

Proposed letter to members of the UK Board of Trustees
Draft – for consideration, discussion, and action by the University Senate

Members
University of Kentucky Board of Trustees

At its meeting on May 4, the Board of Trustees voted to extend the contract of the current President of the University of Kentucky despite the fact that university Administrative Regulations, approved by an earlier Board of Trustees in 1988, require university employees who are bona fide executive officers at the rank of dean or above to retire from their administrative positions by the end of the fiscal year in which they reach age 65. As the elected representatives of the faculty and students of this University, the members of the University Senate Council request that you reconsider that decision because of the manner in which it was reached.

As Kentucky's flagship university, it is our duty to openly and honestly serve the citizens of the Commonwealth. Regardless of our positions, this entails us to act with integrity and honesty. Even appearances can cause us to lose the citizens' trust. The decision to exempt de facto the President from the University's Administrative Regulations was made without any opportunity for advice from citizens, students, faculty, alumni or other administrators. It was not even included on the meeting's agenda. It appeared that some Board members had prior information about pending considerations while the majority did not. For these reasons, it looks to outsiders as if prior arrangements had been made.

As the Commonwealth's University, opinions should be welcomed for a decision as important as extending the tenure of the President beyond the regulated term. The extremely rapid nature of this decision prevented this from happening.

Many have stated that a great university requires a great faculty and student body as well as skilled administrative leaders. Great faculty and students expect to be included in important decisions affecting their professional and educational lives. In order to reach top 20 status, faculty must be enthusiastic. Faculty who are leaders in their professions want to be involved in the leadership of the University. The Board can help move our University toward top 20 status by reconsidering its decision and by receiving opinions from faculty, students and others. To act otherwise diminishes faculty morale, encourages faculty to find positions elsewhere and makes it difficult to recruit the internationally leading scholars we need.

We respectfully request that you take the following actions. First, vote to reconsider the previous decision to extend the President's contract. Second, provide a forum to receive opinions from the University community regarding the exemption of the President from the mandatory retirement regulation. Third, take a new vote on the issue of extending the President's contract/ exemption from mandatory retirement regulation following the acceptance of input and with the vote included as part of the Board's published agenda.

Respectfully Requested,

University of Kentucky Senate

US Agenda Meyer resolution 5.17.99.doc