My journey from faculty to full-time administrator and back again has profoundly affected me. My return to faculty status in 2008 reaffirmed the rich intrinsic rewards available to academic scholars. To be reengaged in the life of the mind is a privilege that I recognize daily. But my administrative assignments allowed me to learn a great deal about higher education in general and UK specifically. That experience affords me an invaluable perspective that I can now use to represent our shared faculty interest on UK’s Board of Trustees.

Although we can speak of our shared faculty interest, we must also recognize that in order to speak on behalf of such a diverse constituency your representative must reach out to all faculty and invite the kind of input that enables a representative to represent. That is what I pledge to do. In addition to being accessible, I want to hold regular open meetings for the purpose of kindling faculty conversations that can enhance my ability to represent all UK faculty.

My view of faculty governance was shaped early in my career when I was given an article that outlined a principle that I had never before contemplated but now hold dear. In the article, two department chairs are conversing. One says to the other “You know, my faculty…”, but he is interrupted by his colleague who cautions “Let me correct you. You have no faculty. You are their chair but they are not your faculty.” The conversation goes on to assert that faculty do not work for chairs, deans, provosts or even presidents. Rather, they all work for us. In essence, we the faculty ARE the University. There is a nuanced concept at work here; one that we faculty must embrace and reaffirm to our BOT.

In recent years core academic values and principles have been in decline as factors driving decision-making at UK. We have allowed the organizational complexity and financial intricacy of UK to obscure the essence of what we are. As a result, we have misaligned our priorities, sacrificing important academic principles. Certainly, we should not ignore financial or political realities. But we can manage the University quite well while being true to the core academic values.

Abe Maslow aptly stated: When the only tool in your box is a hammer, you treat everything as if it were a nail. We are not a for-profit business, and we must be vigilant in resisting the reification of the business metaphor else we will become something other than faculty: mere employees. Academic values and principles must steer the ship.

I am not a flame thrower or a comedian, but I will not be surpassed in my ability to stand firm by what I believe and say what needs to be said. I also recognize that good humor goes a long way to promote open and candid discussion. I would be honored by the opportunity to serve as your faculty representative to the BOT at this critical moment.