

Dear Colleagues,

To be our best, UK needs a strong faculty with a strong voice. It must improve communication, so the faculty's needs and success stories are heard at the highest levels. Mostly, it needs an attitude change I can summarize in two words: Faculty First.

Excellence begins and ends with the faculty.

A university that says it puts students first is not serious without first ensuring it has a first-rate faculty, fully staffed, supported, and engaged.

You can't put buildings first, you can't put PR first, you can't put bureaucracy first, and you most certainly can't put a culture of fear first.

The Board of Trustees needs a faculty representative who is an advocate and a great communicator willing to speak truth—your truth—to power.

To find that truth, the faculty trustee must be visible and available to hear your concerns and to celebrate your accomplishments. The faculty trustee must be a reporter, who tells you what's going on and what's coming up.

The Board of Trustees' website talks about UK's "ambitious vision." Has it been explained clearly to you?

The late, great mayor of Hazard, Kentucky, observed: "A vision without funding is a hallucination."

The University is warning us that it needs to cut \$200 million over five years. If you don't think that ax is swinging toward you, think again. You need a faculty trustee willing to sound the alarm and fight to protect faculty positions from being cut.

The University's fundraising pitch for a \$2.1 billion campaign talks about "student success, funding for research, improving healthcare for Kentuckians, strengthening alumni networks and our athletics programs."

What's the one word missing? Faculty!

Words matter. They reflect who is at the table and has the strongest voice. Please let me, Buck Ryan, be that voice for you.