



## Speaker's "Interim" Report

October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009

Hello everyone,

In order to keep you all in the loop and make sure we are working in a coordinated fashion, I am going to start sending out a regular report/update in addition to the one I give during our monthly meetings. To those who testified in Juneau, I apologize for not going in to detail on your speeches. I don't have a recording of the meeting yet so all of this is coming from notes and memory.

In the future I will probably spice these up with graphics and photos, but for now you are going to have to tolerate nothing but dry text.

Please be sure to pay particular attention to the **bulleted talking points** under items 1 & 2

### 1. October 6th Business Council Meeting

As most of you know, the Business Council had to cancel their meeting on September 23rd. They have rescheduled and will be meeting on Thursday, October 6th from 12:30p-1:30p.

The number to dial in is (800) 893-8850. The password is 5560195. I would like to have one representative from each campus call in to the meeting. Each of the major campuses will have an on-site teleconference location. The UAA location will be Admin 201. I do not know what the locations for Juneau and Fairbanks will be at this time. Please make sure to review the materials on the student wage increase so that you are as informed as possible going into the meeting.

The Business Council's recommendation to the Board of Regents on student wages will have a huge effect on what the Board decides to do. With that in mind, make sure that you are getting in touch with Bill Spindle if you're at UAA, Pat Pitney if you're at UAF, or Carol Griffin if you're at UAS.

*Key points to keep in mind:*

- Even the Board of Regents has recognized that affordability at UA is a serious problem.

- Tuition has just been raised by 5% and 10% for AY2012. That means upper division credits will have nearly doubled in cost since the last time student wages were raised.
- Certain Regents actually suggested that raising student wages could be used to address the affordability problem.
- Because of the increasing cost of education in Alaska, many students now NEED a job to cover costs.
- It is harder to work off campus than it is to work on campus. If a student works off campus, he or she is going to have greater flexibility in their schedule and a more convenient location. This means that working on campus is less likely to adversely affect a student's grades than working off campus.
- The convenience of student worker jobs does not make up for the pay disparity that we are trying to address. If you don't have enough money to pay for books and classes, then you don't have enough money to pay for books and classes.

## **2. 9/24-9/25 Board of Regents Meeting**

Last week, the Board of Regents met in Juneau and ploughed through a lengthy agenda, including the setting of tuition rates for AY2012.

ASUAF, USUAA, and USUAS all sent representatives to the meeting.

The Coalition got public testimony started by proposing a tuition increase of 3% for lower division credits and 5% for upper division credits and asking the Board of Regents to work with students to reach a compromise rather than disregard our input by passing an increase of 5% for lower division credits and 10% for upper division credits.

ASUAF Senator and Coalition Pro-Temp Nicole Carvajal spoke about the need to keep tuition as low as possible and to keep UA affordable.

Acting USUAS President CJ Reeves spoke to the Board about several issues, including keeping tuition low.

ASUAF Vice President Todd Vorisek testified about the need for an increase in student wages to keep student jobs competitive and also make UA more affordable.

USUAA President Michaela Hernandez gave an impassioned speech to the Board about keeping tuition low and the need for the Board to change its policy regarding public testimony from students.

President Hernandez pointed out that even though the Board of Regents admits that spoken testimony is the most effective form of advocacy in Juneau and that sending written testimony to the State Legislature would be totally insufficient to have an impact,

students are limited to submitting written testimony if they cannot physically attend a BoR meeting.

This issue of distance testimony is one that I think we should all be taking on together. According to the current BoR policy, distance testimony can be taken at the discretion of the Board. Unfortunately, students are almost never allowed to give distance testimony, which means that those of us who are not part of a student government with a sizable travel budget have to wait for the Board of Regents to hold a meeting that is geographically convenient in order for us to meaningfully participate.

Unfortunately, the Board of Regents did end up passing the increase of 5% for lower division and 10% for upper division credits by a vote of 6:3.

Regent Martin started off the discussion with a surprising motion to change the increase to 2.5% for lower division credits and 5% for upper division credits. Several UA administrators, as well as Chancellor Rogers (providing input from Fairbanks via audio/video) and Chancellor Pugh spoke against Regent Martin's amendment, saying that it would provide over \$3 million less than President Hamilton's proposed increase and that this would lead to cuts in programs and/or the termination of staff and/or faculty.

President Hamilton pointed out that affordability was the real concern and the discussion on the amendment quickly turned to an around-the-table endorsement of the effort to create need-based financial aid for Alaska as the best way to solve the issue of affordability.

After Regent Martin's amendment failed, the Board quickly moved to a vote on the original proposal made by President Hamilton.

*A few things to take away from that meeting and to bring to the next:*

- It is good that at least a handful of Board members listened to our concerns about the proposed AY2012 tuition increase being too high.
- The Board of Regents, despite talk about how much higher tuition is at most other campuses, does indeed recognize that the cost of attending UA is increasing to the point where affordability is becoming a critical issue.
- Despite citing the lack of willingness on the part of the State Legislature to fully fund the university as a reason for tuition going up, the Board of Regents chose to lay the financial responsibility for fixing the issue of affordability on Juneau.
- We need to make sure that the Board of Regents takes up a leadership role in making UA affordable. They can do this by raising student wages to make them more competitive with off-campus employers and by reconsidering the decision to raise 2012 tuition by 5% and 10%.

- Make sure everyone understands that AAIP, lower tuition increases, and increasing student wages are all part of an "**affordability package**". We are not throwing these items out individually with the understanding that any one of them can solve the problem.
- We need BoR to keep tuition as low as possible AND raise student wages to make them more livable, not one or the other.
- Even if BoR reconsiders the tuition increase and raises student wages, we **STILL** need the State Legislature to pass AAIP and vice versa.

### **3. October 30th Board of Regents Meeting**

The next Board of Regents meeting will take place in Fairbanks on October 30th. Public testimony will begin bright and early at 08:00. The focus of the meeting will be the budget, but it would be a good idea to do everything we can to keep affordability in the minds of the Regents, whether it's talking about reconsidering the decision to raise tuition in 2012 or to increase student wages. I'm definitely interested in hearing from all of you on what you would like to make happen.

More updates will be coming in the near future!

### **4. 9/20 Coalition of Student Leaders Meeting**

The minutes for the 9/20 Coalition meeting have been posted on the website for your review. Please look them over as a refresher and to look for any changes that need to be made.

Thanks to everyone for contributing to a lively and productive meeting!

### **5. October 23<sup>rd</sup> Coalition of Student Leaders Meeting**

The agenda has not been finalized, but an important part of the meeting will be an update on where all the campuses are as far as working toward their goals and the creation of goals for any campuses that were not present during the September 20th meeting. One other big item of discussion will be the theme for the Juneau conference.

Please let me know if you want to have anything added to the agenda.

**Thanks for reading!**

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