



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Date: September 29, 2017
To: President James R. Johnsen
University of Alaska
From: University of Alaska Faculty Alliance
Subject: Faculty Comment on the UA College of Education

The Faculty Alliance (FA) has discussed the report titled “Update on Planning for the Alaska College of Education” that was provided to the Board of Regents (BoR) on September 1, 2017 and wholeheartedly welcomes the updated plan's preservation of three separately accredited education programs at our three universities.

The NWCCU has correctly pointed out that the previous plan of completely merging the three Schools of Education would be extremely complex, time consuming and a distraction from the University’s mission and there is no guarantee on accreditation of the final product. Even the discussion of this notion has already been highly disruptive for students, staff, and faculty in education. In an effort to minimize further disruption, the FA would like to offer the following recommendations.

Preserve the three existing Schools of Education. The revised plans for a UA College of Education describe the interests that will be served by formation of a single, statewide program. The FA believes that several of these services could be provided without the costly, time-consuming and disruptive movement of education faculty at UAA and UAF to alternative colleges. Accountability for teacher education programs, establishment of consistent and standardized programs and the focus of additional resources on teacher education could be easily implemented through the existing Schools of Education, supervised by an Executive Dean that is given authority via well-defined and parallel mandates from chancellors at each of the three universities.

Workload, promotion and curricular issues should remain the purview of established practices at each university. The creation of new processes

involving statewide faculty committees would be costly and time-consuming. The work product of any University faculty committee would affect each university and thus require their separate approval, adding another layer of complexity and further slowing the process.

Consider another action taken under Strategic Pathways Phase I. Is there any evidence that disbanding the UAS School of Business and placing associated faculty into the School of Arts & Sciences has resulted in any increases in cost-savings, program consistency across UA or student access? The opportunity for comparative analysis is noteworthy.

If the current direction is to be maintained, the FA suggests use of a less provocative term than “dissolution” when referring to the Schools of Education at UAA and UAF (<http://www.uas.alaska.edu/chancellor/pdf/alaska-college-of-education-documents/AKCOE%20Update.pdf>). It is not clear what benefit is achieved by the term "dissolve" or exactly what happens to the programs when this action is executed. Many faculty believe the term raises doubts among students and the public in general that teacher education units will continue to exist at UAA and UAF. This in turn is negatively impacting our capacity to recruit and retain qualified students and faculty. In addition, the term does not engender support among affected faculty. If the enrollment and completion goals of the proposed College of Education are to be met, existing and potential students must be assured of program continuity and UA education faculty must have a degree of certainty surrounding their status. These two criteria are fundamental to the implementation and continued success of the proposed statewide college.

The Faculty Alliance looks forward to continuing collaborative efforts as we work through these complex issues and fully embraces faculty governance roles in future deliberations.

Respectfully,

Lisa Hoferkamp
Chair, Faculty Alliance