

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Heather Bush, Dean, UK College of Public Health, Co-Chair of Work Group

George Wright, Senior Adviser to the President, Co-Chair of Work Group



UPDATE FROM GOVERNING REGULATIONS REVIEW WORK GROUP

Overview

- Work Group Members
- Board of Trustees Motion from April
- Our Work and Process
- History/Background
- Benchmarking
- Expedited Faculty Appointment Process
- Discussion

Work Group Members

- Heather Bush, Dean, Public Health, Co-Chair
- George Wright, Senior Adviser to the President, Co-Chair
- Johanna “Hanna” Hoch, Incoming Chair, Faculty Senate; Professor in Health Sciences
- Carl Harper, Chair, Staff Senate
- Nick Pace, President, Student Government
- Kelly Holland, Community member; President-elect, UK Alumni Association; former UK Board of Trustees member
- Jay Blanton, Vice President for University Relations
- Dave Melanson, Executive Director for External Relations, staff support

Subject Matter Experts Providing Information Background:

- Caroline Baesler, UK Office of Legal Counsel
- Fredrick Martin, UK Human Resources
- Rebecca Thomas, Provost Office for Faculty Advancement

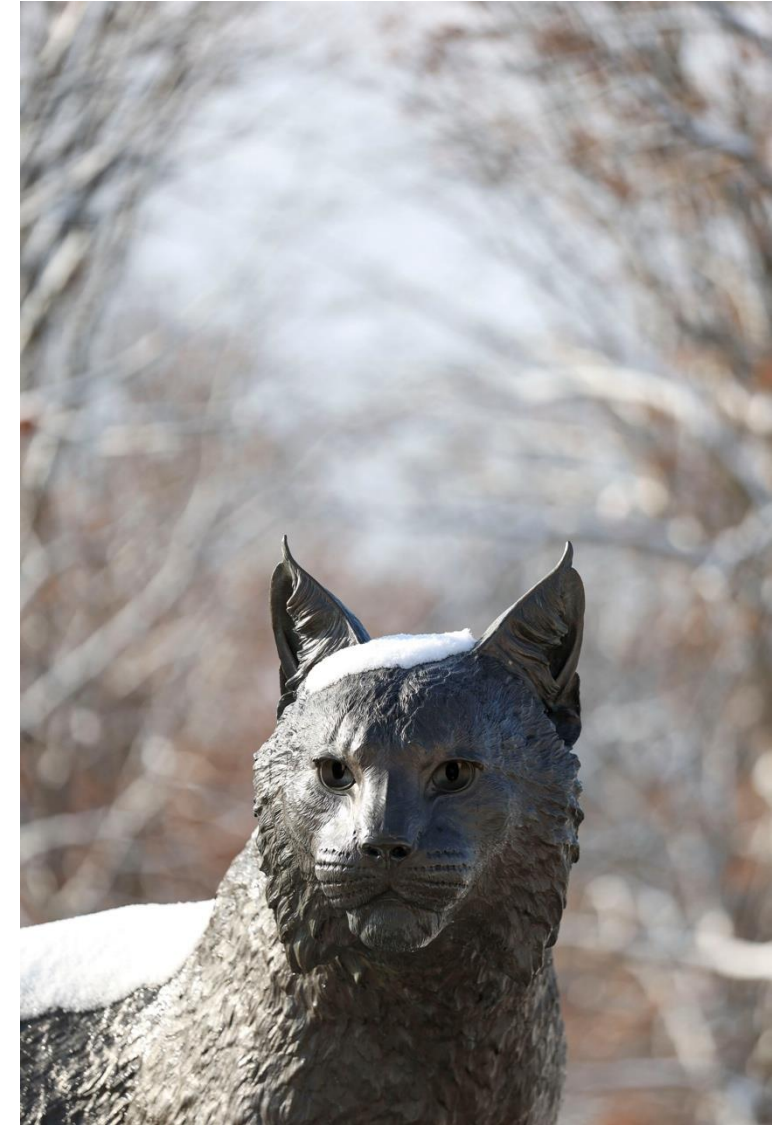
Resolution from the UK Board of Trustees — April 2026

“A collaborative group of university stakeholders examine, adjust and revise where appropriate the governing regulations to allow for a vote on these kinds of appointments going forward, and to report back to the Board at its next meeting.”



Work Group Scope

- Work Group focused specifically on dean appointments to major academic units, as these roles present unique governance and operational considerations.
- A dean serves as the chief administrative officer of a college, responsible for academic leadership, fiscal management and personnel oversight.
- Importantly, the dean role is defined as an administrative assignment, distinct from any underlying faculty appointment.



Work Group Meeting and Process

- Group met six times
- Group reviewed relevant information
 - Governing and Administrative Regulations (pre- and post-2024)
 - Provost's report to the UK Board of Trustees in April 2026
 - Dean offer letters
 - UK-PURPOSE (Strategic Plan 2021)
 - UK Board of Trustees' Project Accelerate directive (2023)



Governance Changes

- Project Accelerate led to campus conversations about university governance.
- Benchmarking research of Kentucky public institutions, SEC institutions and surrounding state flagship/land-grant institutions.
 - Analysis showed a different shared governance model than UK, with the exception of Kentucky State University.
- Extensive campuswide meetings with stakeholders.
 - President met over 1,000 people in small group sessions.
 - President met with executive bodies of the three shared governance branches.
- In June 2024, UK Board of Trustees voted 19-1 in favor of governance changes.
 - Restates the Board of Trustees as the institution's final authority.



UPDATE FROM GOVERNING REGULATIONS REVIEW WORK GROUP

Accelerate our Purpose

Shared Governance Structure

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Current GR III delegates administrative authority to President.

PRESIDENT

Chief executive officer of the University and has responsibility over the administration of the University.

ADVISORY

**STUDENT
GOVERNMENT
ASSOCIATION**

Liaison
through VP for
Student
Success

**FACULTY
SENATE**

Liaison
through
Provost

**STAFF
SENATE**

Liaison
through EVPFA

**PRESIDENT'S
COUNCIL**

Students
Faculty
Staff

UPDATE FROM GOVERNING REGULATIONS REVIEW WORK GROUP

Historical Board of Trustees Personnel Actions

Board Appointment Approvals — July 2014-June 2024

Number of Administrative Faculty Appointments Presented	Number of Dean Appointments Presented	Number of Senior Faculty Appointments (with tenure) Presented
215 permanent appointments	25 permanent dean appointments	179 senior appointments (Associate or Professor) with tenure
144 interim/acting appointments	17 new to UK faculty; 8 current UK faculty members	

All these appointments were approved by the UK Board of Trustees. None were pulled for further review.

BOARD APPROVAL AUTHORITY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY DEAN APPOINTMENTS

A study of governance roles and scope of authority in May 2026, analyzing how different institutions balance power between the Board of Trustees, university presidents and faculty. Analysis included 40 institutions.

Tier 1: Board Approval Mandated	Tier 2: Unclear Policies	Tier 3: Administrator Empowered
30% of institutions mandate Board approval Only 12 institutions maintain policies explicitly requiring Board of Trustees approval for dean appointments.	13% of policies remain unclear Five institutions operate with no definitive or clear policies regarding specific dean appointment authority.	57% of institutions empower administrators to appoint deans 23 institutions permit the president or other administrators to appoint deans without a formal Board vote.

Key Findings in Benchmark Analysis

Of the 16 SEC schools, 11 delegate dean appointments to the university president. Three of the five remaining SEC schools that require Board of Trustees approval are: Mississippi State, Missouri and Ole Miss. Two SEC institutions fall in the tier 2 category and are unclear with their policies on institutional approval. Those institutions are Louisiana State and Oklahoma.
Several aspirational institutions delegate dean appointments to the president or their administrative team, including: Florida, North Carolina, Northwestern, Tennessee, Texas, Texas A&M, UCLA, USC (California), Vanderbilt and Virginia.
The University of Kentucky has a larger Board of Trustees size than many on the comparative list. Of the 40 schools in the analysis, eight schools had Boards that were the same size or larger than UK's. All eight of those institutions delegated the approval of deans to the president, rather than to the Board of Trustees.

Current Expedited Appointment Process

Pre-vetting of candidate’s curriculum vitae (CV) and dean’s assessment that the candidate merits senior rank/tenure under UK standards; reviewed/approved by associate provost for faculty advancement.

Offer letter must explain that rank/tenure are contingent on approval by provost and Board of Trustees.

Candidate submits dossier materials (CV, teaching portfolio, statements, etc.).

Department solicits three external evaluative letters based on dossier plus UK department’s standards for rank/tenure.

Dossier (with external letters) is then reviewed by faculty from academic unit; those of same/higher rank must provide written judgments.

Academic unit leader reviews all materials to date and adds their written recommendation.

College Appointment, Promotion and Tenure (APT) Committee reviews all materials to date, holds discussion and vote, and provides a committee recommendation.

College dean reviews all materials to date and adds their written recommendation.

Dossier is reviewed by provost; in unusual cases, the Provost APT Advisory Committee may be asked to assess the dossier before the provost’s final recommendation.

Provost submits to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Reviewed Academic Approval Process for Senior Hires

- Work Group asked the Office of the Provost about timeliness for approval of academic appointments.
 - Received report from Associate Provost Becky Thomas.
- Dr. Thomas' analysis indicates that the average duration from the Office of the Provost receipt of an approved offer letter until Board of Trustees consideration is **244 days**.
- When isolating internal process time from offer letter approval to Office of the Provost appointment approval (last step before sending forward to the president/BOT), the average duration is **189 days**.

Work Group Findings

- Majority of benchmark and other comparative institutions delegate appointment of deans to administration (president or chief academic officer). That includes the majority of the SEC.
- UK has a larger Board than many comparator institutions. Of those with similarly sized Boards, the authority to appoint deans is delegated to administration.
- Ten years of dean and faculty appointment data show that appointments have been met with no Board questions.
- Academic approval process for senior hires — including deans — is too long, cumbersome.
 - 244 days from receipt of approved offer letter until Board consideration.
 - 189 days from receipt of approved offer letter until Office of the Provost approval.

Option 1

Maintain current appointment process

- Appointment of deans would remain at administrative level.
- This is in alignment with majority of peer institutions.
- This is in alignment with the Board of Trustees directive to “accelerate” and be more nimble.

Option 2

A hybrid approach

The Board could recommend a change in the current GR II regarding “appointments requiring action by the Board.”

- Academic administrators may have both an academic appointment and an administrative appointment or may have only an administrative appointment.
- The Board, acting upon the recommendation of the President, shall take final University action on the academic appointment.
- The President, after consultation with appropriate groups, shall take final University action on the administrative appointment.
- If an individual already has an academic appointment at the University or does not wish to have an academic appointment, then the President will inform the Board of the administrative appointment.
- In those instances, when the individual seeks both an academic appointment and an administrative appointment, the review for academic rank and tenure will follow a process to be developed under the direction of the President that is specific to deans, given the unique nature of this role within the University.
- The recommendation on the academic appointment shall be conveyed, through the President, to the Board, as soon as practicable.

Option 3

Return to dean appointment process prior to Governing Regulations revisions

- Some peers — a minority but not an insignificant number — take this approach.
- Recognizes the unique position of dean, which has both administrative and academic responsibilities.
- This would require modifications to the provost offer letter to better align with current timeliness and academic appointment process.

QUESTIONS

