

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 8, 2023

8:01 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair  
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative CJ McCormick  
Representative Tom McKay  
Representative Rebecca Himschoot  
Representative Andi Story

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 9

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

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 31

"An Act relating to the Alaska performance scholarship program."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 9

SHORT TITLE: ADD FACULTY MEMBER UNIV BOARD OF REGENTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CARRICK

01/19/23	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
01/19/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/19/23	(H)	EDC, JUD
02/20/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
02/20/23	(H)	Heard & Held
02/20/23	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/08/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE ASHLEY CARRICK  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 9.

STUART RELAY, staff  
Representative Ashley Carrick  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Joined to answer questions on HB 9 on behalf of Representative Carrick, prime sponsor.

MARIA WILLIAMS, Professor  
Alaska Native Studies  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

HEATHER BATCHELDER, Professor  
School of Education  
University of Alaska Southeast  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

LUANN PICCARD, Chair  
Project Management  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

JENNIE CARROLL, Associate Professor  
Rural Development  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

TIM WOODIE, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

MAX KULLBERG, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

KEVIN MAIER, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

WILLIAM CASON, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

ART NASH, Associate Professor of Energy  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

JOEL POTTER, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

STACEY LUCASON, representing self  
Chugiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

ALEX JORGENSEN, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

AMY LAUREN LOVECRAFT, Professor  
Center for Arctic Policy Studies  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 9.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:01:39 AM](#)

**CO-CHAIR JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives McCormick, McKay, Himschoot, Story, Allard, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order. Representative Prax arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **HB 9-ADD FACULTY MEMBER UNIV BOARD OF REGENTS**

[8:02:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 9, "An Act relating to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska."

[8:03:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ASHLEY CARRICK, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor of HB 9, thanked the committee for revisiting HB 9, which would add a faculty member to the University of Alaska Board of Regents. Her hope was that a lot would be taken away from the public testimony that would be provided. She noted that a number faculty were excited to talk about the issues and address some of the challenges that the university faces without having representation on the board. Having a faculty member would add to the overall direction and composition for the governance of the University of Alaska, she added.

[8:06:55 AM](#)

STUART RELAY, Staff, Representative Ashley Carrick, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Ashley Carrick, prime sponsor of HB 9, explained that in a previous hearing, regent biographies were requested. He confirmed that they were included in the committee packet today.

[8:08:12 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on HB 9.

[8:08:39 AM](#)

MARIA WILLIAMS, Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), testified in support of HB 9. She relayed that she is a faculty member and explained that the board of regents oftentimes deals with the complexities of the roles of faculty. If there is the opportunity to have the voice of a faculty member at the table, she opined, it would make the university stronger and more powerful. She said decisions would be less damaging.

[8:11:56 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked Ms. Williams whether she had testified in front of the board of regents at any time.

MS. WILLIAMS replied that she had when she was the faculty alliance chair.

[8:12:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD sought to confirm that multiple faculty members could testify.

MS. WILLIAMS replied that the board of regents allowed public testimony prior to the start of their meeting; however, it has now moved to remote testimony a week before the meeting. The only faculty person allowed to speak is the faculty alliance chair for a seven-minute time slot, she said.

[8:13:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Williams how she sees the role of a faculty member participating on the board during times of negotiation.

MS. WILLIAMS replied that recently, the board went through the collective bargaining agreement, and she watched the negotiations with a handful of leaders. She observed that when it came to voting, it was not unusual to have a conflict of interest amongst the regents and it would not be a challenge to abstain.

[8:16:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked whether the focus is only advocating for a faculty member from University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF).

MS. WILLIAMS clarified it is for the entire system. She explained that the chair rotates between UAA, UAF, and University of Alaska Southeast (UAS). The leaders of the three faculty senates meet to discuss the issues, which is the role of faculty alliance.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked Ms. Williams whether she was aware of the lack of leadership support.

MS. WILLIAMS replied that there is a perception that the faculty are like an "angry mob," but the fact is that faculty are all very dedicated to their perspective universities. Adding a faculty member to the board of regents allows faculty on the board to have those very important conversations with other regents, she said.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD stated that she preferred the rotating system.

MS. WILLIAMS concurred, adding that she believes in a rotating system. She said the way the bill is set up it could result in a two-year term rotating amongst the three major universities if it comes to fruition.

[8:19:35 AM](#)

HEATHER BATCHELDER, Professor, University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), testified in support of HB 9. She provided a brief background and explained that she was faculty alliance chair, as well faculty senate president, adding that the system would benefit from adding a faculty regent. It would be helpful in onboarding, she said, and the institutional knowledge a faculty member would possess can help to clear up misconceptions about academia that many people have. She provided names of other universities that have a faculty member at the table.

[8:21:20 AM](#)

LUANN PICCARD, Chair, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), testified in support of HB 9. She expressed appreciation to be able to address the committee, and provided a brief background. She said she supported what the prior testifiers had expressed and emphasized the importance of having new voices to bring to the conversation for innovation. She stated that having a faculty regent would help support and bring diversity and a voice into the room with the experience to contribute to the conversation and make the voice stronger.

[8:26:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked Ms. Piccard how she felt about current regent members who were faculty members that had lengthy careers at the University of Alaska.

MS. PICCARD replied she did not think any members were previous faculty, although they may have attended the university.

[8:27:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked Ms. Piccard about her experience in Hewlett Packard and whether it was a shareholder owned company.

MS. PICCARD confirmed it was a publicly traded corporation.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there was an employee representative on the board of directors.

MS. PICCARD replied she did not think there was an employee representative on the corporate board of directors.

[8:28:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT questioned the documentation Co-Chair Allard had regarding regents who have full time faculty experience.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD replied she was looking at resumes of people who, for example, worked as professors and sat on boards.

[8:29:50 AM](#)

JENNIE CARROLL, Associate Professor, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), began her testimony in support of HB 9 after providing a brief introduction. She stated that faculty does the business of the university, have a great deal of knowledge and expertise, and have a desire to be partners. In addition to having a student regent, she said, bringing a faculty regent into the mix would provide that well rounded knowledge.

[8:32:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether a faculty member would have to resign their position if they wish to serve on the board of regents.

MS. CARROLL replied she does not know.

[8:33:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY asked what would happen if there were a tie vote.

MS. CARROLL confirmed there had been discussion on that. The board tends to vote unanimously and does not typically see this coming up at the board level, she said.

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY stated that should a tie happen, the procedure should be on the record.

MS. CARROLL replied that the board would have to make a policy and establish the steps.

[8:35:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY suggested that Representative Carrick explain what she had covered in a previous hearing.

[8:35:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK directed her response to Representative McKay, and explained that the board would be increased to 12 members and a majority of board members present for the quorum would be required to approve a motion. She reiterated that votes are usually unanimous, and it is unlikely it would ever come down to just one vote. However, there is a process in place for a tie situation in that it would take seven members to approve any motion.

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY reiterated his belief that voting should be clear so as not to end up with a gridlock situation and be unable to move forward.

[8:37:10 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD offered her understanding that the voting follows Robert's Rules [Robert's Rules of Order], and in Robert's Rules, a tie fails.

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK confirmed that Co-Chair Allard was correct in stating that a tie vote [6-6] would fail.

[8:38:25 AM](#)

TIM WOODIE, representing self, testified in support of HB 9. He expressed deep concerns about the future of Alaska and the education system. He explained his personal connections to present and former university faculty members and had heard their frustrations and concerns. He said it was an injustice not to faculty members on the board of regents and opined that this should have been done long ago. He urged the committee not to delay in making it happen now.

[8:40:25 AM](#)

MAX KULLBERG, representing self, provided a brief background and testified in support of HB 9. He stated that the bill would be a step in the right direction for including shared government at the university. Other regents could lean on a faculty regent when it comes to making decisions, as they possess comprehensive

understanding. Adding a faculty regent would follow a national trend happening across the country, he said.

[8:43:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked Mr. Kullberg whether he was a faculty member, and whether he was a part of the union.

MR. KULLBERG replied he has a long history with the university and is now a faculty member as an associate professor. He clarified that he was part of the union but does not take part in meetings.

[8:46:14 AM](#)

KEVIN MAIER, representing self, provided his background and testified in support of HB 9. He stated that the addition of a faculty regent would represent a government where all voices are heard, and decisions are made collectively and democratically.

[8:48:18 AM](#)

WILLIAM CASON, representing self, testified in support of HB 9 and urged the committee to support adding a faculty member to the university board.

[8:49:18 AM](#)

ART NASH, Associate Professor of Energy, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), testified in support of HGB 9. He offered a brief introduction before expressing support for HB 9.

[8:51:57 AM](#)

JOEL POTTER, representing self, testified in support of HB 9. He thanked the committee for taking public testimony and expressed his support for HB 9.

[8:55:15 AM](#)

STACEY LUCASON, representing self, testified in support of HB 9. She stated she is a former member of the board of regents, and she said that while the board is composed of enthusiastic committee members with a variety of experience, specifically including a student member could bring a unique insight.

[8:58:01 AM](#)

ALEX JORGENSEN, representing self, testified in support of HB 9. He said he echoed what previous testifiers have said, and that the knowledge and experience a faculty member could bring to the table is a positive. Adding a faculty regent, he said, would increase the strength of the university and in turn improve Alaska.

[8:59:35 AM](#)

AMY LAUREN LOVECRAFT, Professor, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), testified in support of HB 9, and provided the committee with a personal perspective. She stated that the addition of a faculty member would provide a current "finger on the pulse" of what is happening with the university.

[9:05:03 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE closed public testimony on HB 9.

[9:05:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK provided a brief wrap-up and offered to connect with the committee to provide further answers to any questions.

[9:06:19 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 9 was held over.

[9:07:13 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.