

Subject: Clarifying Misinformation: Setting the Record Straight
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Web Version



Dear University Community,

Over the last month, UK's upper administration has repeatedly used false or misleading evidence to accuse the University Senate of cumbersome inefficiencies, poor leadership, and inhibiting the growth and agility of our educational programs. University Senate members and Senate Council leadership have repeatedly requested to be included as true collaborators in examining potential inefficiencies or procedural confusion and for the President to partner with us in formulating solutions to any problems we identify together. The administration, unfortunately, continues to rebuff our attempts as true collaboration, even though best practices in reforming shared governance recommend such partnerships.

At the Monday, March 18, 2024, University Senate meeting, the President once again used inaccurate accounts to malign the University Senate and its processes unfairly. Using a story that has been repeatedly relayed by College of Medicine personnel in listening sessions as well as other venues, the President pointed to a stalled proposal for a course in Spanish for medical practitioners as an example of how the University Senate prevents us from achieving our goals to improve education and healthcare in the Commonwealth. You can watch a video of the President's statement on this matter at this [link](#). Unfortunately, the President did not have accurate information about this proposal. The truth of the matter is that the University Senate was not responsible for the failure of this proposed course to advance.

It is startling that this false characterization of the events came in the very same University Senate meeting at which the President had, just minutes earlier, made the following assertion about what we must retain as part of the course review process:

"There needs to be a way that we check ... such that we don't duplicate, and we encourage collaboration."

The facts reveal that it was at precisely this juncture in the review process that the Medical Spanish courses were paused and withdrawn by the proposer before they could be approved by the University Senate. **Here are additional facts, the omission of which has led to the false and unethical characterization of events:**

1. The College of Medicine submitted a proposal on July 5, 2023, for two new sequential courses: [Medical Spanish 1 elective \(MED 802-1cr\)](#) and [Medical Spanish 2 elective \(803-2cr\)](#). Both courses were proposed to be offered only in the fall and spring semesters. Because they were submitted after the end of the previous academic year, they are not reviewed by a council until the council begins meeting in September.
2. The course proposals were then reviewed by the Senate Health Care Colleges Council, which includes College of Medicine members. The [HCCC](#) found the proposed course syllabi were missing information required of every University course syllabus to comply with the *institutional* accrediting body SACSCOC ([SACSCOC Standard 9.2,10.1](#)). The proposals for these features were corrected and approved by the HCCC. [9/28/2023]
3. The only remaining step was what we call a 10-day web transmittal, a University-wide accessible posting of the curricular proposals, that allows **all** colleges to see the posted proposals and indeed, as the President has acknowledged, to 'check that it doesn't duplicate and that collaboration is encouraged.' [10/2/2023]
4. On October 12, 2023, the proposer was contacted by a member of the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Hispanic Studies who noted potential pedagogical issues related to the way the proposed courses were at that time described and included concern with student learning outcomes that implied that after just two semesters of online practice, providers would be qualified to bypass using qualified interpreters in healthcare. The A&S colleague pointed out existing high-functioning collaborations between the A&S program and UK HealthCare programs. The A&S colleague asked in part if the proposer could pause the proposal "until we have the opportunity to communicate more among our departments."
5. That same day, the College of Medicine course proposer responded in part, "I'm willing to pause our current approach to respect the principles of collaboration... I believe we can develop a solution that serves their needs while aligning with our shared goals. I would greatly appreciate the chance to discuss this further."
6. The next day ([October 13, 2024](#)), the A&S Hispanic Studies contact responded, "Thank you so much for your quick response and your willingness to pause the approval process for now. I truly appreciate your openness to a collaborative effort ... Again, thanks so much for your

willingness to collaborate."

The University Senate never disapproved or stopped the course proposal.

Rather, the proposer paused the proposal during exactly the step the President has elsewhere specifically advocated being a part of the process: colleges in communication with each other "check[ing] ... such that we don't duplicate, and we encourage collaboration."

The College of Medicine course proposer paused the 10-day web transmittal, which is the last approval step and **has yet to re-engage** in the streamlined final step.

How can the President avoid such false and derisive characterizations of the work of the University Senate? We suggest, once again, that it is only through collaboration as true and equal partners that we can do quality work to identify weaknesses in our systems and to create solutions together.

To read more about a framework for such collaboration and partnership, we recommend [this article](#), which describes best practices for adapting university governance to meet the needs of the Board of Trustees, the administration, and the faculty in these tumultuous and changing times in higher education.

Additionally, as we seek to maintain our unity, we urge all faculty members of our University community to unite in solidarity to safeguard our rights and responsibilities within the University governance framework. Kindly consider endorsing and signing the letter and petition provided below.

The [AAUP Open Letter](#) articulates essential points advocating for faculty governance, emphasizing faculty involvement in institutional decisions and the preservation of academic integrity standards.

The UCW's faculty organizing committee has initiated a [petition](#) addressing the President's recent actions and the resolution of the Board of Trustees, which threaten collaborative governance.

Sincerely,
DeShana Collett

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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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