

UAS Staff Council Notes
March 22, 2007

ATTENDEES: Council members present: Jeri Cary, Rita Fuller, Gwenna Richardson, Cynthia Rogers, and Heather Swanson. Guests Present: Denise Blankenship, Nicole Duclos, Bonnie Elsensohn, Jill Hanson, Bobbi McCoy, Nicole Rogers.

Approve Agenda. Heather requested to add a Staff Alliance update to the agenda. Jeri seconded. The agenda was adopted as amended.

Staff Alliance Update

Heather attended this month's Staff Alliance meeting. She reported that the Alliance is working on a revised educational leave & release time regulation. The Alliance wants feedback from Council Members about this draft. Some items are already in effect; others are still in the proposal stage. Send feedback within the next week or two to ?

Vicki Gilligan and Michelle Pope talked about health care actuals – how they calculate coverage rates for benefits. The end result is that rates are probably staying close to the same for next year. Open enrollment starts April 15.

HR update: Anne Sakimoto, Statewide Training Coordinator, is working on SkillSoft to do e-learning; she want to put together a standardized orientation DVD; several proposals are out at this time. In compensation news, tentative approval has been given to remove the transition grid from the staff salary schedule.

UAKJobs website—upgrades have been done; the new version should be rolled out this spring. Flow reports & some other things will now be done online. Sue Oliva at the UAS HR office has been providing training on the changes; training will continue through this month.

A few wording changes will be put in place in the Family and Medical Leave Act language of the regulations get UA vocabulary consistent with federal regulations.

Kate Wattam is coordinating a new walking program starting next week. We'll be using our new Global ID to sign in to the StartWalking site.

New ID: Rita commented that we shouldn't necessarily jump on the bandwagon with this new ID right away because it's going to create a new profile and cause some problems. Heather noted that the new ID's have already been created, but the tech folks are working on smoothing this transition for the users.

Staff Alliance Retreat April 3-4 in Juneau—Heather and Cynthia will represent the UAS Staff Council for meetings with legislators and the annual Cookie Brigade.

UAS Staff Council Retreat Rita reported that President Hamilton will get back to her later today to set a date for the retreat. At this point we are looking at late April or early May. Elections will be the third week in May. This will give an opportunity for personnel interested in Staff Council to come an open meeting at the retreat.

New Educational Leave and Release Time [\[Attachment 1\]](#)

See Staff Alliance Update.

Staff Make Students Count Award

Rita reported that we have 6 nominations for the Make Students Count award. The packets are ready to mail to committee members. The group agreed that those who nominate should not be involved in judging. Consequently Cynthia will be off the committee. We will ask the UAS-Juneau Student Government President (Lindsay Forrest) to participate.

No Whining

Heather talked about a “stop whining” campaign originated by a pastor: you wear a purple band on your wrist for 21 days. If you catch yourself whining you switch the bracelet to your other wrist and start your count over. Free bracelets are available if we are willing to pay for shipping. People thought it was a fun idea and we will investigate further.

Open for comments and suggestions

Juneau Staff Development Day: Jeri is on the planning committee. The date is Friday, May 11. Rita and Gwenna requested that the general sessions be video conferenced to Sitka and Ketchikan. Jeri will relay this request to the committee.

Heather read a legislative update from Pete Kelly [\[Attachment 2\]](#)

Jeri moved to adjourn – Cynthia seconded – the meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

ATTACHMENT I

DRAFT 2-22-07 1 Pages 1-3 contain language for a new Educational Leave and Release Time regulation. R04.06.195. Educational Leave and Release Time A.

Educational leave or release time may be granted to allow full-time employees on a 9, 10, 11 or 12 month regular appointment to further their education in an accredited degree program. The objective is to increase the employee's value to the University and thereby improve and enrich its programs and to permit an employee's development, especially employees who will be able to complete their degree program in a year or less. 1.

Employees must have been employed in a regular benefits-eligible position with the university for at least three consecutive years prior to applying for educational leave or for release time for more than three credit hours. 2. Educational leave and release time are granted in the sole discretion of the University. Decisions concerning the approval, denial or terms of educational leave and release time are not subject to a grievance or appeal process. 3. For all categories of educational leave or release from work set forth below, approval to continue from one academic term to the next is contingent on the University's determination of satisfactory academic progress and satisfactory job performance, where applicable. Specific documentation relating to this review will be submitted to and maintained by the regional human resources office. 4. A recipient of educational leave or release time shall be obligated to complete at least one (1) additional year of employment, or one (1) additional appointment period, following educational leave or release time. 5. Any employee approved for educational leave or release time to attend UA courses is required to shall use the tuition waiver benefit before other UA funding. 6. Employees are responsible for any tax liability generated from educational leave or release time. B. Educational leave may be granted with or without pay as follows: 1. Paid educational leave. Employees who have been admitted to and are making satisfactory progress in the attainment of a degree that the university determines will benefit them in the performance of their work duties may be granted leave for one semester and receive up to their full salary and full employer-paid benefits OR may be granted leave for one year and receive up to ½ of their full salary and full employer-paid benefits. DRAFT 2-22-07 2

ATTACHMENT 2

The House version of the budget should move out of House Finance tomorrow. It will not be on the floor for second reading (that's when amendments are made) until Monday morning. It will move out of the House and over to the Senate on Thursday. Today, (March 22) the Finance committee will take up one or two amendments on the university, but they are not expected to pass. Those same amendments will be offered on the floor next Monday, but they are not likely to pass there either.

So far the House budget process has given UA enough money to cover fixed costs, but then removed some money when trying to make changes to PERS/TRS. The Finance Chair, Mike Chenault, assures us that it is his intention to cover our fixed costs, but has to figure out a few things regarding the PERS/TRS rate before he can do it. It is even possible that it will not be in the budget bill. He is fully aware of the situation and does not need phone calls or letters.

The Senate Subcommittee was canceled today, but there will probably be a meeting next Tuesday or Thursday. It would not surprise me if the Senate closed the subcommittee on Thursday, but we won't know for a while. We do not know where we stand with the Senate right now, but have not done well in the subcommittee over the past two years. Kim Elton and Joe Thomas are fairly unapologetic friends of the university and are both members of the Senate Subcommittee. You may want to send emails to both of them just to keep UA at the top of their awareness.

At this point we are trying to get our fixed costs covered. If you are going to encourage legislators to support us, that is probably the simplest message.

[Senator Joe Thomas@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Joe_Thomas@legis.state.ak.us)

[Senator Kim Elton@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Kim_Elton@legis.state.ak.us)

There are a number of bills affecting the university that are moving through the process. If you go to the State Relations web site you will see a link to a bill tracker which can give you the status of most UA bills. There are not complete descriptions of all the bills, but there is a link to the legislative page that lists all bills affecting the university. Next week I'll try to get all the sponsor statements online

Capital projects are beginning to be discussed with a little more enthusiasm now. Whenever I mention capital projects I get calls from people who want to know how their project is doing. I really don't know. The biggest push for us right now is major maintenance. Specific projects really have not bubbled to the surface yet.

I'll talk to you next week.

Pete

Paid educational leave may be approved only by the president or designee. An employee who wishes to be considered for paid educational leave will submit an application along with relevant supporting documents showing that the request is approved by the employee's supervisors and chancellor, if applicable. Applications will be reviewed by the Vice President for Administration and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will make a recommendation to the president. Failure of the recipient to fulfill the obligation to return to the University shall require the full and immediate repayment of salary and benefits received from the University while on leave, except in extenuating circumstances approved in writing by the president or designee. Employees who have completed at least five (5) consecutive years of service from the date of return from any previous paid educational leave or sabbatical leave shall be eligible to be granted another educational leave to be taken during the sixth (6th) or subsequent year.

2. Unpaid educational leave. (a) Employees who will be full-time students in a degree program may be granted unpaid leave for up to three years. During the leave, the employee will not receive salary and will not accrue annual or sick leave or other benefits, except as otherwise provided in this section. An employee may continue life, and long-term disability insurance to the extent allowed by the contracts with the vendors of such programs and as allowed by law, upon the employee's payment of both the employee's own and the university's portions of any cost. An employee on unpaid educational leave may be reimbursed up to \$10,000 per year for educational costs such as tuition, fees, and textbooks, or may continue health care coverage. Payment for such costs may be approved only by the president or designee. An employee who wishes to be considered for such payment will submit an application prior to the leave, along with relevant supporting documents showing that the request is approved by the employee's supervisors and chancellor, if applicable. Applications will be reviewed by the Vice President for Administration and Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will make a recommendation to the president. At the end of the period of unpaid educational leave, an employee will be returned to the same position, if it is available, or an equivalent position. If such a position is available, failure to fulfill the obligation to return to the University shall require the full and immediate repayment of reimbursements and benefits received from the University while on educational leave, except in extenuating circumstances approved in writing by the president or designee. (b) Employees may also be granted unpaid leaves of absence for up to one year for educational purposes, renewable for up to one additional year, through the approval process contained in University Regulation 04.06.190. DRAFT 2-22-07 3

C. Educational release time may be granted as follows: 1. An employee may take up to three credit hours during working hours with prior approval by the employee's supervisor. a. The employee is not responsible for making up the time if, in the opinion of the supervisor, the coursework will be of direct benefit to the university. b. Coursework that does not directly benefit the university may be allowed during working hours, provided that it does not impede the work to be performed. The employee will be responsible for making up lost work time through a flexible work schedule requested through and approved by the supervisor. 2. Paid educational release time for more than three credit hours may be approved only by the chancellor or, for statewide employees, the president or designee. Upon approval, employees who will be part-time students in a degree program may be granted commensurate release from their normally assigned work duties for up to 50% of the applicable semester or annual period in order to complete academic work, and continue to receive full pay. An employee who wishes to be considered for release time will submit an application along with relevant supporting documents showing that the request is approved by the employee's supervisors. Failure of the recipient to fulfill the obligation to complete at least one (1) additional year of employment, or one (1) additional appointment period, following release time shall require the full and immediate repayment of salary received from the University for release time during the year prior to the employee's resignation, except in extenuating circumstances approved in writing by the president or designee. 3. Paid educational release time shall not exceed three years, except that employees who are granted release from their normally assigned work duties of 20% or less of the applicable semester or annual period may receive paid release time for up to five years. **R04.06.196 Definitions.** In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, (1) "Educational leave" means an approved absence from an employee's duties for educational purposes for one semester or one academic year. (2) "Educational release time" means an approved partial release for educational purposes from duties or time normally required of a full-time employee in carrying out the employee's full load of assigned responsibilities. DRAFT 2-22-07 4

Below is the current regulation for Employee Education Benefits, with the deletion of paragraph C. Employee Education Benefits R04.06.010 Regular employees, spouses and dependents are authorized a waiver of course credit hour charges under the following conditions: A. A regular employee of the university will have graduate and/or undergraduate course credit hour charges waived up to six credits per semester for a maximum of 12 credits per academic year, beginning with the fall semester and ending with the summer term. B. A regular employee who will be employed by the university for the following academic year but who is off contract during the summer will have graduate and/or undergraduate course credit hour charges waived up to 12 credits per summer session within the 12 credit per year limitation. C. An employee may take up to three credit hours during working hours, with prior approval by the supervisor, without having to make up the time if, in the opinion of the supervisor, the coursework will be of direct benefit to the university. Coursework that does not directly benefit the university may be allowed during working hours, provided that it is approved in advance by the supervisor and does not impede the work to be performed. The employee will be responsible for making up lost work time through a flexible work schedule requested through and approved by the supervisor. CD. Spouses and dependent children under the age of 24 of employees in benefit-eligible positions will have course credit hour charges waived. DE. An individual who qualifies for permanent disability during his/her regular employment under the applicable state retirement system will have course credit hour charges waived. EF. An employee who has included university coursework as part of an approved leave of absence is entitled to the same education benefits as a regular employee. FG. Tuition waiver benefits cease upon termination of employment except for those credit hours in which the employee is currently enrolled and classes are in session at the time of termination. GH. Tuition waivers provided by this section apply to the total number of credit hours in which the employee, spouse, and/or dependent enrolls. HI. An employee is responsible for any tax liability generated from employee education benefits. DRAFT 2-22-07 5

IJ. Self-support course charges are not eligible to be waived under this benefit. JK. For a student enrolled in the WWAMI Medical Program, a tuition waiver may be used only for University of Alaska-provided coursework.

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Below is the current regulation for a nonmedical leave of absence. R.04.06.190. Leave of Absence (nonmedical) A regular employee who wishes to take an unpaid leave of absence in excess of 10 working days is required to make the request in writing to his/her immediate supervisor. The application will be forwarded through normal administrative channels, with recommendations being added at each level, to the appropriate chancellor who will then notify the applicant, in writing, of the decision. Notification must be sent to the Statewide Office of Human Resources. An employee may only rescind an approved leave of absence with written permission of the chancellor. All employees may request leave without pay for 10 working days or less. The employee's supervisor may approve in writing a leave without pay request. Granting leave of absence will not affect an employee's status except as provided by regulation or as agreed to in writing at the time leave is granted. During the leave, the employee is entitled to rights and privileges as if he/she were in regular service except that he/she will not receive salary and will not accumulate annual or sick leave. An employee may continue health, life, and long-term disability insurance and retirement programs to the extent allowed by the contracts with the vendors of such programs and as allowed by law. The employee will pay both his/her own and the university's portions of any cost. Leave of absence may be granted for a variety of purposes. Leave of absence may be granted for up to one year, and may be renewed for up to one additional year. The justification and merit of an application for leave of absence will be assessed in each individual case. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing, the leave recipient will return to the same position which he/she occupied before leaving, or, if the position no longer exists, to a comparable position. (06-20-97)