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OP-ED

# *Administrative takeover of UK is now complete: a dangerous program by dishonest means. | Opinion*

BY DOUGLAS MICHAEL  
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University of Kentucky President Eli Capilouto RYAN C. HERMENS [rhermens@herald-leader.com](mailto:rhermens@herald-leader.com)

On Friday, the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees will vote to hand over the keys to President Eli Capilouto, leaving the governance of UK to him and him alone. This will remove any semblance of an **effective faculty voice in shared governance**. I write to you in my position as the final elected Chair of the University Senate Council, which will be abolished. I am thus the last person within the University to speak as a representative of all the faculty. The takeover this Friday concerns me. It should concern you, too. You should care because this isn't just quibbling over

regulations, this is a president deliberately and deceitfully disenfranchising organized faculty governance for no apparent reason.

**It is a dangerous and reckless program.** The President has manufactured an emergency, demanding that his Trustees act rushed and uninformed. The faculty, through the University Senate, offered four times to help. Four times we were ignored. The resulting rules, penned by anonymous hands, are incomplete nonsense: sloppy, uncoordinated, and lacking critical guidance. They threaten academic rigor, student rights, and institutional integrity, remnants of a once-cohesive system dismembered in pursuit of expediency. Deans, driven by revenue targets, can propose courses and degrees devoid of academic rigor or student protections. Review is not by faculty, but by growth-obsessed administrators focused on expanding our healthcare delivery system. Well-run flagship universities do not flail about as we are about to do. Even if there is triumph over this chaos, there was no reason for the chaos in the first place. This is how doors fly off of airplanes, Mr. President.

**It was wrought by dishonest means.** None of the reasons ever given for this action support the actual measures taken. The President orchestrated messaging designed to set students and staff against faculty. He organized “listening sessions” where he reported what he wanted (the voices of staff and students) and disregarded the rest (the clear concerns of faculty, who were only allowed to participate with their Deans present). The fog continues to the end. On Friday, the Trustees will see almost 300 pages of previously secret documents, first revealed to them only days ago, and written with no input outside of central administration. No faculty, no staff, no students. In particular, the President reneged on a promise to keep existing faculty representatives involved and in place, substituting representatives handpicked by the Deans and the Provost.

**It is clear that the President has failed his faculty.** Faculty morale is already at an all-time low and still in palpable decline, witness the University Senate’s more than two-to-one approval last month of a motion expressing [no confidence in our President](#). In addition, each year the University Senate administers an anonymous survey, evaluating the President’s performance in the preceding year. This year’s poll was just completed, results will be published Wednesday at <https://universitysenate.uky.edu/facultys-evaluation-president>. Please look fast! After Friday I am sure it will be taken down. More than 800 faculty responding (a record) rate President Capilouto overall much more poorly this year. Contrast statements in this paper by the President and Board Chair that only “a few faculty” are concerned. I have, until now, found our President to be a forthright and admirable leader. It is sad and disappointing that he leaves a legacy tarnished at the tail like this for no apparent reason.

I walk to work each day on the path to Memorial Hall, where – literally written in stone – is our commitment together to “shared governance” and “personal responsibility and accountability.” Apparently, these monuments are an insufficient bulwark against the reckless and dishonest conduct of the President and his administration, for which all of Kentucky will be the poorer.

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