

Pat Pitney  
Interim President

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UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

Date December 2, 2021

To Juella Sparks, Chair, UA Staff Alliance

From Pat Pitney, Interim President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat K Pitney".

CC Paul Layer, VP Academics, Students and Research  
Pearl Brower, Senior Advisor for Alaska Native Success, Institutional Diversity and Student Engagement  
Sean Parnell, UAA Chancellor  
Daniel White, UAF Chancellor  
Karen Carey, UAS Chancellor

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Thank you to the Staff Alliance for your October 18 proposal to create and support affinity groups at the University of Alaska.

As noted in the resolution, affinity groups provide employees an opportunity to convene around shared backgrounds, identities, cultures or interests to improve employee sense of belonging, retention and satisfaction. The establishment and support of these groups directly connect to our shared goal to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in students, faculty and staff and will help UA recruit and retain employees from underserved and underrepresented identities. As the Staff Alliance proposal notes, affinity groups for students already exist at local level at each of our universities.

I support the creation and recognition of affinity groups for the University of Alaska, and encourage them as a way to bring our communities together. However, I believe that these groups would best function at the local level, similar to the student organizations. I recommend that these groups be formed through UAA, UAF and UAS and System Office Staff Councils, with the respective governance offices providing administrative support.

I encourage the Staff Alliance to be a mechanism for affinity groups at each MAU to share ideas and bring initiatives for systemwide consideration.