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Many Traditions One Alaska

DATE: March 29, 2017
TO: UAA Faculty Senate, UAF Faculty Senate, UAS Faculty Senate
FROM: Tara Smith, Chair, Faculty Alliance
RE: February Report of Activities

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 ([SAC](#)) 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](#). President Johnsen is scheduled to attend the last 45 minutes of the rest of our meetings for the year. Both the ASA and BOR meetings are [livestreamed](#) if you are interested in watching.

Following this overview are documents related to the work of Faculty Alliance from March. This month, we held two regular meetings and three members participated in a discussion of shared governance with the regents, President Johnsen, General Counsel Mike Hostina, the chair of Staff Alliance Nate Bauer, and the president of the Coalition of Students, Colby Freel. The discussion began with a short [presentation](#) by President Johnsen and General Counsel Mike Hostina.

During the discussion, we asked for official communications to be improved between governance groups and administration, and we emphasized wanting to have full governance groups consulted even when a member or two might have served on a team. We discussed the benefits of creative conflict (from [Doing Democracy](#), page 13) and need for collaboration in order for our institutions to thrive. When the need for change to "business as usual" came up, we pointed out that faculty work (teaching, research, and service) is inherently about change—we are not impediments to change but essential partners in such endeavors. Further, in discussions of how long shared governance takes, it was a pleasure to point out that Faculty Alliance had been asked for feedback on the Strategic Pathways Phase 2 options on February 23rd and had delivered a summary inclusive of all three senates on February 28th. President Johnsen held up our report and said it was exactly the input he had wanted. The regents seemed engaged and appreciative of the discussion from all participants.

Out of that conversation, Chair O'Neil asked all three governance groups to gather responses to the questions on page 9 of President Johnsen's presentation. Faculty Alliance will be gathering input on these through the Faculty Senates for a report to the BOR for their June meeting.

In February, Faculty Alliance sent two recommendations to SAC on the Common Calendar (see February Report). Those will be forwarded to the Summit Team with the support of SAC. To address remaining and future common calendar issues, the Faculty Alliance asked each Faculty Senate leadership to identify two faculty for our Common Calendar Committee. They are Sarah Kirk and David Fitzgerald from UAA, Leah Berman and Sandra Wildfleuer from UAF, and Julie Hamilton and Maren Haavig from UAS. We are grateful to them for being willing to help create this committee and to facilitate productive discussions on our shared calendar.

The Faculty Alliance received a revised version of the draft Protection of Minors Regulation from Timothy Edwards in Risk Management at Statewide. We have added our edits to the draft regulation and sent it to the senates for further comment. We would like to get faculty feedback to Mr. Edwards in time to be incorporated into the revised draft that will be on the April 22 SAC agenda.

Faculty Alliance passed one motion in March, which follows below. We received confirmation that it was shared with the BOR on Monday, March 27th.

The next regular BOR meeting will be June 1st & 2nd in Fairbanks. President Johnsen has indicated that there will be a discussion on system governance given by [Dennis Jones](#) and [Aims McGuinness](#). They will present a whitepaper they are preparing on the University of Alaska System governance and drawing on the discussion in Dr. McGuinness' report [State Policy Leadership for the Future](#).

My remaining monthly meetings with President Johnsen are April 13th at 10a and in May 2nd at 1p. I welcome your input on topics and concerns you would like me to discuss with him.

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 if you would like to contact me.



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Faculty Alliance

Resolution 2017-07 Regarding the Statewide System Offices of the University of Alaska

Whereas, recurring reductions in state funding for the University of Alaska System necessitate significant changes to the University's current mode of operation; and

Whereas, the Board of Regents and President Johnsen have publicly emphasized the need for change and stressed that we, as a system, can no longer simply conduct business as usual; and

Whereas, efforts towards that end are currently led by the Strategic Pathways initiative and actions resulting from that process so far have focused on the universities and satellite campuses that comprise the UA system with insufficient focus on the Statewide System Offices; and

Whereas, a recent publication¹ shows 199 Statewide administrative positions in 2017 that cumulatively consume more budget resources than all permanent and contingent faculty salaries and benefits combined; and

Whereas, the Faculty Alliance appreciates the hard work and demonstrated competence of UA Statewide administration and staff and is empathetic with regards to the personal impact of reductions, we also emphasize that the priority must be given to the viability of the universities and their capacity to provide higher education opportunities to Alaskans through high functioning academic programs; and

Whereas, reallocating resources toward units that directly fulfill the teaching, research and service mission of the university and away from central administrative offices would be a positive step toward the reestablishment of student and employee morale, which are essential components of a self-sustaining institution of higher education; and

¹ [A New Vision for the University of Alaska](#), Abel Bult Ito, 2017

Whereas, both the external reviews of the University of Alaska system (MacTaggart Report², Fisher Report³) independently came to the conclusion that UA Statewide is an administrative support service with a cost that is disproportionately large relative to the services it provides; and

Whereas, both external reviews cite reductions to the UA system central office as the most feasible and meaningful effort towards fiscal viability and emphasize the need for a change from the current command and control approach to the UA System; and

Whereas, the University of Alaska system is a state-funded, non-profit institution and therefore committed to providing the public with high-quality education under the most cost-effective conditions; and

Whereas the UA Faculty Alliance believes strongly that the UA system should focus as much support as possible to areas that directly maintain and improve its ability to serve its core mission through teaching, research and service; and

Whereas the budget allocated to UA Statewide Offices does not directly produce graduates or student credit hours, nor does it conduct academic research; and

Whereas, the value of a compact, efficient, central administrative office that provides analysis and recommendations to the Board of Regents and the Chancellors is duly recognized, the Faculty Alliance, through open discourse followed by consensus among stakeholders, seeks to identify a clear route to a revised central office that more closely fits that description; and

Whereas, the Statewide Transformation Team⁴ articulated four essential roles of Statewide that can guide such a revision; and

Whereas the Faculty Alliance supports the transfer of services regarding curricular decisions, student services, alumni activities, university relations (especially outreach), and most institutional research functions to the individual universities of the UA system; and

Whereas, significant cost reductions have been recognized by several state-funded universities that have redistributed relevant administrative functions to individual universities while maintaining a minimally-staffed central office or no central office; and

² [*Planning the Future: Streamlining Statewide Services in the University of Alaska System*](#), prepared for the Office of the UA President in 2008 by Dr. Terrence MacTaggart and Brian Rogers

³ [*University of Alaska: Review*](#), prepared for the UA President in 2011 by James L Fisher, Ltd.

⁴ [*Transforming the University of Alaska Statewide Offices*](#), prepared for UA President, September 2015

Whereas, a significant potential for savings lies within an examination of administrative services and associated positions currently listed on the UA Statewide organizational [chart](#) and subsequent reassignment of all services that can be successfully completed by existing university-based offices; and

Whereas, additional savings could be realized through more economical approaches to administrative leadership, planning and professional development events as well as reductions in the employ of external consulting firms for services in which an expertise already exists among UA faculty; and

Whereas, President Johnsen has already indicated that he opposes learning from the Oregon model specifically, and he has asserted that Statewide has already been cut sufficiently; and


Whereas, President Johnsen has distributed a white paper at the March Board of Regents meeting with financial data that does not accurately reflect the actual cost of Statewide to the universities and Alaska.

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Faculty Alliance urges the UA Board of Regents to take the following actions:

- Publicly endorse significant reductions to the Statewide System Offices and the priority of the central mission of each university in allocating revenue from all sources; and
- Appoint an independent, knowledgeable, and trusted individual or team to conduct an expedient analysis of other state system models which administer a greater number of institutions and students for far fewer resources, such as North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia; and
- Through this study, produce options to reduce the services and functions of the UA Statewide System Offices to the minimum required for accreditation and for legislative and federal compliance; and
- Using this study, past reports from Fisher, MacTaggart, and the first Statewide Transformation Team report, produce options for the remaining functions to be eliminated or distributed to the universities, using shared services where they are beneficial and cost effective.

Adopted unanimously by the Faculty Alliance the 24th day of March 2017.

DocuSigned by:



Tara Smith, Chair