

Governance Report

February 2020



Coalition of Student Leaders

will review this at its retreat scheduled for the end of March. The Alliance plans on having final recommendations ahead of the UA BOR June meeting.

Alaska College of Education

There are concerns among faculty that the Alaska College of Education structure is weak and inefficient. This is resulting in major confusion for the Faculty at UAS, UAF and in particular at UAA. With the loss of licensure of four of the education programs at UAA, the plan was to absorb the UAA Faculty and programs into the Alaska College of Education— and those faculty would be teaching out of UAS and/or UAF. Student transfers happened and although everyone worked very hard, there were over a 130 students that simply left the entire university system and remain unaccounted for. The future of 'growing our own teachers' in Alaska is in a negative trajectory. The Alaska College of Education model is not fully developed, and there is no vision for how this is going to operate. This has taken far too long and must be addressed immediately if UA is going to continue to state they support teacher preparation in Alaska. Right now, it is unclear as to what is happening, and what the time frame will be for more effective delivery of teacher education.

Faculty and Staff Attrition

It is clear that the UA system is losing professional staff and faculty are high percentages. This is due to the budget cuts and the budget compact signed by former BOR Chair Davies and Governor Dunleavy. Faculty and professional staff are seeing the writing on the wall and are seeking employment and leaving the state. This is impacting programs, as staff now have to take on additional duties, and faculty are having to teach more as faculty line items are not being replaced. This is not a sustainable situation. Faculty and staff burnout is already obvious across the entire system. The domino effect of having fewer faculty and professional staff is impacting local economies and businesses. The state of Alaska is in an economic downturn and the shrinking university is adding to it. Faculty are also not being recognized for their service contributions— which means faculty are working harder than ever. Again, this is not a sustainable practice.

Policy Audit

Faculty Alliance supports a policy audit of UA BOR Policy and University Regulation and had passed a resolution with possible changes to policies surrounding the president's and the chancellors' authority in October; this resolution was supported by all three faculty senates and all system governance groups across UA. We are pleased that the Board addressed this in January and its Governance Committee is working on identify areas in the policies that need updating and revision. Faculty are particularly concerned about the areas of the policies that 'blur' the line of authority of the chancellors, provosts and the academic vice president position. Faculty Alliance fully supports the work being done by the Governance Committee and hopes to provide any assistance or feedback.

System Governance Council

Heather Batchelder, Chair

Regents and Stakeholders,

Thank you for your service to the University system. Thank you for this opportunity to share our work.

Current Discussion Topics:

Shared governance, according to policy from the U.S. Department of Education and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), is critical to the success of a public institution of higher learning. As not-for-profit organizations, public service university systems are quite different than for-profit businesses. If you have not come through the ranks in academia, if you will, that may be a new concept. Input from stakeholders and ensuring that access to information is available to all (i.e. transparency in decision-making), and evidence that the input is being utilized in decision making processes are central to shared governance.

NWCCU Standards

The institution articulates its commitment to a structure of governance that is inclusive in its planning and decision-making. Through its planning, operational activities, and allocation of resources, the institution demonstrates a commitment to student learning and achievement in an environment respectful of meaningful discourse.

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective governance structure, with a board(s) or other governing body(ies) composed predominantly of members with no contractual, employment relationship, or personal financial interest with the institution. Such members shall also possess clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Institutions that are part of a complex system with multiple boards, a centralized board, or related entities shall have, with respect to such boards, written and clearly defined contractual authority, roles, and responsibilities for all entities. In addition, authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated in a written contract, described on its website and in its public documents, and provides the NWCCU accredited institution with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission.

2.A.2 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

2.A.3 The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board(s) but may not serve as its chair.

2.A.4 The institution's decision-making structures and processes, which are documented and publicly available, must include provisions for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which each has a direct and reasonable interest.

Academic Freedom

2.B.1 Within the context of its mission and values, the institution adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

2.B.2 Within the context of its mission and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to test and examine all knowledge and theories, thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Individuals within the institution allow others the freedom to do the same.

The Council is concerned that the Alaska Constitution is being used by Statewide leadership, as an excuse to keep the current status quo regarding BOR policy and the clarification of roles and responsibilities. The NWCCU stated concerns with the lack of shared governance and the lack of clarification of roles and responsibilities between system leadership at statewide and the chancellors of the individually accredited institutions. The chancellors are still operating under the confines of the president's memo that prompted the NWCCU to ask for clarification of roles and responsibilities between the president and the chancellors and demonstrate a real commitment to shared governance.

Mixed messages continue to come from Statewide. Administration states that they are complying with the NWCCU; however, the actions taken at Statewide indicate the exact opposite. The continued lack of transparency in consolidations, the lack of equitable funding for projects common to all universities, and the lack of respect for stakeholder input demonstrates to students, staff, and faculty that leadership at statewide is not earnest in the effort to comply with the NWCCU.

The Board of Regents' Governance Committee Work Plan – Overall, Council members agreed that a May decision would be a reasonable deadline as concerns were expressed that if the policy revision delineating the roles of the chancellors and SW leadership were not completed prior to the Fairbanks site visit, UAF's accreditation may be negatively affected. Legislators assured governance leaders that the Alaska constitution does not preclude the BOR making revisions to their policy.

Council Discussions included the following:

- 1) The need for a statewide audit
- 2) The importance of public testimony during the BOR meetings
- 3) The importance of maintaining that governance reports follow the chancellors' reports during the BOR meetings
- 4) [The BOR expectations statement](#)
- 5) Lack of responses from BOR chair and president to resolutions sent by system governance bodies
- 6) SW leadership continues to present on their goal for one UA throughout the state and outside, utilizing invalid data

