

Kentucky Conference of the AAUP
c/o Dr. Nancy J. McKenney
3541 Galahad Drive
Lexington, KY 40517
April 19, 2024

President Eli Capilouto
Office of the President
101 Main Building
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506-0032

Dear President Capilouto:

As President of the Kentucky state conference of the American Association of University Professors, I am writing to express great concern about the direction that you and the board of the University of Kentucky seem to be taking with regard to shared governance. I am in contact with the UK Chapter of the AAUP, and I have also been following events as reported in the Lexington Herald.

The University of Kentucky has, in the view of AAUP members in the Commonwealth, long been a shining example of what shared governance can and should be. True shared governance is a governance structure in which faculty have actual decision-making authority in their area of primary responsibility. According to the "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" which was jointly formulated by the AAUP, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and the American Council on Education:

"The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process."

Your proposals for changing the University Senate at UK to a faculty senate that is purely advisory would be a drastic and very unfortunate retreat from real shared governance. Your proposal of establishing a council with 4 faculty, 4 staff, and 4 students would not be shared governance. It would be an example of "stakeholder" governance, in which token representatives of various types of employees are allowed to share their opinions, but the decisions are all made at the top. In essence, stakeholder governance is a sham in which those employing a dictatorial style of decision making pretend that there is shared governance. We in the AAUP want the University of Kentucky to continue the true shared governance that has been its practice since 1917.

In conclusion, I will add that my graduate degrees are from the University of Kentucky. I decided to pursue those degrees at UK because of the outstanding faculty. I did not come because of buildings or administrators or even amenities for students. The original definition of a university comes from the Latin phrase *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, which roughly means "community of teachers and scholars." In other words, as an AAUP colleague once said to me, the faculty ARE the university. As a proud alumna of the University of Kentucky I do not want to see its quality degraded by misguided ideas of reducing the authority of faculty so that decisions can be made hastily due to an apparent desire to rapidly increase the number of students. The danger is that this will result in the degrading of the quality of a UK education. This will not only harm current students, but those of us who are alumni.

I have full confidence in your ability to speak to the UK Board and to persuade them that this is not the right direction for the University of Kentucky, flagship of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nancy J. McKenney, President
KY Conference of the American Association of
University Professors

cc: Dr. DeShana Collett