

University of Alaska Academic Structure Change Management

Focus: Research Centers and Institutes

Session Notes, August 2019

First Session (Fairbanks and on-line)

Overall Session Goals:

- In a focused, systematic way, address changes being advanced by the University of Alaska Board of Regents in response to the current financial crisis and in service of the long-term vision for the university.
- Surface and address conflicting interests; identify and advance common interests.
- Generate constructive options and, to the extent possible, consensus recommendations.

Overall Note:

- This document is the product of brainstorming and dialogue. It is designed to be generative not definitive – as a way of providing broader input into the responses to the Board of Regents that might have happened otherwise. It does include options and some consensus recommendations, all of which need to be understood as the inputs of a diverse set of participants, but not the final word on any of these issues.

Welcome:

- This session is in response to the charge from the Board of Regents to respond around one university and accreditation
- The session focuses on research centers and institutes, as well as research grant management and related matters – thinking about organized or sponsored research and non-sponsored research
- This is to begin a conversation in a new UA moving forward on the role of research broadly defined
- This is the beginning of a conversation that will reach to students and staff as well
- There are Regents and others involved – it is a public process

First Alaskans Institute Agreements:

- In Every Chair, a Leader
- Speak to be Understood; Listen to Understand
- Be Present; Be Engaged
- Value Our Time Together
- Safe Space for Meaningful Conversation
- Challenges → Solutions
- Takest Thou Hats Off
- Our Value of Humor Helps Us
- We are Responsible for Our Experience
- Take Care of Yourself; Take Care of Each Other

Additional Proposed Groundrules:

- Focus on interest and options – avoid jumping to positions.
- Be hard on the issues, not each other.
- Operate with transparency – notes will be recorded live on a cloud-based, shared document.
- Be mindful of the time available in each session; issues that can't be resolved during the session will be placed on a "parking lot" in the notes.

- Turn off electronics during the session; observers may communicate (in person or electronically) with participants with whom they have connections before and after the sessions, but should only serve as observers during the sessions.

Change Management Model:

Phase 1: Hopes & Fears (30 min.)

Phase 2: Vision & Data (30 min.)

Phase 3: Stakeholders & Interests (30 min.)

Phase 4: Alignment & Options (30 min. + Session 2)

Phase 5: Recommendations & Implementation (Session 2)

Phase 1a: Hopes

- More cross-campus, cross-state, cross-disciplinary collaboration
 - Building on the collaboration that is going on now (there is variation now)
- Equity with more collaboration
- There is a way to operate with good thought in this process – not a rushed way of operating
- A hope for more grad students in the sciences at UAS and more generally for sharing of graduate students and post-docs across campuses
- A hope that non-arctic research will be recognized in a one-UA framework
- Research opportunities can be extended and stabilized across the state
 - This can include linkages across centers and institutes, with more stabilized operations
- The cyberinfrastructure for data and research, including library subscriptions, could benefit from collaboration
- Maintain research strengths within centers and institutes
- Increased collaboration across multiple centers and institutes
- Increase critical mass in some specific subject areas through cross-campus collaboration, including grant writing collaboration
- Regardless of eventual decision – a hope that the centers located at different campuses be less focused on a single campus and more on the whole system as a UA center
 - Some current examples – it is not easy to do, but it is a better way to operate (not just associates or affiliates, but a more complete way of operating)
- A hope to achieve as a group to have a better relationship with the people of the State of Alaska so they see the benefits of research in the state
 - The least town and gown relationships that one person reports relative to other places and a hope for better
- A hope for the matching funding needed to advance research
- Retain the confidence of federal funding agencies that we can follow through on the research
- Research can and should lead academics
 - Faster response on the part of academic departments to advances in research
- A hope that students from around the state who are involved in research will improve the town and gown research
- Able to continue to invest the ICR in research
 - The “color” of money for research funding is clear even if there is a state funding freeze – using it more effectively
- A hope to maintain the identity of the centers and institutes we have – fostering entrepreneurial research

Phase 1b: Fears

- Loss of diversity – regional, different business models for centers and institutes – being forced into a single model

- Loss of autonomy overall
- That the research portions of workloads will be decreased with increased teaching (there is now variation in how workloads are defined across campuses)
- Making sure the major funding agencies and current faculty/researchers are not scared away by what they see happening in the system
 - A fear of losing top researchers
- Will one UA mean one DUNS number when applying for research – UAS can now apply for undergraduate grants and Native Serving research
- A fear that custom support to faculty might be lost with centralization
- A fear of a reduced ability to provide data to stakeholders
- A loss of capability within business offices and increased bureaucracy as a result of centralization
 - Loss of grant management support
- UAS and other campuses would lose its focus on undergraduate research
 - Also an issue with all student research
- A fear that compliance and regulatory issues will not be as well managed from afar
- A fear of turning into a giant widget factory – losing identity for research due to centralization

Phase 2a: Elements of a Future Success Vision – 2025

- Increased, diverse portfolio for funding
- A new research institute structure that facilitated cross-collaboration while maintaining unique local portfolios
- With centralization that it is in a way that enhances, rather than hinders what happens in outlying campuses
 - The face to face work that goes into grant proposals
- Still have really great research centers that attract great faculty, staff, and students
 - Increased student enrollment
- We are a research family focused on relevant needs of the Arctic and of Alaska, leveraging a talented team of faculty, researchers, and students addressing purposeful research problems
 - Purpose-built
- Have enough support so that NSF science and technology centers and NIH biomedical centers have a long-standing role
- Maintain and expand arctic and sub-arctic powerhouse standing
- Agenda setting with an ambitious and inclusive agenda – for faculty and students
 - This will be key with the state – an agenda that the state can buy into
- UA to be leading research in the state
 - The place that Alaskans turn to for their research needs
 - America’s Arctic university
 - Navigating the wave of interest in the Arctic
- A special focus on retaining research productive faculty who are at risk of being lured away
- Students – undergraduate and graduate – working with faculty
- Research workforce training – serving students in the state and around the world
- Compliance is efficient and effective in facilitating research
- Improved outreach, marketing and communication on the research – within the state and in the lower 48
 - In addition to what is happening now
- Faculty not connected to a research institute are still involved in larger research projects
- We should have achieved R1 status in the Carnegie classification
- Seamless interdisciplinary research – across campuses and across fields and disciplines

- We continue to move in the direction of strengthening research by Alaska Native – not just being the subject of research
 - Nothing about us without us
- The first choice where people choose to come on Arctic, Sub-Arctic and Indigenous research

Phase 2b: Relevant and Available Data

- An appropriate data dictionary – so we are all using the same language
 - For example, how to calculate research – expenditures and awards
 - Publications and other softer measures
- Specific and measurable objectives
 - Cost savings, and related matters
- Clearing house on information, research and skills across the system
 - Facilitating cross-disciplinary connections
 - Enabling the formation of research teams
 - “Digital measures” on workloads that are public or semi-public to enable finding the right person with whom to work
- Data on impact – case studies and other measures
 - Such as “broader impacts” under NSF proposals
 - Ways to tell the story on how research is important to Alaska
- Requirements to join a research institute and how this work is evaluated
 - Missions of centers and institutes, along with size, funding, stakeholders, certifications, integration nationally or internationally
 - Template for looking across centers and institutes in the same way
- Understanding on how research workloads are set, which is a barrier to collaboration
- With information being the basis for collaboration, “digital measures” are important, but a searchable data base with lists of topics and other matters can find who else has interest in a topic
 - Information infrastructure to identify potential collaborators
 - Conferences are impacted by travel limits, but use technology to enhance collaboration and how local conferences by general disciplines among ourselves – there could also be Western region conferences as well

Phase 3: Stakeholders & Interests

Stakeholders	Interests
All stakeholders (shared interests)	
Undergraduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does research apply to my degree • Why is this important to me/undergrad program • How do I get engaged in research
Graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does research apply to my degree • Am I joining a cohort of students • How to pick an appropriate advisor • How do I navigate through this new structure
Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this apply to P/T process • Structuring workloads • Do I have the grad students and how do I find them • How do I support these students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I need to seek external funding sources - some disciplines use different models • Standards for promotion
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How secure is my position if dependent on research dollars • How do I advance in my field
Research centers and institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping good researchers • Recruiting researchers and faculty • Maintaining unique identity • Funding and ICR return/stability • Prestige - maintaining ability to do high quality research • Appropriate focus and ability to accomplish mission • Improving understanding of research enterprise (PR?) • Integrating research into the communities • Cross/Intra/Translational Research • Effectively and efficiently manage research
Statewide university Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to increase administrative burden/costs • Minimizing controversy and risk • Increasing prestige • Positive publicity • Compliance and Risk
Board of Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully functioning research university • Minimizing controversy and risk • Increasing prestige of University
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful input into research agendas • Useful results with practical applications • No implementation gap in applying research as appropriate • Capacity building to respond to needs/challenges (e.g., climate change)
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs for their children • Solutions of problems • Funding for students • Engagement of research through outreach
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions to problems • Productive Alma mater • Glowing reputation • Substantive use of contributions • Preservation research institute identity
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive use of contributions • Excellent Reputation • Name recognition • Solutions for problems • Fostering success of next generation • Preservation research institute identity
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled workforce

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative knowledge • Critical thinking • Partnering Opportunities • Access to students/graduates
Alaska Native Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring capable employees • Overlap with industry interests - use innovation from researchers • Tribal Health Consortia - information to improve health and culturally appropriate practices
Legislature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and societal benefits of research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation of change/events • Innovation and entrepreneurial benefits • Infrastructure Advancements • Advancement of the state
Accreditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every student counts • Student research opportunities and facilities (e.g., ABET, ACS) • Student success outcomes, workforce development • Graduation outcomes, enrollments
Funding agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **Confidence** of delivery on products and contracts • Seeing UA as an Arctic powerhouse • Collaborator concerns (e.g., for state agencies that collaborate with researchers) • Outcomes and return on investment
Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return on investment
Tribal organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having their interests be integral to the research, and to be involved in all aspects • Training for their employees • Partners for tribal research interests and needs • Trained Alaska Native researchers
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to facilitate environmental review. • Workforce training • Will the university provide adequate training for future employees? • Will the university consult with industry about their training needs?
Institutional review boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there adequate funding for administrative support so that reviews are efficient, effective, and timely? • Will there be a robust relationship between compliance chairs and THE(?) institutional official. • Will there be adequate / relevant community representation on the IRB for the diverse regions of the state? • Will there be concerns about preferential (in terms of priority) processing of protocols from 'local' researchers? (Interest in being perceived as fair and impartial).
Future students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential learning opportunities • Training for agency, industry and other employers • Tuition will be reasonable / education accessible . • Quality of education will be high compared to out of state alternatives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tradition of undergraduate research and scholarship will be maintained.
Federal, state and local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can UA research advance/assist interests • What strong collaborations can we form for mutual interests in research, staff & student education/research • Serve as evaluators for their projects that require evaluation • Data and research products • Applied research that addresses policy and management needs • Data management and data serving capacity • Research expertise • Capacity to work across jurisdictional boundaries • Training employees
Other university collaborators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased ability to do work in the Arctic and sub-Arctic and to work with Indigenous populations • Expanded opportunities/access to research partners/equipment
IT, HR, and other supporting infrastructure for research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These support units should be reconfigured or redirected for full support in contexts of real research needs. • How can we help advance research needs • Can we have better partnerships with support organizations to make grants more competitive and help build skill set of these support organizations
Non-governmental organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having their information needs met • Reach out to include more non-profits and local organizations in partnership and collaborative research • Continue to be the state representatives for national and international networks (e.g., NatureServe network)

Phase 4a: Alignment

Points of Alignment:

- Institutional reputation is important across all stakeholders
- Goal of becoming an R1 institution

Points of Misalignment:

- Can research centers and institutes perform best when independent or when nested in colleges
- Conflict between the needs of early career researchers who might need investment versus external funds coming in
- Concerns around the issues of being able to apply for grants as an undergraduate research UAA and UAS
- Where do other campuses align in the journey to R1
- We are all here to figure out how to save money – what will be doing to save money

Second Session (Anchorage and on-line)

Discussion of Mapping Exercise (lines drawn by geography or domains)

- We had some with potential:
 - Centers and institutes better connected on health
 - Alaska would be a good place to do research on eLearning
- Importance of keeping research to academics – strengthening the student experience
- A need to connect better on student services
- There is support for Alumni for research and that could be expanded
- The blue, green, red was not sufficient – there were lines that were both red and green or a green squiggly line as a need to innovate, as well as purple and red squiggly
- A need for Alaska Native programming to be added on the list
- There is a red/green swirly line with Arts and humanities
- Green and red zig zag line with eLearning
- There is a potential for innovation with Education
- Lots of blue lines:
 - Engineering
 - Health
 - Student services
 - Science
 - Education
- Green with:
 - Management and business
- A mix of lines and circles
 - Research centers and institutes to support functions – needs work
 - Red circle with red, green, and blue with all domains – some innovative, some routine, and lots of opportunities
- The lines can be interpreted as pointing to the need for more interdisciplinary work
- Health – the One Health Initiative – is an overarching connection
- There is a need for competitions, citizen science, Alaska Native science, seed funding – all things missing from the map

Phase 4b: Options

(Note: These are options (a product of brainstorming) meant to be thought starters, not formal recommendations. They can be built on, through consultation and planning, as inputs into ways forward that improve collaboration, efficiency, and effectiveness in a resource constrained historical moment, as well as potentially serving as a foundation for the future.)

- A review of centers and institutes is needed
 - See if all are performing with a focus on sustainability
 - Include Colleges, which manage much of the research at UAA rather than centers and institutes
 - Make data-supported decisions
- Having institutes have a state-wide presence
 - Varying workloads around the system
 - It would be good to be linked through state-wide institutes to maximize the potential, including:
 - Grant support
 - Outreach
 - Outlying campuses may have people doing research that is not known to the centers and institutes

- Increased engagement with private and nonprofit sector
 - We reached out to industry in the last round of vetos and there were some responses that they agreed with the governor – so we have work to do
 - Could be visiting appointments from industry – teaching a class or so
 - Option for an industry innovation board, with an associated fund
 - PCCRC is an example – the largest donor to UAF, with a governing board
 - There could be an IUCRC such as is supported by NSF with some core funding and then subscriptions from industry
 - One or more research parks is an idea – a physical location
 - A virtual research park – a virtual arrangement to be pioneered
 - Role of tech transfer is relevant
 - Engagement with smaller entrepreneurial organizations
- Research centers should be in all three campuses, even if we go to one university
 - SE has a marine coastal rainforest center
 - There is policy making legislative internship, but not a research center
 - This leads to better collaboration and better relationships
- Consideration of virtual institutes
 - A virtual health institute might be helpful as an example
 - With distributed locations that make sense for the research
 - Opportunities for cross-fertilization – going across disciplinary lines
- The one-institute model would not be the best way to go – you lose identity and connectivity with constituents – this is in response to rumors
 - There might be a disciplinary focus of one director
 - Clarification that current programs could have a state-wide dimension
 - A mechanism for connectivity state-wide could be beneficial
- There are cases of some Centers and Institutes with connections with people from around the state
 - There is a difference between being an affiliate and a joint appointment
 - An issue of moving beyond case by case arrangements to a strategy along these lines
- A cost saving idea – single licenses for software, subscriptions, and other expenditures
 - Note that there are increased costs when library subscriptions are extended beyond a single location
 - Also note that there will be additional outreach to the libraries on this more broadly
- Savings from shared grant servicers across UA and UA-wide research appointments, combined with college-specific appointments
 - Break this up into:
 - Shared services at the college institute level
 - Shared services at the state-wide level (OSP)
 - Aim is increased services, reduced risk
- Building a data base or inventory of expertise
 - Key is finding the minimum critical information so that it is sustainable
- In a new UA there was the Arctic supercomputing center that lost funding and it could be grown to after research computing
 - This could be useful for researchers across the state
- There is research capacity – facilities, imaging lab, chemistry lab, etc. around the system
 - Distributed core lab services as a concept
- A need to find better ways to communicate with the state on research – across all state departments, communities, boroughs, etc.
 - Engage folks and ask for advice
- There is a need to focus on types of positions – we have tenure track, graduate students, post-docs, etc. but a need for secundments, and other arrangements to all for bringing in additional types of people – short term, flexible

- A concern with pre and post grant services at the institute level not being diminished
 - The support for proposal writing and grant administration

Phase 5a: Consensus Recommendations

- **Consensus:** Increased engagement with the private sector (see above options)
 - Improved outreach and communication
 - Potential to also include “collaboratories,” pre-competitive consortia, and other arrangement
 - Could include non-profits and ngo
- **Consensus:** A review of centers and institutes (free standing and research in colleges, and research infrastructure support)
 - With defined metrics/criteria
 - Demonstrated holding ourselves accountable
 - Use existing data from funding agencies to minimize the task
 - It is also a way of educating multiple constituencies
 - Including qualitative data as well as quantitative data on impact
 - There is not the intent of eliminating centers and institutes, but with the intent to identify new opportunities and risks
 - Establishing the research portfolio and advancing it in the process
 - There are some, such as GI, that are Congressionally mandated and others mandated by the State – so decision-making must take that into account
- **Consensus:** The aim is to keep the structure of having research centers and institutes
 - An issue of identity, with decades associated to forming reputations
 - There can be time horizons for some topics
 - This can include distributed footprints
- **Consensus:** Virtual institutes concept to be explored
 - Example of One Health
 - Example of Museum with both a physical location and a virtual presence
 - Arctic Doman Awareness Center as another virtual presence with a small physical footprint
 - A need for processes and procedures to do so
 - To be utilized where appropriate – bigger is not always better

Phase 5b: Implementation Planning Template

- **What:**
 - (recommendation)
- **Who:**
 - (listing of stakeholders relevant to the recommendation)
- **When:**
 - (milestones with timing)
- **Where:**
 - (any specific locational considerations)
- **Why:**
 - (the crisp 1 sentence elevator speech on “why change”)
- **How:**
 - (tools, methods, and other mechanisms to be utilized)

Concluding comments:

- The Board meeting will have a report on the process ahead, not a single structure to be approved
- There are process steps identified here that will be part of the process going forward

- There will be additional input from faculty governance, student groups, advisory groups, and others
- Appreciation for the dialogue and reflection
- The issues of structure and budget are linked
 - There is a new floor in state support that does drive the need both to increase efficiency and to grow revenue
- There is also a need to assess risks going forward, and identify opportunities
- More definitive decisions by the Board are anticipated in November
- Building on the ways to utilize research capacity in the state to ever better effects

Appendix:

All Session Overview:

- ***Fairbanks (part I sessions)***
 - Monday, August 19th
 - Health ... Science/Arts/Humanities
 - Tuesday, August 20th
 - Management and Business ... Research ... Engineering
 - Wednesday, August 21st
 - Education ... eLearning ... CTE / Community Campuses
- ***Anchorage (part II sessions)***
 - Thursday, August 22nd
 - Health ... Management and Business ... Research ... Engineering
 - Friday, August 23rd
 - Education ... eLearning ... CTE / Community Campuses ...
Science/Arts/Humanities