

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

February 7, 2007

8:07 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins, Vice Chair
Senator Bettye Davis
Senator Gary Wilken

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Donny Olson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS:

University of Alaska Board of Regents

Tim Brady

Fuller A. Cowell

Patricia Jacobson

Kirk Wickersham

CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to consider

WITNESS REGISTER

Tim Brady

8936 Gloralee St.

Anchorage, AK 99502

POSITION STATEMENT: Nominee for the UA Board of Regents

Fuller A. Cowell

222 E 7th Ave #402

Anchorage, AK 99501

POSITION STATEMENT: Nominee for the UA Board of Regents

Patricia Jacobson

PO Box 8707

Kodiak, AK 99615

POSITION STATEMENT: Nominee for the UA Board of Regents

Kirk Wickersham
280 34th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99503

POSITION STATEMENT: Nominee for the UA Board of Regents

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate Special Committee on Education meeting to order at [8:07:48 AM](#). Present at the call to order were Senators Wilken, Huggins, Davis, and Chair Stevens.

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS: UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA BOARD OF REGENTS

CHAIR STEVENS announced that the committee would be considering the confirmation of the four appointees to the University of Alaska Board of Regents. He asked them to come up individually before the committee, starting with Timothy Brady.

[8:08:37 AM](#)

TIMOTHY BRADY explained that he was appointed to the board in 2005 by then-governor Frank Murkowski, and that Governor Sarah Palin reappointed him. He said that he believed there was a lot of work to be done, and that he was committed to further development of programs and campuses. He was surprised by the scope of the University of Alaska (UA) school system.

[8:09:56 AM](#)

MR. BRADY said that he worked hard to see as many of the UA campuses as possible, including those in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kodiak, and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. He is particularly interested in the status of the UA facilities.

[8:10:39 AM](#)

SENATOR WILKEN thanked Mr. Brady for his service and asked what the status of the UA Alumni Association was. He said that the association seemed unorganized.

[8:11:29 AM](#)

MR. BRADY replied that he believed the UA Board of Regents should encourage the association to be more involved.

SENATOR WILKEN said that he hoped the Board would be able to aide in the activeness of the UA Alumni Association in explaining what the UA had done for them and their careers.

[8:12:44 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked for a description of policy that Mr. Brady dealt with on the board.

[8:13:22 AM](#)

MR. BRADY replied that in his tenure the board has improved its method of project delivery. The board assembles design teams to find competitive prices to fit the UA's budget and is much of its policy to increase consistency. He wishes to see the UA schools become schools of choice, more so than now.

[8:16:28 AM](#)

MR. BRADY explained that 70 to 80 percent of Alaskan residents who attend the UA system remain in the state afterwards. He feels the UA does a good job offering programs that lead to jobs and careers in Alaska.

[8:17:20 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if the legislature could do anything to allow the board to remove a member.

[8:17:44 AM](#)

MR. BRADY replied that he would not change the statutes as currently written, because the legislature should not have to assume that role and neither should the governor. The board does not wish to be politically motivated.

[8:18:46 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS thanked Mr. Brady and invited Fuller Cowell to testify, and asked him why he was interested in working on the board.

FULLER COWELL replied that he was honored to be appointed and that he saw the UA as one of Alaska's finest assets. The benefits of the schools are long-lasting.

[8:20:01 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked about Mr. Cowell's connection with the UA.

[8:20:06 AM](#)

MR. COWELL replied that he studied biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and later took courses at Cordova and Anchorage campuses, most recently in aviation electronics.

[8:21:21 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked how many flight hours Mr. Cowell had logged.

[8:21:34 AM](#)

MR. COWELL replied that he had about 1,500 hours logged, in several different types of flying ratings.

[8:22:17 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked Mr. Cowell to explain the story of his wife's name.

MR. COWELL explained that his wife was born around Christmas-time and so she was named Christmas.

[8:23:59 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if Mr. Cowell could comment on how the UA was involved in fishing studies.

MR. COWELL replied that he was not very well-versed on the subject yet, but that he knew the UA had a sea-grant program.

[8:24:33 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS invited Patricia Jacobson to testify, and asked about her involvement with the UA.

[8:25:06 AM](#)

PATRICIA JACOBSON said that she got her master's degree through UA classes in Kodiak and Anchorage. She thinks the UA system is a critical resource, particularly the smaller campuses. She has also volunteered with UA marine studies.

[8:27:35 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked Ms. Jacobsen how she perceived the UA system and how she planned to work with it.

MS. JACOBSON replied that she didn't know much about the UA system as a whole but would be totally dedicated to the entire network of schools.

[8:28:28 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS remarked that he had noticed disparities in the time required to complete similar degrees in different parts of the state. He asked Ms. Jacobson to be aware of this in her work with the UA.

[8:29:29 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS thanked Ms. Jacobson for her work, and said that he found her varied background well-suited to the job.

[8:31:24 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS invited Kirk Wickersham to testify, and asked about his interest in the UA.

KIRK WICKERSHAM replied that he ended up in Alaska after high school and found that he could work construction in the summer and afford a wonderful UA education during the rest of the year. He then continued on to Yale Law School. He is currently active in UA alumni affairs.

He mentioned that his daughter was a staffer for Senator Bunde and is currently a legislative liaison for the Department of Public Safety.

[8:34:12 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS thanked all of the nominees for attending the meeting and asked for a motion to approve the nominees and forward them to a joint session of the House and Senate.

SENATOR HUGGINS seconded the motion.

[8:34:51 AM](#)

SENATOR WILKEN introduced Roger Brunner, the general counsel of the UA.

CHAIR STEVENS, seeing no further business, adjourned the Senate Special Committee on Education at [8:35:52 AM](#)