

Faculty Alliance
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July 16, 2019

Dear President Johnsen, Vice President Layer, Chancellor Caulfield, Chancellor Sandeen, and Chancellor White:

Firstly, I would like to thank the Board of Regents for delaying their vote on declaring financial exigency. Thank you! We view this short reprieve as a way to continue to advocate with the legislators and the Office of the Governor in hopes of restoring most, if not all, of the budget that was passed by the legislators.

In the meantime, I understand that budget scenarios are being developed by the three universities, and also scenarios for moving towards a single accredited institution. To this end, the Faculty Alliance would like to respectfully request that each of the Chancellors and Provosts engage your respective Faculty Senate President and two senior faculty on your budget scenario planning team. I understand that UAS has already implemented this.

It is clear that there are probably several scenarios:

- a) the 41% cut;
- b) Legislative bill to restore \$100 million;
- c) Legislative bill to restore more than \$100 million—maybe even the entire amount that was vetoed by the Governor.

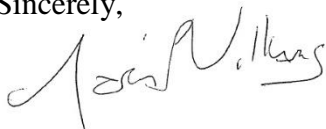
Chancellor Sandeen and White, is it possible that you invite your respective Faculty Senate President and their choice of at least two additional senior Faculty to be included in your budget teams that are working on scenarios immediately—due to short time frame?

Discussion on restructure is also on the table and again, the respective Faculty Senate Presidents and the two additional senior faculty have to be involved with the discussions in addition to the Faculty Alliance Chair.

There is an incredibly short time frame and if this can be implemented, it will ensure that you are getting faculty input as you all move forward in this urgent time

I deeply appreciate all the advocacy you are all doing and the faculty are also doing incredibly hard work. The fight is not over yet.

Sincerely,



Maria Williams, Faculty Alliance Chair

Cc: Cyndee West, Abel Bult-Ito, Sonny Ramaswamy, Mac Powell, Valerie Martinez, Anupma Prakash, John Stalvey, Karen Carey, UA Board of Regents

Statement by Maria Williams, Chair Faculty Alliance
July 15, 2019

Good afternoon UA BOR. Firstly, thank you for your dedication to education and the many hours you have spent on shepherding the University through some challenging times. Today's challenge is probably the toughest issue you all have faced as you discuss the possibility of declaring financial exigency.

As Chair of Faculty Alliance, which consists of the Faculty Senate Leaders from UAF, UAS and UAA I must implore you to delay the declaration until the legislative session is over. You all have read our resolution and our letter which states our case. We realize that the Governor's vetoes stand, however, the legislature is working on solutions to restore funding to the UA system that is more in line with their legislatively approved budget. There is still hope, and certainly lots of advocacy happening as well.

Declaring financial exigency, if declared too early, could do more harm than good. It's a signal to our students and our community, who have come out by the thousands to support us, that we are accepting a budget that is the harbinger of chaotic decision making.

Universities are complex structures with protocols and rules that are daunting to anyone outside the system. I get that. I went to graduate school, earned an MA and a PhD, spent thousands of hours in the library, and doing field work. I taught for two years at the Institute of American Indian Art, and for 12 years at the University of New Mexico, where I went up through the ranks of tenure – which is no easy feat. I have been teaching here at UAA since 2011. This marks my 22nd year of teaching – a profession that I love very much. I have developed courses and curriculum, including degree programs, wrote academic papers, published books, and articles, organized academic conferences, served on numerous Master's Thesis and PhD committees, wrote grants, and participated in faculty governance. I have mentored hundreds if not thousands of students to obtain their degrees. Myself and my many other colleagues at UAS, UAF and UAA have walked this path, and many are more accomplished than myself. We have Fulbright Fellows, and Faculty that have achieved national and international recognition for their teaching and/or research, and patents. We know a few things about this system.

However, we feel that our voices have been muted during discussions of restructure. We can bring a lot to the table and would like to be fully engaged with administration as we move forward to restructuring the UA system. It does need re-examination – as do most healthy organizations through the years. The current fiscal crises we are facing is forcing an expedited process that could lead to loss of accreditation, especially if we begin to sunset degree programs without teaching them out. If we leave students with no path forward to their degree attainment, we will lose accreditation.

Faculty constitute 15% (including salary and benefits) of the total UA operating budget and make up less than 30% of its employees. The Faculty are the ones that work closest with the students in the classroom, develop and teach the curriculum, and keep our programs up-to-date and insure they meet accreditation standards.

We hope to work with all of you and the administration on a path forward in examining how best to do this with the least amount of damage. We recognize that programs will be cut, and that faculty positions are on the table. Faculty at UAA and UAF have put forward ideas on restructure in areas of budget, and programs. We have gifted faculty that can do budget analysis, and know academic structures and are familiar with other models. We don't always have to hire outside consultants – when we, the faculty in the UA system are available to do problem solving as well.

Please do not declare financial exigency – please do not wave the 'white flag' just yet. We are still fighting and hope that we will get a sustainable budget. Then we can move forward on a restructure that is evidence based and includes the input of faculty, administration, staff and students.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak,
Gunalsheesh