



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Faculty Alliance

Resolution 2017-07 Regarding the Statewide System Offices of the University of Alaska

Whereas, recurring reductions in state funding for the University of Alaska System necessitate significant changes to the University's current mode of operation; and

Whereas, the Board of Regents and President Johnsen have publicly emphasized the need for change and stressed that we, as a system, can no longer simply conduct business as usual; and

Whereas, efforts towards that end are currently led by the Strategic Pathways initiative and actions resulting from that process so far have focused on the universities and satellite campuses that comprise the UA system with insufficient focus on the Statewide System Offices; and

Whereas, a recent publication¹ shows 199 Statewide administrative positions in 2017 that cumulatively consume more budget resources than all permanent and contingent faculty salaries and benefits combined; and

Whereas, the Faculty Alliance appreciates the hard work and demonstrated competence of UA Statewide administration and staff and is empathetic with regards to the personal impact of reductions, we also emphasize that the priority must be given to the viability of the universities and their capacity to provide higher education opportunities to Alaskans through high functioning academic programs; and

Whereas, reallocating resources toward units that directly fulfill the teaching, research and service mission of the university and away from central administrative offices would be a positive step toward the reestablishment of student and employee morale, which are essential components of a self-sustaining institution of higher education; and

¹ [A New Vision for the University of Alaska](#), Abel Bult Ito, 2017

Whereas, both the external reviews of the University of Alaska system (MacTaggart Report², Fisher Report³) independently came to the conclusion that UA Statewide is an administrative support service with a cost that is disproportionately large relative to the services it provides; and

Whereas, both external reviews cite reductions to the UA system central office as the most feasible and meaningful effort towards fiscal viability and emphasize the need for a change from the current command and control approach to the UA System; and

Whereas, the University of Alaska system is a state-funded, non-profit institution and therefore committed to providing the public with high-quality education under the most cost-effective conditions; and

Whereas the UA Faculty Alliance believes strongly that the UA system should focus as much support as possible to areas that directly maintain and improve its ability to serve its core mission through teaching, research and service; and

Whereas the budget allocated to UA Statewide Offices does not directly produce graduates or student credit hours, nor does it conduct academic research; and

Whereas, the value of a compact, efficient, central administrative office that provides analysis and recommendations to the Board of Regents and the Chancellors is duly recognized, the Faculty Alliance, through open discourse followed by consensus among stakeholders, seeks to identify a clear route to a revised central office that more closely fits that description; and

Whereas, the Statewide Transformation Team⁴ articulated four essential roles of Statewide that can guide such a revision; and

Whereas the Faculty Alliance supports the transfer of services regarding curricular decisions, student services, alumni activities, university relations (especially outreach), and most institutional research functions to the individual universities of the UA system; and

Whereas, significant cost reductions have been recognized by several state-funded universities that have redistributed relevant administrative functions to individual universities while maintaining a minimally-staffed central office or no central office; and

² [*Planning the Future: Streamlining Statewide Services in the University of Alaska System*](#), prepared for the Office of the UA President in 2008 by Dr. Terrence MacTaggart and Brian Rogers

³ [*University of Alaska; Review*](#), prepared for the UA President in 2011 by James L Fisher, Ltd.

⁴ [*Transforming the University of Alaska Statewide Offices*](#), prepared for UA President, September 2015

Whereas, a significant potential for savings lies within an examination of administrative services and associated positions currently listed on the UA Statewide organizational [chart](#) and subsequent reassignment of all services that can be successfully completed by existing university-based offices; and

Whereas, additional savings could be realized through more economical approaches to administrative leadership, planning and professional development events as well as reductions in the employ of external consulting firms for services in which an expertise already exists among UA faculty; and

Whereas, President Johnsen has already indicated that he opposes learning from the Oregon model specifically, and he has asserted that Statewide has already been cut sufficiently; and

Whereas, President Johnsen has distributed a white paper at the March Board of Regents meeting with financial data that does not accurately reflect the actual cost of Statewide to the universities and Alaska.

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Faculty Alliance urges the UA Board of Regents to take the following actions:

- Publicly endorse significant reductions to the Statewide System Offices and the priority of the central mission of each university in allocating revenue from all sources; and
- Appoint an independent, knowledgeable, and trusted individual or team to conduct an expedient analysis of other state system models which administer a greater number of institutions and students for far fewer resources, such as North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia; and
- Through this study, produce options to reduce the services and functions of the UA Statewide System Offices to the minimum required for accreditation and for legislative and federal compliance; and
- Using this study, past reports from Fisher, MacTaggart, and the first Statewide Transformation Team report, produce options for the remaining functions to be eliminated or distributed to the universities, using shared services where they are beneficial and cost effective.

Adopted unanimously by the Faculty Alliance the 24th day of March 2017.

DocuSigned by:

Tara Smith

Tara Smith, Chair