



UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

Retreat Agenda

**Staff Alliance**

Friday, August 11, 2017

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Butrovich Bldg., Rm. 109

Fairbanks, Alaska

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Voting Members:

Kara Axx, President, UAF Staff Council

Ryan J. Hill, Co-President, UAA Staff Council

Shiva Hullavarad, President, SAA

Kolene James, President, UAS Staff Council

Brenda Levesque, Co-President, UAA Staff Council

Elain Main, Vice President, SAA

Sue Mitchell, Vice President, UAF Staff Council

Kiwana Sutton, Vice President, UAS Staff Council

Staff:

Morgan Dufseth, Executive Officer, System Governance

Guests:

Heather Arana, HR Analyst

Nate Bauer, FY17 Staff Alliance Chair

Tara Ferguson, Director of Compensation

Diane Hirshberg, Professor of Education Policy, ISER

James R. Johnsen, President, University of Alaska

Michelle Rizk, Vice President for University Relations

Sara Rodewald, Healthy Roads Consultant

Erika Van Flein, Director of Benefits

2. Governance Orientation

Morgan provided a brief presentation on governance at UA. The presentation is attached to the end of these minutes.

3. President Johnsen and Vice President Rizk addressed several topics with the Staff Alliance:

FY18 Budget – The state appropriation for UA was \$378 in FY14 and has been reduced to \$317M as of FY18, a reduction of 16% of the UA’s budget. Although UA has had to face reductions, the Board has continued to make strategic investments—K12 Outreach, ANSEP, research, completion of UAF engineering building. This year there will be a \$6M re-allocation of funds to strategic investments. Also pulling back some carry forward from the universities—which on average had 3.5% and will be reduce to 2%. Process automation and process improvement will be a priority in the coming year as well.

FY19 Budget – Next year’s budget will be approved in mid-November. The president will brief the Board in October and will preview priorities in September. President Johnsen noted he was frustrated with compensation at UA and wants to continue to make positive changes. He also noted UA is working with NCHEMS to review UA and our state system structure.

Enrollment – The president noted enrollment is down 6000 students from the last five years and also expressed concern about community campus tuition. He tuition at UA universities is low but UA’s community campus tuition is almost double the lower 48 average.

Strategic Pathways – [Phase 1](#) and [Phase 2](#) decisions have been made and are in various states of implementation. [Phase 3](#) decisions will be addressed in the fall.

Summit Team and councils – The councils have been developed to help campuses have input on how decisions are carried out.

Recruitments at UA – Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research has changed to Academic and Student Affairs. The position has been posted and is accepting applications. The Academic Council will serve as the search council and will report back to President Johnsen. He hopes to have the position filled later this fall. The president is still determining whether he will use a search firm for the UAA chancellor recruitment and plans to meet with faculty, staff and students at UAA to get their feedback on the process.

4. UA Benefits Review – Erika

Erika provide a brief review of benefits at UA. She noted if staff choose to use TeleDoc, it helps to pre-register so that if you do need to use it, it is much faster and easier. Overall, she has received positive feedback for that service and noted it was a much cheaper option than a traditional doctor’s visit. She also encouraged staff to sign up for paperless EOBs through Premera to help UA obtain additional savings.

Ryan asked questions about UA's retirement benefits, especially the removal of the ORP option for new staff in 2015. Erika provided some history on the subject and noted that UA had to make changes because the program had become financially unsustainable (a 2008 law—SB125--that created a salary floor issue). Erika noted that she is currently looking at including a Roth option to add to the 403b plan.

5. PageUp Review – Heather Arana

Heather provided an overview of the new performance appraisal tool at UA. The tool, PageUp, will be accessible online via [myUA](#), and should help to start a conversation between supervisor and employee on expectations and goals. The new tool is not tied to performance management.

6. UA Compensation Review – Tara Ferguson

Tara answered questions regarding furlough, staff compensation, and previous unionization efforts at UA. She noted Geoff Bacon, Director of Labor and Employee Relations, would likely have more information regarding staff unionization. Morgan noted she will invite Geoff to the September Alliance meeting.

7. Staff Morale Survey – Diane Hirshberg

Diane noted she had done some research on how other organizations have conducted morale surveys and noted there are roughly five areas to examine: campus culture and policies, institutional goals, involvement in planning and decision-making, work environment, demographics. She noted Cornell University had developed an employee survey and were asking employees about issues affecting them outside the university. She noted she had not seen that approach before but that it might be something UA looks into.

Diane noted she will be meeting with the Faculty Alliance at their retreat to discuss the same issue later in August. She noted the two groups could hire ISER to formulate questions and analyze results.

Shiva offered to look into internal options for the morale survey—ISER, SOM, Justice. Members also noted the next steps would be to get buy-in from President Johnsen.

8. Chair's End-of-Year Report – Nate Bauer

Nate gave a review of his time as chair of the Staff Alliance. He noted he had great support over the years and thanked Kolene James, Monique Musick and Faye Gallant for their service. He noted he was proud of how collaborative Staff Alliance had been over the last few years, not just between campuses but between governance groups. He noted a lot of that was due, in part, to the Strategic Pathways process. Also noted there was practical knowledge and expertise that staff have brought to the Pathways process. Noted he thought current executive leadership seemed supportive of governance at UA, and thinks those relationships can be strengthened

even more. Noted that other governance groups have come at administration from a different angle. Small wheel v. big wheel—wants to make a big wheel to cover more ground. But encouraged SA to continue to offer feedback and critiques on processes. Nate also noted he thought the expanded Summit Teams was a positive move, even if they are not the final decision making body. He noted he felt the winter retreat was productive and encouraged the Alliance to continue to hold one. Noted he was heartened by the proposal to have a staff and faculty regent, and encouraged the Alliance to continue those efforts.

## 9. Staff Alliance Committees

Members discussed committee actions from FY17 and how to best move forward in FY18.

- 9.1. Staff Health Care Committee
- 9.2. Compensation Committee
- 9.3. Morale Committee
- 9.4. Staff Emeritus (Ad Hoc)

## 10. External Committees

Members discussed the external committees, none of which have met yet in FY18.

- 10.1. System Governance Council
- 10.2. Joint Health Care Committee
- 10.3. System-wide Councils – New for FY18

## 11. Alliance Business Meeting

### 11.1. 2017-18 Meeting Schedule

Sue moved to meet on first Wednesdays at 10am, seconded by Kolene. The motion passed without objection.

### 11.2. Chair and Vice Chair Elections

#### 11.2.1. Chair

Sue nominated Kara, and she accepted. Through unanimous acclaim, Kara was elected chair. Kolene noted she would like local staff council members to attend BOR meetings to support the chair.

#### 11.2.2. Vice Chair

Brenda nominated Kolene, and she accepted. Kolene was elected by unanimous acclamation.

### 11.3. Committee Appointments

SHCC – Sue, Elaine  
Compensation – Shiva, Kiwana  
Morale – Kolene, Kara  
Staff Emeritus – Ryan, Kolene  
JHCC – Brenda, Elaine

- 11.4.      Agenda Items for September Meeting  
            JHCC representation  
            System-wide councils  
            FY18 Goals and Opportunities (retirement options; full-time employment  
            definitions; unionization efforts; staff and faculty regent positions; layoff notice for  
            hourly employees)  
            Tara Ferguson  
            Morale Survey – Diane Hirshberg

12. Adjourn

The retreat adjourned at 3:55 p.m.