



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Minutes

Staff Alliance

Wednesday, February 22, 2017

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

[Google Hangout](#)

Audio call-in: 1-855-280-1855

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting came to order at 10:05 a.m.

Voting Members:

Nate Bauer, President, UAF Staff Council 2016-2017; 2016-2017 Alliance Chair
Kolene James, President, UAS Staff Council 2016-17; 2016-2017 Alliance Vice Chair
Ryan Hill, Co-President, UAA Staff Council 2016-17
Eric Johnson, President, SAA 2016-2017
Chrystal Warmoth, Vice President, SAA 2016-2017
Samara Taber, Vice President, UAF Staff Council 2016-2017
Liz Winfree, Co-President, UAA Staff Council 2016-2017

Staff:

Morgan Dufseth, Executive Officer, System Governance

Guests:

James R. Johnsen, President, University of Alaska
Juella Sparks, Director, CES Outreach and Communications

Members Absent:

Gwenna Richardson, Vice President, UAS Staff Council 2016-17

2. Adopt Agenda

Eric moved to adopt, seconded by Chrystal. Morgan noted approving the minutes will need to be postponed because they were not yet ready for review. Eric moved to postpone approving the minutes at the next Alliance meeting, seconded by Chrystal. There was no further discussion, and there were no objections. The agenda was adopted as amended.

3. Approve January Retreat Minutes

Approval of the minutes was postponed to the next Alliance meeting.

4. Chair's Report

Nate Bauer

Nate introduced Ryan, attending for his first full Alliance meeting. He also thanked members for their engagement at the January retreat. Nate noted he wanted to continue to highlight exceptional staff work across the university. He reported Jeff Rothman at UAF was recently recognized for excellence by a professional organization. He encouraged Alliance members to continue to lift up the notable work of their peers. Regarding President Johnsen, Nate noted it seems to be the staff that work closest with him have the highest opinion of his work and that those further from him are more critical of his plans. Nate also noted that the current re-organization under Strategic Pathways require decisions that will not please everybody and that attempts to please some stakeholders actually moves the process away from common ground and creates more contention. Primary change between Phase I and Phase II is a longer, more protracted feedback phase, which allows for additional input from stakeholders and more thoughtful feedback from potentially affected units.

5. Public and Guests Comment

5.1. President Johnsen joined the meeting at 10:38 a.m. He noted there were a couple topics he'd like to address before opening the floor to questions.

Voluntary agreement with Office of Civil Rights (OCR): The president noted there has been a lot of work to reach this point and a massive amount of improvement since this issue (Title IX violations) was first disclosed two years ago. The president expressed appreciation for the staff who have been taking on this heavy load. He noted he had appointed Mary Gower as the Chief Title IX Officer at UA and she would be heading up efforts to address the goals and timelines issued in OCR's report. The president asked Alliance members to pass on his appreciation to staff that were involved in the process. He also noted he hopes that UA's transparency on this matter helped to negate any surprise and damage to our brand.

Budget: The Alaska Senate is taking a hard line this session and is taking aim at what they see as the biggest budget drivers in the state—and the University is included in that. The Senate is pushing at \$16M reduction this year, leaving the UA FY18 budget at \$305 or 306M. The House so far is supporting the Governor's budget for UA, which was \$325M. The president noted he prefers to frame the University as an investment in Alaska—not solely a budget driver. He also noted that VP Rizk and AVP Baker are currently in Juneau advocating for the university.

Legislative issues: The president noted the higher education tax credit—a corporate tax incentive for donations to UA—was going to expire at the end of 2018 and the University is already voicing their support for renewal of the program. There are some legislators who would like to reduce the tax incentive, which could translate to reduced corporate donations to UA. The president also noted the University is working to communicate its plan for revitalizing its land grant. The plan will include creation of a new federal program and then coming back to the state for their contribution. Despite some rumors, this would not require a constitutional amendment.

Strategic Pathways: Regarding Phase II feedback, the president is meeting with all of the affected areas—48 in all—to gather their feedback on the currently proposed options. The president feels it is a major improvement to the input process from Phase I. The president noted VP Dan White is drafting a formal request for governance groups to provide feedback on the Phase II options. The president also offered to spend time with the Alliance to review their feedback on Phase II. The president also noted there were several options he will identify as less viable or feasible for UA; he plans to announce those options at the March Board meeting.

Shared Governance discussion at March BOR: The president noted he will share materials with governance leaders regarding this upcoming discussion. He plans to have that sent out by next Monday to help provide a framework for that discussion.

Public Comment: Juella Sparks, a former chair of the Staff Alliance, noted she wanted to hear what the Alliance had to say on the upcoming BOR discussion on shared governance. She encouraged Alliance members to ensure the president follows process and that affected employees are all treated the same under University policy and regulation.

6. Staff Alliance Committee Reports

6.1. Staff Health Care Committee

Chrystal gave a brief update on staff health care. At the most recent SHCC meeting, Benefits Director Erika Van Flein reviewed health care benefits rates and noted rates should not go up significantly next year (or at all). The JHCC has voted to include a new service for high risk pregnancies. They are going to vote on the Evicore vendor at their upcoming meeting. EviCore is a vendor who provides a review of necessary therapeutic rehabilitation services. JHCC also opted to drop Best Doctors for FY18.

6.2. Compensation Committee – The Compensation Committee has not met since the Alliance retreat. They are currently waiting to hear back from Alliance on what recommendations will move forward.

- 6.3. Governance Process Committee – This committee has not met this year. Nate asked for new members for FY17—there were no volunteers. Nate suggested waiting to see the request from VP White regarding the Phase II feedback.
- 6.4. Morale Committee – Morgan will arrange their next meeting by poll and will share the UAF engagement recommendations with the system morale committee. Kolene noted that at the UAS campus, the provost has created a student success survey and distributed to faculty and staff, which received encouraging responses about ways to better UAS. Nate noted he would like to have a comprehensive report on the morale surveys from each campus.

7. External Committees

- 7.1. System Governance Council – Will meet next on March 6.
- 7.2. Student Services Council – Morgan will check with AVP Oba on the status of SSC.
- 7.3. Joint Health Care Committee – See above SHCC report.

8. New Business

- 8.1. Resolution re: Google Email Reference 3

Several members noted hesitation to support the resolution due to concerns about vague and anecdotal language, especially regarding high attrition rates and privacy/security concerns. Nate noted it would be useful if Liz and Ryan worked with the UAA IT to provide evidence for the claims made within the resolution. Eric suggested having the Alliance make a formal request for information regarding the switch to Google mail. Eric moved to postpone the approval of the resolution to a future meeting and to formally request information regarding the claims made within the resolution, seconded by Kolene. There were no objections and the motion carried.
- 8.2. Resolution re: Emeritus Staff Reference 4

Ryan reported the UAA Staff Council was asked by Chancellor Case to formalize the process to recognize staff as emeritus. The UAA provost raised concerns that the emeritus status should only be used for academic faculty, and that staff should be recognized as ‘distinguished’ rather than emeritus. There was general support for this resolution, however, Morgan asked to make several format changes and have members vote via email. Kolene moved to approve the resolution via email later this week, seconded by Eric. There were no objections. The motion carried.
- 8.3. UAF Staff Volunteer Days Proposal Reference 5

Nate asked to postpone this item to a future meeting; there were no objections.

9. Ongoing Business Topics

- 9.1. Strategic Pathways Phase II Feedback [Reference 6](#)

Members agreed to postpone discussing feedback until receiving the request for feedback from VP White.

9.2. Compensation Recommendation

[Reference 7](#) & 8

Members agreed to postponed approval of the memo until they heard back from the UA compensation director and review the memo and vote on it via email.

10. Roundtable discussion

11. Adjourn

Eric moved to adjourn, seconded by Kolene. There were no objections. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.