

GOVERNANCE REPORT

February 2013



Coalition of Student Leaders

Shauna Thornton, Speaker

The Coalition is busy making arrangements for our upcoming Legislative Conference on February 9 -12. We have an amazing line up of speakers for the event. Our theme this year is "Education Is Always in Season." We would like to thank Amber Averette and UAS for making our arrangements and coordinating our logistical needs for the Juneau event. We would like to thank President Gamble for covering the cost of printing our calendars for the legislators this year. The calendars show the activities students are undertaking on their campuses and within their communities. The calendar will be a daily reminder of what the students at UA bring, not only to the university, but also to our state and to our communities.

We are working with Mari Freitag, Student Regent, and Kathleen Wattum, Interim Public Affairs Director to engage students in dialog about topics important to students. This will give students a means to voice concerns and comments to the UA administration and to encourage ongoing dialog that will be important for our Strategic Direction Initiative endeavors.

We are continuing to broaden our voice through Facebook, and printed brochures, to enable the campuses to share what the Coalition offers the university students, and to report our current projects.

The Coalition is assisting and offering feedback to the administration in any way possible from marketing materials, to the strategic direction, and to the proposed fee increases. We are very excited to be a part of the process and offer our feedback to better our university and campus communities.

Shauna Thornton has been a member of the KRC Student Union for several years, and a member of the Coalition of Student Leaders for the past two years. She successfully led the KRCSU to rally against cuts to the campus budget saving the campus hundreds of thousands of dollars, and was one of the leaders in Juneau for need based financial aid.



Staff Alliance

Juella Sparks, Chair

Hopefully you all enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and are on your way to an exciting new year.

Mid-way through the academic year, Staff Alliance efforts to improve communications with staff and focus our advocacy show great promise.

- In the four months since we launched our blog, it has already counted almost 5,500 views.

- Our compensation working group has offered the first of several proposals and by mid-February, we should be surveying all UA staff for their input on these proposals.
- By the February regents meeting, we should be finished with our analysis of the 800 plus responses to our Work Life Survey, shared them with the staff and administration, and have a strategy for taking action on that data.

Finally, we are providing input on the metrics for the Strategic Direction Initiative. More importantly, we are focusing our efforts on helping staff to apply SDI “where the rubber meets the road.”

Juella Sparks was born and raised in Alaska and graduated from UAF with a B.B.A. in Management. After several years working for the state and starting a family, she came back to the university to work for Cooperative Extension Service in December, 2002. She was active in student government and moved quickly to being active in staff governance at UAF. In her words, “I am looking forward to working with Staff Alliance and the System Governance Council to strengthen our UA system, especially with two teenagers contemplating post-secondary education.” Juella has in past years served as Staff Alliance vice chair 2007-2009, chair of the System Governance Council 2008-2009 as well as president of the UAF Staff Council 2008-2009.



Faculty Alliance

Cathy Cahill, Chair

Faculty Alliance has been addressing several important issues since our last report to the Board of Regents. These issues include: metrics for the UA Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI), the E-laboratory Task Force recommendations, General Education Requirements (GERs) across MAUs, common placement and cut scores, and textbooks. The outcomes of these discussions are as follows:

- 1) SDI – Faculty Alliance is currently evaluating proposed metrics for measuring UA’s effectiveness in meeting SDI goals. We will provide faculty-based recommendations to the SDI leaders.
- 2) E-laboratory Task Force – The recommendations from the Task Force are being evaluated by Faculty Alliance. The current discussion is centered on the timeline for implementing specific recommendations for each MAU.
- 3) GERs – Faculty Alliance, in conjunction with Vice President Thomas, held an Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) Institute at UAA January 11-12, 2013. The two-day institute brought together approximately 10 members from each MAU and focused on commonality, best practices, and shared experiences among the MAUs. A detailed report of the institute and its outcomes will be forthcoming. Initial comments about the institute were positive and highlighted the similarities between the MAUs.
- 4) Common placement and cut scores – Faculty from English at the MAUs have developed common placement and cut scores for similar classes across the MAUs. Math faculty at the MAUs are also coming together to develop similar guidelines for math courses. This effort is expected to produce a published list of classes and their associated placement and cut scores. This list should remove students’ confusion about cut and placement scores across the MAUs.

- 5) Textbooks – Faculty Alliance has begun a discussion of how and when textbooks are chosen and why students may have trouble getting the correct textbooks. We also passed a motion encouraging faculty to consider the costs associated with different textbooks in their decisions to adopt specific books for their classes. Note: we know that most faculty already consider the costs to students when choosing a textbook.

In summary, the Faculty Alliance is addressing issues of importance to our students and faculty. We are working especially hard on improving our students' experience at UA by streamlining procedures, clarifying expectations, ensuring high-quality courses, and investigating ways to save students time, effort, and money.

Dr. Catherine F. Cahill is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at the University of Alaska Fairbanks where she teaches a wide variety of classes ranging from undergraduate General and Physical Chemistry to graduate Environmental Chemistry. Cathy also mentors undergraduate and graduate students, conducts cutting-edge research on atmospheric aerosols, develops payloads for unmanned aircraft systems, and contributes her professional expertise to professional, public, and university needs.