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May 5, 2017

Professor Dave Fitzgerald
UAA Faculty Senate President

via email to dafitzgerald@alaska.edu

RE: Board Response to UAA Faculty Senate Vote of No Confidence

Dear President Fitzgerald:

Thank you for your reminder that the board had not formally responded to the Faculty Senate's vote of no confidence in UA President Jim Johnsen, transmitted January 13, 2017. It was not clear that a specific response was needed at that time, and no disrespect was intended. Even though the process set out in regulation—by which the board can take up to 90 days to respond to a governance action with a notice of “approval, disapproval, or modification”—in my mind is not well suited to responding to a “no confidence” resolution, please allow this letter to serve as the board's formal response to the matter.

The board's effort to establish dialogue with governance at the March 2-3, 2017 Board of Regents' meeting shows our desire to find a communication model that is respectful and effective as we continue to navigate this process. I am hopeful the dialogue we began in March builds on President Johnsen's communication with governance and other university constituencies and that the dialogue can be even more constructive during these challenging times.

The board has full confidence in President Johnsen. Mr. Johnsen demonstrates a relentless and thoughtful willingness to best position the university for facing its many challenges. The board also has confidence in the Strategic Pathways process and the modifications made to address governance and other concerns. We believe that the Pathways process is a systematic effort to involve governance, faculty, staff, and outside stakeholders in a critical review of how the university can best address state needs.

President Johnsen has modified the Strategic Pathways process to provide valuable feedback in a short amount of time regarding available options. This is critical, as we are facing very real time constraints in dealing with the dramatic funding reductions passed down from the state.

The board and governance will not always agree with the options presented through Strategic Pathways, or even with those recommended by the president, but our decision-making is better informed because of the process. We are committed to further dialogue with governance and are looking forward to working with all faculty to encourage legislative support of the funding needed to do what is best for our state.

Thank you for your thoughtful service.

Sincerely,

Gloria O'Neill
Chair, University of Alaska Board of Regents