

# University of Alaska Academic Structure Change Management

## *Focus: eLearning*

*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:**

- Thank you all for joining in this dialogue on engineering in the University of Alaska
- This is the first of two meetings
- This session is in response to the board's directive to look at the consolidation of the system and consideration for single accreditation
- Even though the new compact is better than things were, there are still unprecedented budget cuts of over \$20 million a year for three years
- This is chance to look at ways to be collaborative across the system and surface ideas on how to move forward
- Think of this as the beginning of ways to move forward
- The goal is to help advise the board

#### **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.

- Limit electronics during the session to what supports 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 (45 min.)

Phase 4: Alignment & Options (45 min. + Session 2)

Phase 5: Recommendations & Implementation (30 + Session 2)

### **Phase 1a: Hopes**

- We can move forward in an efficient manner, taking into account the research that went into strategic pathways eLearning report
- Institutional recognition for teaching well on-line is provided, which takes monetary resources
- Engage with the opportunities before us – make intentional decisions in more entrepreneurial and agile ways
- For student services, this process is seamless – no barriers in enrollment and degrees across locations
- A consolidated view of education as a whole – synchronous, asynchronous all coordinated without it being adversarial
- The Board of Regents and the highest level of administration will recognize and support eLearning
- Making sure we are all in agreement on vocabulary when talking about eLearning, distance education, etc.
- Operate in a collaborate way, even with the distance – to achieve cross pollination of ideas
- We maintain a sensitivity to local constraints (bandwidth) and culture
  - Not a “one size fits all” approach, particularly with our geography
- The eLearning people will be protected in this process – these are rare skill sets in Alaska
- The quality of the eLearning programs stays at a high level and the skills of faculty continue to increase
- Increase on-line enrollment and access
  - Able to see enrollments across locations
- Hope for continued and expanded ability to work together and collaborate
- Entertain the possibility that higher education is changing rapidly
  - New modalities, needed new skill sets (the course is the actor more than the instructor on-line)
  - Students are changing
  - There are mature students, such as in-service
  - Hope for an on-line organization that is responsive
- Don't just follow the path of least resistance – be strategic and define our vision – what it means to be excellent and let that be our guide
- Being able to increase the offerings on-line at the end of this process
- Being able to consider different models than a centralized powerhouse

### **Phase 1b: Fears**

- This will turn into a college of eLearning, with faculty in academic units losing their ability to do eLearning or being pulled out of their academic units
- ELearning will be stereotyped rather than attending the mix of learning modes
- There would be an administrative target of serving 100 students in a single session
- We don't embrace the opportunity
- That we will not take the opportunity to work together

- Note clarifying the role of eLearning in the system
- Once again this will be an exercise in examining eLearning with no action resulting
- ELearning hasn't been addressed strategically and a fear that it will continue that way
- A fear that staff will be left behind on the community campuses
  - Access to local instructional designers, etc. on campus
- A fear of a loss of local control on-line
  - Losing the ability to stay relevant with the local communities
  - There are local opportunities to connect with students that are complementary and a fear that this will be less accessible
- A fear that faculty will be pressured to make courses into on-line, without choice or the quality that is needed (this from someone who loves teaching on line)
- A centralized source will grab authority, with resulting favoritism for UAF since statewide is here
  - Taking control over courses, work load, etc.
- A fear of losing individuality and place-based character – distinction and diversity
- UA will create a plan and act without sufficient input and data – not being evidence based

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

- There will be robust faculty support and professional development for teaching on line
  - Getting up and running
  - Ongoing peer review
  - Having on line teaching be enjoyable
- The on-line institution is recognized as a national leader (distinct from ASU, Southern New Hampshire) as good as any and better than most
- Students should not be confused on how and where to register, what their options are
  - Not let technology (Banner) force the way we teach
- We have solved the bandwidth problem
- We have to have an acknowledged vision and strategic plan – agreeing on what it is we need
- A need for governance around eLearning
  - Equal representation from faculty and staff across the system
  - Ex officio seats for K-12 education and industry/employer needs
- Define what data it is we need to consider and look at
  - The three institutions don't presently hold the same data
- The wrap-around student services are available to students on-line – comparable to what students have on campus (financial aid, book store, advising, etc.)
- ELearning must be accessible to all students – meeting federal accessibility standards and other standards
  - A vision for 100% close caption
  - Data accessibility
  - Professional licensure standards
- A learning-centered 21<sup>st</sup> century model of eLearning, including hyper-mixed modalities to meet the needs of place-based, intensive, dual enrollment, certificates, graduate education, and mechanisms for out-of-state enrollments
- Academic eLearning units free from fear and distrust
  - The model of an e-college has to be intentional, with distinct eLearning service units, but also with integration faculty with joint appointments in units
  - Solve the tension between impact on-line and role in academic units
  - There are different models possible, but outside of people who want to get a degree in eLearning itself, it is not a separate academic domain
- More collaborative institution for faculty who can work with each other
- Expand and complement place-based and Alaska-based learning, particularly for those who are in-service
- Expand the learning process and STEM education/delivery through eLearning

- More collaboration between or among academic units
  - ELearning can help to facilitate the collaboration
  - Doesn't necessarily need joint appointments, but more of support for collaboration as needed in creating eLearning approaches

**Phase 2b: Relevant and Available Data**

- UAF 2017-2018 Annual eLearning report was shared as hard copy and as a PDF
- Data is not defined in comparable ways across the system – data is important but there is a need to agree on what data we are looking at
  - Both administrative service data and other data
- In higher education we are not looking at the larger context – where we sit in a national context – this is part of the relevant data, but it is a staggering task
- A concern that the data that is thrown around is limited by the way things are set up in banner
  - Class size and efficiency data doesn't match how we operate
  - There is no way to classify mixed synchronous and asynchronous offerings – it gets listed as two smaller classes, which is not accurate
- There just isn't the time to generate the relevant data
  - There is eLearning that is not distance learning, even without a hybrid component – nearly all university classes have some eLearning components, for example
- Some of the most helpful data could come from the instructional design teams – more than instructional units, but numbers of faculty and students served by eLearning teams
  - Measures of services are most helpful
  - There are hours of support for faculty development, for example, but there is also considerable face to face that is hard to tease out – it can be on-line or in-person, synchronous or asynchronous

**Phase 3: Stakeholders & Interests**

**Stakeholders**

| <b>Stakeholders</b>                          | <b>Interests</b>   |
|--|--|
| All stakeholders<br>(shared interests)       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strong data set and use</li> <li>● Governance of elearning that includes and addresses key sets of standards (e.g. NWCCU guidelines, C-RAC guidelines, accessibility, etc) and policies</li> </ul>  |
| Course designers/<br>eLearning support units | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop sustainable course and program development models for online delivery</li> <li>● Ability to delivery quality online learning and an equivalent learning experience to rural Alaskan environments</li> <li>● Provide structures and training that ensure excellent eLearning course offerings</li> <li>● Provide access to emerging technologies on course delivery, design and instruction</li> <li>● Keep current on new technologies</li> <li>● Ability to collaborate successfully with a variety of faculty</li> <li>● Supplement pedagogical approaches</li> <li>● Provide faculty with “pre-flight” checklist</li> <li>● Offer professional development training for faculty (i.e. iTeach)</li> </ul> |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New technology is used to support student learning (not just for the sake of new technology)</li> </ul>  |
| Faculty              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to training from instructional designers and professional development opportunities for eLearning (whether for distance or local courses)</li> <li>● Support for students in using eLearning technology</li> <li>● Offer innovative content</li> <li>● Representation and shared governance for faculty in statewide eLearning decisions, technology releases, and related issues; similar to TLTR (Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable) at UAS</li> <li>● Opportunity for Quality Matters training and support to improve course content and delivery</li> <li>● Housed within (and supervised by) their home disciplines and departments, not within (or by) an “e-college”</li> <li>● Transformative approaches to delivering lab-based course content</li> <li>● Faculty representatives (selected by faculty, not administration) on higher-level eLearning decision-making bodies</li> <li>● collaborate on IT/Tech offerings (i.e. TLTR at UAS)</li> </ul> |
| Student advisors     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Course equivalencies</li> <li>● Modality to recommend</li> <li>● Confidence in quality</li> <li>● Accessibility</li> </ul>   |
| Currents students    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessibility</li> <li>● Rigor</li> <li>● Availability</li> <li>● Transferability</li> <li>● Teach out Capacity</li> </ul>   |
| Future students      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Relevant programs</li> <li>● Opportunities</li> <li>● Quality</li> <li>● Support</li> <li>● Modern</li> <li>● Open courses - course visibility</li> <li>● 21st century pedagogies</li> </ul>   |
| Staff                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employment</li> <li>● Sufficient numbers to excel in jobs</li> <li>● Job satisfaction and morale</li> <li>● Professional development, career pathway, options for advancement</li> <li>● Flexibility (it is eLearning, ha ha)</li> <li>● Adequate funding</li> </ul>   |
| Executive leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bottom line</li> <li>● Revenue</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resource allocation</li> <li>● Sense of advocacy, pride and bragging rights about success and innovation</li> </ul>  |
| Communities                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessibility (broadly defined)</li> <li>● Bandwidth issue</li> <li>● Tech resources</li> <li>● Stability for state funding</li> <li>● Access to research and innovation modality</li> </ul>   |
| Local governments                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educated Workforce, including locations that do not have a university campus</li> <li>● K-12 partnership and co-ops</li> <li>● Technology sharing for seamless transition</li> </ul>   |
| Native Corporations                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Equitable education access to remote locations</li> <li>● Access to education and training to build skills for employees and stakeholders</li> </ul>   |
| Funders and grant agencies                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partners for research grants within UA</li> <li>● Funding priorities to grow services across UA</li> </ul>   |
| Board or Regents                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategic priority</li> <li>● Dedicated funding</li> <li>● Comparative success and persistence data to F2F courses and peer institutions</li> </ul>  |
| Vendors  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (Re. vendors -- that stakeholder came up in the 2017 eLearning Strategic Pathways document... and in that document, Option #1 was to outsource all outline teaching or course design to vendors, so they would naturally be included as stakeholders in that scenario. In our current conversation, this may be less relevant.) -- Math Trafton's comment, Zoom chat</li> <li>● Partners in building platforms</li> <li>● No, vendors are strategically important. We can not create the infrastructure needed without them. However, we should identify ones who will partner with us, and not those that just want to sell a service and be gone.</li> </ul> |
| Regulators – professional certificate agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Compliance with minimum training standards</li> <li>● Robust learning equivalent to the outcomes produced by F2F coursework</li> <li>● Compliance with minimum training standards</li> <li>● Robust learning equivalent to the outcomes produced by F2F coursework</li> <li>● Curriculum/experiences that prepare students to pass licensing exams on the first attempt</li> <li>● Additional accreditation required by professional body (Nursing and Education as examples)</li> </ul>   |
| Employers /Industries                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soft skills embedded in online courses</li> <li>● Access to education/training for employees in timeframes that complement work schedules</li> <li>● Producing students prepared to meet workforce needs</li> </ul>  |
| Parents  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quality, affordable education options</li> </ul>   |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flexibility</li> </ul>  |
| Alumni                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Opportunities to be an alumni by distance, including lower 48</li> </ul>  |
| Legislators           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Good ROI; successful graduates across the state leveraging online educational technology</li> <li>● Exemplar programs and commitment to funding of programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think SW OER</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| IT                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to support faculty and students and staff</li> <li>● Stable and adequate state funding for staffing and for equipment compatibility</li> <li>● Infrastructure to support best practices in design/delivery of content, student support, etc.</li> <li>● Responsive and timely to meet needs; industry standard down-time, minimal class interruptions</li> </ul>  |
| K-12 school districts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preparing students to be college-ready -- common definition of what that means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In GERs, potential curriculum discussions; digital literacy scaffolding, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Collaboration with faculty/programs to raise student awareness of post-secondary/career options</li> <li>● Collaboration among groups to develop future workforce of AK</li> </ul> |

## **Session 2 (Anchorage and on-line)**

### **Phase 4a: Alignment**

#### ***Points of Alignment:***

- The need for academic integration and leadership of eLearning
- The huge opportunity to increase enrollment for all campuses
- Current eLearning services at all campuses – focus on instructional design and faculty support services, and student advising/technical/pedagogical support (and they don't offer classes)
- All three eLearning offices provide instructional services regardless of mode of delivery (face-to-face, on-line, hybrid)
- All three eLearning offices share a focus on student success
- The eLearning offices across the units have a long history of collaboration and a history of harmony in missions and processes
  - A history of collaborative projects, collectively negotiated vendor agreements, faculty development
- All eLearning departments/staff share common goals around course quality, student success, accessibility, and ensuring that the end-goals work best for Alaska
  - Leading practices in the lower 48 may not work here with the infrastructure, geography, and other matters
- Although we do it in different ways, each of the eLearning offices is dedicated to serving faculty and students in their region
  - There are various models that match diverse needs – alignment on the value of doing things differently
- ELearning supports and encourages faculty development and improvement
  - Example of Quality Matters (a national peer reviewed program for course structure)
- Any eLearning services or products should be a support unit, not a separate college

#### ***Points of Misalignment:***

- Many of the existing student services are misaligned for students engaged in eLearning
  - Misaligned student services across campuses
  - Misaligned between face-to-face and on-line
- The balance or lack there-of for quality standards for on-line education
- Policies and processes across institutions
  - Variation in Banner codes
  - A need for an identifiable process for establishing new modalities
  - These data are the basis for improvement and so have to be accurate and useful
- Definitions of modalities and use of language across campuses and across the stakeholders – with massively different understandings on what eLearning is
  - The diversity can be a plus in some ways, but some basics do need to be shared
  - Banner codes need to support the modalities
- All three eLearning offices do not have the same eLearning funding model or administrative mechanisms
  - Some of the offices are more centralized and more decentralized – each works for the campuses served – so it may be okay for there to be some variation
- Disconnect between eLearning and research in the university
- There is variation in the degree to which Quality Matters (national peer reviewed program) is followed in different locations
  - Note necessarily a bad thing – good where it involves deliberate choice
- Evaluation of eLearning in the promotion and tenure process
  - Doesn't generate the same kudos as face-to-face



- A tension between the need for standards and quality for on-line learning and creativity and independence
  - A productive tension, but it has to be managed
- A prospective student searching for courses would find that information is presented in different fashions
  - In some places you have to dig for information
  - The strategic offerings are not aligned and there is duplication (which may or may not add cost)
- There are misalignments across stakeholder groups more broadly around how much support faculty actually need
  - Workload, course buy-outs for development, staff support – what is realistically needed
  - A misunderstanding if you are not faculty doing this work for what it really takes
  - This includes keeping the course up to date
- There are issues around language: “duplicative” versus “common” for example
- A misalignment on how well we have taken advantage of the opportunities

## **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 servings as a foundation for the future.)*

- Think of this as Academic Support Services – a name change to consider
  - Maybe this support unit could be like an institute supporting all forms of teaching and learning
  - Many of the issues are systemic, such as growing enrollments, that live on the academic side of the house – which requires academic leadership (they are structured to do this)
  - Note on the three functions of a support function
    - Providing services
    - Enforcing standards
    - Facilitating change
  - There are service roles and faculty roles in this space
- A broader focus on students as not just recent high school graduates, but also more and more employed adults, military personnel, and others from all walks of life
  - An eCollege might serve these folks better than a traditional college
  - A need for data collection on prospective markets
- A need to develop a new model for structure
  - It may or may not be an eCollege, but needs academic leadership
- A unique Alaska focus
  - Combine with residency opportunities across the many physical campuses
  - A both/and for virtual and physical that is magical in Alaska
- Scaling up faculty development for eLearning
  - A true center for teaching and learning across the system
  - A need for professional development around new pedagogies and practices across the UA system
- An issue of faculty leadership on course content and on-line administration
  - A need for leadership and a question as to who leads?
  - Questions on whether this will be a Dean, a Vice Provost, a Vice Chancellor, or a role that can effectively influence change

- There still have to be support services at each campus
    - It can't just be a call center that is centralized
- Scaling up support services for students, faculty, and staff
- Graduate student supports
- Addressing shared governance with a Technology Roundtable with students, faculty, and staff (example of UAS)
  - Reports to the faculty senate and provost
  - Could be system wide
  - Could be a service role for faculty
  - There is a need for faculty, staff and students advisory mechanisms that are horizontal – consider strategic pathways models 1 and 5 that can be a both/and central and distributed as a collaborative body
  - It also has to be agile to scaffold up programs, the market is changing monthly not every decade
- An integrated academic and service unit
  - A combination of instructional designers and faculty
  - Avoid the term eCollege, which raises issues of faculty oversight of teaching
  - Name is not as important – UA Global or something else

### **Phase 5a: Potential Consensus Recommendations**

- **Consensus:** All faculty need support for teaching (all modalities), with appropriate infrastructure and staffing levels
  - A specific need even where funding has dried up
- **Consensus:** The need for a deliberate strategic planning process for eLearning (term is important and needs discussion/definition)
  - More than a program review, but a strategic look at the institution overall, spanning diverse stakeholders
- **Consensus:** A strategy for growing enrollment that takes into account identity issues and relevance in local communities
- **Needs further discussion:** Respect for faculty workload and shared governance concerns
  - There are CBA issues and governance issues in addition
  - Faculty, staff and students having a say in eLearning decisions
- **Consensus:** Educating administrators on workload issues with respect to different learning modalities
- **Consensus:** A process for identifying and developing agile structures that meet the needs of local campuses and students, with mechanisms for coordination
  - Ways to identify the name and the leadership
  - Includes a focus on the emerging international market, particularly the international Arctic market
- **Consensus:** Mechanisms for agreement on terminology and definitions
- **Consensus:** A shared sense of urgency for having these discussions and making actionable decisions
  - Recognition of how others are capturing enrollments in Alaska now
  - Drawing on the expertise of current internal professionals in the e-learning community
  - With the opportunity comes responsibility to engage fully
- **Needs further discussion:** A need to define a leadership structure in eLearning in the system
  - In administration, academics, etc. so there is participation in top-level discussion
- **Needs further discussion:** A recognition of geographically and culturally diverse students at the University of Alaska with unique needs, constraints, and opportunities
  - This includes broadband constraints
  - Ensuring that students in remote locations are fully served

- Not just Alaskan students
- There are place-based (in an urban location where many are present) and place-bound/place-committed (where there are geographic limits, though concerns with the connotation) strengths and constraints
- Differences in mission and focus across campuses, as well as underlying philosophical approach
- ***Needs further discussion:*** The need to discuss the possibility for a new name for this group

## **Phase 5b: Implementation Planning**

- **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:**

- There will not be a structure decision at the September meeting, but recommendations on the process going forward
- This is a highly engaged group
  - Remarkable use of technology with great opportunities
- This was a rapid-fire idea generating forum
- It is good to keep this conversation going
- There will be consultation with additional groups, students, faculty governance, advisory groups, and other stakeholders
  - There needs to be a broader conversation – these are important ideas, but not the only ideas
- The motion from the Board of Regents was to consider options and this group is a unique one under the charge given how learning is changing
  - The situation may not be as dire as the \$135 million cut, but it is still a budget challenge
  - We can cut cost, combine programs, and build ways to grow revenue – there are multiple options
  - The board will be making decisions about structure and there are issues in addition to structure that need discussion
- Think of this as moving away from the current levels of dependence on the State of Alaska funding
- There will be additional work between September and November
- It is a unique opportunity to rethink what it means to be a university in the State of Alaska in the Arctic in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Appendix:

### Session Overview:

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