

Statement for UA BOR from Chair of Faculty Alliance

July 30, 2019

Dear UA BOR:

Thank you for allowing me to read a very brief statement for your July 30th meeting.

These are extraordinary times and I want to thank each and everyone of you for your advocacy in the area of higher education and the additional hundreds of hours you are each spending on UA communique's, reports, and countless emails.

I wish to thank Chancellor Sandeen, Chancellor Caulfield, and Chancellor White, and their respective Faculty Senate Presidents, senior faculty, senior administrators and staff on coming together in a true shared governance fashion to discuss, share and analyze the future of the UA system and our three separately accredited universities.

Alaska is my home state, and Anchorage is my home town – where I was born and raised. The University system is vital to the future of the state and all the faculty, staff and students are dedicated to guiding us to a better and more sustainable future and it is a testament to the strength of the relationship between the three Chancellors, the three Faculty Senate Presidents as they have been working together to discuss the models and options that President Johnsen has proposed. I urge you to listen to the Chancellors reports as they have truly been engaged with their faculty, staff and students on developing a consortium model, that would maintain the separate accreditations, and still improve efficiencies in operations and budgeting. The chancellors are a direct link between their campuses and community stakeholders and are uniquely positioned to collaboratively address their budgets with a balanced reduction in instruction and administration. They are already using their intimate knowledge of the universities to make cuts and are working collaboratively to find program consolidations that are market driven and would result in cost savings while minimizing impact on student enrollment.

As the Chair of Faculty Alliance, my greatest focus is on maintaining the accreditation that each of our universities has worked so hard for. UAA and UAS have recently been reaffirmed in their accreditation from the NWCCU – this is an effort that takes up to 2 years and involves a lot of heavy lifting on behalf of the faculty, and the three Provosts. It is laudable that UAA and UAS have received excellent commentary and commendations – which reflects the unique personalities and strengths of these two Universities. UAF is preparing for a fall site visit from the NWCCU and I expect UAF to receive accolades for their work in curriculum, research and student success as well. Having three separately accredited universities is a reflection of the diversity of our state and is a sign of strength.

The three universities are now examining ways in which they can act as a consortium; maintaining their separate accreditations, but aligning and sharing aspects of the University that will make it even more efficient and also result in student success.

Student success will always be the number one lens in which faculty examine proposed changes, and is certainly on my radar as the UA system moves towards establishing a new model or restructure. Faculty are the 'guardians' of curriculum and we deeply appreciate that Chancellor Sandeen, Chancellor Caulfield and Chancellor White have engaged our voices.