

HB

415

COMMENTS ON HB 415
RELATING TO DECENTRALIZATION OF U OF A

There is quite a possibility for confusion and a lack of clarity in lines of responsibility in the language in Section 1.

In lines 13-16 the language indicates that the Chancellor would operate "under the control of and in accordance with rules established by the Board of Regents and the president of the University" (underlining added). However, lines 17-18 state that the Chancellor is directly responsible to the Regents. It does not appear logical to have the Chancellor responsible directly to the Regents and yet under the supervision and control of the Regents and the President. The President would have difficulty exercising supervision and control over a Chancellor not directly responsible to him.

In Section 2(1) again the rules and policies to be implemented are those of the Regents and the President.

The dichotomy could be corrected by striking the words "and directly responsible to" in lines 17 and 18.

In order to avoid possible confusion in Section 2 and to make clear that the functions listed in (2)-(6) are to be carried out under rules and policies of the Regents and the President, the first paragraph of Section 2 should be re-written as follows: "Under policies established by the Board of Regents and administrative rules and procedures adopted by the Board of Regents and under the supervision and direction of the president, the chancellor of each unit of the University established in Sec. 10(b) of this chapter shall, in relation to the unit of the University under his supervision,..."

Eliminate (1)

Renumber (2)-(6) to (1)-(5)

If one wanted to be more precise and to differentiate clearly between policies, which are normally established by the governing board, and administrative rules and procedures for implementing these policies, which are normally promulgated by the president and approved by the board, the language in Sec. 1, lines 13-18 might be changed as follows:

"Subject to the policies of the Board of Regents and administrative rules and procedures promulgated by the president and approved by the Board, and under the supervision and direction of the president, the operation and affairs of each unit of the University, with the exception of the Community College unit, shall be supervised locally by a chancellor appointed by the Board of Regents."

MINUTES OF HOUSE HESS COMMITTEE MEETING

April 25, 1977

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Parr at 3:05 p.m. Members present: Mr. Parr, Mr. Buchholdt, Mr. Phillips, Dr. Beirne, Mr. Cotten with Mr. Nakak coming in later.

Absent: Ose, Bennett, Chatterton.

HB 410,
415
493
McKinnon

Chairman Parr stated HB 410, 415 & 493 were on the agenda and asked Representative McKinnon, prime sponsor of HB 410 to testify. Mr. McKinnon said the problem as he sees it is the differences of the purposes and goals between a Community College and the University of Alaska have gone unrecognized which he felt was due largely because the Board of Regents are insulated from the philosophy of what a community college should do. He felt Community Colleges weren't consistent with a university's program. He felt regardless of any reorganization that could take place in the University system, it still wouldn't change the fact the the central administration won't act as a buffer between the Regents and the Community College. Stated he felt this bill would create a separate governing body for the Community Colleges. He passed out a sheet that showed the organizational structure as it would be set up under HB 410.

There was discussion regarding the courses that would be offered in the 2 year program, the transferability aspect, whether community colleges would be allowed to offer anything above the 1st 2 years.

Romesburg

Next to testify was Mr. Kerry Romesburg, Director of the Commission of Postsecondary education. Said with respect with HB 410, last year the Commission did conduct hearings around the state with regard to community college structure in Alaska and did formulate recommendations which the committee members had. He said they did make 7 recommendations, 6 of which were to the Board of Regents and the 7 to Board of Regents and also offered for legislative concern. He said in the hearings around the State, there were a number of people who were unhappy with the current structure, administratively, a number of community college advisory councils who feel that the community colleges do not receive the kind of hearing and kind of statute that they wish they would receive through the existing structure. Said one thing mentioned specifically was the community college split. He said there were a number of persons who did advocate 2 separate systems but the majority did not., felt the 2 systems should remain the same. Said there were 2 principal reasons mentioned for not splitting the system. One, transferability and the other accreditation. He did say he didn't think the accreditation reason was a valid reason, but said the issue of transferability bothered him.

Mr. Romesburg went on to say that Wyoming has almost an identical type of structure to what we are talking about. (He called attention to the administrative structures that he had passed out to the committee members). Said in Arizona there are 2 systems with no coordination above them. He said transferability was not a problem in Arizona, because they established transferability guides.

With regard to HB 415, Mr. Romesburg said that particular structure comes closer to the type of thing the Commission was recommending in that it does establish a chancellor for community colleges within the present university structure and under the Board of Regents. Said the issues not mentioned in the bill but what he was interested in hearing comments on were: what do you do in Anchorage, Juneau & Fairbanks with regard to the community college and senior college sitting side by side;

Mr. Romesburg said with regard to HB 493, establishing branches of the University at Anchorage. Said this bill essentially eliminates community colleges and the community college identity from the terminology of a community college. Said there are some states which have a basic university and branches, including 2 year branches. Said the problem he would have with this bill is the fact that the concept of community college is lost.

Mr. Romesburg said not one bill addressed exactly what the Commission recommended, parts of the recommendation were in all the bills. He did say the Commission felt the problems could be addressed by the Board of Regents without having to create a number of different boards or putting it into law.

There was discussion as to how much autonomy the community colleges should have, what courses should be taught, the local input, more input for academic programs,

Mr. Romesburg said at the hearings the people felt that the central person should have access directly to the Board of Regents and also that the Advisory Council should have direct access to the Board of Regents.

Next to testify was Representative Meekins. He stated his bill was not new to the legislature, it is the same bill that Gruening introduced last year and co-sponsored this year. He said this bill is not a response to the current problem existing in the university, but said it is an idea that has been around for a long time but felt the problems they are currently having do reinforce it. He said he agreed with the Chairman' intention to not rush this matter through this session of the legislature and that there would be interim authority to review all of these bills because he knows they are quite complicated and felt there were problems in the bills that needed to be resolved. Did there was a good case for decentralizing.

Meekins

Mr. Meekins said if you look at it from the other aspect, you have to ask why there is a central administration that administers all of the different areas of the university system. Said the 3 primary reasons are: need standardization and coordination among the different campuses and among the different program and there is an attempt to reduce duplication and also to minimize harmful competition between the Regents. He said he did not think these theoretical reasons were any good as applied to Alaska for a number of reasons. He said his bill does not call for total autonomy, just takes away the central administration but still leaves the 4 units proposed under the Board of Regents. He said he felt more important to Alaska than standardization and coordination that is given by the central administration is the responsiveness if the units were more autonomous. They would still report to the Board of Regents, there would be the coordination in terms of academic standards and policy considerations which are necessary which could all be done through the Board of Regents but felt more responsiveness to the local level. Mr. Meekins said in terms of duplication this is the argument given him in opposition to decentralization. They say that every region will have to do all the accounting procedures that the central administration does. He said Anchorage already does those accounting procedures and then send them to Fairbanks and the central administration does them again so he feels the duplication in the system is in the current system.

Mr. Meekins agreed that a great deal of work needs to be done and hoped some interim authority would take a look at the bills. Does believe could benefit and spend a lot less money if we would decentralize and give the authority to the regional level.

Next there was discussion regarding the budgets, whether it would still go through the Regents.

Ostrosky

Next to testify was Katherynn Ostrosky former member of this committee and Chairman of the Interim Higher Education Subcommittee during the last legislature and appeared as a representative of the Alaska Community College Federation of Teachers on behalf of their support and interest for HB 410. She stated HB 410 is the most recent effort to respond to the growth of the community colleges and is offered as the third Community College Act in the history of Alaska. and at this point she gave a historical perspective on the two previous Community College Acts. She believes the problems facing the community colleges is a statewide issues, not a local or regional issue. Said it affects the entire statewide student population from Nome to Ketchikan.

Marie Darlin spoke from the sidelines and said their main concern was that there be some attention given to these bills during the interim.

Mrs. Ostrosky said she felt there had been a real resistance to real basic reform rather than a response to the reforms.

Mr. Parr said that there will be some hearings held once the initial opening of the semester has gotten over with and people settle down, somewhere in the general vicinity of the first of October and he said it was his intent to have hearings both in town and on the Campuses in Anchorage and Fairbanks.. Said they would have it in one of the smaller communities. Said they wanted to get input from people who are not in any way members of the university in addition to the University. Would have Juneau hearings in January.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.