



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

4/9/21

Dear Alaska Legislators,

Thank you for considering how the faculty voice can be more prominent during meetings and discussions with the UA Board of Regents. UA has an excellent governance structure that includes Faculty Alliance, Staff Council, and the Coalition of Student Leaders. First, I want to express how important it is that the UA system has shared governance structures in place, and how vital it is to consult with the shared governance groups.

During our Faculty Alliance meetings, we have discussed how the faculty perspective could be a more *intentional* part of UA Board of Regents meetings and discussions. Currently, the Chair of Faculty Alliance has the opportunity to provide a written report, and verbal comments (under 10 minutes). Faculty Alliance feels that having the faculty voice, as well as staff and student perspectives, be a more active part of UA Board of Regents discussions would be beneficial. Faculty Alliance supports this approach, and I am sure this will be well received by the accrediting agency, NWCCU, as well.

Many other University systems have faculty regents. Faculty in the University of Alaska support having a faculty regent selected by the Governor from a list of candidates, which ideally would rotate from the different universities, as the student regent does.

This will provide a wonderful way for the University of Alaska to work through some of the budget challenges we are facing, in addition to the possible restructuring of some programs.

The Faculty Alliance hears the concerns of some Legislators regarding the prospect of including a faculty regent on the UA BOR. We would like to address the concerns as they are presented:

Conflict of interest: Faculty are dedicated to the UA system as all three of our separately accredited universities work together to form the system. UA System university leadership is currently committed to creating an environment that fosters and incentivizes collaboration and unity. Working within the UA system would not preclude

one from contributing to the Board in a fair and ethical manner. In fact, faculty participate in shared governance groups in an ethical and fair manner through their service commitments to their respective universities and the system. Elevating faculty participation in shared governance to the Board level is equitable and ethical.

Voting to defund programs: Faculty across the system work together and independently on programs. Faculty Senates guide the review of curriculum at each institution, on a regular basis. Programs are entities that take on a life of their own as they are constantly evolving and changing to meet student needs. The essence of our programs are the students and faculty creating the mutual cycle of teaching and learning through interactive learning experiences. Faculty input regarding programs is critical. The need to reorganize or delete programs that are not working as expected is a necessity that all faculty are aware of and this procedure is conducted during the curriculum review process.

Professionalism: Faculty abide by a strict code of professional conduct as educators. Faculty will comply with Board policy in all matters. The Board of Regents (BL03: Duties of the Board of Regents) policy states:

Each member of the board will uphold their constitutional and fiduciary duty to act prudently, in accordance with law, and in the best interests of the University of Alaska System.

Thank you for your consideration of adding a faculty regent to the UA BOR. Faculty Alliance appreciates your continued support of the University of Alaska System and your dedication to the children and families in Alaska.

The UA Faculty Alliance reaffirms support for the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the University of Alaska Southeast Faculty Senates' reaffirming their commitment to adding a faculty regent to the UA Board of Regents (UA FA, UAS, UAA, and UAF, Support for Faculty Regent: 2017, 2021)

Sincerely,

Heather Batchelder, Faculty Alliance Chair

Faculty Alliance constitution and Bylaws:

https://www.alaska.edu/governance/files/FA-Constitution-Bylaws_updated-Feb.-2019.pdf

