

System Governance Report

February 2014



Coalition of Student Leaders

Shauna Thornton, Speaker

We held our Winter Retreat on Jan. 10-11, 2014 in Anchorage at the Hotel Captain Cook. Various speakers informed the student leaders on subjects such as student services, legislation and budgeting for 2014, how to tell our story, the legislative process, and the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. The retreat was informative and important for our upcoming Legislative Affairs trip to Juneau. We provided feedback for a student satisfaction survey the Faculty Alliance is working to develop. We also spoke with Dr. Dana Thomas, VP of Academic Affairs and shared feedback on the Shaping Alaska's future draft documents.

Our advocacy trip to Juneau takes place Jan. 31-Feb. 4. Our theme for the Legislative Affairs trip is "Building Alaska's Future". The Coalition of Student Leaders will be hosting an evening event with students and legislators at the CTC in Juneau on Saturday evening Feb. 1. The students will be meeting with legislators and others during the four-day event.

We will be working closely with Chris Christensen, Associate Vice President for State Relations and Michelle Rizk, Associate Vice President for Budget on topics we need to know for our meetings with the legislators. There will be 30 to 40 students involved in this event from all over the state. The students are studying hard and excited to be a part of the legislative and university budgeting process.

During our business meeting at the retreat, we formed an ad hoc committee to explore ways to fundraise for the Pat Ivey Coalition of Student Leaders Scholarship fund and they will report to us after the Legislative Affairs trip.

We are working on getting out our mission and recruiting students for the upcoming year with Facebook, Twitter, and presentations on each campus.

Shauna Thornton has been a member of the KRC Student Union for several years, and a member of the Coalition of Student Leaders for the past two years. She successfully led the KRCSU to rally against cuts to the campus budget saving the campus hundreds of thousands of dollars, and was one of the leaders in Juneau for need based financial aid.



Faculty Alliance

Dr. Robert Boeckmann, Chair

The Faculty Alliance met twice (12/13/13 & 1/17/14) since its report to the BOR meeting in December. As I write, we have yet to meet for our January meeting. Our December meeting corresponded with the BOR meeting in Fairbanks. Based upon our concerns, and those we heard aired at public testimony at the December BOR meeting, the Faculty Alliance passed a resolution supporting staff in their efforts to maintain the employee tuition waiver benefit at current levels. In the resolution, we noted the key role that well qualified and long-standing professional staff people play in supporting faculty and students in the academic mission of the university.

Our two meetings have focused primarily upon the issue of the proposal for establishing a UA system wide minimum standard for admission into a baccalaureate degree program. Concerns with establishing such a minimum, broadly speaking, fall into two categories. First, a UA system minimum may not be well suited to the unique student needs at each of the three universities of the UA system and the individualized approaches that have been or may be developed to serve those unique student populations. Second, there is concern, particularly at UAA, that establishing a UA system minimum for admission into a Baccalaureate program may discourage college going and stigmatize students unnecessarily. This is particularly a concern in a state that does not have a robust community college system and because UAA's mission involves a commitment to being an "open access" institution that provides a wide range of educational programs. After our last meeting, it became more apparent that UAF and UAS faculty governance were closer to agreeing on a common minimum standard than UAA.

I am doing my best to guide the discussion in the Faculty Alliance toward a productive compromise to the BA minimum standard proposal from SAC. In my efforts, I am striving to move beyond simply striking the proposal of a UA system wide standard down, and proposing an alternative that meets some of the objectives inherent in the proposal while addressing some of the concerns noted above. I have held a number of meetings with UAA faculty governance and with UAA administration to better understand their concerns. In those discussions, I learned that UAA does have minimum standards for admission into baccalaureate degrees. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Bruce Schultz had his staff prepare a table comparing the degree admission standards of the three UA universities to help inform this discussion.

At our Jan. 17 meeting, we will discuss two possibilities as alternatives to the SAC proposed motion for baccalaureate minimums. One will focus on examining the table produced by Vice Chancellor Schultz's staff and attempt to find common ground among the variety of standards currently existing within the system to establish a UA wide minimum standard. The other will focus on using a UA wide minimum standard to initiate a thorough system of assessment, advising, and placement to assist students not meeting the minimum to engage appropriate educational goals and revise them, if necessary, as they develop college skills and obtain success in meeting intermediate educational goals. Those goals may include baccalaureate degrees, but may also be more appropriately focused on AA degrees, or other types of certificates.

The January meeting will also focus on developing an agenda for our face-to-face retreat in February. That agenda will also include discussion of topics we would like to discuss informally with the regents at the February meeting.

Dr. Robert J. Boeckmann grew up in Southcentral Alaska and is now an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Alaska Anchorage where he teaches a variety of classes in the Undergraduate, Masters, and UAA/UAF joint Ph.D. program. Courses include: research methods, statistics, personality and social psychology and honors seminars in the psychology of social justice. He enjoys mentoring students in research at all levels but is particularly inspired by helping undergraduates explore and discover. Robert chairs the UAA Institutional Review Board and is active in faculty governance. Robert earned his BA, MA, and Ph.D. at the University of California Berkeley. His research is primarily focused on social identity and social justice, but more recently has expanded his interests to include Alaska Native behavioral health, evolutionary psychology, and social media.



Staff Alliance Carey Brown, Chair

We have been working closely with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs providing feedback on the latest version of the Shaping Alaska's Future initiative. Each local governance group has been disseminated the draft Issue and Effect Statements from the latest version of the Shaping Alaska's Future document and asked to provide a second round of feedback from the Dec. 23, 2013 matrices. We express appreciation for the inclusion in this ongoing effort.

We are preparing for our annual retreat to be held in Fairbanks, Alaska on March 10-11, 2014. The members will assess goals, discuss pending concerns, decide future direction, and provide feedback from staff at each university for future discussion and Board of Regent consideration.

In conclusion, Staff Alliance would like to express appreciation to the Fairbanks, Juneau, and Anchorage staff for their participation in the December UA Board of Regents' meeting. Their continued support solidifies the importance of Staff Alliance and its mission. We value all input from staff and thank those who participate in meetings, surveys, and general informational queries. We are happy about the tuition waiver benefit conclusion.

Carey Brown is from Fort Worth Texas and is currently the Academic Advising Coordinator for the College of Health at UAA. He earned a bachelor's degree in health administration at Texas Southern University in 2001, moved to Anchorage, Alaska in 2006 to complete the MPA degree in 2008. He is also adjunct faculty for the College of Health and First-Year Experience courses. He is on the board of directors for Anchorage Urban League (Anchorage Urban Works), member of the ASD Multicultural Concerns Committee, and volunteers with various youth scholarship committees.