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March 2, 2016

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy  
Chair, Senate Education Committee  
State Capitol Room 11  
Juneau AK, 99801

Via email: [Senator.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov)

RE: CS HB 107 (EDC) am – Follow-up on Composition of the Board of Regents

Dear Senator Dunleavy:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee at its March 1 hearing on HB 107 - the composition of the Board of Regents. Regent Davies and I very much appreciated the opportunity for dialogue with the committee. Some additional information may be helpful to the committee.

The Board of Regents has no role in selecting Board members. Instead, the governor appoints and the Legislature confirms volunteer board members, who serve eight year terms. A student regent is also appointed, but for a two year term.

Regents terms are staggered so that generally, every two years, two regents' terms expire. However, as a result of the 1975 expansion of Board membership by two, every eight years, four non-student regent terms expire. In 2015, replacements were required for four regents and a student regent whose terms had expired, as well as for Regent Mike Powers, who stepped down. Fortunately, six well qualified Alaskans were nominated and confirmed by the Legislature and have quickly stepped up to the important task of running a complex organization in difficult times for the benefit of all Alaskans.

The difficulty of finding two, and periodically, four, well qualified individuals, who are also willing to commit to an unpaid eight year term, will be compounded by imposing regional requirements. This is an unintended consequence in addition to the others addressed in my letter of February 29.

Delays in appointments that result from difficulty finding willing, well qualified candidates, or from disputes about the constitutionality of geographic restrictions, would have real impact since six votes are required by law for Board action.

We also discussed problems posed by regionalism in trying to run a university for the benefit of all Alaskans. While it is true that regionalism can occur even without geographic representation requirements, the Board has worked hard and successfully over the past two decades to avoid the problems that result from a regional agenda. This legislation would actively promote the sense that regents are expected to advocate for their geographic areas and provide legal backup for that position. This is a concern when the University will be faced with hard choices about what to cut and collaboration will be required as never before.

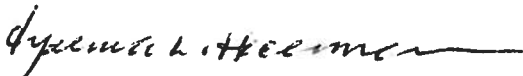
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While regionalism is not helpful, diversity of perspectives and breadth of knowledge and experience is critical. The Board is composed of individuals from across the state, many with ties to multiple regions. Members have experience in small and large businesses, government, the nonprofit sector and native organizations. They also reflect gender, age, ethnic and geographic diversity.

It is noteworthy that while Anchorage Community College was established in 1954, Palmer Community College was established in 1959 (becoming MatSu Community College in 1965), and UAA was not established until 1962. The Board has worked diligently over the years to bring higher education to all areas of the state. We appreciate the concerns expressed about all voices being heard and we are fully committed to ensuring that the University is managed for the benefit of all Alaskans.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



Jyotsna Heckman  
Chair

cc: Senator Huggins, Senator Giessel, Senator Stevens, Senator Gardner