MEETING SUMMARY
Statewide Academic Council
September 10, 2009

Attending: Jon Dehn, Michael Driscoll, Susan Henrichs, Melissa Hill (teacher education discussions only), John Petraitis, John Pugh (teacher education discussions only), Bart Quimby (Hex form discussions only), Roberta Stell, Robert White

UAA Provost Michael Driscoll acted as chair.

The meeting convened at 9:40 a.m. via audio conference.

Introductions were made for the benefit of the new member, John Petraitis.

SAC members agreed that the draft summary of the August 13 SAC meeting was an accurate reflection of discussions at the meeting. However, it does not seem possible to meet the deadlines set in that summary. SAC should revisit the deadlines at its next meeting.

Melissa Hill summarized the August memo from VP Julius to Chancellor John Pugh thanking him for his work with the Education deans group.

The VP Julius memo also reiterated that Board or Regents wants substantive campus plans for addressing the gap between UA Education graduates the need for teachers in the State. Ms. Hill said that the discussions of the Deans and Chancellor Pugh, as well as other campus leaders, make clear that UA does want to produce more teachers. But the planning group believes there is a need to provide information about the ‘status of the profession’ and the fact that there are a number of issues outside UA control that must be addressed in order to increase the number of active teachers within Alaska, i.e., pay, housing, workload (esp. paperwork done by Special Education teachers), and retirement benefits. We need to look at alignment of plans with budget priorities. Also, we need to identify what are feasible goals? That is, what are attainable outcomes for which we can show progress in a few years? Provosts need to be involved. MAU plans and budget priorities need to align with the education plans and priorities.

Ms. Hill is working with ISER to prepare the gap analysis. UA Statewide is funding this, and Gwen White is also providing data. Institutional research offices at the universities have been very helpful.

The draft education plan from the deans is expected to go back to the deans 9/11. By 9/18 they need to provide feedback. The objective is to present a draft of the plan to the Board at the September meeting. Provosts should communicate with deans about the draft plan.
The SB241 report draft will be completed in November (and it will include the 3 year plan). The report will be submitted to the Board for the meeting in December.

Chancellor Pugh offered to distribute plan to provosts to ensure that they have enough time to review it. Ms. Hill stated this distribution will occur about the 21st of Sept.

Chancellor Pugh provided a summary of some of the key changes to the plan and issues:

A stronger problem statement is added based on ISER data. Not only production of new teachers but also turnover/retention issues is highlighted.

Turnover is just the same as 5 years ago, and not that different from 10 years ago: 10% annually for urban, 16% for rural, and 53% for special ed. Special Ed burns people out. Surveys have shown that an important factor is that there is too much paperwork expected of the teachers [rather than having staff support for this].

We need to make the legislature aware that availability of qualified teachers is a broader problem that the university alone can’t solve. But, we need to work on what we can do, and not look like we are just handing off this problem.

ISER needs regular funding for their data collection and analysis. Chancellor Pugh asked for provost support. The provosts indicated their support.

Provost Stell asked, What is the reason for calling the ISER work a Policy Center? Provost Driscoll said that much of their activity is in data gathering and analysis. But they will go beyond that role to offer advice to State EED. Chancellor Pugh agreed, and supplied some examples. Data show that undergraduate special education degrees are not useful, but this requires inference. Special Education teachers turnover at >50% per year. An undergraduate SPED program leading to licensure would mean those leaving SPED could not get another position in teaching in AK, and would be lost to our systems. So, we want SPED teachers to have elementary or secondary licensure first, before pursuing the SPED. A different example is that we need a study of the impact of retirement system changes on teacher retention, and on recruiting students to teacher education programs.

Money is also needed for classroom research, but state has not invested in that. Chancellor Pugh wants to continue to work on funding for such research, but the data collection and analysis are first priorities.

We also need to do more outreach. We need to get nontraditional people with other degrees and background to become teachers. We need some specific strategies, for example, in math and the physical sciences.

A question for the group: Should we have a final section in the plan that talks about policy recommendations?
Provost Stell responded that perhaps the data should drive policy recommendations.

The rest of the group did not say much about this.

Melissa Hill asked if Larry Harris is retiring from UAS, and Provost Stell said yes, next May.

Bart Quimby joined the meeting for discussions about the Hex form.

Jon Dehn commented that he likes the draft form. But he is not clear on, whether this addresses Board concerns. Do we know what they want? Can we exchange drafts with Regent Jacobson?

Provost Driscoll commented that Regent Jacobson would want to see a draft.

Provost Stell had a question about the Distance Ed section, concerning terminology. Distance refers to students who are not present, face to face. But is Distance Ed the right term? A key question for students is where will they need to go to get any other requirements if a program is not 100% “distance”. Wholly distance courses are for anyone, anywhere.

Provost Driscoll commented that fixed meeting time is an issue as well as location.

Bart Quimby said he had not given this much thought.

Provost Stell noted that there is Banner coding for synchronous and asynchronous courses and for mode of delivery. Can we use this? The main question about a program is, Is it accessible to any location? The UAS MBA meets for 4 days to orient the students, the rest is online. ECE has two week session in summer. Every program has some requirement for togetherness.

Jon Dehn remarked that the key question is requiring residency vs. a visit.

Provost Stell said that the needed information is whether a program is accessible to distance students, vs. location specific, vs. a combination but requiring more than a visit.

There was discussion of the issue that established programs often change their mode of offering. Some that were originally face to face have been transformed into largely or wholly distance programs. Board approval has not been needed for such changes.

Provost Driscoll said that we should address distance delivery only in terms of the immediate plan. We need to leave the door open for change in the future.
Provost Stell suggested moving the distance information toward the bottom of the page.

Provost Henrichs said that another approach would be to have the form similar to this draft, but followed by several pages of the relevant sections copy-pasted from the full proposal, headed and numbered like the sections of the form for easy cross referencing. This would make it clear that the full proposal addresses these issues, it would be minimal extra work for the proposers, and it would allow the regents to find the key (to them) information in the top few pages.

Vice Provost White supported this idea although thinking more along the lines of an Executive Summary where the proposal information was not necessarily repeated verbatim, but summarized if it was lengthy.

Provost Stell also supports this idea.

Provost Driscoll summarized the discussion. Dr. Quimby should make the suggested changes to the distance section and develop an executive summary (from information copied out of prospectus) to follow the one-page cover page.

Dr. Quimby repeated his instructions, to align sections of the 1-pager with the current hex form, after revision. The summary will now be longer, not just two pages, but abstracted from the larger document.

Provost Driscoll suggested that we reference to current regulations for specific questions. He also suggested that Dr. Quimby revise the form and summary, and then make an example set of documents for a proposed program, which would allow the Regents to comport the new and the old program.

Dr. Quimby will send another revision of the form around for comment, and then complete the new/old example paperwork for the Environment and Society program.

Jon Dehn gave the Alliance Report.

He thanked SAC for welcoming John Petraitis. The Alliance wants continuity of representation on committees. ITEC has been particularly confusing for new people, due to the acronyms used, but SAC also needs continuity. The Alliance approved a motion that both the current and incoming chair of the Alliance will serve as SAC members.

The Alliance had questions about background checks conducted by HR on potential new hires. Staff do these checks, but who has access to the results? The Alliance passed a motion asking for the existing policies to be provided to them.
The Alliance also approved a motion that says, “Silence does not equal approval.” Those seeking an Alliance position need to get clear response before knowing (or communicating) what that position is.

The Alliance asked about the timeline for release of the legislative audit. Provost Driscoll responded that the report needs to be vetted by LBA; they are meeting in late September and it is on their agenda. We won’t see it until after that, but they might decide not to release it at that time. So, it could still be some time before the report is released.

The Alliance invited Regent Jacobson to speak to them about what she would like to see in new programs from faculty. She has not yet responded.

The Alliance also passed a motion that one Regents’ meeting per year should occur during the academic year at each of the main MAU campuses.

The Alliance is looking forward to sharing AMP comments with SAC and President’s Cabinet.

Provost Stell noted that Regent Drygas requested the Sept. Juneau meeting so that it would be held on campus. In February they are downtown.

Dr. Dehn noted that the motion does specifically say campus.

Dr. Dehn returned to the topic of background checks on faculty…do the results go to the search committee? Is it handled at another level?

Provost Driscoll noted that HR speaks directly to hiring authority at UAA.

Vice Provost White mentioned an immigration issue for graduate students. Immigration rules require them to spend one year in residence at the campus where they are enrolled in a degree program. This is a problem for UAA resident students enrolled in a UAF program, for example. Both UAA and UAF need to make sure their faculty who have graduate students are aware of this policy.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.; summary submitted by Provost Henrichs.