

Focusing on a Sustainable Future

One of the best parts of my job as president of Kent State University is sharing all the remarkable accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff—and this semester has exceeded all expectations.

I am proud to share the news that during the 2022 Spring Semester, Kent State was awarded the esteemed R1 designation for research from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

As the highest recognition that doctoral universities can receive, it affirms Kent State's place as a prestigious research institution, in the company of Yale, Harvard and other top-tier research universities in the United States. Only 146 universities in the nation have achieved this designation, and Kent State is proud to be among just five universities in Ohio to receive this award.

This recognition underscores the excellence and breadth of research and scholarship at Kent State. This is an amazing accomplishment and a testament to the hard work of our faculty, staff and university leadership. It is, along with attaining a record-high graduation rate on our Kent Campus and the growing diversification of our student body, one of three signature achievements of the last decade.

Kent State's well-established research institutes continue to spark innovation, produce groundbreaking discoveries and attract federal funding to support their efforts. Perhaps most important, our institutes provide fertile training

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grounds where our undergraduate students can learn and our graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and faculty can pursue their investigations and scholarly inquiry.

In this issue's special section on climate change, numerous faculty members—many of whom collaborate with our Environmental Science and Design Research Institute—reflect on how their research relates to global warming. Climate change is impacting areas such as weather patterns and water quality, but its effects also extend to mental health and social inequality, too.

As we marked Earth Month and Arbor Day in the spring semester, I was reminded of how the issues of climate change and environmental sustainability are intrinsically intertwined with life on our campuses, including faculty research, student activism and the efforts of our facilities staff to make operations at Kent State more "green."

This semester, we began the process of formulating a sustainability strategic plan. We are looking ahead 10, 20 or 30 years to determine what the best practices will be in the future and what steps we can take now to ensure that we are



ready to implement the changes needed to achieve carbon-neutral status on our campuses.

Achieving this level of efficiency is an ambitious goal, but one we believe is required to protect our earthly resources and our most precious resource of all—our people. Moreover, our sustainability efforts will guarantee a future where Kent State remains a vital research institution, where we continue to seek solutions to the ongoing challenges of climate change and where we are solving tomorrow's problems today.

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