



June 2, 2025

To: Ralph Seekins, Chair, UA Board of Regents

From: Jackie Cason, Chair, UA Faculty Alliance on behalf of the Faculty Alliance

cc: Pat Pitney, UA President
Brian Smentkowski, VP-CAO
Cheryl Siemers, Interim UAA Chancellor
Daniel White, UAF Chancellor
Aparna Palmer, UAS Chancellor

We thank you for the opportunity to review proposed changes to Regents' Policy:

- PART I – MISSION AND GENERAL PROVISIONS Chapter 01.02 – General Provisions
- PART IV – HUMAN RESOURCES Chapter 04.02 – General Personnel Policies
- Part IX – STUDENT AFFAIRS Chapter 09.05 – Employment of Students

We want to begin by affirming the language (Part 1. Ch. 01.02.025.D) that speaks to the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech in that section. These remain core values in institutions of learning.

We understand that revisions to Part I, IV, IX are a response to the Jan. 25, 2025 Executive Order titled "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity." Perhaps most noticeable among the policy changes are the deletion of "affirmative action" and the emphasis on "equal access" and "merit."

While we oppose the EO's claim that our institution has "adopted and actively use[d] dangerous, demeaning, and immoral race- and sex-based preferences under the guise of so-called 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' (DEI) or 'diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility' (DEIA) that can violate the civil-rights laws of this Nation," we recognize the Regents' desire to comply with the order by revising policy language. We also challenge the EO's claim that "in case after tragic case, the American people have witnessed first-hand the disastrous consequences of illegal, pernicious discrimination that has prioritized how people were born instead of what they were capable of doing." We consider that a mischaracterization. Character matters, and compliance—without evidence, without refutation, without an assessment of the merits of such claims—lends credence to sweeping generalizations and diminishes our institutional character and reputation.

In response to proposed policy changes, we offer two recommendations, one minor and one more significant.

1. Revise the second sentence in Part IV for parallel grammatical structure: “The board is committed to opposing all illegal employment discrimination by prohibiting it within the university and **by providing** ~~to provide~~ equal access and merit-based advancement opportunities to all individuals.”
2. Retain (P04.02.012.A.1) the legal context and history with reference to federal and state civil rights laws that have over the decades served to bolster and refine our national aspirations to end unfair discrimination and to provide equal opportunity for all. We ask that you do not delete these references, which remain the law of the land. While the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause was supposed to end racial discrimination, it was used to support Jim Crow laws and segregation for decades. By removing subsequent legal references, we obscure a long journey toward greater equality and broader legal protections for all.