



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Date: August 29, 2017
To: President James R. Johnsen
University of Alaska
From: University of Alaska Faculty Alliance
Subject: Summary of Faculty Initial Feedback on Strategic Pathways Phase 3 Options

Faculty Alliance has used a Google document to collect feedback from faculty senators and other faculty on [the Strategic Pathways Phase 3 options](#) (SP Ph3). Faculty participation was not as extensive as the Phase 2 effort, a feature that is likely tied to the collection of feedback during the summer months when a very large percentage of the faculty is off-contract. Regardless, 24 faculty from UAA, UAF, and UAS shared their thoughts. Contributing faculty were asked to only offer informed opinions thus not every faculty member voted on every option, but each option collected at least a number of votes from various faculty members and the entire effort produced meaningful insight and useful information relevant to how the implementation of SP Ph3 may affect the University of Alaska.

Faculty opinions of the options varied widely, from overwhelming interest to unanimous rejection. Because the opinions presented here are based only on published SP Ph3 information and come from self-selected volunteers within faculty governance and a small number of non-senators, any lack of rejection should be considered only as an indication of faculty interest in a fuller, more detailed description and analysis of the option. Tacit approval should not be assumed. Red indicates that the option appears unworkable and not worthy of fuller articulation or analysis.

Faculty Senates and the Faculty Alliance look forward to continuing the SP Ph3 discussion and fully embrace adherence to established faculty governance roles in future deliberations on Strategic Pathways options and implementation.

Respectfully,

Lisa Hoferkamp
Chair, Faculty Alliance

<u>Arts & Humanities</u> Option	Faculty Consensus	
Common Course Numbering	No, this should not be considered any further.	The effort required to renumber courses is high, while the payoff is quite low--a simple cross reference list could easily accomplish the goal. Numbering GER courses is currently underway and almost complete. There's no reason to continue common course numbering into upper level courses as faculty at each university have unique expertise in their areas. These differences should be highlighted for students to see the wide variety of choices they have.
Common Public Accessible Degree Portal	Yes, this should be analyzed in detail.	Very frustrating for students to not be able to compare programs across units and see all the options available. Updating the UA Online website seems an appropriate place to start to retain continuity and capitalize on the features already in place there.
DegreeWorks upgrade to include course equivalency	Maybe this could work, depending.	Transfer of credits doesn't always follow strict rules - could incorrectly place students. It would require significant upfront work and continual maintenance to be accurate. Would need to determine whether the benefits outweigh the likely considerable costs.
Course Sharing across Universities	Maybe this could work, depending.	There are departments where course sharing is currently working and others where it can be made to work, especially for online courses, but also for courses that work via synchronous video conference. There are currently substantial administrative barriers to course sharing, including inter-campus competition among both deans and departments. At the moment, it does not appear possible to share tuition dollars between campuses to reflect the shared contributions of the campuses to a shared course.
Disciplinary Coordinating Teams	Maybe this could work, depending.	There are benefits to this for a variety of reasons, but this should be entirely faculty-driven. They should not be administratively-created or directed.
Support for High-Impact Teaching Practices	Yes, this should be analyzed in detail.	Agreed on development, but faculty also need administrative support, (e.g. appropriate workload adjustments) to implement new and improve existing high-impact practices. Better marketing to communicate already-existing programs would increase public awareness of the high-quality teaching practices used across the University.

Social & Natural Sciences Option	Faculty Consensus	
Common Course Numbering	No, this should not be considered any further.	Same rationale as with Arts & Humanities.
Common Catalog	No, this should not be considered any further.	Students can currently look up courses on: UA Online Course Search (common) Schedule Planner (common) DegreeWorks (three separate access links) Ellucian GO (app) UAF CourseFinder (UAF only) Students don't need more ways to look up courses. This is an especially bad idea if all academic policies must be aligned--making all three university's academic policies identical would be an enormous and probably decade-long effort, for minimal benefit to students.
Course Sharing	Maybe this could work, depending.	Same rationale as with Arts & Humanities, but sharing courses is particularly difficult with lab science courses.
Common Curriculum Committees	No, this should not be considered any further.	Coordinating ordinary curriculum approvals across three campuses would be a logistical nightmare, and lead to decreased productivity and increased resentment. Currently, curriculum proposals take several months to pass through curriculum committee and get the required approvals in order to be added to the following year's academic catalog. Additional layers of discussion and approval would consume productive teaching and research time as well as jeopardize the ability of our universities to be agile and respond to current trends and research.
Faculty and Student Intrastate Mobility	Maybe this could work, depending.	We would like to give faculty and students the opportunity to choose to work in another part of the system without a need to use sabbatical leave or leave of absence, although most faculty and students already live in the part of the state they prefer. It would be useful to coordinate short-term housing. There are opportunities for distance research assistantships, to provide a deeper pool of research assistants.
Share High Impact Practices	Yes, this should be analyzed in detail.	UA-wide professional development opportunities would facilitate this. Need to invest in the process of sharing and mentoring.
Enhanced Advising	Yes, this should be analyzed in detail.	Since UA truly cares about student success and completion, it must put resources here. Professional advisors are great, but departments need to commit to publishing course availability and sequencing and administration must commit to honoring those academic offering plans. Faculty advising is not necessary but faculty mentoring is.

<u>Mine Training</u> Option	Faculty Consensus	
UAF leads mine training	No, this should not be considered.	The "lead institution model" is highly disruptive, and offers minimal benefit. This model was forced on SOE and it is terrible. No faculty buy in. No new mission or rationale. No discussion of institutional capacity. Completely disrupts programs that are already working, and poses serious accreditation threats. No financial savings. Students and industry are confused and worried.
UAS leads mine training	No, this should not be considered	It is not feasible to move the existing training portals, or mine equipment. The programs are unique to regions they serve
UA does not do mine training	No, this should not be considered.	Mining in Alaska is a multi-billion dollar industry, and provides many thousands of good jobs. UA should help Alaskans fill these positions.
Enhance Existing Structure	Maybe this could work, depending.	Faculty should decide how and why. The two existing programs are very different and uniquely serve the communities in which they are situated..

<u>Finance</u> Option	Faculty Consensus	
Fully Decentralized Finance	Maybe this could work, depending.	One downside would be triplicated back-office complexities, such as income tax withholding calculations. Triplicate offices does not necessarily mean triplicate personnel.
Consolidate Finance at One Lead Campus	No, this should not be considered.	It would be nearly impossible to maintain even the perception that the lead campus is providing fair service to the other campuses.
Consolidate Finance at Statewide	Maybe this could work, depending.	One downside would be the potential for more command-and-control top down decision making. Consolidating some services is financially efficient, but requires statewide to provide that service to the campuses. Eliminates any face-to-face between students and financial services they require.
Strategic Finance	Yes, this should be analyzed in detail.	Indeed, some functions could be merged, others should remain separate. Statewide finance decisions must be vetted more thoroughly with affected stakeholders, e.g. the dramatic 2015 change to faculty time off.

<u>Risk Management</u> Option	Faculty Consensus	
Process Improvement Across the University System	Maybe this could work, depending.	The process is so convoluted now, it needs much more investigation than was available to the phase 3 team. A bottom-up rethink of the system is needed.
Consolidation at Statewide	No, this should not be considered.	Many risk management issues directly affect classrooms, labs, and fieldwork.
Single Functional Experts to support System	Additional information is needed.	It was not clear what this meant.
Centralized Strategy, Decentralize Operations	Maybe this could work, depending.	If we define clear principles at the BOR policy level, but leave the detailed regulation and exemptions to the campuses, we could maintain productivity and safety with local control.

<u>Land Management</u> Option	Faculty Consensus	
Status Quo	Maybe this could work, depending.	
Decentralize Educational Properties	Maybe this could work, depending.	
Outsource Management of Investment Properties	Maybe this could work, depending.	The university's core mission is not to manage a large real estate portfolio. Will this reduce the size and expense of Statewide? If so, there is support..
Outsource Management of Educational Properties	No, this should not be considered any further.	The core campus should be managed by the university, not an outside agency.
Separate Land Management from the University	Yes, this should be analyzed in detail.	The university's core mission is not to manage a large real estate portfolio.
Fully Centralize Land Management	No, this should not be considered any further.	We are almost fully centralized right now.
Fully Decentralize	No, this should	Dividing land between UAA UAF and UAS would not improve returns.

Land Management	not be considered any further.	
Liquidate Investment Property	Maybe this could work, depending.	<p>A real estate investment trust with our 140,000 acres of investment property could rapidly raise on the order of a billion dollars for the UA endowment, without needing to sell parcels one by one into a market.</p> <p>Most universities that received land grants sold their excess land to build an endowment, and they fund the university from the endowment returns.</p> <p>We would need to retain the university's current ability to coordinate research activities on state land.</p>