

Final Draft of Principles for Campus Review

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The last few weeks have been a time of important and beneficial listening and engagement for me. I've talked with and heard from nearly 1,000 members of our community, in small and large groups, and I have read themes that have emerged from hundreds of anonymous submissions.

No matter the place or context, I've heard the same refrain and shared sense of commitment: we care about this community, and we understand and support its essential mission to advance Kentucky.

We all are deeply invested in the idea that this place is a promise — a promise to the people of Kentucky that through education and research, service and healing, we will make our state healthier, wealthier and wiser.

Thank you for your feedback. My thinking continues to evolve on these topics. There are times and topics on which we disagree, but embracing disagreement as a natural part of the collaborative process can lead to stronger, more resilient outcomes for the overall success of this institution.

When working well, our Governing Regulations (GRs) should lay out our values and our principles for how we should work and collaborate. They should clearly describe lines of authority — when they are shared or when a Board, officer or group have primacy.

As foundational principles, they are akin to a charter for our institution — a statement of commonly held values and clarifying principles that guide our mission and focus our work.

Our mission has not changed since our founding in 1865 — we were created to advance this state in everything we do.

That mission is expressed and executed across a complex, sprawling and multi-faceted institution with a presence in all 120 Kentucky counties and among nearly 34,000 students, more than 20,000 staff and 3,300 faculty.

Further, in recent years, the call to do and be more from our state and those we serve has increased. We have been directed by the members of our Board of Trustees, who are appointed and elected citizens to represent the people of this state, to accelerate our efforts and progress in advancing Kentucky.

Tremendous opportunities exist for Kentucky. Maximizing those opportunities will require us, in each facet of our mission, to grow and focus on how we support Kentucky. As our Board has directed, we must grow enrollment in ways that align with the state's opportunities. We must ensure that the educational foundation we provide for students prepares them for success in the workplace, but also in life.

We must strengthen and expand partnerships — in health care, research, business and among governments and non-profits — to provide more options for students and make collaboration easier for those who want to work with us. We must realize that our workplace — diverse and talented, and spread among five decades of dedicated colleagues — is changing in profound and dynamic ways. Recruiting and retaining a world-class workforce necessitates changing along with it.

And, finally, we must ensure that the rules and structures that facilitate and support our work — both on our campus and in our state — make us more, not less, responsive to what Kentucky needs.

Indeed, our continued growth — in the scope and scale of what we do and the people who comprise our community — means we must be willing to reflect on and refine the regulations, procedures and structures that are in place to support our work and ensure our success.

That is where we are at this moment in the evolution of our promise to Kentucky. We need to further focus and accelerate our efforts to advance this state, as we are being called to do and be more.

Refining our GRs is the first step as they are principles that clarify values. Our Administrative Regulations (ARs), then, are how we, as a collaborative community, operationalize those principles and ensure that everyone has a voice and role in making those values real; our community will work in the coming months to revise the ARs to align with the refined GRs.

Informed by the thoughtful and substantive feedback I've received, I offer the following principles to guide potential revisions to our GRs:

Principle 1: The University of Kentucky's Board of Trustees is the institution's ultimate authority for all policy matters, which should not be delegated.

- The Board entrusts the President, who serves as the chief executive officer, with administrative oversight to execute the policy-making direction.
- The Board will approve undergraduate admissions policies for the institution, based on the recommendations of the President, who will consult with the Faculty

Senate. The Board will continue to have final authority for new program approvals and closures.

- The President, in turn, will work with campus partners, including the shared governance bodies, who will advise the President on the development of Administrative Regulations.
- The ARs will operationalize the values and principles enumerated in the GRs.
- Further, it is critical that the Board — as expressed in the GRs — makes clear the primary role that faculty must play in the development and oversight of the University's curriculum.
- I will recommend that our Board be just as unequivocal in stating this commitment to the foundational values of tenure and academic freedom in our governing documents.

Principle 2: We need more voices being heard and more people with ranges of roles and levels of expertise being truly engaged. As such, the refined GRs will contemplate and describe three shared governance bodies, which will work on important matters relative to the expertise of each group.

We have so much momentum, so many wonderful things happening at a rapid pace. Our challenge is to balance our faculty, staff and student bodies in a shared governance structure, clarify the roles that our community members play and create parameters for how they can best function to support the constituents they represent and, ultimately, align with the larger institutional priorities.

Faculty Senate: Currently, we have a University Senate. Because of how it is structured and comprised, however, it is more accurately a Faculty Senate. The constructive feedback I have heard spoke loudly to the issues of student and staff representation — they are not adequately represented within the current structure. It is not organized to focus on the overall health and well-being of the whole University, nor is it positioned to establish or convey an overarching mission and vision for this institution. It is recommended, then, to be transitioned to a true faculty body — a Faculty Senate.

The Faculty Senate will be the official representative body of faculty at UK. The Provost will continue to seek the advice and counsel of the Faculty Senate on matters such as program reviews, approvals and closures, as well as the UK Core to ensure the curriculum aligns with our mission, that rigor is evident and that flexibility is a key tenet. Additionally, the faculty, through elected membership supporting colleges and units, should also have an important role in ensuring peer review of performance and adherence to agreed-upon standards of accountability. The faculty are the critical voice in guaranteeing a system of

faculty appointments, tenure and promotion essential in maintaining an intellectually vibrant community.

Staff Senate: Our current GRs say very little, in fact, about the role of the Staff Senate, despite it being the official representative body of staff at UK. The elected representatives should have an even more formal role, and larger say in, issues impacting staff. We can create more formal ways to get feedback through the Staff Senate, working with the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, on issues such as compensation, career progression, benefits and infrastructure, as a start.

Student Government Association: The Student Government Association is the official representative body of all UK students. It shall advise the Vice President for Student Success on matters relating to tuition, the student code of conduct, student support services, student employment and the necessary growth of co-curricular and experiential opportunities that enhance student life and career readiness, as a start.

Principle 3: To facilitate an even greater institutional focus aligned with the goals of the three bodies, I propose the creation of a President's Council, whose membership would be codified in the GRs to regularly advise the President on the most critical, high-level institutional matters.

- This council will meet regularly with the President and offer counsel on the important, high-level issues and opportunities confronting our University — from our strategic plan, key performance metrics and budgetary priorities; to proposed new initiatives that we should be thinking about; to our admissions policy and plans for growth that align with the state's needs.
- For initial feedback, I would propose that the President's Council is composed of three students, three staff, three faculty and three senior administrators.

Principle 4: There should be more primacy for the development of — and decisions about — educational policy and practice at the college and unit level.

- Even as there is an imperative to be institutionally minded on University-wide policy and strategy decisions, there are many decisions that should be made at a level closer to those most impacted, specifically students, staff and faculty within a college.
- Colleges should empower curriculum committees, composed of faculty, to make decisions and, in some cases, recommendations about courses, content, programs and initiatives. Colleges should also empower the student and staff voice in those conversations.

- The Provost will ensure that programs and curriculum meet our expectations for quality and do not create unnecessary duplication or redundancy between and among disciplines. In such cases, the Provost will consult with the Faculty Senate.

Operationalizing these principles and refined GRs should take place through a collaborative and transparent revision of the institution's ARs. In reviewing our GRs, it is clear that more information is delineated in the document than is necessary for inclusion in what is, in essence, the institution's charter. I recommend we reframe our GRs to ensure they are a collective statement of institutional principles. Other information that is included now could be moved into Appendices or considered for inclusion in Administrative Regulations as they are more operationally focused.

To that end, following the adoption of revisions to the GRs, elected leaders from among the faculty, staff and students, including the elected Faculty, Staff and Student Trustees, will be asked to work together and in concert with the administration to advise the President on the creation and implementation of ARs.

The regulations will detail through an iterative process how these principles and GRs will work in practice and policy.

For example, elected faculty, staff and student leaders, respectively, will delineate and enumerate how the elected bodies — the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and Student Government — will be comprised. Those bodies will determine their rules, their membership and how they will conduct their business in collaboration with the President or designee.

I offer these initial thoughts as draft recommendations, as points of departure for what I know will be a robust set of earnest deliberations and discussions over the next several weeks. There will be many details to be worked out as we translate principles into Governing and Administrative Regulations.

I am committed to continuously listening and learning. I will take these initial ideas and, informed by feedback from you and the entire campus community, consider refinements and improvements to them as we seek to position our community to serve our Commonwealth even better.

I look forward to our collective commitment to, and shared work in, revising the rules and structures that support our efforts to accelerate our progress in advancing Kentucky.

Together, we can meet this moment. Together, I know that we will.

Eli Capilouto, President