



UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

DATE: September 30, 2016  
TO: UAA Faculty Senate, UAF Faculty Senate, UAS Faculty Senate  
FROM: Tara Smith, Chair, Faculty Alliance  
RE: Summer & August Report of Activities

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The [Faculty Alliance](#) consists of the president-elect (First Vice President at UAA), president, and past president of each Faculty Senate in the University of Alaska System. The chair of this body rotates amongst the past presidents of each university. AY17 is UAA's year to chair, and this is why I am writing to you on behalf of the Faculty Alliance members.

The Faculty Alliance exists primarily to promote communication amongst the Faculty Senates and to/from Statewide leadership. We are an advisory body to the President and we have members serving on the Statewide Academic Council and the chair is an ex-officio member of the Board of Regents Academic & Student Affairs (ASA) committee. We meet via Google Hangouts and anyone is welcome to attend our [meetings](#). Both the ASA and BOR meetings are [livestreamed](#) if you are interested in watching. *Please note that [public testimony](#) is no longer conducted during the regular BOR meetings. It occurs in advance via audio.*

Following this overview are documents related to the work of Faculty Alliance from August and September. During that time, we sent two memos to President Johnsen. The first was a request for including a faculty member on the Summit Team. We requested this of President Gamble and he declined. President Johnsen's response is included here, and he has also declined. During my monthly meeting with him in September, he did discuss a possible quarterly meeting that would include a Faculty Alliance member. The second memo is our compiled feedback on the Strategic Pathways Phase 1 process and our nominations for the Phase 2 teams. The final [team membership](#) is now posted. Please note that my October meeting with President Johnsen has been moved to October 7<sup>th</sup> if you would like to contact me with any information or questions.

The GER Coordinating Task Force continues to fulfill its charge from the Faculty Alliance. Disciplinary teams have been formed and are beginning their work. The English faculty have initiated curriculum changes to align all required composition courses from the 0-level through the 200-level. You should see these revisions in your Senates this semester. Additionally, the GER Coordinating Task Force was charged to make recommendations on an instituting Alaska Native Studies GER at all three institutions. The [Alaska Native Studies Council](#) has continued their work on identifying student learning outcomes and existing courses so that the proposals you will receive are thorough, thoughtful, and worthy of your consideration.

We have begun discussions of a request for comparable budget information for FY16/17 from all three universities and Statewide in order to help all of us better understand how cuts and allocations have been distributed across our system. Please feel free to send your ideas to any faculty alliance member. We also received a report from a UAF faculty member last May that faculty benefit rates were prohibitively costly to departments. This was causing them to choose adjunct faculty over fulltime faculty for overload or summer assignments. We are looking into this, as well.

We are also still compiling feedback on the accreditation study compiled by Chancellor Dana Thomas. The final versions of our comments will be sent to all three Faculty Senates. We continue to hear from faculty that the additional teaching days in the fall, the lopsided number of teaching days between fall and spring, and the final exam week starting on a Tuesday in the spring are areas of concern with the new common calendar. We welcome further feedback and will make recommendations to ameliorate as many issues as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact your respective Faculty Alliance members with any comments or questions on these items or to make suggestions of items we should address. I can be reached best at [tmsmith@alaska.edu](mailto:tmsmith@alaska.edu) if you would like to contact me.



Date: August 23, 2016  
To: James R. Johnsen, President, University of Alaska  
From: Tara Smith, Chair, UA Faculty Alliance 7570FDE157BE499...  
Re: Request for a faculty member on the Summit Team

The Faculty Alliance is requesting that a representative of the Alliance be added to the University of Alaska Summit Team. We think this is an important action to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the shared governance structure at UA and to strengthen communication between the administration and faculty.

The Summit Team, since its formation, has generated and sent to Faculty Alliance a number of proposals to review, some of which have raised faculty concerns that might have been avoided had a faculty member been in the room when the proposal was initially discussed. We firmly believe that occasional meetings between the Summit Team and Faculty Alliance are not sufficient to ensure faculty voices inform proposals and discussions, and that a faculty representative needs to be in the room with the Summit Team unless we cannot legally be a part of the discussion.

In fall 2014, former Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research Dana Thomas shared an article titled "[Shared or Divided Governance?](#)" from *Inside Higher Ed*. There are two recommendations in this article that support our request:

1. Be sure that there is at least one body on campus whose members include both administrative leaders and elected faculty representatives and whose charge is to consider, in confidence, matters of strategic importance that cut across all areas of operations; and
2. Include an elected faculty representative on the president's senior staff.

While these recommendations are aimed at university and not system-level administration, we believe they hold true also for decision-making at the statewide level. Furthermore, the Summit Team membership has expanded to include Vice Chancellors for Administrative Services at all three universities, and the UA Vice President of University Relations. We believe this increase in membership underscores the necessity of ensuring that the appropriate individuals be included in discussion of issues that cross university boundaries.

We are supportive of the ongoing efforts to improve communication and collaboration across our system, and believe the Summit Team is one-step in that direction. However, it will only succeed if faculty members have representation on this team, to make sure that proposals moving forward reflect the understandings and perspectives not only of administration but also faculty.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

James R. Johnsen, Ed.D.  
President

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MEMORANDUM

Date: August 30, 2016  
To: Tara Smith, Chair, UA Faculty Alliance  
From: James Johnsen, UA President  
Re: Response to memo dated August 23, 2016 regarding request for a faculty member on the Summit Team

*Tara,  
Happy to discuss further  
when we meet next.  
Jim*

Thank you for your service to UA governance and commitment to the shared governance model of the University. The Summit Team is composed of a subset of my direct employees (Chancellors, Vice Presidents) and a subset of theirs (Provosts, VCAS). This group serves as an advisory group to me and I need them to speak candidly about issues that affect them and their roles in leading and managing University functions.

I value governance a great deal and have enlisted faculty governance in a variety of advisory capacities. For example, faculty, staff, and student governance members were on every strategic pathways phase 1 team. No other internal group received de facto membership on every team; not provosts, deans, or community members. I also meet personally with you on a monthly basis and participate in Faculty Alliance retreats, regular meetings, and events. The Faculty Alliance is represented by 3 people on one of the University's most important councils, the Statewide Academic Council (SAC), as well as on the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the BoR. At the same time that I think it is important for me to seek and receive Faculty Alliance input separate from the Provosts or Chancellors, I believe I need the same from them.

It is very important in my mind that the Faculty Alliance chair be in a position to gain knowledge and distribute information to faculty about decisions being made by me and other members of University leadership. I also believe that it is critical that University decision-making is informed and advised by Faculty Alliance. I believe that both of these objectives are met using the existing meeting formats while still allowing the Summit Team to advise me on issues important to them.

Thank you.

JRJ

cc: Morgan Dufseth, Executive Officer System Governance Office



Date: September 9, 2016  
To: James R. Johnsen, President, University of Alaska  
From: Tara Smith, Chair, UA Faculty Alliance DocuSigned by:  
Tara Smith  
27.09.16 15:29:00 SGT  
Re: Strategic Pathways Recommendations

Thank you for including a Faculty Alliance member on each of the Phase 1 Strategic Pathways review teams. We have discussed the experiences of all our participating members and would like to offer our feedback on Phase 1 process and give recommendations for future phases. We hope our contributions will help ensure the best results possible of this effort. We have three general areas of recommendations: Participants, Process, and Facilitation. We agree that the most important consideration for the success of future Strategic Pathways phases is the participants on the teams.

**Participants**

- Consider engaging outside faculty experts from peer institutions for membership on teams. Outside experts would bring valuable knowledge and experience as well as new eyes to our teams.
- Increase the number of faculty members on the Administrative Services teams. Changes to these services have significant impacts across the institutions and system and directly affect faculty work and working conditions. However, many discussions in these teams lacked a full examination of the academic implications of the proposed administrative service options.

The Faculty Alliance offers the following nominations for Phase 2 team membership. We would be happy to assist in nominating further faculty for all the Strategic Pathways teams.

<b>Phase 2 Strategic Pathways Team</b>	<b>AY17 Faculty Alliance Member</b>	<b>Faculty At-large Nominees</b>
Community Colleges	Tara Smith, UAA	Scott Downing, UAA Bill Urquhart, UAS Andy Anger, UAF
Health	Chris Fallen, UAF	Cecile Lardon, UAF Leslie Gordon, UAS Tim Hinterberger, UAA

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<b>Phase 2 Strategic Pathways Team</b>	<b>AY17 Faculty Alliance Member</b>	<b>Faculty At-large Nominees</b>
Fisheries	Lisa Hoferkamp, UAS	Doug Causey, UAA Reid Brewer, UAS Shannon Atkinson, UAF
E-learning	Maren Haavig, UAS	Carrie King, UAA Richard Collins, UAF Alberta Jones, UAS
Human Resources	Sharon Chamard, UAA	Charla Brown, UAS Soren Orley, UAA Ken Abramowicz, UAF
Institutional Research	Orion Lawlor, UAF Megan Buzby, UAS	Diane Hirshberg, UAA
University Relations	Chris Fallen, UAF	Kathryn Ohle, UAA Robin Walz, UAS
Student Affairs	Dave Fitzgerald, UAA Debu Misra, UAF	Andrea Dewees, UAS

The summer contracts for the Phase 1 faculty team members were critical for full faculty participation. As AY17 workloads have already been filled and approved, we understand faculty willing to serve in Phases 2 and 3 will need to have overload assignments or other workload adjustments.

**Process**

- Allow team members to consult broadly with stakeholders outside of the team. This would uphold the integrity of a shared governance process and enhance the ability of teams to address stakeholder concerns more efficiently.
- Allow teams to rank options. Teams should be encouraged to give the full benefit of their analysis to the Summit Team.
- Provide time for structured inter-team crosstalk during face-to-face sessions. Teams could benefit from the lessons learned in other teams and increase the overall quality of outcomes.
- Craft team charges and goals that promote creative thinking rather than limiting team response. Some teams were stymied by charge or goal statements that were highly directive. Such quantitative goals were unattainable without the required quantitative data.

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**Facilitation**

- Ensure that facilitators have deep and broad experience with higher education institutions. Some teams were hampered by the facilitator's limited knowledge of the topic area.
- Use survey results from Phase 1 to select Phase 2 facilitators. Quality of facilitation was uneven.
- Allow teams to adapt/modify consulting templates. Some teams were allowed to modify templates while others were unable to explore alternative approaches to the options.
- Omit the "stakeholder percentages activity" completed on the first day, but retain the enumeration of stakeholder groups. All groups reported the percentage activity as a purposeless use of our meeting time.

Thank you very much for your continued support of faculty contributions to the Strategic Pathways teams. We would be happy to discuss our feedback and recommendations with you at your convenience.