

System Governance Report

June 2015



System Governance Council

Rachel Morse, Chair

System governance appreciates the strong partnerships we have with the leadership of the University of Alaska. We welcome new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research, Dr. Daniel White. We look forward to working with you as UA shapes our future in these interesting budget times. Thank you President Gamble for continuing to attend system governance meetings given the tremendous demands for your time. At our last meeting system governance unanimously approved a recommendation to revise the governance vetting process—University Regulation R03.01L. We hope the BOR will consider this revision and if there is any uncertainty, ask questions during our time together at the beginning of the next BOR meeting. The changes we request will systematically capture and catalogue requests for governance input as well as clarify timelines and expectations. We also agreed to dedicate time and attention to the issue of Core Values and provide counsel on a way forward, or not, for unearthing the core values of UA, celebrating them across UA and utilizing them as we establish other policies and guidelines.

Special thank you to Dr. David Valentine. This is Dr. Valentine's final BOR meeting as Faculty Alliance Chair. It has been a pleasure to work with Dave on system governance issues and to see the dedication and service he has devoted to issues of statewide concern. Those are many, but worth special mention are the common calendar and the alignment of General Education Requirements. And we sadly acknowledge the retirement of Chancellor Brian Rogers and thank him profusely for his work on behalf of not just UAF, but the entire University of Alaska.

Rachel Morse is originally from Louisville, Kentucky, but has lived in Alaska since 1999. She has spent the past decade working with rural communities on projects that include environmental stewardship, housing, early childhood education and other social services. Rachel served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Zimbabwe. She has a master's degree in business administration from the University of Alaska Anchorage and a master's degree in forestry and natural resources management from Purdue University.

The System Governance Council consists of the leaders from Faculty Alliance, Staff Alliance, and Coalition of Student Leaders and includes the alumni directors from the three UA universities. The Council provides the setting for collaboration on University of Alaska systemwide issues.



Coalition of Student Leaders.

Toby Wark, Chair

We the students of the University of Alaska, have just completed the spring semester, and are moving into our summer months. Some students have graduated. They completed the onerous task of higher education thanks to the support of many faculty, staff, and fellow students. Others are returning home to work as interns or fill positions in seasonal jobs.

We face a new year, changes herald progress, progress brings growth and a deeper understanding of our parts in this complex machine known as life, society and the relationships we cultivate.

This opportunity we have been granted comes from your diligence, wisdom and guidance. We thank you for your continued support. By sitting as Regents you influence the future of every student. Alaska's future workforce is in your hands.

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.



Faculty Alliance

Dr. David Valentine, Chair

During this concluding academic year, the Faculty Alliance has undertaken a broad array of tasks committed to it by the Board of Regents and Statewide Administration. As this is the final report of academic year 2015, it seems worthwhile to provide the Board of Regents and next year's Faculty Alliance with a summary of both accomplishments and work still underway.

Work completed:

- The Faculty Alliance commissioned a Calendar Coordination Task Force to align the major elements of academic calendars across UAS, UAA, and UAF. Under the leadership of Saichi Oba, the Task Force completed its work and submitted its recommendations to President Gamble and the Board of Regents at the February BOR meeting.
- The Faculty Alliance commissioned a Mathematics GER Alignment Task Force to implement all provisions of the April 2014 BOR resolution calling for common course titles, numbers, descriptions, and placement scores. Under the leadership of Mark Fitch, the Task Force completed its work and submitted all necessary course change paperwork through the appropriate curriculum revision channels at all three universities. The alignment will be in force starting in fall, 2015, with the exception that UAF is undergoing a trial evaluation of a different placement examination (ALEKS) with an eye toward possible adoption across the UA System. Some disruption to students is expected owing to the fact that not all of the numbering changes could be entered into registration systems prior to registration for Fall semester 2015, particularly at UAA.
- The Faculty Alliance evaluated the WICHE Passport program for possible use by the UA System and recommended against its adoption at the current time. This was not intended to preclude future review and potential adoption of the WICHE Passport.
- The Faculty Alliance forwarded revisions of the UA Student Code of Conduct (R 09.02.020, section A) proposed by UAA to the UAF and UAS Faculty Senates, which approved them with one minor change in wording. The Faculty Alliance approved of the revised Student Code of Conduct.
- The Faculty Alliance agreed to a number of procedural changes to facilitate more rapid

turnaround of items submitted through governance. These include establishing a streamlined pathway of measures that require Faculty Senate approval and doubling the meeting frequency starting in Academic Year 2016.

- The Faculty Alliance received and responded to a number of other requests for input throughout the year.

Work likely to be completed by June 2015:

- The Faculty Alliance proposed a common set of minimum standards for admission into Baccalaureate programs in early 2015. These were sent back by the university faculty senates, and are currently being re-worked to address concerns raised during the submission process. We anticipate having a proposed set of standards ready by the end of this spring for submission to the three faculty senates early next fall.
- The Faculty Alliance commissioned an English GER Alignment Task Force to implement all provisions of the April 2014 BOR resolution calling for common course titles, numbers, descriptions, and placement scores. Under the leadership of Dan Kline, the ENGL/PRPE-DEVE group is compiling a final report on the alignment effort to be completed by the middle of May. The report will present the results of their efforts, the rationale behind the conclusions, and a timeline for implementation at the three universities.

Work continuing into next year:

- The Faculty Alliance commissioned an GER Coordination Task Force to develop a plan to align GERs across the three universities as directed by the April 2014 BOR resolution, with a target completion date of fall 2016. Under the leadership of Dan Kline, the Task Force is in discussions for compiling an interim report by the middle of May 2015 detailing our progress to this point as well as the rationale for the decisions and a timeline for continued discussion (so as to meet the request for a plan to be ready by Fall 2016) as well as a strategy for discussion on the three campuses to further the alignment process in light of our commitment to shared governance.

Dr. David Valentine is a professor of Forest Soils and chair of the Department of Forest Sciences in the School of Natural Resources and Extension Agricultural Sciences. He earned his MSc and PhD from Duke University (1984 and 1990, respectively) in ecosystem ecology. He worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow and Research Associate at the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory at Colorado State University. During that time, he was also awarded a Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Department of Energy, and worked at the Agricultural Research Service. He joined the UAF faculty in 1996.

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



Staff Alliance

Monique Musick, Chair

The anxiety that staff feel waiting for the final budget from Juneau is palpable. We know the news is bad—at the last Board of Regents meeting Gamble was referring to an anticipated \$31.5 million reduction. We know there will be deep cuts and that staff will be hit most of all. The workloads and daily demands on those who remain will only grow as staffing is cut back and reorganized. Now the State is stopping compensation increases. Staff fear that in addition to the loss of a cost of living

adjustment and rising health care costs we may also face furloughs. We put on our best faces each day, work to remain positive and hopeful, but are also waiting for the next round of bad news. Then to top it all off we have two chancellors and the president leaving. It is a troubling time to be sure.

Collaborative relationships with leadership is vital right now. We have seen them take the first step toward fiscal constraint with the announcement of the leadership furlough in FY16. That is meaningful, but mostly symbolic. We all realize that the \$600,000 in savings that brings is not the lasting, long-term reduction needed to steer the university through this fiscal crisis. It does, for better or worse, give an insight into how the new furlough policy could be instituted on a broader scale. The impact of a salary reduction near the end of a career could be highly detrimental to employees working on their top three earnings years for retirement funding – while those in early or mid-career are able to benefit from the full service credit that provides. Impacts vary by individual, and it would be great if there could be options for different employees to manage forced reductions in ways that fit their retirement needs. Staff representatives are very interested in working further with human resources and administration to assess options and processes and then to help inform and educate our staff so everyone is making the best decisions possible while managing forced reductions.

Furthermore, staff wish to work further on layoff regulation language to ensure the employees receive all rights of due process, and that any review requests are processed in a reasonable time period. A new committee to address these issues has been formed and we are eager to begin working toward an equitable solution that protects employee rights and still streamlines processes for human resources personnel throughout the system.

While *Shaping Alaska's Future* has many external components, at its core it is an internal process. We as a university need to change. Our culture needs to change. Our silos need to come down and collaboration and cooperation need to go up. Strong leadership from the Board and administration is vital throughout this time to provide the direction and motivation to keep our continuous improvement flowing. In the past few years there has been a huge focus on the academic side of the house and groundbreaking work done toward establishing common GERs, a common calendar and greater credit transferability. After years of in-fighting we are acting like a unified university system much to the benefit of our students and ultimately the state.

The formation of the Statewide Transformation Team can be viewed as the first step in doing that same kind of work on the administrative/staff side of the house. How can we streamline a system that has four different processes for doing just about everything? We can benefit by establishing more common protocols and processes, by utilizing common platforms and maintaining common standards and expectations, but the process will not be easy and there are reasons why one-size solutions do not work in such a broad and diverse system. The work on this is only beginning, but we in staff governance are eager to sit down with our leaders and co-workers to begin the self-analysis, questioning, rationalizing and doing that is necessary to help the university come out of this recession stronger than ever.

Monique Musick was born and raised in Ester, Alaska. After attending ICS and later Lathrop High School, she received a bachelor's of art in journalism from UAF. She currently works for UA Public Affairs doing what she enjoys most: photography, communications and graphic design. She became involved with governance in 2009 shortly after coming to UA Statewide and has enjoyed being an active member of System Governance ever since. She values the opportunity afforded through shared governance to support co-workers, participate in policy review, advise on changes in the university and to advocate on behalf of staff throughout the system. She recently purchased her old family home in Ester and enjoys gardening, photography, motor sports, outdoor activities, prospecting, music and time with friends.

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