

Dear University Faculty,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to inform you about a significant development that occurred during the Friday Board of Trustees meeting. Please see the [approved Board of Trustee resolution, link](#) to related recording of the February 23rd Board of Trustee meeting, [recording of Trustee Swanson's dissent](#), and the two articles published today from the Herald Leader from [Linda Blackford](#) and [Monica Kast](#). They will give you some degree of understanding of the level of institutional urgency.

As you are aware, the University Senate has historically played a crucial role in both shaping educational policy but ensuring academic integrity and communication across our institution. However, during Friday's UK's Board of Trustee meeting, each member, with the lone exception from Trustee Hollie Swanson's vote in opposition, approved a resolution to charge the President to "[r]ecommend changes to the University Governing Regulations" to align our University Senate with our peers. [The information presented to the Board of Trustees by CR1 Workgroup 5: More Responsiveness and the consultant group Deloitte](#), seemed to be an attack on the role of our institution's University Senate. This past Tuesday, I received a copy of the presentation and was surprised by the finding given that I, Senate Council Chair, was never interviewed by Workgroup 5 or Deloitte and my office did not receive any data request related to the efficiency of the Senate. These actions alone seem inconsistent with both collaboration and careful assessment and are puzzling with as the President has continually professed his commitment to shared governance.

The assertion by [CR1 Workgroup 5](#) and Deloitte, that the University Senate's governance structure deviates significantly from benchmark institutions, lacked substantial support from data analysis. Moreover, there was no analysis of what part of the variation may represent warranted changes due any unique features of the University. In best practices, variation is a trigger for further analysis, not for immediate change to eliminate variation. The methods used in data analysis per Deloitte, are not "scientific". Again, this is puzzling from a top tier land grant university to consider this acceptable.

The message you received yesterday from the President includes the statements from the resolution that imply faculty have a "authoritative role in the development and review of academic policies", however, after attending the Board of Trustee meeting, it seems clear that "a substantive role" excludes authority over educational policies that affect our students.

Although our governance structure indeed differs from some benchmark institutions, we are certainly not alone in the nature of our educational policy responsibilities the Deloitte consultant's misrepresentation to the Board notwithstanding. Several comparable institutions share similar structures and possess the authority, delegated

by their Boards of Trustees or equivalents, to make well-informed decisions on academic policies, including admissions (see [Alabama](#), [Arkansas](#), [Missouri State](#), [Wisconsin Madison](#)). What sets us apart is that our *University Senate*, emblematic of our commitment to shared governance, is a body of voting faculty, students, and administrators that, in part, performs statutory actions for " the faculty of the university."

This resolution approved by the Board of Trustee represents a fundamental shift in the intended governance structure of our University ([Slide 16 illustrates a Senate that is completely advisory](#)) and it is imperative that we come together to discuss the implications of this decision and determine our path forward. We will request the President be present and provide him with an opportunity to respond to questions and concerns. While the approved resolution may present challenges, it also provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of shared governance and advocate for the continued involvement of faculty, students, and administrators in shaping the educational policies that directly impact our students and academic community.

I want to be optimistic, however, I am concerned by the tone of the report, lack of collaboration in the analysis, and haste with which the Board has requested a proposal for change. I urge all Senators and University Faculty to engage in a thoughtful and constructive dialogue about this matter. Your input and participation are essential as we navigate this situation and work towards ensuring that the voice of the faculty continues to be heard, respected, and have substantial impact within our University.

The Monday, March 4th Senate Council meeting will be held at 3:00 pm in room 311, Gatton College of Business and Economics. I encourage everyone to make every effort to attend in person and encourage all University Faculty to attend. The agenda with information will be posted on the Senate website.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and please share this email with your colleagues.

Sincerely,
DeShana

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She/Her/Hers ([What's this?](#))

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Board of Trustees Policy on Shared Governance. GR I.E “in an environment of shared governance, faculty bodies and administrators will reciprocally solicit and utilize the expertise of the other as each makes decisions in their respective areas of policy-making authority.”

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