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MOTION IN SUPPORT OF HB 21: An Act Relating to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska (Add Faculty Member, Univ. Board of Regents)

In the interest of improving communication, University governance, and accountability, United Academics AAUP/AFT Local 4996 - the union for all full-time faculty in the University of Alaska system - supports establishing a faculty regent position on the University of Alaska Board of Regents as specified in Alaska House Bill 21 of the 32nd Legislature.

From: Pete Praetorius <pwpraetorius@alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 5:58 PM
To: Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Kelly Merrick
Cc: Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Bart LeBon; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Sara Rasmussen; Rep. Steve Thompson; Melanie Arthur; Abel Bult-Ito
Subject: HB 21: Adding a Faculty Member to the University of Alaska Board of Regents
Attachments: HB-21-UNAC-motion-in-support - on letter head 3-16-22.pdf

Hello Representatives Foster and Merrick:

As the Chair of the Legislative Relations committee for United Academics, the collective bargaining unit for University of Alaska full-time faculty members, I am writing to present to you a resolution regarding HB 21: Adding a Faculty Member to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, which was passed at our union's February 19th Representative Assembly meeting.

In addition to the attached resolution, I believe that the following points justify installing a faculty regent on the UA Board of Regents:

- A faculty regent would help the BOR be more informed in decision making by ensuring that there is someone with experience as faculty and with students on the BOR, who understands the ins and outs of processes.
- A voting faculty regent is not unusual—many schools have a faculty member on their BOR or Trustees.
- UA needs broad knowledge on the BOR for the next time we are in a crisis. A faculty regent would help provide potentially critical and unrepresented perspectives.
- Faculty have institutional memory; a faculty regent can remind BOR of past actions and encourage BOR to have better evaluation/assessment processes of their decisions (for example, merging HR and program deletion).
- Faculty members understand shared governance.
- A faculty regent would provide an academic, non-business perspective to board decisions, helping to ensure the integrity of higher education in Alaska.
- Points of dysfunction in the board, which a faculty regent would have helped with, include the following:

Ignoring policy and decorum requirements for system president, instead appointing the interim despite resolutions against the appointment from every level of shared governance (faculty, staff, students).
The BOR nearly merged the three MAUs (UAF, UAA, UAS) in a hasty process that could have endangered accreditation for all institutions in the system.
The rush to financial exigency, which was later proved unnecessary.
Decision to cut healthy, well enrolled programs (sociology at UAA, for example).

Finally, the United Academics are not alone in endorsing HB21. The faculty senates and student governments across the UA system have passed resolutions in support of a faculty regent. Thank you for your time in considering this important legislation,

Pete Praetorius

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