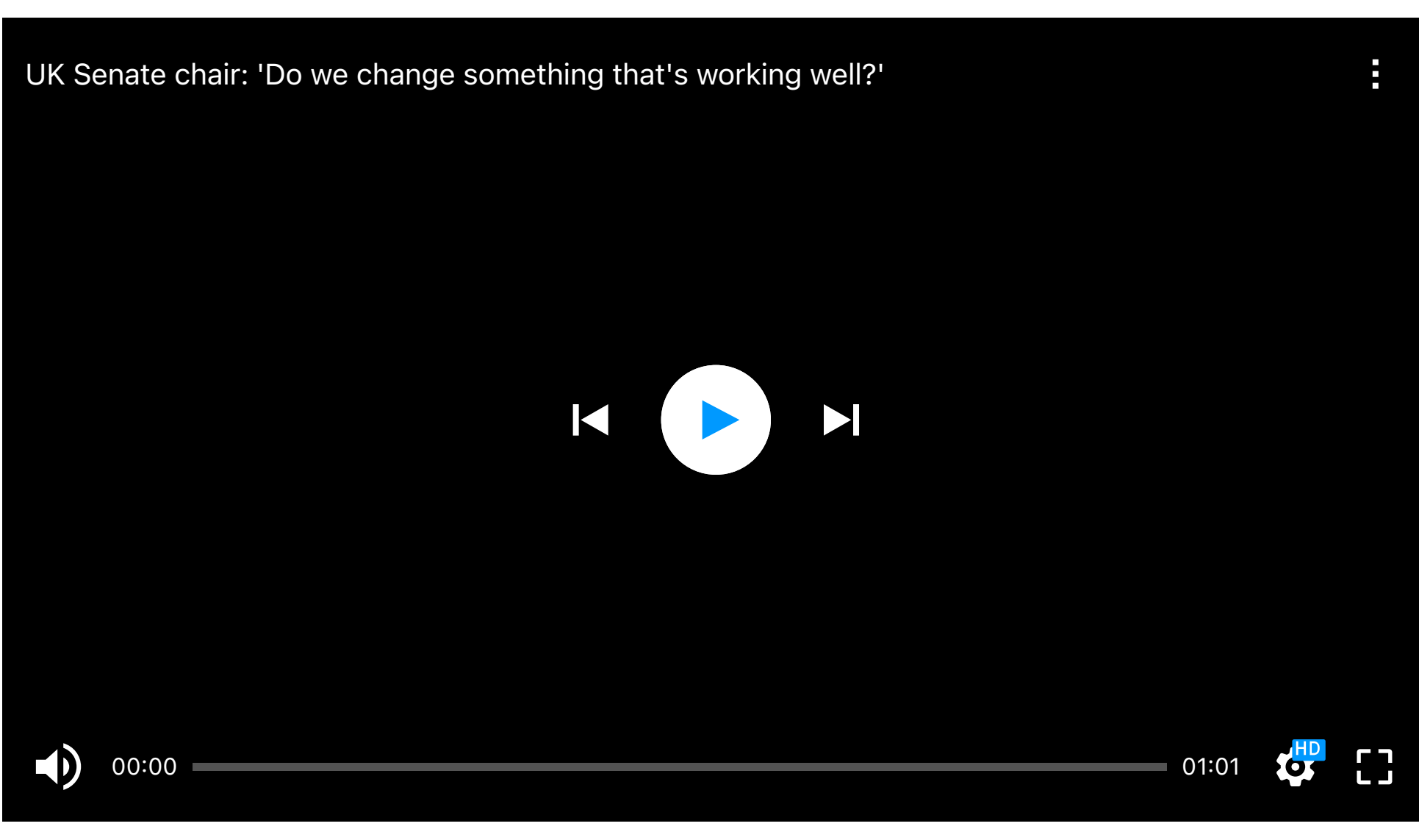
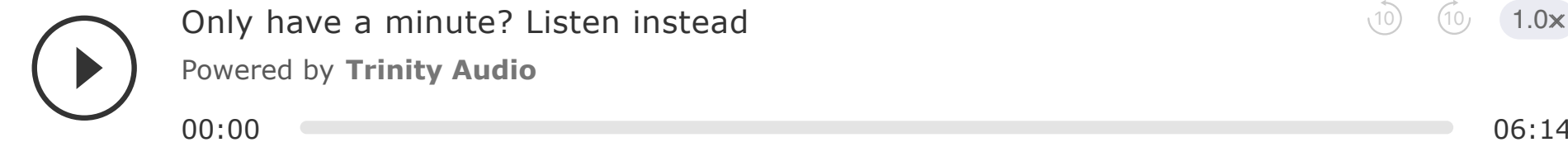


# UK faculty will ask president to halt review of university senate's role, structure

BY MONICA KAST  
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DeShana Collett, chair of the University Senate Council at the University of Kentucky, reacts to a new report released Feb. 23, 2024, that proposes changing the faculty senate's role on campus. The report, presented at a university Board of Trustees meeting at the Gatton Student Center, could change the senate's authority to create policy. BY RYAN C. HERMENS



The University of Kentucky Senate Council will ask university administration to pause its work on potentially reorganizing its governance structure until further collaboration can take place.

The council will consider a resolution at its March 11 meeting that asks President Eli Capilouto to not make a recommendation to the board of trustees until he "collaborates with the senate council and senate" when reviewing the university senate's role, the council said Monday.

On Feb. 23, the board of trustees approved a resolution directing Capilouto to "formulate recommended changes" to the university's governing regulations, to be presented at the April board meeting. The resolution came after a presentation earlier in the day addressing the board's charge to review university governance structures and regulations. The charge is part of Project Accelerate, which has five work groups reviewing various aspects of the university. As part of work group 5, "more responsiveness," UK worked with Deloitte Consulting to present findings to the board.

Administrators said the move would streamline the decision-making and policy-setting processes, while giving equal governance to student and staff groups on campus. But faculty members worry potential changes would remove them from the decision-making process around academics.

UK's senate, which was first established in 1917, serves in an advisory role to the UK administration, but also holds policy-making power. For example, the senate approves academic programs and sets admissions standards at UK.

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In response to the board's resolution, the senate council — the executive arm of the university senate — approved a resolution last week expressing their "profound concern" over potential changes and asked to be included in the process.

### 'A MANUFACTURED EMERGENCY'

More than 200 people attended the senate council meeting Monday, in person and virtually, as faculty discussed the implications of changing the university's governance structure. Most faculty members who spoke said they were concerned about what changing the structure and role of the university senate could mean for the future of faculty involvement and the university's academics.

Jennifer Cramer, a member of the senate council, said this is a process that should not be rushed. The board asked Capilouto to make recommendations at its April meeting, but Cramer said the directive from the board is "a manufactured emergency."

One concern from the board and Deloitte was the length of the university senate's rules, which are 305 pages while other schools have senate rules around 35 pages.

"The senate has figured itself out in a democratic way to do what it needs to do, to do its job of representing in a democratic fashion all the members of the faculty," said Herman Farrell, a former senate member.

Several faculty members said the length of the senate rules adds clarity to their process, and the rules have been updated over time to adapt to the current needs of the university.

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"Rather than having a short set of senate council rules, where there's a lot of ambiguity, I think that the fact that our rules are long is a very good thing," said Akiko Takenaka, a senate council member.

### CONCERNS ABOUT DELOITTE STUDY, POTENTIAL CHANGES

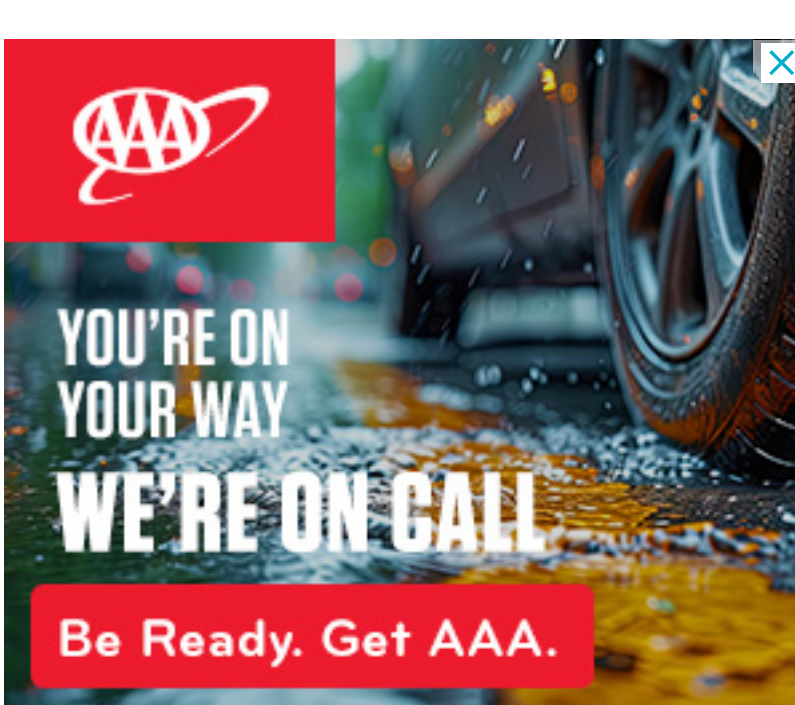
Faculty members said they felt shut out of "closed door meetings" surrounding the findings of the Project Accelerate work group and interviews conducted by Deloitte. Several called on university administration to release the complete findings from Deloitte, saying they were being asked to meet with Capilouto and comment on findings they had not been able to review.

At the board meeting on Feb. 23, Deloitte representatives said their interview process "was not intended to be scientific." Since then, faculty members have raised concerns about why the study is being used, and how interviews were conducted.

On Monday, the UK chapter of the American Association of University Professors delivered a letter to Capilouto supporting shared governance and asking to ensure "that faculty voices are heard and meaningfully considered in all aspects of decision-making that impact the educational mission of the university."

"We have already witnessed, in the run-up to this resolution, that major decision-making processes are becoming less transparent, and administrators are increasingly reluctant to engage with our campus community in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation," a message attached to the letter said. "Furthermore, the authority that these administrators might gain through this resolution could have significant consequences for us and our students."

Provost Robert DiPaola attended Monday and said he would take comments and concerns back to Capilouto. Capilouto is meeting with groups of faculty members over the next week to hear recommendations on the governance structure. Feedback can also be submitted through a form on UK's website.



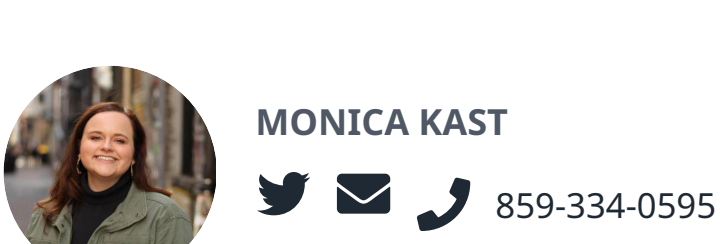
"Our Board of Trustees recently directed me and our community to recommend changes to our Governing Regulations with the goal of creating more clarity, rather than confusion, around the rules that help guide our work," Capilouto said in an email sent to faculty Monday evening. "We need more voices — not fewer — being heard as we determine the steps necessary to make progress in advancing this state. And we need to streamline the processes and procedures we have so that rules meant to help don't hinder creativity and innovation."

UK Spokesperson Jay Blanton said Capilouto will meet with more than 200 people on this topic to share perspectives.

"(Capilouto) believes we should welcome the opportunity to see where, as a community, we can be even better," Blanton said. "We should welcome the opportunity to strengthen shared governance and our shared responsibilities. We should welcome the opportunity to create clarity where there is confusion. We should welcome the opportunity to create space for more voices and people at the table, not fewer."

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