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Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 10:55 AM

To: President, University of Kentucky <pres@uky.edu>; Hardwick, Katie <katie.hardwick@uky.edu>

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academicfreedom@aaup.org <academicfreedom@aaup.org>; UKAlumni <ukalumni@uky.edu>

Subject: Need to ensure faculty primacy in learning

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Dear President Capilouto and the UK Board of Trustees,

Please excuse me if you're the wrong parties to contact about this, but I do feel obliged to reach out in case it's helpful to you and university leaders in Kentucky. I'm an associate professor of English at the University of Southern Mississippi, where I coordinate a graduate program of about 60 Ph.D. and M.A. students in English. Like many faculty and academics around the country, I read today with tremendous alarm that the UK Board of Trustees is considering dissolving the 100-plus-year-old University Senate and eliminating the primacy of faculty in overseeing curricular and academic matters at UK:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/shared-governance/2024/06/05/faculty-power-under-threat-university-kentucky>

As you likely know, the proposal violates AAUP [standards](#) and long-established academic norms, according to which faculty have primary say over what is taught at the university. These standards are crucial for ensuring that learning is not politicized or subject to meddling. What happens in Kentucky could be replicated elsewhere to the detriment of learning across the country.

Although I have much respect for UK and its faculty, I'm afraid I could not recommend that any of my graduate students apply for positions at UK, nor could I encourage others to study there, if the Board of Trustees were to approve this proposal and disregard AAUP norms on shared governance. Indeed, I would urge the AAUP to censure UK if the proposal is passed and faculty say over learning is reduced to an advisory role. Again, I say this as one who cares about learning and wants to see academic standards protected, both at UK and elsewhere.

Respectfully,
Joshua Bernstein

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