



DATE: October 31, 2016
TO: UAA Faculty Senate, UAF Faculty Senate, UAS Faculty Senate
FROM: Tara Smith, Chair, Faculty Alliance
RE: October Report of Activities

The [Faculty Alliance](#) consists of the president-elect (First Vice President at UAA), president, and past president of each Faculty Senate in the University of Alaska System. The chair of this body rotates amongst the past presidents of each university. AY17 is UAA's year to chair, and this is why I am writing to you on behalf of the Faculty Alliance members.

The Faculty Alliance exists primarily to promote communication amongst the Faculty Senates and to/from Statewide leadership. We are an advisory body to the President and we have members serving on the Statewide Academic Council and the chair is an ex-officio member of the Board of Regents Academic & Student Affairs (ASA) committee. We meet via Google Hangouts and anyone is welcome to attend our [meetings](#). Both the ASA and BOR meetings are [livestreamed](#) if you are interested in watching. *Please note that [public testimony](#) is no longer conducted during the regular BOR meetings. It occurs in advance via audio.*

Following this overview are documents related to the work of Faculty Alliance from October. During this month, we have approved two documents to President Johnsen and the Board of Regents. The first is a motion with feedback on the Strategic Pathways process. The second is our response to the accreditation report completed by Dr. Dana Thomas in August, 2016. We also approved budget information request questions and will be submitting them to all three universities and the Statewide Offices. We will send all responses to all three Faculty Senates.

The GER Coordinating Task Force Writing Placement Community of Practice has begun their work, as well.

We have begun discussions of a request for comparable budget information for FY16/17 from all three universities and Statewide in order to help all of us better understand how cuts and allocations have been distributed across our system. Please feel free to send your ideas to any faculty alliance member. We also received a report from a UAF faculty member last May that faculty benefit rates were prohibitively costly to departments. This was causing them to choose adjunct faculty over fulltime faculty for overload or summer assignments. We are looking into this, as well.

We are compiling the feedback from faculty with the new common calendar. We are continuing our research into benefit rates for summer and overload assignments. Please note that my November meeting with President Johnsen is on the 1st if you would like to contact me with any information or questions. My December meeting with him is on the 6th.

Please do not hesitate to contact your respective Faculty Alliance members with any comments or questions on these items or to make suggestions of items we should address. I can be reached best at tmsmith@alaska.edu if you would like to contact me.

[Item 5](#), “The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board”; and

WHEREAS, the number of faculty appointed to participate in all phases of Strategic Pathways has been low and

WHEREAS; faculty have not been given an opportunity to choose their own representation, and those faculty who are involved have been given instructions, in certain groups, that limit their capacity to freely discuss the work of these committees with their colleagues and community.

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TO:

President Jim Johnsen

The suggestions for internal policy and process changes to address issues of quality fall into two main categories: administrative and academic. This memo addresses each domain (cost cutting, administrative changes, academic changes) separately below and concludes with a summary of our main recommendations in bullet points.

Cost Cutting

The discussion of the “Single Accreditation vs Three Separate Accreditations” report at the September Board of Regents meeting made it clear that a number of regents believe that the organizational changes necessitated by merging accreditations would result in significant cost savings for the entire system. In fact, there are dramatic cost savings that could be implemented much more rapidly and less disruptively than merging accreditation. The regents have as yet not fully exploited powers to influence popular opinions of and attitudes towards higher education generally and that provided by the UA family of institutions specifically. The UA Statewide Offices have real and present opportunities to reduce costs that will improve our system metrics on the cost side immediately. The universities are the direct providers to students and have the most opportunity to impact student outcomes and experiences. The Faculty Alliance offers our thoughts and recommendations for each level of leadership and would like to emphasize our willingness to work collaboratively on improving the culture, outcomes, and experience of higher education in Alaska.

The Board of Regents has rightfully identified the need to enhance the culture of education in Alaska and has committed to working with the Board of Education on toward this end. We commend this spirit of cooperation and inclusion for all Alaskans.

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occurred in better budget times. Leadership in cost cutting within UA Statewide for the greater good of students has never been more urgent.

The universities must responsibly allocate funding to achieve the mission of each institution. Support services that do not contribute to mission fulfillment cannot be justified in this climate. As the leadership have noted, the institutions have been cut to the extent that delivery of programs and research productivity have been negatively affected, and more cuts loom. The expectations set by our state government, communities, and individual constituents are considerable. The university leadership must be able to demonstrate to the public that their funds are being utilized effectively and their contributions respected.

- " The President should reduce the cost of UA Statewide Offices immediately and publish cost savings;
- " Prioritize mission fulfillment for budget allocations within all three universities;
- " Address the need for a permanent chancellor at UAF;
- " Pursue incentives as a joint faculty and academic leadership project;
- " Allocate funding for faculty incentives for work towards institutional priorities at each university;
- " Partner with faculty on institutional performance measures and consider that they may differ by the mission and context of each university;
- " Focus efforts on the beneficial *administrative* elements of a common student experience (parts of the common calendar, administrative deadlines, single email and Blackboard login, etc.) and work closely with Faculty Alliance and other governance groups on these projects.