

**Faculty Alliance**  
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May 15, 2019

James R. Johnsen, President  
University of Alaska  
2025 Yukon Drive, Ste. 202  
Fairbanks, AK 99775

Board of Regents  
University of Alaska  
2025 Yukon Drive, Ste. 202  
Fairbanks, AK 99775

Dear President Johnsen and members of the Board:

The UA Faculty Alliance is the system wide governance group that represents the faculty at the three Universities in the UA system (UAA, UAF and UAS).

We were pleased to hear Chair Davies propose the establishment of a Regents' Task Force to examine the structure of the UA system and find more efficiencies. The budget issues that our state is facing are of grave concern to all the faculty, staff, student and administrators within the three Universities. We as faculty, have been addressing these with our respective Chancellors, Deans and Provosts. Among the steps we have taken, we have increased our course enrollments, aligned GER courses, and created more online courses. We have also been supportive of the common calendar and have addressed course block alignment, which will be in an upcoming report at the June 2019 BOR meeting.

We are concerned with using NCHEMS to consult on this project. Our concern stems from the presentation given at the May 9, 2019 BOR meeting. That presentation illustrated a lack of understanding of the depth and diversity of the various academic programs that exist across our various campuses, and the Alaska context. The theme of the report was to create the exact same curriculum across UAS, UAF, and UAA, without consideration of the populations and industries served by the three universities. Currently there is a variety of academic programs that reflects depth and diversity and represents 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge dissemination. Many of these programs are unique to Alaska, and some to specific regions. To destroy or limit the depth and diversity, to have a one-size-fits-all curriculum will result in a very un-dynamic and dull

educational experience for our students, and a reduced ability to respond to the needs of industry partners. Our students deserve the best education available, and the faculty across the three universities have continued to develop and update their academic programs. Indeed, the recent accreditation site visits at UAA and UAS reflect the positive educational experience for our students. We support a seamless education experience for our students without question, but re-designing a curriculum that is exactly the same across all campuses will undermine the vitality of the three universities. As faculty, we cannot accept that.

The current UA statewide structure has remained relatively the same since it was established, when there was only one university—UAF—and fewer than 1,000 students. We agree with the BOR that it is time to re-envision and perhaps re-organize the UA Statewide structure because we have outgrown it. There are ways that we can work together and we hope to extend our support to a task force that will ideally include faculty members from each of the three Universities – so we can work together on identifying seamless student experiences, and more economic efficiencies. Please don't hesitate to contact us and we look forward to the June Board of Regents meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maria Williams".

Maria Williams, Faculty Alliance Chair

On behalf of:

Heather Batchelder, Faculty Alliance Vice Chair

Sine Anahita, President, UAF Faculty Senate

Scott Downing, President, UAA Faculty Senate

Jak Maier, President-Elect, UAF Faculty Senate

Kelly Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, UAA Faculty Senate

Sydonia Bret-Harte, Past-President, UAF Faculty Senate

Robin Gilcrist, Past-President UAS, Faculty Senate