

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 11, 2003  
3:08 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair  
Representative Carl Gatto, Vice Chair  
Representative Cheryl Heinze  
Representative Paul Seaton  
Representative Kelly Wolf  
Representative Sharon Cissna (via teleconference)  
Representative Mary Kapsner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

University Of Alaska Board Of Regents

James Hayes - Fairbanks  
Cynthia Henry - Fairbanks  
Mary Hughes - Anchorage  
Michael Snowden - Sitka  
Derek Miller - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

OVERVIEW: DIVISION OF ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE

- HEARD [See 4:10 p.m. minutes for this date]

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JAMES HAYES, Appointee  
to the University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

CYNTHIA HENRY, Appointee  
to the University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

MARY HUGHES, Appointee  
to the University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

MICHAEL SNOWDEN, Appointee  
to the University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

DEREK MILLER, Appointee  
to the University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

#### **TAPE 03-11, SIDE A**

Number 0001

**CHAIR PEGGY WILSON** called the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. Representatives Wilson, Gatto, Wolf, and Seaton were present at the call to order. Representatives Heinze, Cissna (via teleconference), and Kapsner arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

University of Alaska Board Of Regents

Number 0064

CHAIR WILSON announced that confirmation hearings for the appointees to the University of Alaska Board of Regents would be taken up as the next order of business. The appointees would be testifying via teleconference. Chair Wilson announced that the first appointee to testify would be James Hayes.

Number 0167

JAMES HAYES, Appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, gave a brief personal history of his time in Alaska including his educational background. He told the committee he taught school, served on the school board, and is honored to be nominated as a regent for the university. Mr. Hayes said he agrees with University of Alaska's mission statement.

Number 0320

CHAIR WILSON stated for the record that Representative Heinze has joined the meeting.

Number 0326

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF asked Mr. Hayes if he believes there are any areas in the University of Alaska budget that could be cut without compromising the education of the students. For example, Representative Wolf asked if he thinks the administrative or travel budgets could be reduced.

Number 0377

MR. HAYES responded that he has not had the opportunity to review the University of Alaska's budget; however, as former mayor for nine years, a former city councilman for six years, and a school board member, he said he was hesitant to say what could or could not be cut. However, he told the committee that those who know him know he is conservative, and was responsible for cutting the city budget. To imagine what areas could be cut without the opportunity to review the budget would be hard to do. He added there are always areas that can be cut.

Number 0411

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF clarified his question by saying he was not looking for specific areas to be reduced, but questioned if the university can effectively manage its finances somewhat like a business, without compromising the education of Alaska's kids. He stated he is a strong supporter of education.

Number 0463

MR. HAYES responded that good stewardship and accountability to students, to the people of Alaska, and the legislature are essential.

Number 0477

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked Mr. Hayes what his views are on affirmative action.

Number 0492

MR. HAYES responded that he thinks the board need to take a better look at it. He said he believes the idea was a good one, but that the way it has been administered over the years has become problematic. He said he favors a needs-based system that helps all people, especially minorities.

Number 0556

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE asked how he feels about the Prince William Sound Community College as part of the university system.

Number 0576

MR. HAYES replied that he strongly favors all campuses of the university. He reiterated that he would be very supportive.

Number 0605

CHAIR WILSON announced that Representative Cissna has joined the committee via teleconference.

Number 0612

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA told Mr. Hayes that her concern is with the work development shortages throughout Alaska in the health care field. She asked Mr. Hayes if he is committed to finding new programs and strengthening existing ones throughout the university system in health care.

Number 0648

MR. HAYES responded that he just recently heard of the health care worker shortage. He told the committee he is committed to strengthen the existing programs.

Number 0706

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON made a motion to advance the confirmation of James Hayes, appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, to the joint session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation of James Hayes was advanced.

Number 0759

CHAIR WILSON told the committee the next appointee to testify would be Cynthia Henry.

Number 0765

CYNTHIA HENRY, Appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, gave a brief personal and educational history, highlighting her background of involvement in education including teaching, PTA [Parent Teacher Association], and the Fairbanks School Board [for two terms]. She told the committee she received her master's degree in guidance and counseling through the University of Alaska. She said she believes the university has great credibility and believes it is an important time to be a part of the University.

Number 0851

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE asked if she is supportive of the Prince William Sound Community College.

Number 0871

MS. HENRY replied that she is supportive of all the community colleges. She said she believes it is a vital link to the main campuses. There are a lot of reasons why students choose community colleges. Sometimes it is because they are adults and they have commitments in the community or a student may want to start in a smaller environment, and then maybe later move to a larger one. Ms. Henry told the committee she thinks community colleges serve an important role in the university system.

Number 0872

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE questioned if there is more than one community college. She stated she thought only one community college is in the university system - Prince William Sound Community College.

MS. HENRY responded that Representative Heinze is correct that there is only one community college in the university system.

Number 0921

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO congratulated Ms. Henry on the accomplishment of graduating from Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana, summa cum laude, and as class valedictorian.

Number 0958

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked Ms. Henry if she is committed to strengthening health education throughout the university system. She also asked Ms. Henry what her commitment would be for other degree programs - from two-year degrees to Ph.D. programs.

Number 0990

MS. HENRY told the committee she intends to work on strengthening the health care program. She shared the concern she has heard from many individuals regarding the lack of a nursing program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. She said she thinks the goal and responsibility of the university is to educate students for those positions that are needed in Alaska.

Number 1045

CHAIR WILSON stated for the record that Representative Kapsner has joined the committee.

Number 1050

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE made a motion to advance the confirmation of Cynthia Henry, appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, to the joint session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation of Cynthia Henry was advanced.

CHAIR WILSON told the committee the next appointee to testify would be Mary Hughes.

Number 1085

MARY HUGHES, Appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, gave a brief personal and professional history including her work with the board of regents. She told the committee she has been interested in serving on the board of regents for some time. She said she asked then-Governor Jay Hammond if she could serve, but was not appointed. She told the committee she has been very active in the University of Alaska Foundation for two decades, and is still a trustee. As a member of the board of regents, she plans to continue that involvement. Ms. Hughes told the committee that she has attended five board of regents meetings since her appointment in July and finds there are challenges and opportunities that abound. Ms. Henry said this is the time for the university to move beyond where it is today. The university has great leadership with the three chancellors who are distinguished in their fields. She said the public's trust in the board makes the University of Alaska a place to be for all Alaskan students. She stated that it is her goal to have the University of Alaska's education mean excellence.

Number 1215

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE asked if Ms. Hughes supports the Prince William Sound Community College.

Number 1248

MS. HUGHES said she has attended the theater workshop at Prince William Sound Community College and is very impressed with the work there. She said she is supportive of that campus, but more supportive of education to rural Alaska through whatever means. Sometimes in budget priorities the university does not get everything they wish, but she feels that accessibility of education should be a priority for the board of regents. She said that by providing education to the community, the university gains supporters. She said that she has noticed over the last three or four years that there are many more voters who support the university system than ever before. She said she has always enjoyed her visits there [Prince William Sound Community College] and continues to be a supporter of the college.

Number 1318

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE thanked Ms. Hughes for her comments regarding the theater workshop; however, what she values more is

the fact that this community college reaches people in the Bush and helps thousands and thousands of students.

Number 1354

MS. HUGHES replied that she is in agreement with Representative Heinze on the importance of accessibility for rural residents.

Number 1397

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER prefaced her comments by saying that a reporter had called her a couple of weeks ago after the appointments had been made public, and wanted a comment from her concerning the fact that there are no Native appointees. She told the committee that regardless of the ethnic background of an appointee, as long as the mission is for retention and graduation of Native and rural students, she would be supportive. She asked Ms. Hughes what ideas she has toward achieving that goal.

Number 1397

MS. HUGHES replied that the health education program that is currently taking place in Bethel is a good example of making education accessible to rural students. She said these students will go on to be health professionals. When it is not possible to do training on-site, she told the committee distance learning is important. Since she was born and raised Kodiak she still has many friends there, and understands the importance of accessibility in education.

Number 1479

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON shared that he graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1971 [the same year Ms. Hughes graduated]. He asked what her philosophy is on distance education and the effectiveness of video conferencing versus on-site classes.

Number 1509

MS. HUGHES replied that she finds it difficult to answer the question since she believes distance learning has its place, but she is not sure how it stacks up to on-site classes. She told the committee that is one of the things she will be looking at as a regent.

Number 1553

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA made a motion to advance the confirmation of Mary Hughes, appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, to the joint session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation of Mary Hughes was advanced.

CHAIR WILSON told the committee the next appointee to testify would be Michael Snowden.

Number 1588

MICHAEL SNOWDEN, Appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, gave a brief personal, educational, and professional history. He told the committee he is a graduate of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and feels this is an opportunity to give back some of what he has gained. Mr. Snowden said he has benefited from a lifetime of living in Alaska, attending the university and operating a business in Sitka. He feels he could make a contribution to the mission of the school and sees that an advanced education is essential in developing a talented workforce. He told the committee as a member of the board of directors of the National Bank of Alaska [now Wells Fargo] it has expanded his knowledge in issues important to each region of the state.

Number 1690

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE asked if he is supportive of Prince William Sound Community College.

Number 1703

MR. SNOWDEN said that while he has not been there, he believes the mission of the university is to make education accessible to all areas of the state, including rural areas. He said he is very supportive.

Number 1772

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF made a motion to advance Michael Snowden, appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, to the joint session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation of Mr. Snowden was advanced.

CHAIR WILSON told the committee the next appointee to testify would be Derek Miller.

Number 1810

DEREK MILLER, Appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, gave a brief personal and educational history. He told the committee he was born and raised in Fairbanks and has many good memories as a child watching the University of Alaska Fairbanks basketball team play. Mr. Miller said he has been involved in student government for two years and has served as the student body president. He told the committee it is an honor to serve on the board of regents as the student representative.

Number 1846

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF asked, from a student perspective, what would he say the letter grade is for the University of Alaska.

Number 1868

MR. MILLER replied that he would give the university a "B-." He told the committee in his short time at the university he has seen improvements; however, there are still areas that need improvement. He said he would like to see the university competing with programs of distinction nationally. The university's graduate and undergraduate programs are top caliber, but he thinks the university needs to make efforts to get recognized nationally. He said he sees accessibility as an area that needs to be addressed also. Mr. Miller summarized by saying the university is an above average university.

Number 1903

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF asked, if he were president of the University of Alaska, what would be the first thing he would do to try to improve it.

Number 1922

MR. MILLER said that the three main campuses have different needs. He said the University of Alaska Fairbanks has excellent research programs, but he would like to see a teaching emphasis. At the Anchorage campus he would like to see some Ph.D. programs within the next ten years. The University of Alaska Southeast efforts should continue with its work in rural accessibility.

Number 1989

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER asked for Mr. Miller to clarify his recommendations for the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS).

MR. MILLER said he would advocate for increased technical development with respect to job training.

Number 2008

REPRESENTATIVE HEINZE asked what his thoughts are on joining the schools of engineering and mining at the Fairbanks campus. She said it appears to be a duplication to have the programs at both campuses.

Number 2037

MR. MILLER told the committee he is a business major and hopes to receive his bachelor of administration degree in May. He said he knows there is a strong emphasis in engineering and the sciences in Fairbanks. They are excellent programs. In responding to duplication of programs, he said he does not know how to answer that since he believes students in Anchorage should have the opportunity to pursue mining and engineering degrees at the Anchorage campus.

Number 2066

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA told Mr. Miller that she was glad to hear his support of Ph.D. programs at the Anchorage campus. She asked him to comment on continuity of programs.

Number 2091

MR. MILLER asked if she was referring to transfer of credits or start-up of programs.

Number 2100

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA said she is thinking of a four-year program that can be finished in four years if one is able to do it.

Number 2110

MR. MILLER replied that the statewide administration at the university has taken steps to make that easier for students to acknowledge where they are in their specific program. It is

called "MY UA." Students will soon be able to look up on line what they have taken and what they need to take. It is a self-advisory program and should be helpful to students.

Number 2141

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA clarified that she is concerned about classes that are cancelled because there is not the faculty to teach them. She said it is a problem at the University of Alaska Anchorage with some of her fellow students who are trying to finish their degree program.

Number 2152

MR. MILLER told the committee that while he is not aware of the problem, he will be sure to see that it is addressed in future meetings of the regents.

Number 2171

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER explained that there is a bill introduced by Representative Guttenberg [from Fairbanks] that would expand the board of regents to include two student representatives. Each representative would have more time, their terms would be two years, and staggered. Their terms would not begin in the same year. She asked what his views are on such a change.

Number 2202

MR. MILLER said he is supportive of any effort to have students better represented at the board of regents level. He said the staggered terms would lend well to the continuity of student leaders across state. It would benefit a student regent to have a year to understand how things work because it is a bit of a jump from being a student leader to a student regent. He said he likes the bill.

Number 2259

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked Mr. Miller to comment on the fact that he only received one-third of the votes in winning his seat on the board of regents. He questioned whether that is a true representation of the student body.

Number 2281

MR. MILLER replied that it is difficult to get even 20 percent of the student body to vote. While turnout is rather apathetic, it is twice as many as the university regularly has for elections of student positions.

Number 2304

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO posed the question that if the university's budget were substantially reduced and there was not enough money to fund the university campuses and the outlying campuses, would he consider closing any of the outlying campuses or would he rather reduce the funds for the university and maintain the outlying campuses.

Number 2326

MR. MILLER said he would go with the option of reducing the funds for the university and maintain the outlying campuses. He said he does not want to see the loss of outlying campuses and believes it is extremely important to the success of the state.

Number 2352

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER made a motion to advance the confirmation of Derek Miller, appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, to the joint session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation of Derek Miller was advanced.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting took an at-ease at 3:55 p.m. in order to prepare for the overview. [For the overview by the Department of Health and Socials Services, see the 4:10 p.m. minutes for the same date.]