

July 30, 2019

University of Alaska Board of Regents

Regarding: UA Task Force on Structure – July 12 Meeting Notes Report

Dear Chair Davies and members of the Board of Regents,

At your request, the Task Force held its first meeting on July 12 to explore options for the UA system's future structure. The Task Force considered four structural options—status quo, lead campus, one university, and three independent universities. Attached is a summary of our discussion.

We appreciate the prior research, current information, and other resources and support provided by UA and higher education research organizations to help us in this task. The research and data made broadly available on the Board of Regents website is a valuable resource in any evaluation of these structural options (and possible hybrids) and the opportunities they afford to provide meaningful budget efficiencies while maintaining UA's ability to deliver high-quality, post-secondary education in Alaska.

The Task Force is currently on hold but remains available to continue its work through the end of November 2019. We understand your need to move rapidly to identify budget cutting options for the current fiscal year given the declaration of financial exigency and continued uncertainty over the FY 2020 State appropriation for UA. We still see value in continuing our work, since questions relating to university structure will remain beyond the current crisis. (More thoughts on the role and value of the Task Force in the current situation are presented on page 5.) At the request of Chair Davies, Task Force members will continue thinking about the Task Force charge and be willing to reconvene to serve the Regents in an advisory capacity if called on to do so.

Since there may not be an opportunity to provide further guidance or a final recommendation to the Regents, Chair Davies has asked for a summary report that captures the reasoned discussion that occurred at our first meeting and which was informed by the background study members did in advance. Most of the comments presented in the attached summary represent individual viewpoints and not a consensus or majority opinion, which was not sought at our first meeting. These notes will allow us to resume where we left off, if reconvened. We also hope they offer useful insights to you as you proceed in the difficult job ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring our diverse perspectives and professional competencies together to provide an independent evaluation of these structural options at this critical time in UA's history.

Respectfully,

Task Force Members

Chair Joe Beedle, Tom Barrett, Sheri Buretta, Terrence Cole, Cathy Connor, Jo Heckman, Reggie Joule, Gunnar Knapp, Wendy Redman, Aaron Schutt, and Joey Sweet

University of Alaska Board of Regents Task Force on System Structure

MEETING SUMMARY FOR JULY 12, 2019

FRAMEWORK

The University of Alaska Board of Regents appointed a task force to explore options for the university system's future structure. The task force members were called on to meet up to 7 times between July and October 2019 to evaluate a range of structural options for the UA system:

Status Quo – Three separately accredited universities with the community college campuses part of their respective regional university.

Lead Campus – Three separately accredited universities but with more focus of specific academic programs at each single university along with expanded availability of courses across the system via distance delivery. Also, reorganize the community college campuses to report to one of the lead campuses.

One University – A single accredited university for all of Alaska with the community colleges organized as a unit within the university.

Three independent universities – Three separately accredited universities and associated community colleges with independent administrations and no statewide administration.

These and possibly other options for the university's structure were to be assessed using existing strategic plans, the work done in the Strategic Pathways process, assessments and recommendations from past reviews of university structure, and input to be gathered from key stakeholders. The task force was also asked to consider how each option would serve interests such as these and others:

- Support for UA's [2040 vision](#)
- Service to the university's [strategic goals](#)
- Affordability and a seamless experience for our students
- Broad access to our programs for Alaskans across the state
- Excellence in our educational, research and public outreach activities

Meeting agendas and task force resources are posted online at www.alaska.edu/bor/taskforce.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Chair of the Board of Regents appointed the following members to the task force:

- **One former and one current member of the Board of Regents:** Jo Heckman and Sheri Buretta
- **Three Alaska private sector leaders:** Tom Barrett (Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.), Aaron Schutt (Doyon, Limited), and Joe Beedle (former CEO, Northrim Bank)
- **One rural Alaska leader:** Reggie Joule/former legislator and mayor and currently a lobbyist for K-12 education

- **Three retired UA faculty members:** Terrence Cole, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Cathy Connor, University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), and Gunnar Knapp, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)
- **One former UA executive:** Wendy Redman/former UA executive vice president
- **One student:** Joey Sweet/UAA and former UA student regent

BACKGROUND

The issue of the university's structure has been addressed numerous times over the years. In 1974, the university restructured from a single university to three separately accredited universities and numerous separately accredited community colleges. In 1987, the community colleges were integrated into the universities, resulting in the current organizational structure. Several additional efforts have been made in recent years to assess and potentially modify the university's structure, including several reports by external consultants, a report on a single accreditation prepared in 2016, the Strategic Pathways process in 2016-2017, and options being considered by the Board of Regents in its current budget deliberations. The Alaska Legislature included legislative intent language in this year's state budget that asked the university to report back in December 2019 with a restructuring plan. The appointment of a task force to evaluate restructuring options was a key part of the Board of Regents' plan for responding to the legislature's request.

FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE

The task force met for the first time from 9 am to 1 pm in the Lee Gorsuch Commons at UAA on July 12, 2019. Task force members prepared for the meeting by reading past reports on UA structure and other resources posted on the Board of Regents website for their review (www.alaska.edu/bor/taskforce/resources). The meeting was open to the public and live streamed. All members were present. After Task Force Chair Joe Beedle called the meeting to order and gained approval of the agenda, Regents Chair John Davies opened the meeting by welcoming task force members, reviewing their charge, and addressing the changed landscape resulting from the Governor's budget veto.

REVIEWING THE CHARGE

The task force was appointed prior to Governor Dunleavy's veto of \$135 million in university funding, a reduction of 41% in state support to the system. Faced with a cut of this magnitude and the challenge of implementing it within the current fiscal year, the Board of Regents considered disbanding the task force. They decided to proceed with the initial meeting, since the outcome of the legislature's special session is unknown. A much smaller cut this year would allow the university time to ramp down expenditures in a more deliberative manner and allow time for the task force to provide strategic guidance on restructuring options.

Regents Chair Davies said the task force is therefore still asked to consider structural changes that will lead to budget efficiencies while maintaining the ability to deliver high quality post-secondary educational services for the residents of Alaska. These services include teaching, research and public service at the three main campuses and through the university's community college mission for Alaska.

Regents Chair Davies asked task force members to weigh each of the structures against the stated values and missions of the university and its various component parts, including those encapsulated in UA-LEADS:

- **Unity** in promoting communications and collaboration (working together)
- **Accountability** to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the diverse peoples of Alaska
- **Leadership** for Alaska's people and institutions
- **Excellence** in our programs and services
- **Accessibility** for all of Alaskans
- **Dedication** to serving community needs
- **Stewardship** of our resources.

Task force members were asked to keep their deliberations at a high level and avoid the details of implementation, which is the job of the administration and Board of Regents. Chair Davies also asked them to focus broadly on what is best for the state as a whole and to leave aside potential personal biases related to their background or geographic region.

UPDATE FROM PRESIDENT JOHNSON

At the request of Regents Chair Davies, President Jim Johnsen updated the task force on actions already taken to reduce the university's operating budget. These include 1,280 positions and 50 academic degree and certificate programs being eliminated. Strategic Pathways was launched in 2016 to improve, restructure and reorganize to deliver the university's mission more cost effectively. The process was inclusive, including input from 22 working groups. It has resulted in consolidations, program eliminations, process improvements, and standardization with the goal of bringing spending down in a rational, planned and intentional way.

Through this process the Board of Regents, working in consultation with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), also established five strategic goals that now inform and drive decisions on all initiatives and budget requests: Economic Development, Workforce Development, Research, Educational Attainment, and Cost Effectiveness.

University funding from the state operating budget has been reduced in five out of the past six years. Tuition revenue has remained steady despite enrollment declines due to annual 5% increases in tuition, while revenue from research has grown over the same period. With the Governor's veto, the university's FY2020 operating budget from state general funds now stands at \$192 million, down from \$327 last fiscal year and \$378 million in FY2014.

In addition to the Governor's operating budget reduction, there is a cut of \$1.2M in debt reimbursement the university had previously been provided from state appropriations for buildings. In addition, about \$18M in tuition support for the Alaska Performance Scholarship and Alaska Education Grant and \$3.4M for the WWAMI medical education program were part of the sweep of funds into the Constitutional Budget Reserve, representing further real and meaningful cuts. These were not vetoed, but there is no funding source for them following the sweep.

The State of Alaska's operating budget for the university was split into two appropriations this year. One covers UAS and the community campuses. The other includes the statewide administration, UAA, and UAF. The Governor vetoed the latter appropriation, possibly on the assumption that it would not impact

the community colleges. However, UAS and the community colleges will not be held harmless due to how the university is organized, where services are provided and how costs are incurred. At least \$12M of the \$59M in community college and UAS appropriation would be required to pay for services the community colleges do not currently provide themselves, including IT, human resources, legal, finance, facility maintenance and other functions.

Faced with such huge reductions, timing is important. Every day that we do not make reductions means we have to make deeper cuts later in the year. The university is operating at a cash and capital 'burn rate' that is unsustainable. In addition to the cut of \$135M in state funding, we anticipate declining enrollment and a decline in philanthropic giving. We hear concerns from Washington, D.C., about our ability to perform on research grants and contracts and we can expect our credit rating to decline and our borrowing costs to increase. With these additional losses, the impact on the university as a result of the state's actions could be as much as \$200M.

On Monday, July 15, President Johnson will be asking the Board of Regents for a declaration of financial exigency. That is not bankruptcy or a legal construct managed by courts, but rather a matter of board policy and collective bargaining agreements that enables the university to modify the terms of employment and to expedite layoff and termination of faculty and staff. Financial exigency will negatively impact the university's reputation, which will further damage its ability to attract students, faculty, and staff, pursue research, and provide for community service and state workforce development needs.

Decisions on specific closures and major structural decisions will not be made yet but must be made soon, with the first round coming possibly on July 30. The Board of Regents will be asked to weigh in on these major structural decisions:

- **Horizontal approach:** Hand out proportional reductions to the campuses and let them decide how to make the deep cuts.
- **Vertical approach:** Close one or two main campuses and/or 4-5 community campuses.
- **Strategically redesign the university system:** Decide how best to serve students in the programs they are in with the resources we have.

It is critically important to maintain accreditation through this process. Institutional accreditation is required for eligibility for many federal grants and contracts and also for students to receive financial aid. Programmatic accreditation for professional schools (education, engineering, business, etc.) may be voluntary or required by law. For example, a school of education must be accredited by the state Board of Education for its graduates to be licensed as teachers.

The key criterion the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) is interested in is how we treat our students and how we "teach out" the students who have declared majors. The UA statewide administration had been meeting with NWCCU, the regional accrediting body regularly to make sure that if we were to examine a single accreditation or major redesign that that would be possible. They appear prepared to work closely with us on this.

These are Board decisions. There is a sense of urgency to make decisions relatively quickly, while also remembering to keep an eye on UA's educational mission for Alaska and to maintain as positive a tone as possible. We have been here 100 years, and we are going to be here in 100 years.

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE DISCUSSION

The following is a summary of the broad-ranging discussion by task force members during the meeting. Bulleted items summarize comments made by individual members. They do not necessarily represent a consensus of the task force. Comments have been loosely organized by topic.

ROLE OF THE TASK FORCE

In order to provide more accelerated guidance, Task Force Chair Beedle said the group would dispense with some of the historical and procedural content originally planned for the first meeting. The goal of the task force is still to provide the regents with some substantive input. Task force members indicated that they had read the background materials provided and understood their charge. In light of the Governor's budget actions and possible imminent declaration of financial exigency, task force members started their deliberations with a discussion of the role and value of the task force.

Comments in favor of a continued or modified role and focus for the task force:

- We should continue with the planned meeting schedule since questions relating to university structure will remain beyond the current crisis. The task force's role is to inform the Board of Regents of the pros and cons of different structural models.
- We need to focus on a structure that works in good times and bad, not one done due to draconian budget cuts.
- The cuts and decisions are going to be painful. People are also emotionally attached to certain areas (e.g. sports teams). The task force can help by looking at the health and integrity of the university through the chaos.
- Roles for the task force could be 1) Educating ourselves and others; 2) Putting myths to rest; and 3) Forcing reality into the conversation.
- Task Force Chair Beedle: If called on to do so by the Board of Regents, the task force is prepared to continue its deliberations and make a recommendation to the board on the best organizational structure that will allow UA to survive and thrive into the future.

Comments questioning the task force's utility in the new budget landscape:

- Task force members whose background and expertise lie outside the university questioned their ability to provide meaningful guidance quickly. They would need more in-depth knowledge of the system to make informed recommendations.
- In the face of the budget cuts, some of this is a moot discussion. We must wait to see what the Board of Regents does. Then we can weigh in after the regents make decisions.

HOW TO FRAME AND EVALUATE THE QUESTION OF STRUCTURE

- Rather than discuss how these cuts define what is possible, the task force should start with a long-term vision and then discuss how that is going to work with the budget we have. The question is still, "In 2040, where do we want to be?"

- Costs and the need for huge reductions are going to drive the decisions in the effort to protect UA from chaos. For example, what are the cost savings in transitioning to one accredited university? What structure will help us get through this period of freefall?
- We may be in triage, but UA must continue to focus on the areas it wants to be great at.
- The five goals developed through the Strategic Pathways process provide a more useful lens than the list of UA values for evaluating different structures. (In response to this comment, the task force agreed to look at the five goals when considering each option for restructuring the system.)
- President Johnson: How does the UA best meet the state's needs and organize ourselves to meet those needs? Another way to frame this: What structure gives us the best performance? How do we resource those units?
- I'm not a fan of doing more with less. If you have less, you DO less. You need to shed items that are not core to the mission. What is critical that we heard today: community colleges, student success and accreditation? Focus on that. What structure works? At some point you must act on less complete information, but don't lose sight of the long-term vision.
- It's easy to look back 45 or 50 years ago and say, we should have done this or that, but decisions were made based on events at the time. When we had a single system in 1971-72 with provosts at Anchorage and Fairbanks, it took three to four days to get a purchase order approved. The technology (e.g. fax, computers) was not available to support the kind of efficiency you needed for that system. There was almost a rebellion, with calls for local control. Twenty years later, those things can be done in a split second. The different organizational structures that were created were ones that were appropriate at the time. It is not really helpful to look back.
- Alaska does not look like any other state. You can see some similarities with Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas, but they are really not the same. When you decide you are going to have a state university and you want that university to really serve the state of Alaska, not just Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau, you have an enormous challenge. I think we've met that challenge very effectively around the state—cost effectively as well as academically effectively.

COST SAVINGS

- From private industry experience with merging, consolidating and restructuring: it's possible to capture most of the anticipated cost savings, but second tier effects have their own costs that often keep you from realizing all the savings.
- Going to a single accreditation could save us \$5-10M while possibly delivering better education. Those cost savings are not the kind of numbers that are going to produce the large and rapid cuts we need to achieve. There is also the length of time for accreditation to go through. Single accreditation is not a solution to the immediate problem.
- Part of what's driving the push to one university is the idea that it's cheaper. The concern is high costs. But high costs—where they exist—are not due to accreditation but to duplicative and/or inefficient programs. The cure to high costs is to address the driver of those costs, not just university structure.

- How is structure the problem? Regionalization of the campuses is driven by regionalization of the state. Students, faculty and businesses want programs close to them.
- We are driving toward more efficiency, and we have to, but remember that good teaching is slow and inefficient. Education is an inefficient enterprise: it's difficult and expensive.

COMMUNICATION

- Know your audience. Keep in mind who the audience is at every level. It's not going to be just the academic world. You need messaging and communication at different levels to explain what actions you are going to be taking. You must be able to take stuff that is very complex and break it down to where I can understand it. Don't assume because of someone's title or because they are a legislator that they will understand it.
- We must send pros to the Legislature. It's important to keep inter-campus competition internal rather than bringing it to the legislature.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- The community colleges are vital to the core mission of the university.
- There is a huge impact on the economy of the state of having people in hub communities who get bachelor's and master's degrees. Education improves earnings. Even if the numbers are not great, it makes a big difference. The path for someone without a college or vocational education is difficult.
- The "Middle College" model in which students can earn college credits in high school has been discussed in the legislature. It starts with the premise that students can do the work. We can't dumb down the classes. Instead, we must raise the standards at all levels.
- President Johnson: The commitment to rural Alaska community colleges is strong, but how we achieve that is the "How" that is up to the administration and Board of Regents. There has been discussion of Virtual Middle College and dual enrollment.
- The current structure of UA is not as effective in promoting the community college mission. One suggestion is a single unit for carrying out that mission (in contrast to having community colleges organized regionally under different main campuses as they are now). It could be based anywhere.
- Accreditation must be considered. UA statewide is not an accredited body, so if we don't want to individually accredit community colleges, they must be under an accredited institution, but they could have separate governance.
- One of the reports recommended that data reporting be separated for community colleges (AA degrees) and higher universities. I recommend following that recommendation. (President Johnson: this can be done.)
- Elevating focus on community campuses is a smart idea.
- One objective in our community college mission is geographical presence: we want to provide opportunities in different communities. But there is an interrelated but different objective that speaks to the kind of education offered at the community college level, which includes remedial

and vocational education. It is different in style and content from baccalaureate education. One of the reports we read recommended enhancing the visibility of the Career and Technical Colleges (CTC) in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

- Tuition at UAA, UAF, and UAS is 80% of the average for Western states, but our community college tuition is twice the Western state average. In much of rural Alaska, there is no property tax base, which in other states helps support their community colleges.

DISCUSSION OF STRUCTURAL OPTIONS

“LEAD CAMPUS” OPTION

***System structure:** Three separately accredited universities but with more focus of specific academic programs at each single university along with expanded availability of courses across the system via distance delivery. Also, reorganize the community college campuses to report to one of the lead campuses.*

Points in favor of a lead campus model:

- We are already migrating toward a lead university, and the Board of Regents is accelerating it.
- Managing by distance is difficult, but technology helps. Younger people are used to using technology to communicate. The brand is important, but it doesn't matter as much where they are at.
- We must do a better job communication with the legislature and the public about why we are structured as we are. From an efficiency, effectiveness and a public relations side of things, the lead campus model makes sense.
- Less disruptive than the alternatives.
- Joint appointments that allow researchers at one campus to collaborate with colleagues at other campuses is already being supported through a Lead Campus concept. This is important given our special geographies (e.g. glaciers and maritime in Southeast) and Lead Campus gets you there.

Other considerations:

- There are various options to consider for where community colleges could fit in the lead campus model. These include: 1) All community colleges report to one major academic unit (UAA, UAF or UAS); 2) Community colleges continue to report regionally; or 3) Community colleges become their own governance unit (albeit under the umbrella of an accredited institution).
- Provides some savings (about \$3-5M for each program merged) but doesn't approach \$135M.
- Incremental approach to date has focused on a limited number of mostly professional programs (nursing, fisheries, etc.), and not core subjects like English and history. We are not looking at just an ACCELERATED, but a GREATLY EXPANDED lead campus model, which will look different.
- We are still talking about three accredited, distributed universities. There is still a cost there.

Task Force Chair Beedle summarized the guidance from the task force as follows: We are comfortable with a Lead Campus model and recognize that it would have to be accelerated to

achieve cost-saving efficiencies more rapidly. The guidance for the community college portion is, to the extent possible considering cost and accreditation, to try to figure out a structure that draws them all in and has a unified purpose, support and measurement tool.

“ONE UNIVERSITY” OPTION

System structure: A single accredited university for all of Alaska with the community colleges organized as a unit within the university.

Points in favor of a single-accreditation one university model:

- It is what the legislature asked for.
- A central service, distributed services arrangement is not uncommon in banking, business, transportation and in Native corporations. For a single accredited institution, back-room functions that are not directly service related would be taken care of for all campuses, allowing and empowering people to focus on delivering services locally. It’s not unlike what the university is trying to do with human resources.
- It is what tends to happen in the universe for efficiencies and, more importantly, for alignment. Alignment is hard to achieve. People who choose higher education, especially on the delivery side, are independent. They do not want to follow a lot of guidance. The challenge is to preserve that independence and at the same time unify things. In our state, we continue to lack efficiencies because we can’t get alignment. The lack of progress on borough formation is an example. Nonprofits are undergoing consolidation because they have been forced to by funders.
- One university is inevitable. We will save money by going to this model sooner, rather than waiting.
- The one university concept can work. The Thomas report gave the pros and cons of single accreditation. It heavily emphasized the cons, but it did mention some pros. The lower the budget, the more I think public opinion and feasibility drive us toward the One University model. The Lead Campus model is step one in moving towards a One University option, so work towards a Lead Campus model would not be wasted even if the eventual structure were One University.
- President Johnson: Georgia has merged seven campuses to cut back room costs and is saving about \$5M per merger. The Penn State system uses single accreditation, as does Kent State. This is happening across the country.

Other considerations:

- It’s an enormous change— structurally, emotionally and culturally.
- Because of the Thomas Report, this was taken off the table in previous discussions of structural transition by the Regents. A major factor is timing. This will be a multi-year process, so even if we do recommend this, it will be a phased approach. (President Johnson: We have been told by NWCCU that this process can move much quicker than we previously understood. We would not be coming up with a completely new accreditation, but a “substantive change” to an existing accredited institution, but I like the idea of a phased approach.)

- Sports teams need to be linked to an accredited university. This was a source of opposition in past discussions of single accreditation.
- As with the lead campus model, there can be variations on this model with respect to community colleges.

“THREE INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITIES” OPTION

System structure: Three separately accredited universities and associated community colleges with independent administrations and no statewide administration.

Points in favor of three independent universities:

- People don't like other people's missions imposed on them.
- A committee of the UAA Faculty Senate released a report this spring that argued for greater autonomy for individual campuses. I am not advocating for this report or its conclusions, but I think that it's important to be aware of its arguments in any discussion of this option. The following are examples of the arguments in this report (but by no means all of them). (1) The current model is too big and Soviet-like: too much centralized planning; (2) the trend among university systems that have grown from similar origins as UAA has been toward greater autonomy of local unity; (3) The history of UAA governance has left us with a system that suffers from many of the defects of central planning and is monarchic in character; (4) We need far greater autonomy. This would provide flexibility, entrepreneurship, imagination, and local support; (5) A redefined system might provision each university with its own Board of Trustees.

Other considerations:

- With three independent universities, we are all competing for limited resources. Alignment becomes a bigger challenge, and you lose the sense of overarching responsibility to the state.
- I am skeptical that the public would accept the idea that we are going to make these universities even more separate and less coordinated.
- I'm not sure that it meets the geopolitical challenges that Alaska is facing.
- The concept of “disconnection of scale” used by NCHEMS would argue that the scale is close geographically and close to mission and culture, creating efficiencies that offset the diseconomies of scale. Those that are successful across the country, really home in on their skill set and their internal alignment. However, Alaska still would have diseconomies of scale if you consider just one university and alignment of three of anything is difficult. We are simply not at the size that can be efficient.
- As was said, “Know the audience.” This runs directly counter to the mandate we have that is coming from the legislature. For me, this option falls off the list of anything I would vote for given the current situation.
- Other speakers are needed on this topic. The authors of the UAA report are here in the audience. Perhaps we should hear from them at a future meeting. I am skeptical of the report but will try to keep an open mind.
- I agree with skepticism of the UAA report but want to hear from them on greater autonomy. It's also important to hear from stakeholders. (Response from Task Force Chair Beedle: We are not

planning to invite outside speakers other than our national consultant advisors on university structure and accreditation. I am not anticipating public comment at these meetings. However, if our task force continues to meet, we will have a contracted party provide us with stakeholder input from all constituents, including faculty and students, collected in an organized and efficient manner.

- We need to cost this option out. I am very skeptical that this will save money. All these options get us a very small distance in the savings we need. There must be MAJOR program and campus reductions.

STRAW POLL ON STRUCTURAL OPTIONS

Task force members were asked to vote anonymously using electronic voting keypads on their top two preferences for the future structure of the UA system. Task force members were not asked to make a final recommendation but to indicate in which direction they leaned after their initial reading and discussion. The poll was set up to weight each member's first choice more heavily than their second choice. All members participated in the poll. The results (proportion of weighted combined scores of the different options) were:

1. One university (64%)
2. Lead campus (36%)

In reviewing this summary, one member suggested that the task force should consider any new information that has been presented as options from the chancellors and faculty. There may be a hybrid model that has not been considered. In addition, this member noted, the task force should look at estimated cost savings for each option.

TASK FORCE ON HOLD

Following the declaration of financial exigency by the Board of Regents on July 22, 2019, the task force was put on hold. Scheduled meetings of the task force were cancelled, but Regents Chair Davies asked members to continue thinking about the task force charge, to be willing to reconvene on an on-call basis, and to serve in an advisory capacity not to extend beyond November 30, 2019, as the Board of Regents considers structural challenges and opportunities.