

# Local opinion: U of A failure of leadership

Richard Brusca Special to the Arizona Daily Star 31 mins ago



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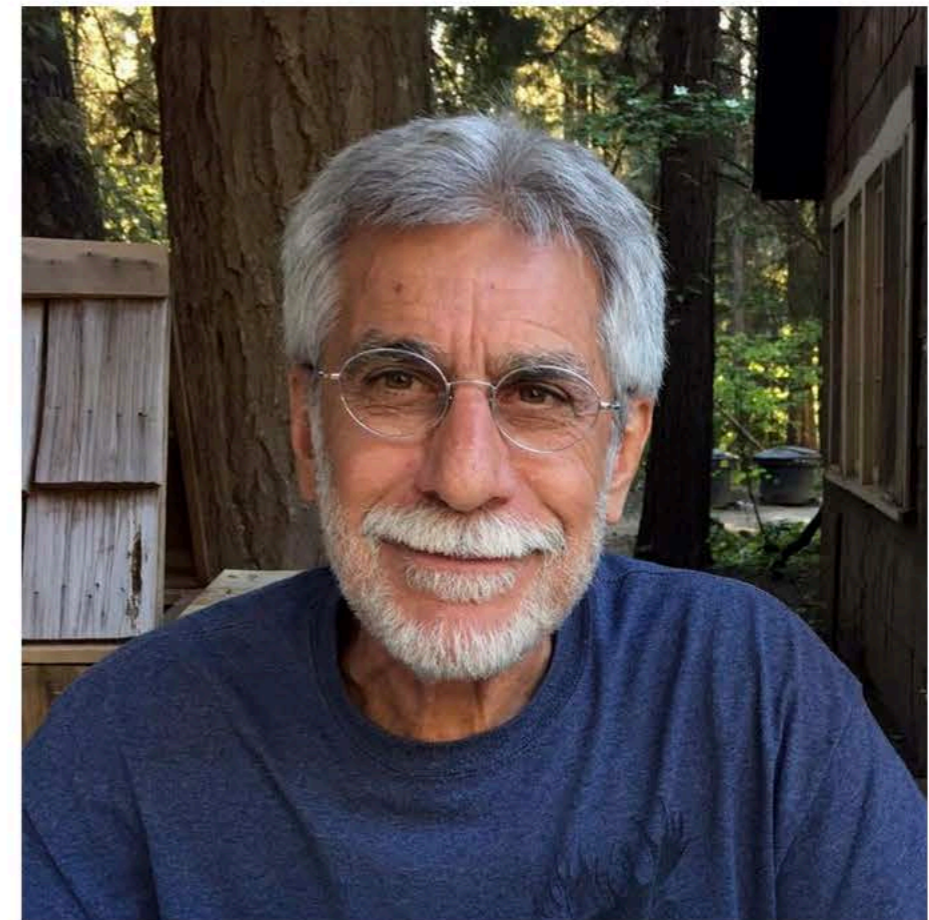
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*The following is the opinion and analysis of the writer:*

Just to put Mr. Kopcsak's interesting administrative salary statistics into broader perspective, I note that the University of Arizona has 21 vice presidents and 22 deans. Harvard, arguably the best university in the Americas, has 10 vice presidents and 15 deans. Does the UA really need twice as many vice presidents and more deans than Harvard? The website OpenPayrolls reports President Robbins' 2023 pay as \$954,515, which is 1,206% higher than the average pay for university and college employees, and 1,276% higher than the national average for government employees. The Daily Wildcat reported (Feb. 5, 2024) that the average UA dean's salary for men was \$312,554 and for women \$261,571.



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But what about the faculty, the heartbeat of the institution and the people upon whom a university's academic reputation is built? The UA website reports faculty salaries by gender. Here is what they say.

The median salary of tenure-track faculty (2020 data) at the UA is \$80,900 for female assistant professors (\$89,750 for male), \$92,510 for female associate professors (\$99,801 for male), and \$125,999 for female full professors (\$131,959 for male). The UA average faculty salary is well below other U.S. Research I universities and actually decreased from 2022 to 2023. Yet it is on the backs of the faculty, and grants they must raise to pay for their research, graduate students, and postdocs. Departments (and the university) gain national academic recognition through these faculty efforts, and it has very little to do with university administrators.

The qualifications of good leadership include intelligence and an ability to make wise decisions, honesty, and compassion. President Robbins seems lacking in all these important attributes. By lacking transparency and blaming other people and circumstances for the problems the university faces, Robbins has failed to earn the trust of his staff, faculty, and students. After months of waiting, listening to President Robbins blaming others and offering countless excuses and misleading statements, I have yet to hear him say what must be said: “I am sorry. I made many mistakes. I have allowed runaway administrative bloat and athletic overspending drain the university of its finances. It was my responsibility not to allow this to happen, but I failed.”

It is important to note that this disastrous failure of leadership does not stop with President Robbins. The Arizona Board of Regents must also take responsibility. Their record of presidential hires for the University of Arizona is far less than impressive and their oversight seems entirely lacking. Personally, I feel the state needs both a new UA President and a new ABOR.

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