

Dear University Faculty,

University Senate Council and Senate have two upcoming opportunities for you to express your views on a critical issue: the future of shared governance at UK.

You are invited to this month's **open meetings of the Senate Council and University Senate**, where faculty can discuss the impacts of potential changes to the governance structure at UK. Administrators will be present at both meetings, and President Capilouto will attend the second of the two listed here:

Monday, March 4 (Today!) at 3:00 pm in Gatton B&E room 311 or [on Zoom](#)

Monday, March 18, at 3:00 pm in Gatton B&E room 311

Please also consider reading this ***excellent joint statement*** from members of our campus chapters of AAUP and UCW, which articulates what is at stake: tinyurl.com/ucw-aaup-letter

If you have questions or concerns about the future of shared governance at UK, please don't hesitate to contact any [Senate Council member](#). If you want to learn more, see a shared governance FAQ below.

What's going on with this Senate stuff?

President Capilouto is meeting with campus constituents to formulate recommendations for changes to the Governing Regulations (GRs) related to the structure and authority of the University Senate. The President is now meeting with administrators and the leadership of the University Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association and is convening groups of deans and faculty representatives from each UK college and the grad school to discuss shared governance as part of Work Group 5 charge ("[More Responsiveness](#)"). These feedback sessions began late last week and will continue throughout this week. The campus community has also been invited to complete this online [feedback form](#). Recommendations for changes to the GRs will be circulated to the campus community by the end of the month, so this week is a good time to share your feedback.

What is shared governance?

The American Association of University Professors offers the following definition of shared governance:

"Shared governance refers to the joint responsibility of faculty, administrations, and governing boards to govern colleges and universities. *Differences in the weight of each group's voice on a particular issue should be determined by the extent of its responsibility for and expertise on that issue.*"

You can read more about faculty and administrator responsibilities in shared governance [here](#).

What does the University Senate even do?

The University Senate, which is made up primarily of faculty, but also includes voting students and administrators, has long had a significant role in educational policymaking at UK, thanks to a robust set of procedures and committees that provide checks and balances on many aspects of University life that fall under educational policy. You can view the complete list of committees [here](#) to see the range of authority currently held by the University Senate. Some of the responsibilities include:

- approval of new courses, programs, degrees, certificates, and significant changes to programs
- policies on and review of distance learning and e-learning
- vetting proposals to suspend admission to or close programs
- determine conditions for admissions and degrees
- formulation of the required elements of the syllabus
- adopt policies and establish academic calendars and degree lists
- advisory on cases appealing certain types of tenure or terminal appointments/dismissal of tenure and non-tenure faculty
- academic aspects of the teacher course evaluation
- disability accommodations and attendance policies
- UK Core and general education
- retroactive withdrawal appeals
- and much more...

Should I be worried about changes to the Senate?

Read this joint AAUP/UCW statement for a clear and concise summary of the stakes and how to get involved: tinyurl.com/ucw-aaup-letter

What does our SASCOC accreditation say about faculty responsibilities?

There have been discussions around campus that suggest the proposal for revisions to the Governing Regulations and the current governing structure are related to the new revised 2024 SASCOC standards. To help with clarity and to provide a better understanding of 2024 SASCOC standards, I offer the following:

During the Feb. 23, 2024, Executive Committee meeting, there was a presentation and discussion led by the Deloitte consultant for Workgroup 5, Emily Omrod, regarding the clarity of our Governing Regulations concerning academic policies, including those regulations that expressly incorporate accreditation requirements (GR IV.C.1; GR XIV.B). Specifically, there seemed to be confusion around the definition of "academic policies" as outlined in GR IV.C.1.

Note that GR IV.C.1 ("University Senate") expressly incorporates in defining Senate responsibility for "academic policies" that these *"include[e] academic policies that may be made necessary by governmental or accreditation agencies, and [the Senate shall] make rules to implement these policies."*

In response to this, Faculty Trustee Hollie Swanson raised a pertinent question to Chair Britt Brockman regarding the credibility of Deloitte's assertion, especially considering Provost DiPaola's recent report of the "flawless" reaccreditation review outcome from the SASCOC visit in December 2023. President Eli Capilouto shared insights from his conversation with Dr. Belle Wheelan, the President of SASCOC, highlighting that SASCOC standards do not dictate how shared governance should be executed but emphasize its importance.

To further understand the implications of the recent SASCOC standards revisions cited by President Capilouto, Dr. Davy Jones created a [one-page summary document](#) of the pertinent standards in the 2024 SASCOC Standards Resource Manual related to faculty approval responsibility in the shared governance of academic programs. The document clearly defines components of academic programs, which are crucial for oversight by the University Senate Rules as outlined in GR IV.C.1.

Dr. Jones has also created an [additional document comparing](#) the pertinent sections from the 2024 SASCOC Standards Resource Manual with the previous 2018 version. **Surprisingly, there were no revisions in pertinent parts in the SASCOC Resource Manual 2024 version when compared to the previously promulgated SASCOC Resource Manual from 2018.** For example, the CR 1 Resolution quoted (without citation) a single sentence in the 2024 SASCOC Standard Resources Manual Section 10.1 (p.91) to the effect that faculty only have a “substantive role in the development and review of academic policies,” without citing any SASCOC Standards on who “approves” institutional “*academic policies.*” The “who approves academic policies” can be found in the **SASCOC Resource Manual 2024** Section 10.4.

“Approval by the faculty ensures that programs, including programs offered through collaborative arrangements, contain appropriate courses reflecting current knowledge within a discipline and include courses appropriate for the students enrolled.” (SASCOC Resource Manual 2024,p.98)

SASCOC 2018 and 2024 standards clearly identify components of “academic programs,” which GR IV.C.1 has expressly incorporated as required for oversight by the University Senate Rules. Each of these SASCOC-required academic program components is and has been directly and necessarily handled by the Senate Rules.

Sincerely,
DeShana

DeShana Collett, Ph.D., PA-C

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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