UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA SOUTHEAST
Staff Council
Juneau • Ketchikan • Sitka

MEMO

DATE: August 3, 2020

TO: Sheri Buretta
Regent, Chair of the Board

Pat Pitney
Interim President, University of Alaska

FROM: Eric Lingle
President, UAS Staff Council

CC: Dr. Karen Carey
Interim UAS Chancellor

Dr. Heather Batchelder
President, UAS Faculty Senate

RE: Amended Motion on Transformation Options

UAS Staff Council respectfully requests that the Board of Regents withdraw the June 4, 2020 Amended Motion of Transformation Options.

- Diverting time, energy, and resources toward a reorganization will not help navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

- UAS made painful budget cuts required under the governor's compact. Rearranging the university's organizational structure will not lead to the anticipated cost savings without deep cuts or campus closures.

- Without an independent university that is responsive to the economic conditions, geography, and unique needs of students in the region, the people of Southeast Alaska stand to lose access to postsecondary education.

- A merger between separately accredited universities would be a massive, multi-year process involving already thinly-stretched staff and faculty at both campuses. There is no guarantee such an action will meet the required approval of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities or the Department of Education.

- Public opinion and media coverage affect enrollment. Students do not want to enroll at a university they believe will be shut down.

Navigating any of the crises the university faces would be a challenge - successfully navigating them all together will take everything we have. The threat of a merger is crushing staff and student morale and is not a productive course of action.

Faced with increasing uncertainty, complexity, and an unprecedented public health emergency, we ask that the Board of Regents withdraw the Amended Motion of Transformation Options. Our task is to emerge better from these crises while completing our primary mission - student success.