-being of each of our employees and are dedicated to creating a healthy place to work, learn, and live.

In the interest of maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our students, employees, patients, and visitors, the University of Kentucky is a Tobacco & Drug Free campus.

Upon offer of employment, successful applicants must undergo a national background check and pre-employment drug screen as required by University of Kentucky Human Resources. The University of Kentucky is an Equal Opportunity University that values inclusion.