



## Save the Seawolf.com

A discussion regarding the future of UAA is underway. At present, that discussion is headed toward consolidation and single accreditation of the University of Alaska, a change from the three separately-accredited universities we currently have. The most likely scenario is that UAF would become the 'University of Alaska' and absorb UAA, thus eliminating UAA's unique identity and mission. Here's why that's a bad idea.

Accreditation is the "licensure" of a university. It's the product of an extraordinarily thorough and intense vetting that occurs every 7 years. Without accreditation, UAA's degrees are not recognized by others and UAA students cannot receive federal financial aid. UAA just received reaffirmation of its accreditation (with several commendations!) by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

To consolidate UAA under UAF, the University of Alaska system would have to apply for a new accreditation under a brand new organizational structure. This is what President Johnsen is calling "One UA/New UA". That new structure would be risking what we already have on a very uncertain future. Accreditation is precious. Any plan for reducing costs at UA must proceed along the most conservative path that protects and preserves existing accreditations for all three universities. Other reasons why pursuing a single accreditation for the University of Alaska is a bad idea include:

1. **Localism:** UAA has a unique student body and a unique mission that have evolved to serve the particular needs of our community. UAA's students are almost entirely commuter students with jobs, caregiving responsibilities and the like. Our calendar and course schedule make it possible for these students to manage their educational goals with their other responsibilities. Community partnerships, training for local jobs and curriculum developed to meet the unique educational needs of our region are all an important part of a local university's role.
2. **Efficiency:** Consolidating the 3 UA universities won't actually save money. Studies of university consolidation have found that such efforts actually tend to increase expenses in the long run. The most recent study undertaken by the University of Alaska (written by Dana Thomas in 2016) recommended against pursuing a single accreditation for this, and other, reasons. (see [Savetheseawolf.com](http://Savetheseawolf.com) for a copy of that report)
3. **Donors and Community Affiliation:** Many major donors to UAA are just that: donors to the University of Alaska Anchorage, not the University of Alaska. Consolidating campuses puts that critical community support at risk.
4. **The Consortium Model:** There's already a plan to accommodate the proposed cuts while preserving the unique mission and culture of UAA, UAF and UAS. The chancellors of all three campuses presented an option to the Board of Regents that allows the University to absorb budget reductions while still maintaining separate accreditation and fulfilling their unique missions.

### HERE'S HOW TO HELP!

1. Tell the Regents what the University means to you, by filling out the [Board of Regents Survey](#) (available at [www.alaska.edu/newua/](http://www.alaska.edu/newua/)) and emailing them ([ua-bor@alaska.edu](mailto:ua-bor@alaska.edu)). See additional BoR background and contact information on page 4.
2. Join us for a discussion on **Monday, August 26 5:30-8:00 in UAA's Gorsuch Commons 106.**
3. Attend the **August 28, 2019 - Special Meeting of the Regents' Subcommittee on Restructuring.** The meeting is in Fairbanks at 1:00 pm. The final time and agenda will be posted on early Monday 8/28. Live streaming is available at [www.alaska.edu/bor](http://www.alaska.edu/bor).
4. On **Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup>**, the Anchorage Assembly will host a Town Hall to discuss the future of UAA. Join us beginning at **5:30 pm in the Wilda Marston Theatre** on the lower floor of the **Loussac Library**. There will be brief presentations followed by Q/A and panel discussion.
5. Call in for a special Board of Regents public testimony session on **Monday, Sept. 9 4-6pm at (866) 726-0757.**
6. Testify in person at the **September 12 Board of Regents meeting** in Anchorage, where they will decide whether to move forward with single accreditation. **Public testimony starts at 8:15am.** The agenda will be posted at [www.alaska.edu/bor/agendas/](http://www.alaska.edu/bor/agendas/)
7. Check out [savetheseawolf.com](http://savetheseawolf.com) and [sign up for updates](#). The site provides a repository of documents, reports, news, events, and advocacy materials and contacts.



## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**What is accreditation and why is it important?** Accredited universities are those recognized as meeting institutional standards set by one of six regional or national accrediting organizations established by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation demonstrates that institutions meet key education quality and institutional effectiveness standards. Accredited institutions offer universally recognized degrees and programs. Only accredited institutions can offer students federal funding, i.e., Title IV federal financial aid and federally sponsored grant programs.

**How long has Alaska had separately accredited universities?** In 1974 the Board of Regents authorized the branch of the University of Alaska based in Anchorage (known as UA,A) to seek separate accreditation. In 1975, the University of Alaska deeded its accreditation to the new University of Alaska Fairbanks. UAS achieved separate accreditation in 1987.

**Who accredits each of the University of Alaska's three universities (UAF, UAA, UAS)?** The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accredits 160 institutions including private and public community colleges, colleges, and universities in Alaska, British Columbia (CA), Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. NWCCU is the organization responsible for accrediting UAF, UAA, and UAS. NWCCU is one of six regional bodies authorized by the US Department of Education to offer accreditation to universities in the US. <https://www.nwccu.org/>

**Does consolidation into a single UA threaten accreditation?** The President of the NWCCU stated in a letter to the Board of Regents on July 29, 2019 "If student success and achievement are demonstrably affected, it could potentially jeopardize the accreditation status of these institutions. Students attending such institutions then become ineligible for federal financial aid and grants that, combined with the loss of scholarships from the state of Alaska, could be the death-knell for the University of Alaska."

**What is the difference between institutional and specialty/programmatic accreditation?** NWCCU provides institutional accreditation for the each of UA's universities: UAF, UAA, and UAS. Additionally, many academic disciplines require specialty/programmatic accreditation for their degree programs including engineering, nursing, business, and education. This additional accreditation demonstrates that graduates of those programs meet standards set by industry and professional licensing bodies. In order to pursue specialty/programmatic accreditation for degree programs in different academic disciplines, the institution as whole **must** have regional or national accreditation. That means that if UAA institutional accreditation is lost, all specialty/programmatic accreditations for that accredited university will be in jeopardy. If institutional accreditation for all three existing universities is merged under UAF, all UAA nursing, engineering, business, education, and other specialty accreditations will require new applications or approval of substantive changes. Off-cycle re-accreditation and/or submission/review of substantive changes requires a significant investment of resources and time and may put those programs all at risk. If the single institutional accreditation proposed for the "One UA/New UA" structure is delayed or standards cannot be met, all specialty/programmatic accreditations at UAA, UAF, and UAS will be at risk. The consequence of getting this wrong could mean the collapse of all programs that require specialty or programmatic accreditation.

**What is the UA Board of Regents?** The University of Alaska Board of Regents (BoR) is an 11-member board. The presiding governor nominates regents to fill current openings which are confirmed by the Alaska Legislature. Regents serve an 8-year term, with the exception of the student regent who is nominated from his/her campus and serves a 2-year term. The BoR was established through the Alaska Constitution and is responsible for UA policy and management through the UA president. The president reports to the UA BoR. The regents do not receive compensation for their services except travel expenses. [alaska.edu/bor](http://alaska.edu/bor)

**What is the Board of Regent's "Duty of Care"?** The three key tenets of good board governance include accountability: ownership and responsibility; integrity: do the right thing; and transparency: open, consistent, comparable sharing of information to stakeholders. Regents have a "duty of care" to make informed decisions and exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence on behalf of the organization and stakeholders. This means that the UA Board of Regents is ultimately responsible for the decisions made and the consequences of those decisions. The BoR cannot delegate overall responsibility for decisions. They must conduct sufficient due-diligence on options under consideration by engaging with diverse stakeholders, and they must be satisfied as a whole body that implications and risks of those options are sufficiently analyzed using clear criteria and objective data. They should not accept nor be swayed by a single powerful voice. They are accountable to all stakeholders in Alaska.



**What is UA Statewide?** The University of Alaska Statewide is the administrative entity which oversees the three separate universities, UAF, UAA, and UAS. It establishes policies and provides some shared/common services and administrative functions on behalf of the three universities in the system. President Johnsen and his staff are part of UA Statewide. The UAF, UAA and UAS chancellors report to the president. Statewide does not teach students or conduct research.

**What is the role of the chancellors?** Chancellors Dan White of UAF, Cathy Sandeen of UAA, and Rick Caufield of UAS serve as the chief executive officers of their universities and are responsible for the day to day operation as well as the long term health of their institutions. As such, they are intimately familiar with staff, faculty, and student needs. They understand the unique requirements of the students and communities they serve and tailor programs and student services to meet those needs. Under current Board of Regents policy only the UA president is allowed to publicly speak on behalf of the university system.

**What is Financial Exigency?** Financial exigency is (not unlike declaring bankruptcy) a means for the university to respond to drastic budget reductions that require immediate and severe cuts. It allows administration to circumvent collective bargaining agreements, accepted governance structures, and other limitations that would normally apply. As such, the declaration of financial exigency could include furloughs/immediate reductions of staff and administration, and eliminate faculty positions with a 60-day notice. It also allows for the suspension or elimination of degree programs without guarantees of “teach outs” for currently enrolled students. Students might have to transfer to a program taught from a different campus in UA or pursue transferring their credits to a different university outside of Alaska. The BoR approved President Johnsen’s recommendation to declare financial exigency on July 29, 2019 based on a \$135M cut to UA. After the governor and BoR agreed on a 3-year \$70M step down plan (\$25M in 2019-20), the BoR approved the recommendation to rescind financial exigency.

**Did the Board of Regents declare Financial Exigency back in 1986?** Faced with severe budget cuts in 1986 caused by the collapse of oil prices, the Board of Regents considered declaring Financial Exigency. They authorized then-UA President Donald O’Dowd to declare financial exigency if further budget cuts were imposed. Since the legislature did not impose further cuts, he elected not to impose financial exigency.

**What is the difference between the “One UA/New UA” and the “Consortium Model”?** President Johnsen has proposed a “One UA/New UA” model that would integrate UAF, UAA and UAS into a consolidated university with a single NWCCU accreditation. The current plan is to absorb all three universities under the UAF accreditation. Doing so would require that all students applying to the UA system would have to conform to UAF policies and procedures. For example, students would have to be admitted using UAF’s admission requirements. This requirement might limit opportunities for students that currently benefit from UAA’s accessible “open-enrollment” philosophy. It might also consolidate athletic programs under a single UA structure rather than teams representing each of the existing universities. The “One UA/New UA” model would also merge programs currently offered on multiple campuses into programs led by or delivered from a single campus. As proposed, it would also centralize university leadership and many administrative and student services in Fairbanks. UAA and UAS would likely become “satellite campuses” dominated by UA(F) structures and policies. The “Consortium Model” proposed by the chancellors representing UAF, UAA, and UAS, would maintain the unique identities of each university and retain their individual NWCCU accreditations. This model accounts for the unique emphasis of academic programs and services tailored for the students, communities, and employers served. The individual universities would be accountable for implementing their share of the reduction of state funds. Additionally there would be a reduction of UA Statewide administrative costs. Both models were presented to the Board of Regents on July 29, 2019. The Board asked President Johnson to further evaluate the “One UA/New UA” model. The BoR did not ask for a comprehensive, objective and evidence-based comparison of the two options (or exploration of others).



**How do UAA, UAF and UAS Demographics Compare? Information can be found at: [UA Data Reporting for 2018](#)**

**UAA:** Approximately 16,500 undergraduate and graduate students served between the Anchorage Campus, Kenai Peninsula College, Kodiak College, Matanuska-Susitna College, and Prince William Sound College. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of UAA students come from Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, and south central Alaska. Average age: 25. Approximately fifty eight percent (58%) of students across all campuses are part-time. Emphasis on teaching, professional degree programs, continuing education, and community engagement. [UA In Review Report 4/2019](#) Growing research (Total 2018 research expenditures: \$18M) [UA In Review Research 3/2019](#)

**UAF:** Approximately 8,300 undergraduate and graduate students served between the Fairbanks Campus, Chukchi Campus (Kotzebue), Interior Alaska Campus, Kuskowkim Campus (Bethel), Northwest Campus (Nome), Community and Technical College (Fairbanks) and eCampus. Most UAF students come from interior, northern and western Alaska. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of freshman come directly from high school. Approximately 58% of UAF students across all campuses are part time. Median age: 26. [UA In Review Report 4/2019](#) Emphasis on teaching, community engagement, and research (Total 2018 research expenditures: \$132M). [UA In Review Research 3/2019](#)

**UAS:** Approximately 2,600 undergraduate and graduate students served between the Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka Campuses. Most UAS students come from southeast Alaska. Average age: 27. Approximately sixty-seven percent (67%) of students are part-time. Emphasis on teaching, continuing education, and community engagement. [UA In Review Report 4/2019](#)

**UA Board of Regents Background and Contact Information**

UA Board of Regents						
Link to BoR full biographies <a href="https://www.alaska.edu/bor/members/board-contact-info/">https://www.alaska.edu/bor/members/board-contact-info/</a>						
	Role	email	Phone	Location	Appointed by	Industry/Experience
John Davies	Chair	<a href="mailto:jndavies@alaska.edu">jndavies@alaska.edu</a>	907-388-0193 (cell) 907-474-4927 (home)	Fairbanks	Walker	AK Legislature, UAF Cold Climate Housing, UAF Geophysical Institute
Sheri Buretta	Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:jndavies@alaska.edu">jndavies@alaska.edu</a>	907-261-0310 (business)	Eagle River	Walker	Chair of Chugach Alaska, numerous Native Corp and community boards
Dale Anderson	Secretary	<a href="mailto:dganderson@alaska.edu">dganderson@alaska.edu</a>	907-723-8687 (cell)	Juneau	Parnell	Financial services, small business, local government
Lisa Parker	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:lparker2@alaska.edu">lparker2@alaska.edu</a>	907-398-1883 (cell)	Soldotna	Walker	Resource development commissions
John Bania	Regent	<a href="mailto:bania@alaska.edu">bania@alaska.edu</a>	(907) 660-7707 (cell)	Wrangell	Dunleavy	Small business owner, former principal and superintendent in rural AK
Cachet Garrett	Student Regent	<a href="mailto:regent.garrett@gmail.com">regent.garrett@gmail.com</a>		UAF Student (Palmer)	Dunleavy	Masters degree in process at UAF in professional communications. Bachelors from UAS. Health care.
Darroll Hargraves	Regent	<a href="mailto:drhargraves@alaska.edu">drhargraves@alaska.edu</a>	907-357-4726 (home)	Wasilla	Dunleavy	Superintendent in Nome, Ketchikan, Tok. Task force on Effective Schooling. UA Statewide (1971-74).
Mary K. Hughes	Regent	<a href="mailto:mkhughes@alaska.edu">mkhughes@alaska.edu</a>		Anchorage	Knowles, Palin and Walker	Lawyer, Bar Association, Economic Development Corp, Numerous community and social boards.
Glorial O'Neill	Regent	<a href="mailto:goneill@citci.org">goneill@citci.org</a>	907-793-3278 (business)	Anchorage	Parnell	President and CEO of Cook Inlet Tribal Council, numerous national government committees and local boards.
Karen Purdue	Regent	<a href="mailto:krpurdue@alaska.edu">krpurdue@alaska.edu</a>	907-590-2278 (cell)	Fairbanks	Walker	Healthcare and public policy
Andy Tueber	Regent	<a href="mailto:andy.teuber@gmail.com">andy.teuber@gmail.com</a>	907-942-1063 (cell)	Kodiak	Walker	Chairman and President of ANTHC. Numerous Native and community boards. Business owner.



**Documents and reports available on [Savetheseawolf.com](http://Savetheseawolf.com) include:**

***UA Report on Single vs. Separate Accreditation*** (Thomas, 2016): “This report was requested by and contracted by UA Statewide in response to inquiries by the Alaska Legislature and the UA Board of Regents.” The report concluded that “single accreditation is neither necessary nor sufficient to achieve cost-saving, enhance the student experience, or improve state higher education performance measures. In addition, the process to merge UA’s institutions would be disruptive, take at least two years, and might not be approved by the Commission (NWCCU). Therefore, undertaking an accreditation merger at this time is not recommended.” (p. 7)

***Transforming the University of Alaska’s Statewide Office*** (Shultz, et al., 2015) Then UA President Gamble “established the Statewide Transformation Team (SWTT) to review the SW office programs and services and make recommendations to ensure SW work is tied to its essential purpose, efficient in use of resources, and effective in delivering results.”

***University of Alaska Review*** (Fisher, 2011). “The purpose of the review was 1) To assist the Board of Regents in assessing the condition of the University System; 2) To advise on the attitudes of the University and System constituencies; 3) To candidly identify and address issues and opportunities affecting the University System; 4) Recommend a tentative agenda for the future which could be used in strategic planning; and 5) To recommend more efficient and effective governance premises.”

***Planning for the Future: Streamlining Statewide Services in the University of Alaska System*** (McTaggart, Rogers, 2008) This report was prepared for the Office of the President. “The gist of the recommendations is that the core virtues of the System would remain, but that operations could be conducted at lower cost and with greater collaboration with the campuses. A streamlined UA System would retain the critical strengths that have made it so successful over the past decade.” “But some things would change. There would be clearer understanding among all parties of the division of authority and responsibility between Statewide and the campuses.”

***Letter from the President of NWCCU to the UA BoR*** (Ramaswamy, July 29, 2019) “NWCCU remains concerned about the long-term consequences of reduced funding as it relates to student learning and educational attainment. The additional and, perhaps, inappropriate strongarm “guidance” of the Alaska Governor in place of the proper and shared-decision making processes central to the healthy functioning of an institution of higher learning poses yet another factor as NWCCU considers the long-term viability and accreditation status of the institutions within your stewardship.”

***A Summary Explanation of the UA Consortium Model*** (Nabors, July 29, 2019). “The UA Consortium Model is designed to enhance cooperation and cost-savings among UAF, UAA, and UAS, while maintaining each university’s status as a separately accredited institution.”

***Report of the Committee on Governance and Funding Reform*** (Nabors, et al., April 25, 2019). This committee was established by the UAA Faculty Senate to review the structure of the university system and administration given the evolution of the university since its founding and in light of Governor Dunleavy’s significant anticipated reduction in general funds for the University of Alaska system.

***Recommendations by the Committee on Governance and Funding Reform of the Faculty Senate of the University of Alaska Anchorage to the Board of Regents, University of Alaska*** (Nabors, et al., July 11, 2019). This report recommended against declaration of financial exigency and consolidation of the university system into one accredited university. It recommended in favor of prioritizing instruction in balancing the budget, making appropriations based on full-time-equivalent student enrollments, and reducing/eliminating UA Statewide and spinning off UAA, UAF and UAS as independent universities.

***Supplemental Report on the “New UA” by the Committee on Governance and Funding Reform of the Faculty Senate of the University of Alaska Anchorage to the Board of Regents, University of Alaska*** (Nabors, et al., July 29, 2019). This report recommends that the BoR delay their decision on a new structure for the university until all viable options have been adequately and comprehensively assessed using evidence-based financial and risk analysis.