

Text from the email sent on behalf of the Senate Council on March 31, 2020

Dear University Senators,

First and foremost, I write to thank you for all that you are doing every day to keep our students, staff, and faculty, safe, healthy, and moving forward in these unprecedented times. I have been continually amazed at the way people all across our campus have responded with kindness, compassion, and a willingness to help over the past weeks. We should all be proud of the community we have built here at UK, and of the work we are doing to preserve that community at this time.

You may have heard that the Senate Council has continued to meet during the past few weeks. We had a four hour special called in-person meeting on March 13, and then switched to Zoom meetings for our regularly scheduled meetings on March 23 and 30. This Zoom platform has worked relatively well, and we will continue Senate Council meetings via Zoom for the remainder of the school year.

As you may have suspected, we will not be able to hold in-person Senate meetings in April or May. While investigating options for video conferencing, we concluded that it would not be feasible to conduct a Senate meeting with our over 150 Senators entirely online. State open meetings laws include some caveats about maintaining digital connections by individual members of the body, which would make it nearly impossible for an online Senate meeting with so many members to comply with state law. As a result, we will not be able to hold regularly scheduled Senate meetings for the rest of the year.

While the *Senate Rules* do allow the Senate Council to act on behalf of the Senate in emergency situations, we want to maintain as much communication with Senators as possible. Below is the model we propose in order to do that:

Instead of holding the regularly scheduled Senate meetings on April 13 and May 4, the Senate Council will hold specially called meetings on those days. Even though the meeting will be a Senate Council meeting, the content of the agenda will be what it would have been, had a Senate meeting been possible. Each item will have been considered once by the Senate Council in a regularly scheduled Senate Council meeting, and then forwarded on for approval by the Senate. The Senate Council will exercise its authority under the Senate Rules to vote on behalf of the Senate, but Senators will have had a chance to review agenda items and submit comments in advance, and will also be invited to participate during the video conference.

While we recognize that this is less than ideal, we are hopeful that this will facilitate the informed on-going governance work of the University Senate, while still providing Senators with an

opportunity to represent their constituencies. Please contact me with any questions you have or suggestions for modifications to this plan.

Thank you again for all of your work, and stay safe. I hope to see you all virtually on April 13.

Warmly,

Jennifer