

Senator Steve Rawlings, co-chair of the Interim Joint Budget Review Subcommittee on Education, has requested that each public postsecondary institution provide testimony at the Subcommittee's upcoming meeting on Tuesday, July 15, at 10:30 a.m., in the Capitol Annex.

The senator has asked that testimony focus on each institution's efforts to comply with House Bill 4 from the 2025 Regular Session.

Specifically, institutions should be prepared to discuss:

Measures taken or planned to achieve compliance

From the moment House Bill 4 (HB4) became law (KRS 164.2894-2899) on March 28, 2025, University of Louisville President Gerry Bradley and the entire university leadership team committed to working with care and compassion to ensure that the university would be compliant by the June 30 statutory deadline.

From the beginning, President Bradley determined that compliance would be the goal of the entire university community and would not be viewed as a purely legal initiative. To that end, the Office of the Provost partnered with the Office of University Counsel in leading a daylong Legislative Guidance Retreat to provide training and guidance to university deans, vice presidents and other key leaders regarding new HB4 requirements.

The president also established four workgroups to focus on key compliance areas:

1. Position Analysis Workgroup
2. Policy Analysis Workgroup
3. Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarship Workgroup
4. Athletics Workgroup

Each work group included a broad cross-section of university stakeholders, and each group had an assigned legal representative to provide legal counsel and legal recommendations. Executive Vice President Angela Curry and I spent Memorial Day weekend reviewing each and every legal recommendation before recommending approval to the president.

Once approved, these recommendations were forwarded to project implementation managers who were empowered to work across university departments and units to ensure and confirm that approved compliance tasks were completed by the June 30, 2025 deadline.

The university's commitment to full compliance also extended to our Board of Trustees. Recognizing that certain changes would require board review and approval, the acting board chair appointed certain trustees to serve on the Ad Hoc HB4 Implementation Committee to provide board input in implementing new requirements and to make comprehensive recommendations to the full board to ensure that the university met the legislative compliance deadline of June 30, 2025.

Finally, as chief academic officer for the university, I am pleased to report that at every turn throughout this implementation process, the university made every effort to ensure that the principles of shared governance were observed and embraced.

Whether full compliance has been achieved; if not, the anticipated date for full compliance

Yes, we believe that we have achieved full compliance with the requirements of HB4. Having said that, the University of Louisville is a large, complex, Research 1 institution with nearly 25,000 students and over 7,000 faculty and staff members. Because of our size and complexity, compliance with any federal or state requirement is an ongoing, dynamic process as new questions are raised and new scenarios are presented. We are committed to ongoing compliance and to resolving any questions or clarifications as they emerge.

Whether any faculty or personnel have been terminated or reassigned as a result

With so many students to serve and so many mission-critical initiatives to accomplish, the university began with a goal of retaining all employees willing to serve. While certain positions required restructuring and realignment to make absolutely sure there would be no misunderstanding about our commitment to compliance, we were grateful that no employee was terminated as a result of HB4 implementation.

Whether any programs or departments have been closed

While no departments or academic programs were closed, some units were realigned to better serve the ultimate university mission of student success. For example, the Department of Inclusive Excellence was realigned as the Office of Access and Opportunity and placed under the Office of the Provost to better carry out the mission of achieving success for all university students.

Also, certain presidential commissions were dissolved and realigned in accordance with the university's overall mission. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Diversity and Racial Equity were dissolved, and stakeholders will be invited to serve on the new Presidential Commission on Climate, Culture and Well-being. This new commission is dedicated to cultivating a safe, respectful and inclusive university environment.

There were also programs that were paused while the university examined the history, intent and implementation to ensure that the program complied with the letter and spirit of applicable law.

What savings have been achieved through compliance, and if there have been no savings, why not?

One of the realizations that emerged early on in our training around HB4 requirements was that our units and departments had many questions about how the law would be applied and wanted assurance that their specific approaches were in compliance. Our legal team was inundated with questions and requests for legal guidance. Recognizing that compliance is an ongoing, dynamic process, the university hired additional legal counsel, including a regulatory counsel role that is fully committed to training units and departments on HB4 requirements and assuring ongoing compliance as we carry out the university's mission.

HB4 also changed the way the university previously handled bias-related incidents involving faculty, staff and students. In light of the new requirement that the general counsel pre-certify all bias-related investigations and hearings, a senior legal compliance director position was created to assist with ensuring that all bias-related investigations and hearings are conducted appropriately.