

Governance Report

November 2016



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Coalition of Student Leaders

Colby Freel, Chair

In late September, the Coalition met in Fairbanks for its annual summit. The brightest student leaders from across our state came together filled with excitement and with a mindset of service to our constituents. Throughout the summit, we were engaged in valuable discussion regarding the biggest issues facing students such as Title IX and campus safety, our legislative advocacy efforts, and UA Athletics. Special thanks is due to Representative Scott Kawasaki, Vice President Michele Rizk, Associate Vice President Saichi Oba, Chief Information Technology Officer Karl Kowalski, and others that fielded questions and shared their perspective.

Ensuring that our peers have access to a safe and welcoming learning environment is a priority for the Coalition. In fall of last year, the Coalition recommended that some form of a campus safety course be required for all UA degree seeking students. We have now formed an ad-hoc committee to review programs such as Everfi's Haven Healthy Relationship and AlcoholEdu, the training currently mandated at UAF, and others like it. The committee will also discuss the issue with faculty and staff. The committee's goal is to provide a recommendation on which program would be ideal to move forward with statewide.

The Coalition will be surveying all UA students later this month on the subject of Athletics. We are hoping to ascertain the answer to two questions. First, how committed are students to having athletics at UA. Secondly, we are hoping to find out if students are willing to support the continuation of athletics over academic programs. We eagerly await the results of this survey and plan to share what we learn with you and the University community.

This coming February, the Coalition will again meet, but this time in Juneau. Our annual legislative advocacy conference has been scheduled for the 11th through the 14th of February. Dozens of students from all areas of Alaska will meet and discuss the issues that affect their education on a larger scale. The Coalition will set its primary talking points so that all students can have one unified voice when we speak with our individual legislators. We feel these efforts are incredibly valuable in securing funding for our education. Last year's trip was largely successful and involved an "I love UA" rally which could be heard throughout the Capitol! I expect this year to be just as successful.

Lastly, the Coalition is pleased to hear that progress has been made toward the addition of Alaskan Natives Studies to University GERs. The Coalition strongly believes Alaska Native culture and history are integral to the understanding of Alaska's past, present, and future and that students of all ethnic and geographic backgrounds would benefit from a better comprehension of Alaska Native Studies.

In closing, the Coalition is fortunate to have a membership of strong and dedicated leaders that are willing and able to serve the students of UA. The Coalition will be meeting twice monthly on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. We look forward to the year ahead and are committed to supporting the Board of Regents in its decision making process by acting as a conduit for communication and as the voice of the student.

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 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 administration on student issues.

Faculty Alliance

Tara Smith, Chair

Faculty Alliance members are participating on all the Strategic Pathways Phase II teams and some implementation teams. We have seen motions from both UAF and UAS Faculty Senates concerning the role of faculty in the academic decisions being weighed by President Johnsen, the Summit Team, and the regents. Discussions on this have also taken place in the UAA Faculty Senate. Faculty involvement and a commitment to shared governance are crucial for maintaining healthy and vibrant institutions. We will continue to seek opportunities to promote broad inclusion of faculty to contribute decisions about our institutions and the system.

The GER Coordinating Task Force continues to fulfill its charge from the Faculty Alliance. Disciplinary teams have been formed and are beginning their work. The English faculty have initiated curriculum changes to align all required composition courses from the 0-level through the 200-level. Additionally, the GER Coordinating Task Force was charged to make recommendations on an instituting Alaska Native Studies GER at all three institutions. Meanwhile, the [Alaska Native Studies Council](#) has continued their work on identifying student learning outcomes and potential courses. Faculty Alliance has communicated with all three Faculty Senates that proposals on this should come to them this academic year.

Our other projects underway are responding to the accreditation report, requesting uniform budget information to help illustrate how the cuts have been distributed across the system, compiling recommendations for improving the common calendar, and examining the impact to departments of faculty benefit rates on overload and summer assignments. We also have the Writing Placement Community of Practice working on recommendations for December.

In spring 2015, Faculty Alliance held an informal dinner with the regents in Anchorage. We hope to hold a similar dinner this January in Anchorage. We are working with President Johnsen and his team to schedule it appropriately, and we hope you will be available to join us. We value the opportunity to work closely with our leaders at all levels and look forward to another valuable conversation with you.

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

Staff Alliance

Nate Bauer, Chair

UA Staff Alliance met on Wednesday, October 5 to discuss directions for Phase I of Strategic Pathways, updates to the single accreditation review process, changes to system-wide human resources policies and procedures, and results from a recent Staff Council-sponsored Staff Morale Survey at UAA.

Staff Alliance welcomes as its newest member Chris Triplett (University Advancement, UAA), recently elected Co-President of UAA Staff Council for 2016-17.

UA Director of Classification & Compensation Tara Ferguson and UAF Director of Human Resources Brad Lobland attended our October Staff Alliance meeting to present a revised and reconceived employee performance evaluation form and process. For many months, it has been a priority for staff governance to ensure a broader, more frequent, more consistent practice of completing performance evaluations by supervisors together with their staff personnel.

Equitable and consistent evaluation processes are essential to staff morale, performance, and career development. Crafting tools that make these tasks quicker, easier, and more transparent across the UA system will go far to making sure they are more common and consistent. University HR has rebuilt and integrated performance evaluations into the PageUp career and human resources management system, and have valued and incorporated practical staff feedback along the way. We're pleased and supportive about these changes, and look forward to helping implement them on a widespread basis.

UA Staff Alliance Co-President Liz Winfree presented important results from a recently completed campus Staff Morale survey. With an impressive response rate (40.5%), the results were clear: 79% of respondents stated morale has decreased over the last two years, and over 52% do not feel secure about their jobs. Unit and campus budget restrictions notwithstanding, these are widespread difficult working conditions, in many cases independent of staff performance.

UAF HR and Marketing and Communications conducted a similar employee engagement survey last year, with some similar results. UAS Staff Council and SAA have also been motivated to construct their own surveys in the coming months. Upon completion, Staff Alliance aims to coordinate and promote these collective, qualitative system-wide data and any resulting trends they have in common.

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