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July 23, 2020

TO: Faculty Alliance

FROM: Michelle Rizk Acting President *Michelle A. Rizk*

RE: June 10 Memo on Suspended Enrollment of Programs and Teach-out Plans

Thank you for your memo expressing concerns about the suspension of programs prior to the board vote and the development of teach-out plans. I have asked Vice President Layer to work with university academic leadership to address your concerns and they have provided information for this response.

With regard to program suspension, the decision to suspend admissions prior to a vote to discontinue the programs was not intended to presuppose a decision by the Board at its June meeting, but rather to provide potential students with information that programs were being considered for discontinuation, and it follows our usual practice regarding program suspension, albeit it in an expedited fashion. It is common for our universities to suspend admission to programs prior to coming to the Board for a vote on programmatic discontinuation. When we are not in an expedited timeline, this suspension generally occurs well before a vote. For example, admission to the UAF Sociology BA and BS degree programs was suspended in 2015, and the vote to discontinue those programs occurred at the June 2020 Board meeting.

With regard to UAF's Atmospheric Sciences programs, in recommending that the Board delay the vote for discontinuation, several factors were cited by Chancellor White in a June 1 memo to President Johnsen, and he concluded: *"However, in light of the significant structural and other academic and administrative changes that the BOR recommended reviewing at their recent Audit committee meeting, the weight of eliminating Atmospheric Sciences overall must be taken in balance. I ask that the Atmospheric Sciences elimination decision, and only this one, be postponed to the November 2020 meeting."* While the NOAA grant is significant, it was not the sole reason for the recommendation and I am sure that feedback from stakeholders also was a factor. Following the decision by the Board to delay a vote on program discontinuation, UAF notified NWCCU that admission to the M.S. and Ph.D. programs was re-opened and a memo was sent from Vice President Layer to the Academic and Student Affairs committee on June 16, 2020, informing the committee of this notification.

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As you point out, there are standards that must be met for teach-out plans according to NWCCU. The three Accreditation Liaison Officers have been working with the Commission on the processes to develop these plans and inform students. They have informed me that faculty in those programs have worked with the deans to develop the course rotations and faculty workloads for each program to meet student needs. It is an ongoing and iterative process, and communication with NWCCU has been a core part of the process from the beginning.

Once again, I appreciate the Alliance sharing their concerns regarding the expedited program review process. The Academic and Student Affairs committee and the full Board of Regents considered a lot of information and made some difficult decisions. I have asked Vice President Layer to review the process and make recommendations to the Academic and Student Affairs committee and to the chancellors on how to address some of the concerns we have heard from stakeholders regarding the process.