

UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA

Faculty Alliance

Minutes

Friday, March 8, 2013

3:00 pm via video conference

Anchorage: Administrative Building Room 201

Fairbanks: Butrovich Building Room 204

Juneau: Egan Room 115

Telephone bridge: 1-800-893-8850 Pin 2151251

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Members:

Nalinaksha Bhattacharyya, Past President, UAA Faculty Senate

Robert Boeckmann, President, UAA Faculty Senate

Cathy Cahill, 2012-2013 Alliance Chair, Past President, UAF Faculty Senate

Mark Fitch, 1st Vice President, UAA Faculty Senate

Virgil Fredenberg, President-elect, UAS Faculty Senate

Dan Monteith, 2011-2012 Alliance Chair; Past President, UAS Faculty Senate

Jennifer Reynolds, President, UAF Faculty Senate

Mike Stekoll, President, UAS Faculty Senate

David Valentine, President-elect, UAF Faculty Senate

Guests:

Patrick Gamble, President, University of Alaska

Dana Thomas, Vice President, Academic Affairs

2. **Adopt Agenda**

Agenda adopted

3. **Approve Past Minutes**

3.1 **February 8, 2013**

Attachment 1

Delayed approval until the April meeting for a chance to look longer at the revised minutes.

4. **Report of the Chair**

Board of Regents met and a Strategic Directions Initiative meeting took place since the last Faculty Alliance meeting. Robert and Dan received thanks for a good job at the BOR Student Academic Affairs Committee in terms of textbook costs. The textbook memo went to the board. The board asked questions and they saw how the faculty had it under control. The issue was dropped. UA budget was another issue regarding sequestration and its effects on the budget. The president can answer questions. Overall tone of the BOR

was to remain engaged and to see faculty move forward being the education leaders in the state, to work with the school districts and others, and try to get good products out of the high schools. Public comment was mostly Anchorage students and staff concerning the issue of a smoke-free campus. The students had a presentation about their legislative trip to Juneau and told about the calendar they made and gave to the legislators. The calendar contained pictures of students from around UA and was very popular. The legislators loved the calendar. The president said he would like to get faculty involved with the legislators. The right faculty should be matched with the right legislator. Faculty would be there for their expert advice and support and not lobbying for their own interests. Many compliments came forth about the faculty being involved with SDI.

Discussion took place about SDI and the possibility of misquotes from faculty and being unaware of the recorded meeting in the face-to-face meeting.

5. **Public or Guest Comments**

None

6. **MAU reports**

6.1 **UAA**

They are transitioning from old faculty evaluation guidelines to new ones with minor corrections submitted at the last Faculty Senate meeting. Fall of 2014 will be the deadline for ending the use of the old guidelines.

The UAA programs are being carefully evaluated. They are looking at how the programs align with the mission statement and strategic plans and incorporating budgeting decisions from the evaluations.

On the table in Faculty Senate: students, who have a B average and take 15 credits, can take additional 1-3 credits for free. The idea is to create an incentive for students to complete their degrees.

A draft strategic research plan was presented to faculty and some questions were raised. The plan emphasized intellectual property, patent related research, and research in the natural sciences. Some spoke up about other types of research not receiving as much support as the latter areas.

6.2 **UAF**

The Faculty Senate passed two changes to the grading system: 1. A “C” minus will count as the minimum grade for a major, a minor or a pre-requisite in a bachelorette degree. This did not address associate or graduate degrees. The registrar is making changes to the catalog to be ready for the fall. 2. They are revising the letter grade description to take it back to what the BOR uses. The new descriptions were widely approved.

They are currently working on updating the guidelines for faculty promotion and tenure evaluations and they discovered the need to look into how joint appointments work, and how to structure the faculty performance evaluations, and promotion and tenure evaluations: who participates, who decides who participates, what criteria are used, and how input from other units besides the

home unit are incorporated. They are setting up an ad hoc committee composed of people who are familiar with this subject. They will write up guidelines for the formal policy manual.

There is an ongoing discussion about creating an online, centralized collection for either course syllabi or expanded course descriptions. They ran a survey by all the faculty posted on the Faculty Senate webpage. They agreed to head toward a restricted access site that contains expanded course descriptions and not the actual syllabi.

Cathy asked the Alliance to do their homework on the C minus issue and discussion will take place at the next meeting.

6.3 **UAS**

The provost shared a recent graduate survey stating how UAS is a great university.

They are working on a faculty handbook and it is almost ready for the faculty to review.

A Food Service Advisory Committee was formed because there are two groups: one wants to have good food and another group wants cheap food.

Note: A discussion took place about the Student Conduct Revision - Someone suggested placing the discussion about the student conduct revision on the Faculty Alliance agenda for future discussion and to discuss it with the student governance groups as well. For instance, it mentions students cannot receive help from anybody else without permission from faculty. UAA Faculty Senate proposed a change to SAC. SAC sent out the information to seek input before SAC takes any action.

7. **General Education Learning Outcomes Committee**

The MAUs have been encouraged to populate this committee. It has been a slow process. Three faculty from each MAU are needed. Usernames/IDs are needed for a Blackboard shell to put agendas, minutes, shared documents etc. Google Apps is not an option for UAA to use as easily as it is for UAF.

8. **Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI) – next steps**

The Effects Statements were discussed and what kind of feedback is needed from the faculty. Dana Thomas explained the Effects Statements is in a working draft ready for faculty input. It has gone through listening sessions and a collection of leadership and governance meetings that pointed out the key topics and priorities and now it is down to what kind of effect do we want to have? There are topics like increased advising, attainment, placement etc. Can we boil this down to the effect we would like to achieve? We want to see progress and improvement in certain areas. It is not a benchmark goal, but it is a continuous improvement leading in a certain direction. We do not need feedback for every topic in the list of themes. It should be boiled down to a strategic set of targets. The president has stated these should be eloquent statements involving multiple elements with a common purpose.

President Gamble

The president explained the meaning of the Effects Statements. When you say you want to be a better person, you are stating an effect you want to achieve and if you set down and figure out how you want to get there, you will get examples that are more concrete. No one metric is going say we are there, but a number of metrics that start trending in the direction we want to go show we are there. It is not quantitative. We are looking for the trending. Effects based thinking is another way to go after problems. Instead of a direct confrontation with the problem, and knowing what all the components to a problem are, and you know where you want to be when you get out of the problem, then you can connect those two and find the things you want to influence and start working your way out of the difficulties. You begin to see you are achieving the desired effect you are aiming for.

Regarding the budget, Juneau said there is a 2.9% increase. OMB side – There is no budget except salaries and benefits. The new science building is the one item the governor left in the budget but the finance committee took it out. On the capital side – how do we get the two engineering buildings (UAA and UAF)? There is good support for getting all the money in one chunk and not stretch it out into 2015 and 2016. The power plant at UAF is another concern with the coal. The carbon footprint is a national problem. Gas is more expensive but cleaner. The third item is research. Research money was taken out in the capital budget as well, but there is some hope for a Vitamin D research project. The president suggested to Rep. Seaton, due to the extreme cutbacks to the to the Health and Human Services research budget, that the research proposal be placed in the UA budget because the research may have a better chance of surviving. Another item is the money going to Fish and Game. It is a \$10 million salmon research project. The intention is to give us part of the money for the work.

The president and faculty discussed the status of higher education and the need for change at the high school level.

Cathy mentioned having a BOR Outstanding Faculty Award and there would one award for the entire state. The president said the board would give this award. He also stated having a distinguished professor award. The criteria should come from the Faculty Alliance and the standard would be set high. The president asked the faculty to present to him what they decide.

Regarding the faculty/president's office interface, Cathy asked if governance was communicating effectively to the faculty in terms of what is going on at statewide. The president asked if communication with governance, deans, and chairs is enough. It is tough to communicate to the faculty at large. Jennifer said the exchange with faculty needs to be on specific topics and not opened ended and this will produce a much better exchange. David said the complaints he hears concerns the president hammering the budget. Faculty Alliance sees the president going to Juneau and advocating for the university but others do not know about it. President Gamble asked how this message should be conveyed and talked about. The school-wide faculty meetings and individual college convocations was a suggestion.

The conversation continued on the topic of communication and how to keep faculty up-to-date and informed. The president believes faculty need to be updated on national and state concerns for the faculty to be supportive. A suggestion was made to have the provost's send a periodical memo out with information the president sees as important for faculty knowledge. Another suggestion was to manage fewer and more focused communications. In addition,

communication is not one direction. The contributions and change the faculty have achieved need to be communicated as well.

19. **Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Minutes taken from a recording of the meeting by LaNora Tolman, Executive Officer, System Governance