

UK 'shoving' new regulations down employees throats without any proof they will work

BY ROBERT GROSSMAN



The UK administration is shoving its plans for reform of UK's regulations down the throats of the faculty in the name of increasing enrollment and streamlined decision-making, but it provides no evidence that the changes it seeks will accomplish its goals, while completely ignoring the collateral damage that it will impose on the University.

The President has misled student and staff representatives on the Board, the Student Government Association (SGA), and

the Staff Senate into believing that the planned changes will increase their voices in decision-making. Under the administration's plans, the SGA and Staff Senate will be purely advisory. The President will have *no* obligation to abide by *any* of their suggestions. The President could have established staff and student consultative bodies at any time in the last 12 years, but he never proposed to do so until this semester, when he needed to distract them from the evisceration of the University Senate (U-Senate).

By contrast, the 18 students in the U-Senate and the three on the Senate Council comprise 15% and 25% of the voting members, respectively. The U-Senate has recently enacted several policy

changes specifically in response to student concerns. Under the administration's plans, student voices will be diminished, not enhanced, because the planned Faculty Senate, whose purview will include academic policy matters and UK Core, will have *zero* student members.

The U-Senate recognizes the validity of the staff's concerns about their voices not being heard, but those concerns can be addressed without eviscerating the U-Senate's policy-making authority. Sadly, the President has ignored the U-Senate's offers to address staff's concerns together.

Enhancing the voices of the students and staff does not in any way require abolishing the University Senate and stripping it of

its policy-making authority.

The President has asserted that accelerating the establishment of new curricula, as mandated by the Legislature, requires UK to abolish the U-Senate's oversight over colleges' curricular proposals. Doing so, however, will create more problems than it will solve.

The U-Senate oversees curricular proposals for two reasons. First, it ensures that faculty from all over this diverse University are aware of what is happening in other parts of the University so that colleges can coordinate their efforts in areas of mutual interest, avoiding waste and duplication. Under the administration's plans, there will be no mechanism to facilitate intercollege communication among faculty.

than 100 years, the U-Senate, representing the faculty, and the administration have shared policy-making authority, with the nature of the policy determining who has final decision-making authority. History has shown that institutions in which power is decentralized, as in American government, are always the most robust in the long term. The administration's plans will concentrate all power in the President's hands and allow him to disregard all independent voices at UK. Viktor Orban would be proud.

The President's proposed changes will seriously damage this unique educational institution. He should achieve his goals by working *with* the U-Senate and other stakeholders to propose new regulations that *everyone* at UK can support.

Robert Grossman has been a UK Professor of Chemistry for 30 years and served 2014-2020 as the elected faculty representative on the UK Board of Trustees.

Where is the research and data that dissolving UK Senate is best for school?

BY DONALD J. MULLINEAUX

Britt Brockman, the chair of the University of Kentucky's Board of Trustees has attempted to assuage concerns about efforts to redefine the University's governance by scaling back the role of the faculty in the process. He suggests relevant constituents be comforted since "board members are successful business people and public policy representatives." A review of mission statements at public and private universities will identify the fundamental purpose as "creating, preserving, and disseminating knowledge through research, teaching, and public service." UK's mission statement is no exception. Given Mr. Brockman's claim, it's reasonable to ask whether a university's mission statement is consistent with that of businesses.

Milton Friedman, the renowned Nobel-prize winning University of

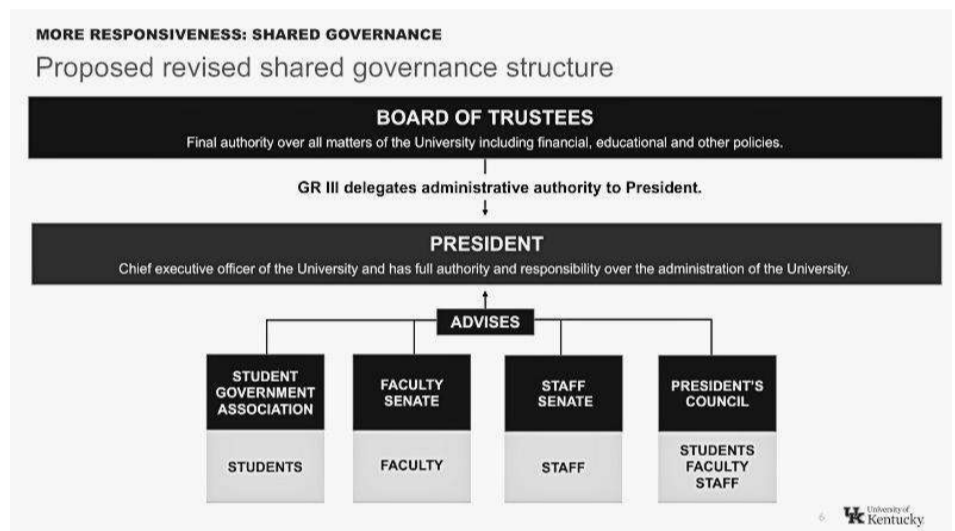
Chicago economics professor famously stated that the singular purpose of business managers and boards was "to maximize profits for the shareholders." Never lost for words, Friedman went on to say in a groundbreaking NY Times essay "a business that takes seriously its responsibilities for providing employment, eliminating discrimination, or avoiding pollution is preaching pure and unadulterated socialism."

It's not hard to envision what Professor Friedman would have had to say about programs to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion were he still with us. One of Friedman's most influential disciples, Harvard Professor Michael Jensen, is the godfather of rewarding CEO's with lavish incentive compensation. He commented before his recent death that stock options had become "managerial heroin" and what the business world lacked was integrity. He described the world of

finance around the time of the financial crisis as "staggeringly bad." Professor Jensen's prolific research has been cited over 340,000 times in the academic literature according to Google Scholar.

If the most famous doyens of economics call for an extremely narrow focus for businesses that have occasionally yielded egregiously bad outcomes, it seems hard to believe a claim that business people are best qualified to govern a university. That the university's senior administration would find this claim credible is disturbing, if not alarming. While a university obviously must assure it has a sustainable financial future, the fundamental aims of universities and businesses seem much more distinct than consistent. There are university's focused on profit maximization as their mission, however, and they go by names such as the "University of Phoenix."

Mr. Brockman contends that the proposed changes



University of Kentucky President Eli Capilouto will propose a new governance structure for the university at board meetings next week. The university senate, which currently holds policy-making power, would become an advisory board, and decisions about courses and curriculum would be approved by the provost.

in the University's governance represent "best practices." Says who? He cites the "Association of Governing Boards," whose leadership positions are held by representatives of the University of Central Florida, The College of New Jersey, and Old Dominion University. These do not strike me as institutions that UK is aspiring to emulate. What are the peer institutions that are instituting similar changes? And what is the research that supports the claim that these proposed changes will yield positive

outcomes? How did the extant faculty role in governance impede the achievement of the mission, as the proposed changes seem to imply? A university builds the rationale for its existence on quality research and teaching, as UK's mission statement attests. Why will placing more weight on the judgments of those who have never been engaged in either and less on those who have such experience be a better road to governance? As far as I can tell, there has been no adequate response to this

question. Instead, the university leadership has said little more than "trust us." Business members on the board may recall a famous line from Ronald Reagan: "Trust, but verify."

Dr. Donald J. Mullineaux served as the DuPont Endowed Chair in Banking and Financial Services in UK's Gatton College of Business from 1984-2015. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati from 2011 to 2013, including six years as Board Chair.

FROM PAGE 1C

BLACKFORD

music and art on brain development; they are good for all children and in fact help the test scores that our states puts so much emphasis on.

Remember way back in 2011 when Superintendent Stu Silberman insisted on music, foreign language and chess in every elementary school? I do.

As veteran choral teacher Kathleen Balling said in a lengthy Facebook post on Tuesday, once again,

our most vulnerable students will be the ones who lose out.

"The schools that have student populations that need the arts the most, because families do not have the resources for private lessons, classes, camps, etc., are the ones who are losing out," she wrote.

"I have taught at three Title I elementary schools since moving to Kentucky. The first one for 13 years,

the last 2 years the arts positions were cut from full time to .5 due to enrollment/funding. The second school for a year and the interim principals cut Music and Drama in favor of STEM. The third for 3 years before again, enrollment/ funding lead to the choice of cutting music (a discretionary position).

"SBDMs should not be put in a position to have to choose. It shouldn't matter the enrollment, every school should have arts educators."

So here's some free advice to everyone in-

involved:

● Parents, please go to your school's SBDM meetings. They are open to the public and offer an amazing viewpoint on why and how schools do what they do. By understanding how everything works, you might be able to offer schools more grace instead of constantly complaining about them.

Then run to be one of the parent representatives on the council, or join the school PTA. You can't complain and not be involved.

● Dr. Liggins, you are in the middle of budget plan-

ning for next year. We understand it's very very complicated stuff. Nonetheless, this would be a perfect time to fully explain how Fayette County's budget works. We know you don't get enough money from Frankfort. But parents and taxpayers still want to know how many people work in Central Office doing what. They want to know why Henry Clay High School can't afford beakers in chemistry classes. They want to know exactly what you're spending money on and why.

Of course, it's tempting for public officials to try to control the narrative.

But it never, ever works. It creates ill will and a culture of intimidation and fear. Let principals tell us what they're doing and why so we can understand what's going on. If parents are really shareholders, then bring them in, don't shut them out.

Arts and music instruction is one of those rare topics that nearly everyone agrees on.

Let's make it happen.

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FROM PAGE 1C

PRATHER

supporters, they are more likely to be reluctant (and even embarrassed) Trump voters, or Never Trumpers, or Democrats. Fundamentalists tend to march much more in lock step with the MAGA movement."

Third, Pentecostals.

Whereas it can be hard for outsiders to tell evangelicals from fundamentalists, French observes, Pentecostals are a differ-

ent species altogether:

"The movement was started by a Black pastor named William Seymour, and it is far more supernatural in its focus than, say, the Southern Baptist or Presbyterian church down the street," French says.

Pentecostals believe the miraculous gifts and miracles given to the church on the Day of Pentecost, as detailed in the biblical

books of Acts and 1 Corinthians, are still available to Christians, including prophecy, speaking in tongues and gifts of healing.

They tend to be working class rather than middle- or upper-middle class, and their churches tend to be more racially diverse than other evangelical or even mainline churches.

Worldwide, Pentecostalism is now the second-largest branch of the Christian faith, trailing only the Roman Catholic Church. It's especially strong in the global south.

"Pentecostalism is arguably the most promising and the most perilous religious movement in America," French says. "At its best, the sheer exuberance and radical love of a good Pentecostal church is transformative. At its worst, the quest for miraculous experience can lead to a kind of frenzied superstition."

He's correct again, on both counts. My background includes all three factions of this evangelical/born-again amalgam.

My paternal grandpar-

ents were fundamentalist Baptists. Family lore says Granny grieved when my dad, as a young man, migrated to the evangelical Southern Baptists. He'd become a liberal, she thought, and his soul was in grievous danger.

I grew up Southern Baptist, then. Much later, when I was a young man, my parents left the Southern Baptists for the Pentecostals. I soon followed, making a different transition — from proud, flag-waving reprobate to Holy Roller.

I've lived the born-again

spectrum up close and personal.

And I've long tried to tell folks who aren't familiar with that influential religious worldview (or set of worldviews), "Those born-again Christians aren't just one thing. It's really complex in there."

Many thanks to French for making that clearer.

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