

Governance Report

September 2017



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Coalition of Student Leaders

Colby Freel, Chair

As students are preparing to return to their campuses for the fall semester, the Coalition is also preparing for the coming year. We are determined to improve our effectiveness as a governance group so that we can help improve the university community by supporting and informing your decision making as regents.

I would like to take a brief moment to celebrate in the collective accomplishment of University leaders, stakeholders and community members. In April, President Johnsen responded to resolutions from each of the statewide governance groups and several local governance groups requesting system-wide recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day. Because of the collective efforts of these groups and individuals, and the governance process working as intended, each of the Universities and campuses will choose how they recognize Indigenous Peoples Day locally, which is a positive step towards a stronger, more inclusive university community.

Preparations are underway for the Coalitions fall summit to be held in September. We will be embarking with refreshed minds and clear objectives. One of those objectives will be to create a shared vision of our role and purpose in the university community. Student engagement in the University supports in decision making and an “integral part of the university community’s culture.” Therefore, it is essential to focus our efforts on improving our effectiveness in representing students and addressing issues that affect them, as well as advise university leadership, and communicate with our constituents and other governance groups. Dialogue with regents and other University leaders will be essential to achieving those goals. Communication will be most effective when each stakeholder in the conversation is an active participant. We need not only to be heard by, but also to hear from, regents and university leaders on how to better serve the university community.

The Coalition will also continue its work to help prevent sex based discrimination and violence on our campuses. In this area especially, we recognize the important role students have in affecting change in our communities. As we discuss this key issue during our summit, we will look for ways to engage diverse groups of students with Title IX committees at their respective universities and seek opportunities to create a dialogue wherein students can share thoughts and ideas on how to improve their communities.

Looking forward, discussions among student leaders regarding tuition are underway and I look forward to sharing our initial thoughts at the September meeting with the Coalition's solidified viewpoints to be shared soon after. The Coalition will also be digging into Strategic Pathways shortly and begin providing feedback in a timely manner.

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

Lisa Hoferkamp, Chair

The Faculty Alliance (FA) thanks the Board of Regents for their efforts to improve lines of communication between faculty and the Board. Increased interaction among regents, faculty, and leadership is beneficial in any context, but especially in the difficult times the University is now facing. The FA extends a warm welcome to Regent Karen Purdue and Student Regent Joey Sweet.

The **June 2017 BOR** meeting prompted the following FA actions:

Regents were assured that completion of the common GER task will be a FA priority and a major component of the FA Retreat scheduled for Aug. 20-21, 2017. An update on Common GER status will be provided to the BOR at the November 2017 BOR meeting.

The June 2017 BOR meeting precipitated a request from Regent John Davies for a summary of faculty concerns regarding the Strategic Pathways (SP) Phase I decision regarding the UA schools of education. The FA response is described below.

In order to ensure communication of faculty concerns regarding SP Phase III prior to administrative decisions the FA has created an online tool for collection of faculty comments and concerns around each of the SP Phase III options. That feedback will be correlated and submitted to the acting VPASA on or before Aug. 25, 2017.

The FA will discuss the BOR response to Resolution 2017-07 regarding statewide system offices of the University of Alaska at the Aug. 20-21, 2017 FA Retreat. This discussion will consider actions from the June 1-2 BOR meeting and the FA will compile and submit a response shortly thereafter. Of significant concern to the FA is the disconnect between the FA resolution and the BOR response which suggests that data sharing and other forms of transparency would greatly facilitate efforts at shared governance. Retreat discussions will explore this issue as well as collaborative projects between the universities and Statewide aimed at maximizing efficiency across the UA system, enrollment issues and letters to the editors of the State's newspapers that accentuate the diverse nature of the programs offered across the three distinctive universities.

The **Statewide Academic Committee** (SAC) has met three times since the May 12, 2017, meeting of the FA. In addition to myself, Chris Fallen and Maria Williams participated in those meetings. Thank you to Chris and Maria for participating in those meetings despite their off-contract status.

The BOR regulation associated with the Protection of Minors on Campus was discussed and the SAC has been made aware that the language wherein numbered UA courses are described as currently exempt from the regulations and will be developed at a later time (J.2.a) is supported by UA faculty. The FA requested clarification on R09.12.085 regarding minors that are concurrently enrolled, noting that minors participating in numbered courses that do not have concurrent status must be addressed somewhere in the regulation. The issue was resolved in an email (July 24, 2017) from Tim Edwards. The FA continues to support policy and regulation that imposes the same requirements and rules and grants the same benefits to minors enrolled in numbered courses identical to those of any matriculated college student. The July 24 email from Tim Edwards also contained an assurance that this language is agreed upon and will be in the follow-on regulation on concurrent enrollment.

The contract between EAB and UA for the Student Success Collaborative (SSC) as described on July 5, 2017, by Saichi Oba has been shared with the FA. The terms of that contract, including a reduction in both the one time implementation fee and the annual fee paid for each campus, opt-out provisions starting in year-one of a five-year contract if a university decides the SSC is not meeting their needs and an implementation process beginning July 2017 satisfies the FA requests for the SSC. The FA would like to thank John Hebard and Saichi Oba for their work on the non-standard contract.

Required training to meet Title IX VRA is available online and faculty must complete this training by Oct. 1, 2017, while students must complete training modules by Oct. 31, 2017, or an account hold will be implemented. The VRA also requires that all UA Publications include the title, office address, e-mail, telephone number of the university's Title IX coordinator. It is recommended but not required that course syllabi include the Title IX microstatement (<http://www.alaska.edu/titleIXcompliance/nondiscrimination/>).

The **Statewide IT Council** has met three times over the summer and the focus of most of those meetings have been statewide actions that would lower IT expenditures across the three universities. A list of potential actions has been shared with the FA and the resulting comments and concerns communicated to the IT Council. Group discussion determined that further analysis was needed to ensure implementation will not detrimentally reduce existing functionality and/or result in higher costs in related areas and the FA expressed their support for such action. In a July 17, 2017, phone conversation, Karl Kowalski stated that any changes to course management systems and office software would be thoroughly vetted with faculty prior to any significant action.

The **Student Services Council** (SSC) met three times over the summer and in the absence of an appointed FA representative, I attended those meetings. The SSC has been charged with revising policy surrounding student medical leave. A working group has been meeting over

the summer to formulate the revisions. That group consists of Ben Morton, UAA Dean of Students, Lora Volden, UAA Interim AVC, Lael Oldmixon from SW, Margie Thompson, UAS Disability and Counseling Services and Debu Misra, UAF Geological Engineering faculty.

The **Expanded Summit Team** met on Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2017. As FA Chair, I serve on that committee and with the three provosts, represent faculty interests. Increased tuition rates were discussed at the afternoon meeting and will be revisited at the Sept. 21 Summit Team meeting. The FA will solicit input from all faculty, document and present to the Summit Team prior to that date. Other agenda items, including the revenue and expenditure model presented to UA by NCHEMS and FA participation in other system-wide councils will be discussed at the Aug. 20-21, 2017 FA Retreat in terms of their impact on academics across the UA system. In response to a request for input, I suggested mutually agreed upon vocabulary when discussing the UA system. A document summarizing preferred terminology will be pursued by the FA in the coming year.

Letters, Memos and Resolutions:

A letter requesting clarification on the Summit Team decision to implement one non-teaching day per semester as opposed to the two non-teaching days recommended by FA. President Johnsen's response was prompt but provided limited information in support of the Summit Team's decision.

A letter of thanks has been sent to the United Academics Negotiating team for their efforts towards securing an equitable and fair collective bargaining agreement for all UA faculty.

At Regent John Davies' request, the FA summarized faculty and student concerns regarding the Strategic Pathways Phase I decision to consolidate three schools of education into one statewide college of education. That summary was provided to Regent Davies in the form of a letter. No response has been received.

The Alliance submitted a letter to President Johnsen requesting that efforts to fill the vice president for Academic and Student Affairs position left vacant by Dan White be delayed for one year and that in that time, UA Provosts co-chair the SAC committee. President Johnsen's response was prompt and indicated that he felt the VPASA position was essential and would be filled as soon as possible.

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

Staff Alliance

Kara Axx, Chair

UA Staff Alliance held its first meeting online on July 11 to introduce the new members and to discuss the role of governance for the upcoming year. Keli Hite McGee was in attendance to discuss the new system-wide performance evaluation process. The group had a significant amount of turnover for the upcoming year with six out of eight members new to UA Staff Alliance.

2017 – 2018 Staff Alliance membership includes:

- Kara Axx, President UAF Staff Council
- Ryan J. Hill, Co-President, UAA Staff Council
- Shiva Hullavarad, President, SW Administration Assembly
- Kolene James, President, UAS Staff Council
- Brenda Levesque, Co-President, UAA Staff Council
- Elaine Main, Vice President, SW Administration Assembly
- Sue Mitchell, Vice President, UAF Staff Council
- Kiwana Sutton, Vice President, UAS Staff Council

UA Staff Alliance held the annual retreat on Aug. 11 in Fairbanks. President Jim Johnsen, Vice President Michelle Rizk, Director of Benefits Erika Van Flein, HR Analyst Heather Arana, Director of Compensation Tara Ferguson and Professor of Education Policy Diane Hirshberg were in attendance to discuss the upcoming budget planning, employee compensation, enrollment challenges, Strategic Pathways, changes to employee benefits, reviewed the employee evaluation process and ways to survey employee morale. Outgoing Alliance Chair Nate Bauer noted improved communication methods over the past year, and encouraged Staff Alliance to follow changes to the annual leave policy, participation of governance with executives and faculty and staff representation on the Board of Regents.

I would like to introduce myself (Kara Axx, UAF) as the newly elected chair of Staff Alliance, along with Vice Chair Kolene James (UAS). We are excited to have the opportunity to represent our fellow staff to President Johnsen and the Board of Regents. As a result of several years of steep budget cuts, it is no secret that all employees in the UA System are dealing with increasing responsibilities, fewer resources and increasing stress. Over the next year, Staff Alliance is looking forward to working on improving staff morale, empowering employees at the appropriate levels to create efficiencies while increasing levels of service, continuing work towards equality in benefits, continuing representation of governance with UA Leadership including representation on the Board, wrapping up the final stage of Strategic Pathways and providing quality communication back to our constituents.

Kara Axx is a lifelong Alaskan who ventured north to Fairbanks 20 years ago to earn her Bachelors in Business Administration with emphasis in Marketing (2002) from UAF. She started employment at UAF as a student in 2000 while working on her degree and recently celebrated her 15 year anniversary as an employee of UAF Facilities Services Division of Design and Construction. While not enjoying her day job, Kara enjoys all things outside, from stocking the freezer with Alaskan goodies to cross country skiing on the amazing trails offered on the UAF campus.

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