

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees
University of Kentucky
Friday, October 20, 2023

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of Kentucky met on Friday, October 20, 2023, in the Gatton Student Center, Harris Ballroom.

I. Meeting Opened

Chair Vance called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. and asked Secretary Webb to report the attendance.

II. Roll Call

The following members of the Executive Committee were present: E. Britt Brockman, Kimberly McCann and Robert Vance. Claude A. "Skip" Berry, III, was not in attendance. Secretary Webb announced that a quorum was present.

III. Approval of Minutes

Chair Vance stated that the minutes of the September 15, 2023, Executive Committee meeting had been distributed. Trustee Brockman moved approval of the minutes, and Trustee McCann seconded the motion. The motion carried without dissent.

IV. Presidential Evaluation Discussion

Presidential Evaluation Process 2022-23

Chair Vance reviewed the President's Constituent Evaluation results and explained the process and timeline for the benefit of the new Board members. "We should be proud of the comprehensive and transparent evaluation process this Board created several years ago. We have taken a deliberate and thoughtful approach to evaluating President Capilouto's performance over the past year."

Chair Vance highlighted results from each subject area including strategies and priorities, leadership, organization and team, relationships with constituencies, financial management, fundraising and future consideration. Participants were asked to reflect on several questions and to rank the president's performance on a scale of one to seven – with one being strongly disagreeing, and seven being strongly agreed.

Strategies and Priorities

Chair Vance reported favorable rankings in response to most every question. Respondents noted: "The President's message to "ADVANCE KENTUCKY" is a powerful one and the strategies to ensure that the University of Kentucky is at the forefront of that mission stands as an example of how higher education changes lives."

“President Capilouto is very effective working with constituents to identify opportunities, communicate, and articulate strategies for both short term and long term for the University of Kentucky.”

“I appreciate the steps the President has taken in recent months to include student leaders in conversations about strategy and priorities. This has allowed us to better communicate with the student body and work in tandem with the administration to further the goals of the University. I hope to see these initiatives continue.”

Leadership

President Capilouto received positive marks across the board. With question seven increasing from 5.9 to 6.4 from the previous year. Respondents cited his transparency, accountability, and leading by example. One respondent noted: “President Capilouto is quick in execution and always provides quantitative and qualitative reasoning behind his decisions, and no matter what disagreements students might have with particular decisions for the university as a whole, they are effectively communicated nonetheless.”

Organization and Team

Chair Vance reported all three scores increased from the previous year and the president was praised for building a solid team and fostering a highly inclusive environment. In this category, constituents commented: “The current leadership team are without question talented, devoted, brilliant and hardworking, however, the concern is the recent reorganization spreads leaders thin.”

“The President has built a great team across campus. I think the teams could improve with more cross functional communication.”

Relationships with Constituents

Respondents described the president as very engaged with his constituents and using his relationships to better the community. In this category, a constituent suggested increasing communication with Board members on issues that are being reported by the news media. Both scores increased from 5.5 to 6.4 and 5.6 to 6.2 respectively.

In this category, constituents commented: “As a UK HealthCare employee, I have met President Capilouto several times in meetings and found him to be a great listener and someone who cultivates positive outcomes. He has my trust that his plan for UK’s advancement will be successful.”

Financial Management

Financial Management continues to be a strength as reflected in the survey with all three scores increasing. The president is viewed as an exemplary steward of UK’s financial resources.

One respondent noted: “President Capilouto has put into place a strong professional financial leadership team that works together to identify financial goals and put plans into place for achievement.”

Fundraising

Chair Vance reported the president also received strong marks in the area of fundraising and building trusting relationships with donors and potential donors, pointing out the high marks displayed on the screen.

Future Consideration

Respondents believe the president is positioning the university to make meaningful progress on important strategic initiatives. Moreover, he has a clear vision and deep understanding of postsecondary education’s academic, physical and technological trajectory. Chair Vance noted that all three of the scores increased from the previous year.

Chair Vance shared that there were 22 scores on the evaluation and 20 of the scores were either higher or equal to last year and only two were below; the average score being 6.24 out of 7.0. The chair then explained that, with this information, the Board will be asked to submit their own evaluations to the Executive Committee. After the final trustee evaluations are returned, the Executive Committee will review the results and provide a report at the December Board of Trustees meeting.

President’s Senate Council Evaluation 2022-23

Chair Vance introduced Senate Council Chair DeShana Collett to present the faculty evaluation of the president.

Dr. Collette thanked the Board for having her and explained the survey of the president is annually distributed to all full-time faculty, adding that this year’s evaluation was distributed from April 4 through May 9, 2022.

Chair Collett explained there were 2,860 faculty members that were surveyed with 681 respondents, which yielded a 23.8 percent response rate, and the results were summarized and compared over the last nine years. She discussed the participation by college and explained that the survey included 17 qualitative questions where respondents ranked the president on a five-point Likert scale with an option of not responding, with one being strongly disagree, and five being strongly agree.

Dr. Collett reported that for the quantitative question results, responses from one question were shared with the Faculty Senate only and the other qualitative question results were shared with President Capilouto only. Further, Dr. Collett explained that the scores include results over the past nine years, and any scores from 3.4 and above are considered a strength.

Communicating His Plans for the Future of the University

Chair Collett reported that the faculty perceived the president as being effective in communicating his plans for the future and considered this topic as always being perceived as a positive for the president.

Generating Resources to Implement the University Mission Successfully

Additionally, faculty perceived the president's effectiveness in generating resources to implement the university mission successfully as a strength and pointed out that this topic was a strong positive for the president since the beginning of the survey.

Dr. Collett continued by stating that the next two slides are framed around faculty concerns.

Listening to Faculty Concerns

Chair Collett pointed out that the results concerning the president's effectiveness in listening to faculty concerns have trended down in the past but noted there was a slight dip as if it is going back up.

Involving the Faculty in Decision Making

The president's effectiveness at involving faculty in decision-making was similar to the previous question with a dip, but now the results were trending upwards.

Engaging the Faculty in Shared Governance

Again, Chair Collett presented similar results with the two previous questions with respect to engaging faculty in shared governance where the results were trending in a more positive rating.

Building Campus Infrastructure

The faculty felt the president was effective at building campus infrastructure and Chair Collett noted it was the strongest rated item on the survey since the beginning of the survey being administered.

Building Faculty Morale

Chair Collett reported that the president's effectiveness in building faculty morale again trended down in the past, but it appears to be increasing now.

Fostering Confidence in the Future of UK

Dr. Collett continued by reporting the president's effectiveness at fostering confidence in the future of UK remained a strength and had been consistent.

Fostering a Campus Environment that is Diverse and Inclusive

Fostering a campus environment that is diverse and inclusive has been perceived by the faculty as a strength over the past nine years and is even trending upward.

Maintaining Productive Relationships with External Constituencies

Again, Chair Collett presented similar results with respect to the president maintaining productive relationships with external constituencies, pointing out very strong positive ratings that have never gone below a 3.5 in the past nine years of evaluating President Capilouto.

Dr. Collett continued by stating the next several slides focus on undergraduate, graduate and professional education.

The faculty again perceives the president's support of undergraduate education as a huge strength. With concern to graduate education, there was a slight decrease from the previous years, but Chair Collett did not consider this a weakness and cited the COVID pandemic and the hiring of a new dean of the Graduate School and feels the trajectory is improving with a lot of innovative ideas and programs within the Graduate School.

With respect to the president's support of professional education, it is trending upward pointing out last year's comparison which was trending upward, as well, and considers this a strength of the president.

Supporting the Research and Service Mission

The faculty considers the president's support of the research and service mission as a strength and the qualitative data that the faculty senate receives supports this score, adding that the faculty perceives this as a huge strength of the president and that he has been an advocate of research and growth continuously.

Restructuring the Administration to be Cost Effective

Dr. Collett reported that restructuring the administration to be cost effective is the lowest ranking on the survey consistently with this year's result being the lowest score at 2.54.

Responding to Unusual or Crisis Situations

The data history under this topic is shorter since the question was not added until the COVID pandemic, but regardless, the faculty considers the president's response to unusual, or crisis situations continues to be a strength.

Chair Collett presented the final slide of her presentation which was a summary of the 17 quantitative questions from the survey ranked from highest to lowest score. She pointed out some general areas where there were lower ratings regarding shared governance, involving faculty in decision making, building faculty moral and restructuring the administration to be cost effective; but added all the scores were perceived as strong or very strong.

Chair Vance thanked Dr. Collett and recognized Trustee Brockman who asked for clarification of the meaning of restructuring the administration to be cost effective. Chair Collett stated that some of the faculty respondents during the qualitative question noted their perceptions of not having enough resources and that the administration is top-heavy.

Trustee Brockman pointed out that the survey occurred in April/May of 2022 prior to the dual responsibilities of the Co-Executive Vice Presidents for Health Affairs that would decrease the cost of the administrative overhead so that in fact has been addressed. Dr. Brockman continued, "It appears that all of the concerns of the faculty are related to the faculty from communication to morale to decision making."

Chair Collett agreed that these were related to the faculty's perception of their engagement with the administration especially the president and noted supporting items in the open response portion including the need for a faculty ombudsman and being involved in shared governance.

Trustee Brockman asked if this was an ongoing perpetual concern of the faculty that they have better communication and more involvement. Dr. Collett responded, "I think faculty, in general, want to be a part of shared governance always, that is one of our key principles, and how we function at the university and being involved and heard is very important to the faculty."

Trustee Brockman in conclusion remarked that it seemed natural, everyone wants to be involved in everything.

As follow up, Trustee Swanson remarked that 12 years ago or so, the faculty discussed the need for a faculty ombudsman to help settle differences between the faculty and administration, and that concern has resurfaced.

Hearing no more questions or comments, Chair Vance thanked Dr. Collett for her presentation.

V. Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation 2022-23

Chair Vance reviewed the evaluation timeline for the Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation. He reminded the Committee that pursuant to Governing Regulation II.F.12 and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Standard 4.2.g, the Board of Trustees is obligated to perform an annual self-evaluation. The Executive Committee serves as the self-evaluation review committee and shall involve the entire Board of Trustees.

Chair Vance reported that the Board feels the institution operates under a strategic plan that defines the institution's mission, goals and priorities. He reflected, "After yesterday's Retreat, I think we should be gratified that we are engaged deeply in the life of the university and substantively supporting the development and implementation of a strong strategic direction for Kentucky's university." He noted all the scores had increased from the previous year.

Under leadership and governance, the Board feels they delegate the day-to-day administration of the university to the president and his executive administrators, and the Board appropriately engages in the governance and policy-making roles designed for this body, delegating to the administration and faculty its operating duties and responsibilities.

Chair Vance stated, "Some members noted they would like to have appropriate information for understanding issues and decisions being made."

Under functions and duties, the Board feels adequately informed and understands the fiscal condition of the university, the auditing process and appropriate actions that flow from that. The Board also believes it understands and respects its roles, responsibilities and appropriate scope of authority.

Under Institutional Effectiveness, the Board feels they review the institution's performance concerning student success, research, service and health. The Board also believes the institution plays a positive economic and social role in the communities it serves across the Commonwealth.

Chair Vance noted all the scores increased with question 16 increasing with the largest margin of 5.9 to 6.5. He noted that members commented they would like to hear more regarding teaching and learning.

Under Board Culture, Board members believe they establish a culture of engagement built upon trust, respect and a commitment to inquiry and inclusion; and are committed to diversity, equity and inclusivity throughout the campus community.

Chair Vance thanked the members for their participation and opened the floor to questions. Hearing none he stated that the Board would receive their individual evaluations of the president in the coming weeks and the results will be presented at the December Executive Committee.

VI. Other Business

Chair Vance recognized Secretary Webb who announced the upcoming lecture Just Action and the Color of Law, featuring Richard and Leah Rothstein who will lead a critical discussion of their books, supplied to the Board members at their seats, and take a deep dive of the economic and social travesties created by redlining.

VII. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rachel Watts Webb,
Secretary