

## **Assessment Plan**

June 14, 2016

Assessment of Single Accreditation versus Three Separate Accreditations for the University of Alaska

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### **Why is an assessment needed?**

UA President Johnsen provided the following statement on the purpose of this assessment:

The University of Alaska is facing the dual pressures of major budget reductions from the state and significant opportunities for improvement in meeting our students' and the states' needs for higher education. In response, the university is examining options for reducing high administrative and academic costs for reallocation into high demand academic programs. A full examination of those options, and their potential benefits and risks, requires an understanding of institutional accreditation and the extent to which alternative approaches to accreditation--e.g., three or one--enables and/or constrains our options for restructuring and, in the end, the university's ability to serve our students and our state more effectively.

Additionally, President Johnsen requested this report because of interest expressed by the UA Board of Regents (UA BOR) and the Alaska State Legislature.

The minutes of the April 2016 UA Board of Regents include the following statement:

The board expressed its support for continued strategic priorities in the areas of deferred maintenance, teacher education, research, engineering, workforce development (e.g. healthcare and maritime), partnerships with industry, eLearning, taking a bold look at organizational structure on how to grow UA's programs and the benefits of one or three universities.

On May 31st, the Alaska State Legislature passed an FY2017 operating budget that included the following intent language:

It is the intent of the legislature that the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska return to the legislature with a specific plan for consolidation that includes specified timelines for anticipated results by the end of the 2016 calendar year; the plan would include, but would not be limited to, the university restructuring to one administrative unit with one accreditation. UA President Johnsen addressed this question in the following statement:

### **Charge:**

Reporting to UA President Johnsen and in cooperation with members of the three Chancellor's Cabinets, prepare a formal written and authoritative assessment of standards, processes, implications, what is possible and what is not, and the pros & cons of three separate accreditations vs one accreditation according to the following timeline:

June 15 – Submit Detailed Assessment Plan; UA Statewide will Post Plan Online

July 15 – Submit Report

July 15 – August 1 – UA Statewide Posts Report and Solicits Feedback

- I. **June 1 – June 30 Describe the purpose and process of institutional accreditation.** Cite and/or provide reference materials from the Council of Higher Education Accreditation and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
- II. **June 1 – June 30 (follow up questions may continue through mid-July) – Consult with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities** to identify the following:
  - a. The collection of possible alternative pathways to change from three separate accreditations to single accreditation;
  - b. The timeline for each of the alternative pathways in item a;
  - c. The NWCCU’s preferred pathway and summarize their logic for such;
  - d. The collection of information required by the NWCCU to review the possible accreditation change; is this a complete self-study process? In what time frame? Or something less complex?
  - e. The implications of single accreditation for UA; Cite accreditation policies, eligibility requirements, and standards as appropriate. Describe examples of things UA:
    - a. Would not be able to do under single accreditation that it can do now as three separately accredited institutions. For example, the accreditation eligibility requirements and standards appear to indicate that a single institutional admission policy would be required. Thus, UA would not be able to have a “research campus” with admission requirements that differ from that of the other campuses (different admission requirements by individual programs, e.g., BS in Biology, or colleges, e.g., Engineering, are feasible but would have to be consistent across campuses).
    - b. Would not be able to do under separate accreditation that it can do single accreditation.
  - f. The minimum scope of authority for CEO(s) under the single accreditation and separate accreditation models. What are the limitations, if any, to centralizing or assigning administrative functions to Statewide or to a single campus, e.g., HR, purchasing, admissions, and research administration, under the separate accreditation model? What are the limitations, if any, to centralizing or assigning academic programs to a single campus?
- III. **June 1 - 30 – Describe the national perspective**
  - a. In consultation with NWCCU, President Johnsen, and Chancellor’s cabinets contact and/or cite national experts on institutional accreditation. When contacting national experts lay out the context for UA considering the change in accreditation, and ask the

experts their opinion of the pros and cons of single accreditation versus separate accreditation.

- b. Briefly describe state university and community college organizations in states similar to Alaska in population size and density and state institution postsecondary enrollment.
- c. Briefly describe accredited institutions with multiple locations and how they are organized, e.g., the Maine System and Penn State University.

**IV. June 1 – July 10 – In cooperation with the Chancellor’s cabinets of the three UA institutions, identify the pros and cons and what is possible and what is not by major administrative area (list subject to change based on feedback).**

- a. Chancellors
- b. University Advancement
- c. Administrative Services
- d. Student Affairs
- e. Academic Affairs
  - i. Impact on Tenure (may be none depending on pathway) and on faculty evaluation, promotion, tenure processes.
  - ii. Assess impact on specialized accreditation
  - iii. Provide examples of how multiple programs at different campuses might be organized
  - iv. Accreditation management under single accreditation
- f. Community Campuses
- g. Research
- h. Athletics
- i. Faculty, Staff, and Student Governance

**V. July 10 – July 15 Complete the report**