



***Interdependent Possibilities:
Cultures of Care, Practices of Place-Making***

Saturday, February 28, 2026

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (all times Eastern)

Healthy Kentucky Research Building, Room 150
760 Press Avenue, Lexington, Kentucky, 40508

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:00 AM to 8:30 AM

Registration, Breakfast, and Poster Set-Up

8:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Poster and Gallery Session

For a full list of posters, see page 4.

9:00 AM to 9:15 AM

Welcome and Introductions

- Michelle Roberts, President, UK Graduate Appalachian Research Community
- Dr. Kathryn Engle, Director, UK Appalachian Center
- Dr. Jennifer Cramer, Director, UK Appalachian Studies Program

9:15 AM to 10:15 AM

Presentation Session 1 – Care, Well-being, and Community

- “Financial Well-being and Quality of Life during Cancer Treatment in Rural and Appalachia Kentucky,” Adam Strong, Emma Dowdy, Abigail Carter, Ming-Yuan Chih, Joseph Alexander, Pamela Hill, Timothy Mullet, University of Kentucky
- “The Economic Impacts of Rocktoberfest Climbing Festival in Eastern Kentucky's Red River Gorge,” Melissa Meade, Eastern Kentucky University, Brian Clark, Eastern Kentucky University, and James Maples, Vista Site Selection

- “SAFE ROADS Policy and Public Opinion: A Qualitative Analysis of Community Discourse,” Ally Moseley, University of Kentucky
- “Discrimination, Community Belongingness, and Substance Use Among Sexual and Gender Minority Adults in Kentucky,” Carleigh Litteral, University of Kentucky

10:15 AM to 10:25 AM

Break

10:25 AM to 10:45 AM

Artistic Interlude

- “Glitter and Blood,” Bradley Firchow, University of Kentucky

10:45 AM to 12:00 PM

Keynote Address – “Hopesick: Reckoning with Care, Community, and Recovery in Central Appalachia”

Abby Mack, PhD

Assistant Professor, Anthropology, University of Kentucky

Dr. Mack is an applied/engaged ethnographer and medical anthropologist with extensive training in linguistic anthropology, public health, and the critical humanities. Her research program explores how people navigate everyday ethical and political dilemmas in providing and accessing care for psychiatric and substance use disorders in the United States, Los Angeles and Central Appalachia in particular.



12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Lunch and Networking; Poster session reopens at 12:15pm

1:00 PM to 2:15 PM

Presentation Session 2 – Appalachia Online: Place-Based Knowledge

- “‘We All Know What You’d Say, You’re From The Mountains’: Appalachian Narratives on Accent, Stigma, and Social Injustice,” Giorgia Cola, University of Oregon
- “Care Is Not an Add-On: Reframing Campus Anxiety Support as Interdependent Place-Making,” Ijeoma Idika-Chima, Ohio University
- “‘Learning Through the Experience of Managing a Business, but it is Much More Than a Store’: The Pine Mountain Settlement School’s Co-op Store in the 1930s early 1940s,” Adrien X. Lievin, University of Lille
- “Framing Addiction in the Age of Vaping: A Journalism-Focused Reporting Resource,” Jessica Riley, West Virginia University

- "We're Still Here: Indigenous Healing Justice within Appalachia," "Mel" Melinda Trueblood-Stimpson, "LAB": Ludar Animal Behavior; EKY Mutual Aid; Heer 2 Serve; Capella University

2:15 PM to 2:30 PM

Artistic Interlude

- "Survival Was Never Living: Returning to What Ignites Us," Jessica Radicic, Claremont School of Theology, and Stevie Skovira, Independent

2:30 PM to 3:30 PM

Panel Presentation

- "Reframing the Y'all: Quare Poetics & Place-Making," Samantha Ratcliffe, Willie Edward Taylor Carver, Jr., Samar Jade, Ariadne Alexis Macquare, and Leo Coffey, University of Kentucky

3:30 PM to 3:45 PM

Artistic Interlude

- "Falling (Unfinished)," JRS, Berea College

3:45 PM to 4:45 PM

Presentation Session 3 – Identity, History, and Indigenous Roots

- "Simultaneous War: How the War of 1812 Leads the Cherokee onto a Dark Path of Immerse Suffering and Tragedy," Benjamin McElroy, Marshall University
- "A Place For Us: Incorporating Appalachian Historical Themes through the Use of Kentucky Social Studies Standards," Kelli Lemaster, University of Kentucky
- "'Western Carolina University is a Cherokee Place':The Formation of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and WCU," Mandy Choie, Western Carolina University
- "Protest and Prose: A Literary Analysis of Appalachian Labor Reform," Beaux Hardin, University of Kentucky

4:45 PM to 5:00 PM

Closing Remarks

- Megan Hall, Vice President, UK Graduate Appalachian Research Community

POSTER AND GALLERY SESSION

- “Using Fuzzy Clustering to Decode the Craftsmanship of Rare Appalachian Instruments,” Adrienne Caudill, Kazi Sabbir Ahmad Nahin, and Terrance E. Conners, University of Kentucky
- “Substance Use, Minority Stress, and LGBTQ+ Appalachians: Belonging as a Protective Factor,” Rea Franks, Liz Schreyer, and Rachel Farr, University of Kentucky
- “Social Determinants of Health and Medical Traumatic Stress in Youth with Cancer in Kentucky,” Sophia Imler and Madison Augustine, University of Kentucky
- “...and the creek don't rise...Disasters, Climate, and Resiliency in Appalachia,” Nicole Marks, University of Kentucky
- “Digital Reconstruction and the Afterlife of Hamilton House,” Hannah Miller, University of Kentucky
- “Healthy Futures Through Heritage: Adaptive Reuse for Rural Kentucky Clinics,” Hannah Miller and Travis Rose, University of Kentucky
- “Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the Role of Preventative Factors and Community Support in Appalachia,” Evan Murray, Trey Coburn, Lydia Grace McDougal, and Karen L. Roper, University of Kentucky
- “Comparing the Lifestyle Behaviors of Physical Education Teachers in Kentucky and Appalachia: A pilot study,” Ensieh Shahrjooihaghighi and Heather Erwin, University of Kentucky
- “Financial Well-being and Quality of Life during Cancer Treatment in Rural and Appalachia Kentucky,” Adam Strong, Emma Dowdy, Abigail Carter, Ming-Yuan Chih, Joseph Alexander, Pamela Hill, Timothy Mullet, University of Kentucky
- “Challenges in Obtaining Appalachian Voices for Nutritional Literacy Research: A Case Study,” Grace Thomas, Courtney Luecking, and Suzanna Attia, University of Kentucky

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, SPONSORS, & OTHER DETAILS

Accessibility

We value everyone being able to participate in the Symposium. In order to be accessible to as many attendees as possible, this event will be hybrid with both in-person and online access, and we are working to ensure quality experience for both in-person and online attendees.

Presenters (both in person and online) are asked to limit the presence of flashing lights and sudden sounds in their presentations (and give adequate warning in advance), describe any visual content seen as important to their presentation, and to give trigger or content warnings when relevant.

University of Kentucky Mask Policy

As of June 3, 2022, masks are optional on the campus of the University of Kentucky, as well as the use of plexiglass. While masks will now be optional, we want to strongly encourage members of our community who want to do so to wear them as an added layer of protection. Just as we will respect those who no longer want to wear masks, we should — and we will — respect the decisions of those who choose to do so.

Location, Parking, and Logistics

The Symposium will be held in the University of Kentucky's Healthy Kentucky Research Building (HKRB), located at 760 Press Avenue in Lexington. There is free parking available on the weekend in the Press Avenue Lot. The entrance to the Press Avenue Lot is on Press Avenue (not Virginia Avenue, as indicated by many navigation systems). Below is a campus map indicating the Press Avenue Lot and main entrance to HKRB. Registration, breakfast, and set-up will take place immediately inside the first-floor lobby. Single toilet lockable bathrooms are available on each floor of HKRB.



Things To Do Around Lexington

Come a day early or stay a day late! Kentucky has amazing art, cultural, historical, and environmental recreation opportunities! Here are just a few in Lexington and surrounding areas:

- Did you know that 95% of the world's bourbon is made in Kentucky? Make a stop at a distillery on the [Kentucky Bourbon Trail](#)! The [Barrel House Distillery](#) is also conveniently located in Lexington.
- There are over 450 champion horse farms in Kentucky. Visit over 1,000 horses at the [Kentucky Horse Park](#), a 20-minute drive from UK's campus.
- As Kentucky's oldest garden cemetery and home to Henry Clay's mausoleum, the [Lexington Cemetery](#) is an excellent place to walk, reflect, and watch nature. The cemetery also hosts the second-largest basswood tree in North America!
- Famous for its world-class rock climbing, hiking, archaeological sites, natural rock bridges ([Natural Bridge](#)) and breathtaking scenery the Red River Gorge in the [Daniel Boone National Forest](#) is a 1.25-hour drive south from Lexington.
- The [Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill](#), the largest surviving historic collection of dwellings built by this utopian sect and only a 35-minute drive from Lexington!
- The [Mary Todd Lincoln House Museum](#), the family home of the wife of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln is a great place to learn more about this famous American family!
- Visit the [UK Art Museum](#) located in the heart of campus with FREE admission to all!

Dining

- Breakfast & lunch will be provided at the Symposium.
- Please note any specific dietary needs and restrictions (allergies, vegetarian, vegan, etc.) in your registration.
- Dinner will **NOT** be provided.
- Please consult our [local restaurant guide](#) or ask a local attendee for restaurant recommendations!



Thank You to Our Sponsors

The Graduate Appalachian Research Community would like to thank the UK Appalachian Center & Appalachian Studies Program, UK Gaines Center for the Humanities, UK Center for Health, Engagement, and Transformation, UK Student Government Association and UK Student Sustainability Council, for their generous support of the 2026 Research Symposium and Art Showcase.



Land & Labor Acknowledgement and Commitment

The University of Kentucky Appalachian Center and Appalachian Studies Program acknowledge that we are on the lands inhabited for millennia by the ancestors of the Shawnee, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and other Nations, and that these traditional territories were taken by force through settler colonial and white-centered institutions. In Appalachian Studies, we have a particular responsibility in our scholarship to counter historical narratives that marginalize or erase indigenous and minoritized voices in the region's past and present. As a land-grant institution, the University of Kentucky must actively attend to the historical narratives and well-being of the descendants of those who were displaced from these lands, which enabled this institution to grow in this place for the past 150 years. We commit to this acknowledgement being more than a token statement, and to center Indigenous and minoritized perspectives and experiences going forward. We join with others across this university community in actively pursuing those conversations and collaborations, including advocating for increasing the presence of, and support for, those who identify as minoritized in student, staff, faculty, and administrative positions. We also acknowledge the reliance on the labor of those who have been enslaved, displaced, and minoritized in the building of the spaces and institutions which constitute the University of Kentucky, and we join in the efforts to recognize, and value with a living wage, the work of all of those who make everyday life on and beyond the campus of the University of Kentucky possible.

PRESENTATION NOTES

[illegible]