

Board of Trustees Discuss UK's Future

October 3, 2011

The University of Kentucky Board of Trustees met this past weekend for two days and engaged in long discussions about where we are as a university. As importantly, they talked with focus, resolve, and a sense of urgency about where we need to go in the future.

I'm confident you would have been gratified by the depth of their discussions, their commitment to this institution's future and their understanding of our central and profound importance to the Commonwealth.

Their message at the end of two days was clear:

It is time to act.

In particular, the Board urged quick action to begin the process of transforming our campus, paying particular attention to two critical priorities:

- Enhancing and expanding our undergraduate educational experience in terms of student quality, academic programming and opportunities for more Kentuckians and students from other states and backgrounds to learn and grow here.
- Renewing and rebuilding the core of our nearly 150-year-old campus. We have a 21st century faculty and curriculum. But too much living and learning is taking place in 19th century facilities. We must find creative ways to change that condition.

A brief release about the weekend retreat can be read here along with the document outlining priorities that the board utilized: <http://uknow.uky.edu/content/uk-president-board-agree-time-now-transform-campus>; www.uky.edu/President/review_report_challenges.pdf.

How do we now go about achieving such transformation?

First, we have the framework that establishes much of the template for our priorities. Hollie Swanson, our senate council chair, provided to the Board an important overview of the report by the University Review Committee, which she chaired. The report -- composed by a broad cross-section of faculty and staff leaders on our campus -- can be read here: www.uky.edu/President/review_report.pdf.

Second, I've promised to report back to the Board at their next meeting, Oct. 25, on a substantive outline of how best to move forward on these core priorities.

Third, we must pledge together to continue the dialogue. Many of you have participated in small-group discussions across campus and in colleges to talk about what makes us proud of UK, but also in a frank manner about what remains to be done. Hundreds more of you have continued the dialogue as exemplified by your responses to our recent campus survey, a summary of which can be found here: http://www.uky.edu/President/response_to_review_report.pdf

This dialogue must continue to occur in the months ahead. A shared vision and a campus consensus for action isn't a static process. It must be a living one, created by a steadfast commitment to ongoing dialogue. My pledge to you is that we will continue such discussion. Considerable and significant challenges lie ahead. We can't wish away a struggling economy or deny the fiscal constraints in which we operate. At the same time, however, we shouldn't let today's realities stymie our ability to be creative and innovative, to think strategically and in new ways about what can be done together.

That's our shared history as an institution and as agents of discovery, change and innovation. We may not be able to change the direction of the wind, but we can adjust our sails. We can harness the intellectual capacity and dynamism that exists in abundance on this campus toward the goal of moving UK forward. In the process, we will move Kentucky forward.

Regards,

Eli Capilouto
President