

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

REPRESENTATIVE ADAM WOOL

Session: January - April
State Capitol, Room 501
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House Finance Committee, Member
House Ways and Means Committee, Vice Chair

Interim: May - December
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House Bill 21 Sponsor Statement University of Alaska Faculty Regent

The University of Alaska has a mission to inspire learning, advance and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, and to emphasize the North and its diverse peoples. The University of Alaska Board of Regents is an eleven member board that is responsible for helping to guide the University towards this mission. The addition of a Faculty Regent to the Board would serve to help advance this mission and to provide further representation to this key University stakeholder group.

Currently, there are six states that require a Faculty Regent to be a voting member of the University Board of Regents. These States believe that the interests of the institution are best served when a Faculty Regent is granted voting representation. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities has stated that the University of Alaska system should "create a space for inclusive dialogue as the Board of Regents deliberates on the future of the University of Alaska System." One way to ensure that this inclusive dialogue occurs through current fiscal stressors as well as future organizational challenges is through the addition of a seat for a qualified Faculty Regent.

The Board of Regents is critical in determining the direction of our public University system as well as the State of Alaska. Adding a tenured Faculty Member to serve for an appointed two-year term would allow for better representation on the Board, and would provide better opportunities for meaningful input on the direction of the University system in the years to come.

Please join me in supporting HB 21 so that our University system can continue to meet its mission and provide transparency and voting representation for the Faculty constituency at the University of Alaska.

HOUSE BILL NO. 21

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES WOOL, Fields

Introduced: 2/18/21

Referred: Education, State Affairs

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 * **Section 1.** AS 14.40.120 is amended to read:

4 **Sec. 14.40.120. University governed by Board of Regents.** The University of
5 Alaska shall be governed by a Board of Regents consisting of 12 [11] regents.

6 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.40.130 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

7 (f) In addition to satisfying the requirements in (a) of this section, at least one
8 of the 12 regents must be a current full-time faculty member who is employed at and
9 has acquired tenure at the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska
10 Fairbanks, or the University of Alaska Southeast based on the guidelines of that
11 campus. A person appointed as a regent under this subsection forfeits the office if the
12 person is no longer a full-time, tenured faculty member. The governor shall appoint a
13 successor from the list of faculty member nominees submitted under AS 14.40.150(c)
14 within 60 days after a forfeiture or vacancy in the office, subject to confirmation by
15 the legislature under AS 14.40.150(a).

1 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.40.140 is amended to read:

2 **Sec. 14.40.140. Term of office.** Except for a student regent as specified in
3 AS 14.40.150(b) **and a faculty member regent as specified in AS 14.40.150(c)**, the
4 term of office of a regent is eight years. The term of office begins on the first Monday
5 in February of the year in which the appointment is made. Each regent serves until a
6 successor is appointed and qualifies.

7 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.40.150 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

8 (c) At least one member of the Board of Regents must be a faculty member.
9 The faculty member shall be appointed from a list of nominees submitted to the
10 governor. The governor shall make the appointment from the list within 60 days after
11 the list is submitted. The list must consist of the names of two faculty members
12 selected by each of the three faculty senates of the University of Alaska, for a total of
13 six nominees, after an election is held by each faculty senate. Elections shall be
14 conducted under rules established by the Office of the Governor. The term of office of
15 a regent appointed from the faculty of the University of Alaska is two years. The term
16 of office begins June 1 of the year in which the appointment is made. An appointment
17 of a successor made under AS 14.40.130(f) shall be for the unexpired term of the
18 original appointee.

19 * **Sec. 5.** AS 14.40.200 is amended to read:

20 **Sec. 14.40.200. Quorum.** Corporate business may not be transacted at any
21 meeting of the Board of Regents unless at least **seven** [SIX] regents are present, the
22 majority of the whole board to approve the same.

23 * **Sec. 6.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
24 read:

25 TRANSITION. The governor shall appoint one faculty member to the Board of
26 Regents as required under AS 14.40.130(f), enacted by sec. 2 of this Act, and
27 AS 14.40.150(c), enacted by sec. 4 of this Act.



4/9/21

Dear Alaska Legislators,

Thank you for considering how the faculty voice can be more prominent during meetings and discussions with the UA Board of Regents. UA has an excellent governance structure that includes Faculty Alliance, Staff Council, and the Coalition of Student Leaders. First, I want to express how important it is that the UA system has shared governance structures in place, and how vital it is to consult with the shared governance groups.

During our Faculty Alliance meetings, we have discussed how the faculty perspective could be a more *intentional* part of UA Board of Regents meetings and discussions. Currently, the Chair of Faculty Alliance has the opportunity to provide a written report, and verbal comments (under 10 minutes). Faculty Alliance feels that having the faculty voice, as well as staff and student perspectives, be a more active part of UA Board of Regents discussions would be beneficial. Faculty Alliance supports this approach, and I am sure this will be well received by the accrediting agency, NWCCU, as well.

Many other University systems have faculty regents. Faculty in the University of Alaska support having a faculty regent selected by the Governor from a list of candidates, which ideally would rotate from the different universities, as the student regent does.

This will provide a wonderful 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.

The Faculty Alliance hears 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 as 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. Working within the UA system would not preclude one from contributing to the Board in a fair and ethical manner. In fact, faculty participate in shared governance groups in an ethical and fair manner through their service commitments to their respective universities and the system. Elevating faculty participation in shared governance to the Board level is equitable and ethical.

Voting to defund programs: Faculty across the system work together and independently on programs. Faculty Senates guide the review of curriculum at each institution, on a regular basis. Programs are entities that take on a life of their own as they are constantly evolving and changing to meet student needs. The essence of our programs are the students and faculty creating the mutual cycle of teaching and learning through interactive learning experiences. Faculty input regarding programs is critical. The need to reorganize or delete programs that are not working as expected is a necessity that all faculty are aware of and this procedure is conducted during the curriculum review process.

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 children and families in 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 FA, UAS, UAA, and UAF, Support for Faculty Regent: 2017, 2021)

Sincerely,

Heather Batchelder, Faculty Alliance Chair

Faculty Alliance constitution and Bylaws:

https://www.alaska.edu/governance/files/FA-Constitution-Bylaws_updated-Feb.-2019.pdf

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House Bill 21 Sectional University of Alaska Faculty Regent

This bill amends Alaska Statute 14.

Section 1: States that the University of Alaska Board of Regents will have 12 members.

Section 2: States that one of the 12 regents will be a tenured full-time faculty member. This members is appointed by the Governor from a list of nominees.

Section 3: The Faculty Regent shall have a term length as descrided in Section 4.

Section 4: The Faculty Regent will be appointed from a list of 6 nominees. The Faculty Senate of each campus shall elect 2 nominees for this list. The term of office for a Faculty Regent is 2 years.

Section 5: The quorum for a meeting of the Board of Regents is seven members. A majority vote of the board is requires to approve a motion.

Section 6: The Governor will appoint one Faculty Regent to serve on the Board of Regents.