

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 26, 2019

8:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair  
Senator Shelley Hughes, Vice Chair  
Senator Chris Birch  
Senator Tom Begich

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Mia Costello

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 53

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

- MOVED CSSB 53(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 56

"An Act relating to health education and physical activity requirements for students in grades kindergarten through eight; and establishing the Thursday in February immediately following Presidents' Day as PLAAAY Day."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 53

SHORT TITLE: UNIVERSITY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) STEVENS

02/11/19	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/11/19	(S)	EDC, FIN
02/21/19	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
02/21/19	(S)	Heard & Held
02/21/19	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/25/19	(S)	EDC WAIVED PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE, RULE 23

**WITNESS REGISTER**

TIM LAMKIN, Staff  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced CSSB 53, version M.

MILES BAKER, Associate Vice President for Government Relations  
University of Alaska  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions about university reporting processes for accreditation in the context of the hearing on SB 53.

DR. KAREN CAREY, Ph.D., Provost  
University of Alaska Southeast  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions about the university accreditation process in the context of the hearing on SB 53.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:30:16 AM](#)

**CHAIR GARY STEVENS** called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Begich, Hughes, Birch, and Chair Stevens.

**SB 53-UNIVERSITY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

[8:30:30 AM](#)

**CHAIR STEVENS** announced the consideration of SB 53 and his intent to move the bill out of committee. He noted the proposed CS and solicited a motion.

[8:31:22 AM](#)

**SENATOR HUGHES** moved to adopt CSSB 53, version M, as the working document.

[8:31:32 AM](#)

**CHAIR STEVENS** objected for purposes of discussion.

[8:31:42 AM](#)

TIM LAMKIN, Staff, Senator Gary Stevens, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, said SB 53 is a reaction to the recent loss of accreditation by the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Education. It is designed to keep the legislature informed.

He explained that Section 1 in the committee substitute would require that UA's annual statutory report be submitted to the legislature (Senate Secretary and Chief Clerk) and then presented to the education committees with scheduling of the presentation at the discretion of the committee chairs. Section 1 also conforms to the existing reporting requirements in statute.

MR. LAMKIN said Section 2 is the new reporting section regarding accrediting for the University of Alaska. It gives more detail about what the report should contain. It uses common vernacular to describe what is expected. The committee packets have a spreadsheet called UA Program Accreditation Summary. He said he used the column headers in that report, which the university currently provides to the Board of Regents and incorporated that language in the committee substitute. The fiscal note cites existing Board of Regents policy. He said there too he used terms from the fiscal note in the committee substitute. The committee substitute gives clear parameters and definitions of what the report should look like. It aligns to what the university is doing now but adds specific attention to any accrediting that could be compromised. The goal is to be preemptive rather than reactive.

SENATOR HUGHES asked how future education committee chairs will know that the reports must be presented in person.

MR. LAMKIN responded that the language is crafted to give a fair amount of flexibility to the legislature. He expressed confidence that between the Senate Secretary, House Clerk, committee chairs, and other members, the presentations would be scheduled.

[8:36:34 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said that the bill states that the Board of Regents "shall prepare and present in person," so it puts the onus on the Board of Regents, but she wanted it on the record that if an education chair failed to request the report, the Board of Regents would be responsible.

CHAIR STEVENS said that for an issue like this, it would be a joint presentation to the House and Senate Education Committees, so there would be a double system to ensure it occurs.

8:37:26 AM

SENATOR BIRCH commented on the number of accreditation agencies and asked if the university pays for membership in the bodies and how much they pay.

CHAIR STEVENS said it is often a two-year process and a lot of expense is involved.

MR. LAMKIN added that there is an elaborate network of accrediting agencies. Dr. Karen Carey can speak to accrediting issues. He also mentioned possible consideration of a change for the second date in the bill. August 15 is about six months after the first report, but it may not align well with the Board of Regents' meeting schedule.

8:39:33 AM

MILES BAKER, Associate Vice President for Government Relations, University of Alaska, Juneau, Alaska, said the Board of Regents has a fairly regular schedule and could comply with the bill as currently written, but June 30 or July 1 would allow the board time to review the report during the June meeting and before it was submitted to the legislature. Alternatively, a September 30/October 1 time frame would allow the board to review the report during the fall meeting.

SENATOR HUGHES asked whether a report that's due in January would be approved in December.

MR. BAKER said it would be done in the fall meeting, which is typically in November. The budget is prepared at the fall meeting so it can be submitted to the governor's office on time.

SENATOR HUGHES said June 30/July 1 would be more evenly spaced if it's a November report.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if he was saying that it would be easier to have this report due in October if the board meets in September.

MR. BAKER replied yes; the end of September or the beginning of the following month.

SENATOR HUGHES said he also stated that July 1 would work for the Board of Regents. That date would be more evenly spaced.

MR. BAKER agreed that July 1 would work.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if two weeks after a meeting is sufficient.

MR. BAKER said that would be very doable.

[8:43:20 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES offered her understanding that the Board of Regents would not be developing the report during those two weeks. They would approve it on June 15 and it would be available on July 1.

MR. BAKER said that is correct.

[8:43:48 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked if an amendment was needed to change the date on page 2, line 22, from August 15 to July 1.

CHAIR STEVENS replied that Senator Hughes would make the motion.

SENATOR BIRCH asked if the meetings are live streamed and a record made similar to legislative committee meetings.

MR. BAKER answered that the Board of Regents meetings are streamed live and minutes are prepared and approved at the next meeting. They are not archived. All committee materials are released a week in advance and the meetings comply with the Open Meetings Act.

[8:45:48 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if he had any comments on the fiscal note.

MR. BAKER said the fiscal note is not expected to change in terms of finances but there may be slight changes to the descriptions to comply with the committee substitute. The report will be integrated into the system.

SENATOR HUGHES noted that the fiscal note mentions the internal processes are annually reported to the board, but it sounds as though that will be switched to twice a year.

MR. BAKER answered that is correct. As mentioned during the introduction, UA has established a number of interim steps between the campuses, the provost, and the Academic Student Affairs Council, and the Academic Council, all of which will have this as an agenda item. By the time the legislative report

is prepared, there should be ample information. Any accreditor feedback from each of those meetings will be reported up the chain.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if he could answer the question about the cost of accreditation.

MR. BAKER deferred the question to Provost Carey.

CHAIR STEVENS said every major university goes through that process and as expensive and time consuming as it is, it is a very valuable process.

8:48:50 AM

DR. KAREN CAREY, Ph.D., Provost, University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau, Alaska, said that every accreditation body charges a fee for the university to be a member of the accrediting commission. All the universities in Alaska pay a fee as part of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The university pays a fee for each program to be accredited and for site visits. It is expensive, but it is absolutely necessary for the programs to be accredited for the students to be successfully later.

8:49:54 AM

CHAIR STEVENS said that the Northwest Commission accredits all the major programs at the university. This entails a lot of time and travel for the commission and a lot of time for the provost, the administration and faculty. He said he assumes she would agree that the process is very important.

DR. CAREY said yes and added that the Juneau campus is getting ready to go through the Northwest self-evaluation and host a site visit April 24-26. Nine members of an evaluation team will visit the campus for three days to review what is in the self-study. UAS have been working very hard the last year to prepare the report and to prepare for the site visit. Every program needs to stay on top of its accreditation to make sure all the requirements of the accrediting body are met.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if the Northwest team would have any recommendations during the site visit.

DR. CAREY answered that the team will come to campus to verify that UAS is doing what is in the self-study. There will be meetings with student groups, faculty, staff, advisory council, members of the community, and the Board of Regents. At the end

of those three days, the chair of the evaluation team will meet with the chancellor and verbally present an overview of what the team found. Several weeks later UAS will get a written report with recommendations. That report goes to the 11 members of the Northwest panel who will vote in June to approve accreditation, to give partial accreditation, to put impose probation, or to deny accreditation.

[8:53:20 AM](#)

SENATOR BIRCH said he noticed there are 65 accredited programs and a myriad of agencies and that most have initial accreditation dates after 1974. He asked how UAS pays for 65 different programs and if she had a rough estimate of the cost.

DR. CAREY said each accrediting body tells the university what the fee will be for the year. The money is set aside in the budget so the university can follow through with accreditation. In the late 60s and early 70s, there was a great push for programs to demonstrate that they were providing the education that students needed to be successful in whatever career those students were going into. Almost every professional field today has an accrediting body to make sure the programs are meeting the expectations of what is required in the field, so that students can be prepared when they complete their education.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if she would agree that some accreditation bodies are more important than others; the Northwest Commission is the big one and then there are some programmatic accreditations.

DR. CAREY replied that the Northwest Commission is the big one. In order to have any access to any of the federal programs through the federal Department of Education, UAS must be accredited by the Northwest Commission. In many cases, other accrediting bodies are important to employers.

[8:56:37 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES moved a conceptual amendment to CSSB 53, version M. On page 2, line 22, delete August 15 and replace it with July 1.

[8:56:56 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced that without objection, the conceptual amendment is adopted.

[8:57:16 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS opened public testimony and after determining there was none, closed public testimony. He removed his objection and solicited a motion.

[8:57:42 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES moved to report CSSB 53, version M as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note.

[8:57:52 AM](#)

Chair Stevens announced that without objection, CSSB 53(EDC) moved from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[8:57:58 AM](#)

At ease

[8:58:04 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Stevens adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee at 8:58 a.m.