



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Date: August 23, 2016
To: James R. Johnsen, President, University of Alaska
From: Tara Smith, Chair, UA Faculty Alliance
Re: Request for a faculty member on the Summit Team

The Faculty Alliance is requesting that a representative of the Alliance be added to the University of Alaska Summit Team. We think this is an important action to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the shared governance structure at UA and to strengthen communication between the administration and faculty.

The Summit Team, since its formation, has generated and sent to Faculty Alliance a number of proposals to review, some of which have raised faculty concerns that might have been avoided had a faculty member been in the room when the proposal was initially discussed. We firmly believe that occasional meetings between the Summit Team and Faculty Alliance are not sufficient to ensure faculty voices inform proposals and discussions, and that a faculty representative needs to be in the room with the Summit Team unless we cannot legally be a part of the discussion.

In fall 2014, former Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research Dana Thomas shared an article titled "[Shared or Divided Governance?](#)" from *Inside Higher Ed*. There are two recommendations in this article that support our request:

1. Be sure that there is at least one body on campus whose members include both administrative leaders and elected faculty representatives and whose charge is to consider, in confidence, matters of strategic importance that cut across all areas of operations; and
2. Include an elected faculty representative on the president's senior staff.

While these recommendations are aimed at university and not system-level administration, we believe they hold true also for decision-making at the statewide level. Furthermore, the Summit Team membership has expanded to include Vice Chancellors for Administrative Services at all three universities, and the UA Vice President of University Relations. We believe this increase in membership underscores the necessity of ensuring that the appropriate individuals be included in discussion of issues that cross university boundaries.

We are supportive of the ongoing efforts to improve communication and collaboration across our system, and believe the Summit Team is one-step in that direction. However, it will only succeed if faculty members have representation on this team, to make sure that proposals moving forward reflect the understandings and perspectives not only of administration but also faculty.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.