

University of Pikeville students participate in 2026 Inside Washington Seminar

SPECIAL TO APPALACHIAN NEWSPAPERS

University of Pikeville students participated in the 2026 Inside Washington Seminar hosted by The Washington Center, joining students from 38 colleges and universities across the United States for an immersive academic experience in the nation's capital, according to a statement UPIKE. The statement said UPIKE sent 11 students to Washington, D.C., through the Fred W. Meyer, Jr. Scholarship, established by Distinguished Professor Emeritus Dr. Nancy Cade, Ph.D. The program is now led by UPIKE Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Chandra Massner, Ph.D., who assumed leadership following Dr. Cade's retirement in 2024.

The seminar opened with a welcome from Kim Churches, president and CEO of The Washington Center, followed by plenary sessions examining the first year of the current presidential administration and key policy

issues facing the nation. Throughout the program, the statement said, students engaged with scholars, journalists and policy experts on topics including U.S. economic trends, health policy, immigration reform, education policy, trade and the future of political parties. "The Washington Center trip is one of those experiences that stays with you long after you return home," said UPIKE senior Kirsten Callahan. "Being in Washington, D.C., gave me a level of clarity about my goals that

I hadn't had before, and it reinforced that students from places like Eastern Kentucky belong in national spaces just as much as anyone else. "Learning from professionals who were honest about their journeys and generous with their advice meant a great deal to me," she continued. "Opportunities like this matter because they remind students that their stories and ambitions deserve a place in the larger conversation." In addition to academic sessions, students

participated in site visits across Washington, D.C., including a guided tour of the Pentagon, marking the first Pentagon visit for any group led by Massner, the statement said. Other visits included meetings with national advocacy organizations, policy research institutions and think tanks. Students also toured the United States Capitol and stopped by Rep. Hal Rogers' office. The experience was further enhanced by an early-morning White House tour, made possible through Congressman Hal Rogers' office. The seminar concluded with discussions on the state of democracy in America, careers on Capitol Hill and international policy perspectives during a visit to the European Union delegation in Washington.

"The Inside Washington Seminar provides UPIKE students with hands-on exposure to national policymaking and leadership, reinforcing the university's commitment to experiential learning and civic engagement," the statement said.



The University of Pikeville sent 11 students to Washington, D.C., recently to participate in the 2026 Inside Washington Seminar.

Submitted photo

UPIKE Tanner College of Dental Medicine receives grant to expand pediatric dental access

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The University of Pikeville Tanner College of Dental Medicine announced in a statement Jan. 28 it has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the National Association of Dental Plans to support a research initiative to improve access to pediatric dental care in Central Appalachia through innovative teledentistry solutions. The grant, according to the statement, will fund a mixed-methods research project to identify barriers that prevent children with dental benefits,

including Medicaid and KCHIP, from receiving routine dental care. The study will also pilot and evaluate teledentistry as a tool to overcome access challenges in rural and underserved communities. The TCDM project will examine both structural and individual-level barriers, such as provider shortages, transportation challenges, health literacy and cultural perceptions of dental care, the statement said. "This grant allows us to take a meaningful step toward addressing long-standing pediatric oral health disparities in Central Appalachia," said Jill Keaton, DMD, MS, DABOP,

FAAOP, dean of TCDM. "By combining rigorous research with real-world teledentistry applications, we can better understand why access gaps persist and, more importantly, develop solutions that meet children and families where they are." The project, the statement said, will collect data through surveys of parents and caregivers, community focus groups, dental claims analysis and a pilot teledentistry program conducted in partnership with local organizations. Findings will help inform policy recommendations and service delivery models designed to improve pediatric dental utilization and outcomes

across the region, according to the statement. As part of the initiative, first-year students at TCDM will participate in the research through their public health and research coursework, gaining hands-on experience in community-based dental public health, data collection and teledentistry technology. The statement said this integration reinforces the college's mission to prepare future dental professionals to serve underserved populations through innovative, patient-centered care. The Tanner College of Dental Medicine received initial accreditation from the Commission on Dental Accreditation in

August and will welcome its inaugural class in June. "The college's accelerated three-year DMD program and planned state-of-the-art facility position UPIKE to play a critical role in addressing oral health needs throughout Central Appalachia," the statement said. Research findings from the grant-funded project will be shared through academic publications, conference presentations and policy briefs to support broader adoption of effective teledentistry strategies in rural communities nationwide. Visit, UPIKE.edu, to learn more about TCDM.

MEETINGS

Continued from Page 3A

Western Kentucky Community and Technical College, Emerging Technology Center, 5100 Alben Barkley Drive.

- April 6 at 5 p.m.

in Highland Heights at Northern Kentucky University, University Center, Budig Theatre, 1 Nunn Drive.

- April 8 at 5:30 p.m.

in Bowling Green at Western Kentucky University, Amy and David Chandler

Hall, Houchens Industries Auditorium, 410 Regents Avenue.

"As our nation struggles to keep up with rising demand for electricity, nuclear energy is increasingly seen as a reliable, dispatchable, clean energy

source, and as such, is experiencing a resurgence in the United States," said Kentucky Public Service Commission Chair Angie Hatton. "Recent technological advances have made nuclear energy potentially more affordable

and attainable. However, the technology is still very expensive, and we want to make sure we examine all angles of this potential power source, including its impact on ratepayers, electric grid reliability, our environment, econom-

ic development and our workforce in Kentucky as we explore our options." The order setting the meeting and other records in the case are available on the PSC website, psc.ky.gov. The case number 2025-00186.

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