



3/21/2025

Dear Alaska Legislators,

Faculty and students are the foundation of university education, and both provide an essential perspective to university leadership. Currently, the University of Alaska Board of Regents includes a Student Regent, but no Faculty Regent. A comprehensive understanding of the university system leads to more informed and effective policy decisions. For this reason, we thank you for considering the addition of a Faculty Regent to the Board and for recognizing the ways a faculty member would contribute to discussions that set university priorities in order to serve students and the state. The Faculty Alliance of the University of Alaska remains deeply committed to the university and to the inclusion of faculty perspective and insight on the Board.

Specifically, the University of Alaska Faculty Alliance is in strong support of having a Faculty Regent who serves on the Board of Regents who is nominated by faculty members at the three UA universities, selected by the Governor, and confirmed by the Legislature. A Faculty Regent would participate in all of the duties and responsibilities of a regent (i.e. attend all meetings of the board and its committees) and have full voting powers on the Board of Regents, analogous to the current duties of the Student Regent. The Faculty Regent would ideally rotate among the different universities, as the student regent does.

Shared governance is a critical part of the university structure, and UA has a long-standing governance structure that includes Faculty Alliance, Staff Council, and the Coalition of Student Leaders. Currently, the chairs of each of these organizations attend BOR meetings to keep their constituents informed and to help Regents weigh decisions from a variety of experiential and research perspectives. However, this current structure is limited. The Board of Regents as a deliberative body would gain a more comprehensive view of the university if both faculty and students had a seat at the table throughout the process of Board discussions and decision making. This more collaborative approach would provide a meaningful way for the University of Alaska to work through some of the budget challenges we are facing, in addition to the possible restructuring of some programs. Because the teaching and learning relationship is central to any university system, both a student and faculty perspective provide classroom-level insight that complements a more aerial view of economic incentives and constraints. Faculty are also in

regular communication with national and international colleagues as they pursue research agendas that yield new knowledge and applications. A Faculty Regent would enhance the system's reputation, safeguard the academic integrity of decision-making, and offer valuable insight into recruitment, retention, and graduation objectives.

The Faculty Alliance has listened to the concerns of some Legislators regarding the prospect of including a faculty regent on the UA BOR. We would like to address the concerns as they are presented:

**Conflict of interest:** Faculty are dedicated to the UA system, and all three of our separately accredited universities work together to form the system. UA System university leadership is currently committed to creating an environment that fosters and incentivizes collaboration and unity. Being employed within the UA system would not preclude a faculty member from contributing to the Board in a fair and ethical manner, in the same manner that being a student at a UA university does not prohibit such a contribution. Currently, faculty participate in shared governance groups in an ethical and fair manner through their service commitments to their respective universities and the system. As with any other regent, specific conflicts of interest could be handled through recusal. Elevating faculty participation in shared governance to the Board level is fair and ethical.

**Voting to fund or defund programs:** Faculty are invested in the success of the university and recognize the importance of program reviews in order to ensure their relevance and necessity. Across the system, faculty work both together and independently on the development and revision of academic programs at each of the three separately-accredited universities. A faculty perspective regarding programs at the Board level is critical. Faculty currently play a role in the Academic Council, where major program and curriculum modifications are discussed. Having a Faculty Regent would allow for better communication between the faculty and the other Regents, allowing greater clarity regarding the program review process. We are confident that a Faculty Regent could provide insight to the rest of the Board regarding the details of specific academic programs, without showing favoritism towards individual colleges or universities.

**Professionalism:** Faculty abide by a strict code of professional conduct as educators. Faculty will comply with Board policy in all matters. The Board of Regents (BL03: Duties of the Board of Regents) policy states:

*Each member of the board will uphold their constitutional and fiduciary duty to act prudently, in accordance with law, and in the best interests of the University of Alaska System.*

Thank you for your consideration of adding a Faculty Regent to the UA BOR. Faculty Alliance appreciates your continued support of the University of Alaska System and your dedication to the students, their families, and the residents of Alaska.

***The UA Faculty Alliance reaffirms support for the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the University of Alaska Southeast Faculty Senates' reaffirming their commitment to adding a faculty regent to the UA Board of Regents (UA Faculty Alliance, UAS, UAA, and UAF Faculty Senates, Support for Faculty Regent: 2017, 2021)***

Sincerely,



Jennifer Carroll, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rural Development and Past-President, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2024-25 Faculty Alliance Chair



Jacqueline Cason, Ph.D., Professor of Writing and Faculty Senate President, University of Alaska Anchorage, 2025-2026 Faculty Alliance Chair



Ali Ziegler, Associate Professor of Psychology and Faculty Senate President-elect, University of Alaska Southeast, 2026-2027 Faculty Alliance Chair



LuAnn Piccard, Professor of Project Management and Faculty Senate Past-President, University of Alaska Anchorage



Matthew Cuellar, Associate Professor of Social Work and Faculty Senate President-elect,  
University of Alaska Anchorage



Abel Bult-Ito, Ph.D., Professor of Neurobiology and Neurophysiology and Faculty Senate  
President, University of Alaska Fairbanks



Brian Blitz, Ph.D., Professor of Mathematics and Faculty Senate President, University of  
Alaska Southeast



Glenn Wright, Professor, Political Science and Government and Faculty Senate  
Past-President, University of Alaska Southeast



Leah Wrenn Berman, Ph.D, Professor of Mathematics and Faculty Senate  
President-elect, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Faculty Alliance constitution and Bylaws:

[https://www.alaska.edu/governance/files/FA-Constitution-Bylaws\\_updated-Feb.-2019.p  
df](https://www.alaska.edu/governance/files/FA-Constitution-Bylaws_updated-Feb.-2019.pdf)