

Dear Regents

The Faculty Alliance supports the UA Board of Regents and all our UA colleagues during this historic time in our State. We understand the decision of declaring exigency was perhaps the most serious decision you have had to make.

We wanted to share our thoughts in three important areas:

- 1) Immediate budget cuts
- 2) Future restructure of the UA system
- 3) Fostering collaboration and cooperation

Immediate Budget Cuts

The future of the three Universities is at stake, as is our accreditation. We, as faculty, want to work on finding solutions, examine models and be part of the planning. We currently do have faculty that are pro-actively examining models. President Johnsen has provided three possible scenarios in restructure of the UA system. We suggest that we deal with the budget cuts first, and separate the discussion of restructure and budget reform; in essence 'de-couple' budget from structure planning. Structure is being addressed through the lens of fear – the process must be more thoughtful.

At the Monday July 22nd meeting it was valuable to hear the perspectives of the three Chancellors. It was helpful and vital to hear from them. We think the chancellors are uniquely positioned to move quickly along with involvement of shared governance to address budget cuts in a way that does minimum damage to the three universities. In sum, we support our respective chancellors and are starting to work with them on their budget approach.

Restructuring Considerations

Decisions on restructuring the university system will have long-lasting effects on the university system and its ability to weather the storm of decreased budgets. Given the gravity of these decisions, we support a thoughtful, evidence-based, collaborative approach to decision making that allows a variety of models and options to be considered. We think the chancellors along with shared governance and community stakeholders are in a unique position to identify a cooperative, collaborative approach that can help ensure the university system develops a structure that will be most effective not only now in dealing with budget cuts, but in the long term in determining how best to meet the needs of the State.

Fostering Collaboration and Cooperation

We support a hybrid option of those being considered. The chancellors could assume more coordination of system governance and be allowed to find ways to cooperate and collaborate. Allowing the chancellors to drive this discussion would improve the chances of success not only in responding quickly to budget issues, but in developing the collaborative atmosphere that will be imperative as we move forward during these challenging times. The chancellors are in a

better position to involve shared governance and important community stakeholders at each of their universities in a way that will increase support and chances of success.

A single-accreditation model in which collaboration is forced on the three universities in a top-down approach is likely to create divisions within the UA system that are difficult to overcome. Statewide administration has acknowledged that a single-accreditation model will result in minimal cost savings. In addition, Statewide coordination of many activities could be reduced, allowing for additional cost savings.

We again urge the Board of Regents to delay making any decision on restructure so that clear and intentional planning can take place and that engagement of all the stakeholders can occur. In the meantime, the three Chancellors, the Staff Alliance, the Faculty Senate representatives, Student Governance can work together in collaboration and cooperation to address budget cuts and help lead us in a direction that will serve Alaska as effectively as possible both now and in the future.

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