

# Governance Report

November 2018



UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

## Coalition of Student Leaders

Nick Bursell, Chair

Thank you for taking the time today to hear this report. The Coalition of Student Leaders has officially met and formed at this point in time, so I will be updating you on our status and actions, as well as a brief mention of topics of interest.

On October 12th and 13th, we held our annual Coalition summit in Anchorage. Student representatives from all around the state were present. We had folks from Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Sitka, Mat-Su, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Kenai, and Kachemak Bay attend, so we had solid representation of the various campuses, and heard updates from each. I am excited to work with such a diverse field of student representatives.

We made three actions at the summit as a body. The first was establishing dates for the upcoming legislative affairs conference, which will be held in March 2019 from the 16th to the 19th. Next, we elected officers of the Coalition. I was elected chair and Teresa Wrobel was elected vice chair. We have a strong group of student leaders in the Coalition this year, and Teresa and I will do our best to bring you any concerns from the various campuses as concisely as possible.

We also received updates from President Johnsen, Vice President Layer, Vice President Rizk and Associate Vice President Baker on legislative affairs, FY20 budget development, the UA Gateway, efforts to increase the Middle College at UA and the development of a culture of respect. The Coalition also heard an update from Regent Sweet on the September Board meeting and upcoming issues the Board will take into consideration, including the policy on reports of misconduct. I want to thank Regent Sweet for his continued involvement in the Coalition and clarifying Board policy for myself and the rest of the student representatives.

There are a few issues we are looking into at the moment, but have thus far taken no official action on. We hope to look into the cross-facility fee to see if students end up paying for services that they are unable to access. For example, students in a nursing cohort having to pay fees for services only available at the Anchorage campus. Another matter the Coalition plans to review in more depth in the future is student employee compensation.

We are also planning ahead for various campuses to participate in a student regent and student commissioner elections, though that also is only in early phases.

I want to again thank the board for taking the time to hear this report, and thank my fellow student representatives for their work in student representation. I'm excited to continue to serve as Coalition chair. Thank you.

Nick Bursell is pursuing a degree in creative writing at the University of Alaska Southeast. He previously served as an intern in the Ted Stevens Legislative Internship Program.

*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**

Chris Fallen, Chair

Faculty Alliance (FA) identified several action items to advance during the academic year at its mid-September retreat hosted by the University of Alaska Southeast. The action items discussed at the retreat and in subsequent meetings include proposing changes to the University of Alaska (UA) and United Academics (UNAC) Faculty Initiative Fund (FIF) request for proposals (RFP) and evaluation process, transitioning work from the general education requirement (GER) coordinating task force to a new GER maintenance committee, review of proposed Regents' Policy 01.02.080, review of proposed changes to UA travel regulations and processes, review of proposed Common Calendars for academic years 2020 through 2022 approved by the systemwide Common Calendar Committee, plans for sharing information on the accreditation processes currently or soon to be underway at each university, review and revision of the FA bylaws, and recruitment of faculty to serve on the system-wide councils and on a new faculty committee for systemwide Title IX regulation and policy.

The following are progress reports, details, or updates on selected action items listed above:

- The most substantial suggested change to the FIF RFP include the introduction of three “tiers” of proposals allowing for a few large awards and many more smaller awards. This will help distribute funds to more faculty than in the previous year and will also help prevent the difficulties caused by comparing proposals for large awards with proposals for small awards. The revised RFP proposed by FA was presented to the systemwide Academic Council on October 19.
- Faculty Alliance sent a letter of thanks to Professor Dan Kline and the GER Coordinating Task Force for their outstanding work on GER alignment. Faculty Alliance charged the leadership of each faculty senate to recruit charter membership for the new GER maintenance committee that will coordinate GER alignment as curriculums at each university evolve.
- Faculty Alliance reviewed the proposed Regents' Policy 01.02.080 Administrative Response to Reports of Misconduct and solicited additional feedback from the three

faculty senates. By a substantial margin, the most common expressed concern is in regards to the three year time limit for automatic administrative response to a report of misconduct using established procedures. Many faculty feel that this should be a substantially longer length of time. Another significant concern or confusion is how this misconduct policy relates to the various other misconduct policies, e.g. research misconduct or sexual misconduct.

- Faculty Alliance reviewed proposed changes to UA travel regulations and processes, solicited feedback from the faculty senates, and engaged in discussion with Finance Business Process Analyst Geoff Jacobs in the Statewide Financial Systems office. Mr. Jacobs was very helpful in answering faculty questions. Generally speaking, faculty welcome a majority of the proposed changes but feel strongly that any proposed changes should prioritize flexibility and convenience for the traveler. Faculty travel is usually on external restricted funds, is highly varied in scope, includes international and remote destinations that do not have credit card capabilities, requires supervision of students that also need to pay travel expenses independently of the faculty, and requires tight coordination with external collaborations that may be sharing travel expenses. Mandated use of a UA travel expense card and a travel booking portal are the two most significant areas of concern in regards to flexibility in payment and reimbursement of travel expenses, and in the potential hassle of providing justification for exceptions to use of the card and portal.
- Faculty Alliance is reviewing its bylaws and is considering revised timelines for production and distribution of meeting agendas and recordings.
- Faculty Alliance tasked the leadership of each faculty senate to recruit interested and willing faculty to serve on the systemwide councils and to form a systemwide faculty Title IX regulation and policy committee. Faculty Alliance intends to send lists of volunteers to the Academic Council in November.

In the remaining months of the calendar year, Faculty Alliance will continue discussing tentative options for increasing opportunities for synchronous course delivery across the UA system that may include, but do not necessarily require alignment of course block lengths among the universities. Faculty Alliance looks forward to parallel proposals from Statewide administration to incentivize synchronous course delivery through modifications to the current revenue sharing model. Finally, Faculty Alliance is beginning to discuss how faculty can better list and describe their service and research activities and their importance to the state of Alaska.

Dr. Chris Fallen, Chair of the UA Faculty Alliance, is a Research Associate Professor in the Geophysical Institute Space Physics group and is the Chief Scientist of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) Ionospheric and Radio Science Laboratory in Gakona, Alaska. He earned his Ph.D. in Space Physics from UAF (2010) while working as a graduate teaching assistant at the UAF College of Natural Science and Mathematics, at the UAF College of Engineering and Mines, and as a graduate research assistant at the former UAF Arctic Region Supercomputing Center; his M.A. in Mathematics from the University of Kansas (2004); and his B.S. in Physics and B.A. in Mathematics from Fort Lewis College (2000). In addition to serving as Chair of the University

of Alaska (UA) Faculty Alliance, Dr. Fallen is the Principal Investigator (PI) of the Lowell Digisonde Instrument at HAARP and the one currently under construction at Poker Flat Research Range (PFRR). He is also the PI of multiple funded projects at HAARP, and is currently seeking Federal funding to expand the research infrastructure at HAARP and PFRR.

*The UA Faculty Alliance is the system-wide governance group elected to represent the faculty in promoting welfare and education effectiveness at UA, to provide consultation to system executive leadership, and to facilitate system-wide communication among faculty at all three universities at UA.*

## **Staff Alliance**

Josh Watts, Chair

The University of Alaska Staff Alliance met on September 21 and October 19. At both meetings, members discussed the proposed travel regulations and the proposed new policy on reporting misconduct. The Staff Alliance also discussed the importance of staff engagement in shared governance at the University of Alaska, as well as ongoing morale and compensation issues across all campuses. Finally, the Staff Alliance is also discussed formal and informal staff recognition, and formalizing the process for granting emeritus recognition to staff.

The Staff Alliance appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on policy and regulations that will potentially affect a large number of staff at the university. Although the Board does not approve University Regulation, the Staff Alliance would like to highlight the hard work done by the travel management task force to clarify and streamline the travel process for travelers and coordinators, while also creating cost savings for the university. We thank Geoff Jacobs and Myron Dosch for their continued efforts to reach out and foster communication and collaboration between staff and administration on important matters such as this.

The Staff Alliance also reviewed the proposed new policy on reporting misconduct at the University of Alaska. Overall, it appears the policy will create an effective process that will guide the university when reviewing reports of misconduct as well as providing alternative options for reports made outside the three-year window. The Staff Alliance is supportive of the policy overall but has concerns that the three-year window is not adequate for the university community. Students, on average, are spending more than three years on a college campus. It would seem prudent to allow students the ability to wait until after they matriculate to file a complaint.

The Staff Alliance has been closely following the compensation review that has been ongoing since spring 2018. Following the presentation made to the Board at its September meeting, staff were concerned that cost of labor rather than cost of living was used to measure market competitiveness. The Staff Alliance looks forward to continued review of the 300 positions that were identified as having possibly inequitable compensation.

Of particular concern to the Staff Alliance is a perceived shift in compensation policy, away from regular across-the-board pay increases, which have been the standard at the University of Alaska for over 30 years, to a performance-based model that seeks to use bonuses to reward high-performing employees. At a time when employees are routinely being asked to do more with less, we are concerned this philosophy will lead to difficulties recruiting strong candidates and retaining good employees.

To that point, it was identified by the Staff Alliance Compensation Committee that there is uneven use and access to performance bonuses across University of Alaska campuses. In FY18, the University of Alaska Fairbanks awarded 384 bonuses to its employees. The University of Alaska Anchorage gave out 137 bonuses. The University of Alaska Southeast granted eight while the Statewide offices awarded five, one of which was to President Johnsen. The Staff Alliance would like to see an easy and open process developed for supervisors to recognize their employees, formally and informally, and would like to be involved in the development of such a process.

The Staff Alliance is concerned about persistent morale issues present at each campus at the University of Alaska. Particularly troubling was a pay increase hold implemented over the summer. This was distressing to staff because most employee evaluations are conducted near the close of the fiscal year. With the hold in place, supervisors were unable to request performance based in-grade step increases for high performing employees or ask for position reclassifications for employees who have taken on new duties or gained new abilities through professional development. The hold, lifted in early October, created a good deal of frustration among employees already operating under increased workloads and decreased staffing. Increasing the frustration was the lack of communication concerning both the start and end of the hold on pay increases.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this report. As chair of the Staff Alliance, I hope to continue this conversation with you to find a way forward that supports and emboldens our staff to carry out its mission of uplifting and encouraging students at the University of Alaska.

Josh has been on campus since 2006, where he started as an undergraduate student at UAF studying Computer Science. Since then, he has been involved with UAF and UA in many roles, including as a student employee, a grant-funded employee for the OWL grant, a member of OIT's leadership team, and as the staff advisor for a number of clubs. Most recently, Josh has served as the OIT Customer Support Services Manager, and as the Vice President of SAA. While not in the office, Josh enjoys spending time with his wonderful wife, and they fill their life with adventures enjoying everything from Brazilian jiu-jitsu to live action role playing, video games, and the outdoors.

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