

Faculty Senate

UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

October 2, 2019

Dear Board of Regents,

The UAA Faculty Senate Executive Board continues to be deeply concerned about the leadership of President James Johnsen and your continued trust in his leadership. You have been copied on a letter to NWCCU President Sonny Ramaswamy that expresses our concerns with the process and includes a survey of UA leadership completed by the UAA faculty.

It is obvious from the results of the survey that the faculty have little confidence in the president's leadership. As we have expressed in numerous resolutions, the president has failed to effectively engage faculty governance in inclusive decision making as required by NWCCU standards.

President Johnsen had assured the Board that the accreditation standards including NWCCU Standard 2.A.2, and Standard 2.A.1 were being met during the process to consider single accreditation and other administrative and structural consolidation, yet the letter from President Ramaswamy indicates otherwise.

Faculty repeatedly raised accreditation concerns associated with consolidation as the discussion moved from the consolidation of UAF, UAA, and UAS Colleges of Education to the discussion concerning single accreditation. Faculty have consistently asked for cost benefit analysis of these massive changes and yet none have been forthcoming. One analysis of single accreditation, the Thomas report, which indicated minimal cost savings to single accreditation, has been ignored by President Johnsen and yet his argument for single accreditation and consolidation continues to rest on the need to find cost savings and save money.

Even more problematic has been the president's efforts at controlling communication, which undermines the very values of higher education and the free exchange of ideas. We appreciate the difficulty of your job, and as you are likely beginning to discover, the information you have received from the president is often highly curated, making it difficult to determine effective paths forward. Faculty continue to be willing to do the hard work of analysis and share that with the Board.

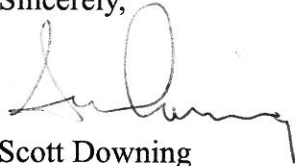
Aside from the president's leadership, we are deeply concerned that the ongoing administrative consolidation and the expedited academic review process as currently configured and driven by the president is in violation of NWCCU Standard for Accreditation 2.A.2, and Standard 2.A.1, given its effects on areas within the chancellors' responsibility. That is why we are asking for a moratorium on those processes.

Given the lack of communication from President Johnsen and the Board, it seems we are moving forward with business as usual. We appreciate the difficult task you face, but it is imperative that you immediately assert control of the university system to avoid endangering the accreditations of UAA, UAF, and UAS and further undermining confidence in your work as a Board.

I have included a resolution that the UAA Faculty Senate will be considering at their meeting on October 4. As noted in the resolution, the UAA Faculty Senate Executive Board recommends suspending President Johnsen and the administrative consolidation processes and academic review discussions that are currently underway while tasking the chancellors and shared governance with completing the report to NWCCU. That report should address the issues with the standards for accreditation while making recommendations for change that will bring board policy into line with those standards.

We firmly believe that you can reestablish confidence in the Board by taking decisive action to address the ongoing leadership issues with President Johnsen and reengage the voices of the chancellors and shared governance in these important conversations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Downing", written over a horizontal line.

Scott Downing
UAA Faculty Senate President