



System Governance Report

September 2015

Faculty Alliance

Dr. Cecile Lardon, Chair

The Faculty Alliance is likely to have a busy year during AY 2015-16. There are several big projects still underway from last year while we need to adapt to a continuing fiscal crisis for the state and the university. The faculty leaders serving on the Faculty Alliance are keenly aware that we need to stay proactive as we find our way through these tough times.

Continuing Projects:

The Faculty Alliance will continue to work with the four statewide taskforces to align math, English, and GER requirements and the academic calendar across the UA system. You received their interim or final reports in the spring. The math taskforce completed its work, the English taskforce is close to completion, and the GER taskforce is making good progress. I will update you as they begin their work again. The calendar taskforce is also making progress. Their main focus now is on solutions for aligning course times.

Intensified Focus:

Last academic year the Faculty Alliance began to work more proactively on priorities expressed by the BOR, including cross-university collaborations and a more efficient governance process that could decrease the time between the initiation of a task to its completion.

The Alliance will continue to work with various university and other groups to encourage and support collaborations that can provide opportunities for our students, increase faculty collaboration across universities, and increase collaborations with state and private entities, especially on research. As David Valentine pointed out in his remarks in the spring, faculty are in the business of generating and disseminating knowledge. We will work on partnerships that will contribute to this mission.

Efficiency is, I'm sure, a word we will hear a lot this year and in years to come. Most of the above mentioned projects are geared at improving efficiency in serving our students. The Faculty Alliance is also working on ways to improve the governance process in the UA system while also preserving the deliberative and participatory decision making processes that are crucial to academic institutions. We recognize that the faculty branch of governance can and needs to make improvements – but this will require working with three separate governance systems with somewhat different priorities, histories, and ways of doing things. We ask for your patience as we tackle this issue. We also hope to improve the communication and information flow between the Alliance, university leaders (e.g., SAC) and the Board.

Given the challenges faced by the UA system, the Faculty Alliance is looking forward to finding constructive ways to work with UA leaders and the Board of Regents. We have much to contribute and are as concerned about the future of the University of Alaska as you are. The faculty leaders on the Alliance have spent years in governance and continue to educate themselves about the issues faced by their universities and by the UA system.

Dr. Cecile Lardon is a professor of Psychology and chair of the Department of Psychology in the School of Liberal Arts at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Originally from Germany, Dr. Lardon earned her PhD from the University of Illinois Chicago (1999) in community, organizational, and social psychology. Her research has focused on community leadership, community and organizational development and change, organizational culture, and health promotion. Currently, Dr. Lardon is a researcher at the Center for Alaska Native Health Research. She joined the UAF faculty in 1999.

Faculty Alliance is the faculty voice in matters affecting the general welfare of the University of Alaska system and its educational programs.

Staff Alliance

Faye Gallant, Chair

Staff Alliance held its annual retreat August 18 in Fairbanks. We elected officers, welcomed new members, and discussed the role of governance in the coming year. The 2015-16 Staff Alliance membership includes:

- Nate Bauer, Vice President, UAF Staff Council
- Faye Gallant, President, UAF Staff Council; Chair, Staff Alliance
- Kolene James, President, UAS Staff Council
- Tom Langdon, President, SAA
- Kathleen McCoy, Co-President, UAA Staff Council
- Monique Musick, Vice President, SAA; Vice-chair, Staff Alliance
- Gwenna Richardson, Vice President, UAS Staff Council
- Liz Winfree, Co-President, UAA Staff Council

As we're all aware, this is a time of major change for the university. The budget environment means we're doing work differently, or doing different work. We are saying goodbye to friends and coworkers, and hello to new responsibilities and opportunities. We are definitely stepping outside of our comfort zones, and while this is undoubtedly stressful, it is also a means to transform both as an institution and as individuals.

In addition to the changes in our processes, our offerings, and our personal landscapes, we are also experiencing a wave of leadership transitions. While those who have left will be missed, we are also eager to build new relationships with our incoming leaders, and chart a course forward together. We're hopeful that in the coming year, staff governance will be recognized as critical to developing policies and plans, just as faculty are for academic decisions.

At our August retreat, Staff Alliance formed two new committees. The first is focused on the governance process, which has been an area of concern for several years. In the coming year, we'll be working with the administration to implement procedural and technological

solutions to ensure that the policies and regulations of this university are as smart and as fair as they can possibly be.

The second new committee is addressing staff morale. We recognize morale must be improved, but we haven't done the groundwork to put forward informed solutions. As our leadership thinks about ways to weather the storm we're in, and ways to improve the university, this committee will be a valuable source of feedback on how staff are feeling and how they might feel better. For the purposes of a "staff opinion," or "staff perspective," our governance body is the only group that represents the non-unionized staff of the UA system; it is critical that this voice is used and is heard.

In addition to process and morale, we discussed the need for better leadership training for staff. We have a deep pool of talented, committed, and passionate employees who will be with this institution for the long haul, as long as they have the opportunity to grow. While there is a veritable wealth of options for staff looking to grow professionally, we do think there is room for improvement. So in the coming year, Staff Alliance will be working on a way to harness the incredible resources of this university to deliver a leadership development program.

We have another year of challenges ahead, both in response to external pressures and as we work to improve internally. While we adapt to a tighter budget, we also have opportunities to grow and advance—in morale, in skills, and in trust.

Faye Gallant came to Alaska in 2003 as an undergraduate at UAF, where she earned her BA in Geography (2006). She started her UAF career in 2009, working at the Geophysical Institute and Office of Sponsored Programs before joining the Office of Management and Budget. She has a Master's of Public Administration from UAS (2013) and is an active member of UAF's Process Improvement team. When she's not working, Faye travels the world with her husband, gets walked by her dogs, or heads to the hills around Fairbanks to hike and camp.

Staff Alliance serves the classified and administrative, professional and technical staff throughout the University of Alaska system.

Coalition of Student Leaders

Toby Wark, Chair

We, the students of the University of Alaska, start this fall semester eagerly moving forward with our lives. The Coalition of Student Leaders has a retreat tentatively set for the first weekend in October. At the retreat, we will assess our situation and elect members who will serve for the next two semesters. Our coming year will have plans drawn from this meeting and will share a voice developed at this time. We, the students of the University of Alaska, accept this challenge to change the future and we accept this challenge to better ourselves and those around us. We thank you for your support and understanding in this important endeavor.

Toby was born in Juneau, Alaska, and raised in Hoonah, a village about 70 miles west of Juneau. He lives in Sitka, attending the University of Alaska Southeast, working towards a business degree in management.

The Coalition of Student Leaders consists of student government representatives from the University of Alaska campuses and portrays the diverse scope of student affairs and needs. The Coalition provides a forum for student expression while fostering dialogue with faculty, staff, administration, state legislature and communities of Alaska. The Coalition promotes the educational needs, general welfare and rights of all University of Alaska students, and functions as an advisory group to the UA president and Statewide administration on student issues.