

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMISSION MEETING
OF THE
ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

March 27, 2014

A special meeting of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education was held Thursday, March 27, 2014, via teleconference from the offices of the Commission at 3030 Vintage Blvd., Juneau, Alaska.

CONVENE

In Chair Johnsen's absence, Vice Chair Randy Weaver called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission members present for all or part of the meeting were Vice Chair Randy Weaver, Jerry Covey, Jo Heckman, Pat Jacobson and Sue Linford.

Commission members absent: Chair Jim Johnsen, Joey Crum, Ray DePriest, Mike Dunleavy, Rebecca Huggins, Andrew Lessig, Jim Merriner, Tammie Wilson and Mike Woods.

Due to the absence of a quorum the Chair indicated that the meeting would be for informational purposes only.

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were Diane Barrans, Executive Director; Charlene Morrison, Chief Finance Officer; Kerry Thomas, Internal Auditor; Rebekah Matrosova, Director of Outreach & Early Awareness; Worth Barthel, Human Resource Officer; Cindee Brown-Mills, Assistant Director of Financial Aid; Joann Rieselbach, School Compliance Officer; Kierke Kussart, Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator; Ben Shier, Quality Assurance Officer; Liz Lange, Administrative Assistant; and Rochelle Rogers, Executive Assistant and Secretary to the Commission.

Others Present: Kelli Pelham, Legislative Assistant, Office of Representative Tammie Wilson.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT

Ms. Barrans presented a Resolution of Support for Senate Bill 195 (SB195) and Senate Joint Resolution 23 (SJR23), along with talking points to allow members to speak with a consistent voice regarding the legislation. SJR23 would place a question on the next general election ballot to consider a revision to the state constitution to allow the issuance of general state obligation bonds to fund education loans. SB195 offers the first substantive update to statutes and student loan limits in the past twenty years.

Ms. Barrans provided an update around legislative activity. Ms. Barrans has been working with Senator Fairclough on both legislative items and has developed recommendations distilled into the bill and resolution before the legislature today. Both items were introduced in February.

As of the morning of March 27, SB195 was heard and passed out of both Senate Education and Senate Finance Committees. It is currently in Senate Rules Committee awaiting calendaring for its second reading on the floor. A minor amendment to SB 195 was made in Senate Finance Committee to allow the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, in the event no general funds are appropriated to create Teacher Education Loans (TEL) going forward, to effect a phase out with Corporation funds for borrowers who already received a TEL. In terms of support, it appears the bill is being well received. Since its introduction Senators Stevens, Hoffman, Meyer and Bishop have added their names as cosponsors. The bill received a number of do-pass votes from committee members under their individual recommendations. Ms. Barrans would expect referrals from the House to include House Education and Finance Committees and will be reaching out to committee leadership to inform them about the bill and address any questions or concerns. Because of the length of SB195 there may have been a greater interest in moving the bill to the other body to allow time for a thorough review.

The conversation around SJR23 is fairly serious because it relates to a constitutional amendment. A single objection was raised based on the belief the state should use money from savings as opposed to issuing general obligation debt to assist borrowers to reduce interest costs. The resolution passed State Affairs and Senate Education, and was referred to its final committee, Senate Finance. SJR23 is short and simple but requires policy discussion.

Commissioner Linford wondered if Commissioners will be expected to advocate for the legislation. Ms. Barrans explained the practice has been for the Executive Director to perform outreach for legislation, however; if members wish to reach out to their legislators, staff has prepared talking points to focus on the objectives of the bills. Ms. Barrans requested members keep her informed if they plan to personally advocate to allow her to stay abreast of any questions or concerns that arise during conversations. If members have any questions they feel would be helpful additions to the talking points Ms. Barrans asked members notify her and she will modify the document accordingly.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was offered.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, Vice Chair Weaver adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:24 p.m.

Randy Weaver, Vice Chair

**MINUTES OF THE
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March 31, 2014

A meeting of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education was held Monday, March 31, 2014, at the Chilkat Room of the Goldbelt Hotel at 51 Egan Drive, Juneau, AK 99801.

CONVENE

Chair Jim Johnsen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Commission members present for all or portions of the meeting were Chair Jim Johnsen, Vice Chair Randy Weaver, Jerry Covey, Joey Crum, Jo Heckman, Rebecca Huggins, Pat Jacobson, Andrew Lessig and Sue Linford.

Commission members absent: Ray DePriest, Mike Dunleavy, Jim Merriner, Tammie Wilson and Mike Woods.

Commission staff present for all or portions of the meeting were Diane Barrans, Executive Director; Stephanie Butler, Director of Program Operations; Charlene Morrison, Chief Finance Officer; Worth Barthel, Human Resource Officer; Kenneth Dodson, Director of Information Support Services; Kerry Thomas, Internal Auditor, SLDS Project Manager; Rebekah Matrosova, Director of Outreach & Early Awareness; Mary Ellen Beardsley, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Law; Cindee Brown-Mills, Assistant Director of Operations; Benjamin Shier, Quality Assurance Officer; Brian Rae, Assistant Director of Research & Analysis; Joann Rieselbach, School Relations Manager; Kierke Kussart, Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator; and Rochelle Rogers, Executive Assistant/Commission Secretary.

Others Present: Deborah Lo, Dean of Education, University of Alaska Southeast; Frank Coenraad, Director of Alaska Learning Network; Dustin Heil, Resource Manager, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; Robert Jost, Vice Chancellor for Administration, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; William Muldoon, Vice Chancellor of Campus Operations, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; Vershawn Idom, Owner, Hair Science; Jana Powell, Owner, Shear Fire Academy of Hair Design; Laird Jones, Manager, Vocational Training & Resource Center; Theresa Woldstad, Legislative Assistant for Representative Tammie Wilson.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Huggins moved to adopt the amended agenda of the March 31, 2014 Commission meeting. The Executive Director Report was proposed to be moved from item 11 to item 6 on the agenda to allow Ms. Barrans the opportunity to testify at a legislative hearing. **The motion was seconded by Commissioner Linford. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.**

ETHICS DISCLOSURE RELATIVE TO ADOPTED AGENDA

No ethics disclosures were offered.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Chair Johnsen welcomed new member Joey Crum, representative of proprietary education.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Weaver moved to adopt the minutes of the January 9, 2014 and February 26, 2014 Commission meetings. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Covey. Not having participated in that meeting, Commissioners Crum and Linford abstained from voting. **By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Barrans presented her written report, first referencing House Bill 266/Senate Bill 120, the fiscal year 2015 operating budget. While the Legislature devotes a great deal of time on the state operating budget, ACPE was fortunate to avoid adjustments to the governor's budget request including appropriations for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and the AlaskAdvantage Education Grant, the two budget items with substantive increments. Having funds set aside in the Higher Education Investment Fund has been a successful strategy along with consistent legislative support.

Introduced during the 2013 session, House Bill 17 was designed to provide a credit to certain borrowers' education loans contingent upon timely degree completion and residing or returning to the state. The bill has not been scheduled for a hearing this session.

House Bill 365 relates to amending APS eligibility. Amendments will require the State Board of Education & Early Development establish multiple WorkKeys' minimum scores for each award level rather than the current standard of a single score thereby using a student's grade point average to determine award level. The Board's goal was to allow more students to access the career and technical education (CTE) APS. There are concerns about the program changes in the bill, especially relating to students qualifying

through the CTE track but then using their award for collegiate programs. WorkKeys is not designed to assess college readiness so there may be unintended consequences of students pursuing an academic credential for which they are not prepared. The House Education Committee heard concerns from Ms. Barrans and the Department of Education & Early Development. The Committee requested additional information relating to the performance of students who qualified through WorkKeys but chose to pursue a collegiate route.

With respect to Senate Bill 195 and Senate Joint Resolution 23, Senate Bill 195 moved to House Rules awaiting a floor vote and is poised to progress to the next body. Senate Joint Resolution 23 has been scheduled with Senate Finance, its final committee of referral. Given the strong support for Senate Bill 195 in Senate Finance, Ms. Barrans is optimistic the hearing for Senate Joint Resolution 23 will advance favorably.

Per Chair Johnsen's request, Ms. Barrans prepared talking points and a potential resolution for consideration supporting Senate Bill 195 and Senate Joint Resolution 23.

Commissioner Covey moved to adopt the Resolution of Support for Senate Bill 195 and Senate Joint Resolution 23. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Huggins. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.

INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS & EVALUATION

Ms. Kussart introduced Joann Rieselbach, School Relations Manager. Ms. Rieselbach has served in a variety of capacities with ACPE since 2005. As School Relations Manager she will work to strengthen relationships between postsecondary institutions and ACPE, engage in institutional audits, investigate formal student complaints, and act as the designated agency contact for the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

Initial Authorization

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Commissioner Linford moved to approve a two-year initial authorization of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, through April 30, 2016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Covey. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.

Hair Science - Commissioner Weaver moved to approve a one-year initial authorization of Hair Science, through April 30, 2015, contingent upon approval of the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers and maintaining full surety bonding. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jacobson. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.

Renewal of Authorization

Shear Fire Academy of Hair Design - **Commissioner Jacobson moved to approve a two-year and six month renewal of authorization of the Shear Fire Academy of Hair Design, through October 31, 2016, contingent upon receipt of compliant financials.** Ms. Powell, owner of Shear Fire Academy of Hair Design, requested her next authorization renewal be moved to the fall quarterly meeting agenda as the spring quarterly meeting conflicts with year-end duties. **The motion was seconded by Commissioner Huggins. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.**

Vocational Training & Resource Center (VTRC) - **Commissioner Weaver moved to approve a one-year renewal of authorization of the VTRC, through April 30, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Huggins. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.**

REGULATIONS

Commissioner Jacobson moved to adopt regulations to amend Title 20, Chapter 17 to provide for Alaska's participation in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement and to make general housekeeping and conforming changes (20 AAC 17.016). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Huggins. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.

ALASKA LEARNING NETWORK (AKLN)

Deborah Lo, Dean of Education and Graduate Studies, University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), presented an overview of the Alaska Learning Network (AKLN). Ms. Lo explained AKLN's goal is to make education more accessible through an electronic, digital network of courses. AKLN was a significant undertaking for the university, but after discussion with faculty and leadership UAS decided to go forward with the initiative. There are three main reasons UAS decided to implement AKLN: to break down the silos in education, show students education is a possibility, keep university faculty happy and maintain productive partnerships. AKLN aligns with the mission of UAS and the larger University of Alaska system. AKLN is a partnership between the three university campuses, the Department of Education & Early Development, and the fifty-four school districts. The advisory board consists of the school districts, with a smaller working group of fifteen superintendents representing Alaska's regions, and a five member executive committee. AKLN has five primary objectives: to provide rich and varied coursework regardless of the students' location; implement a rigorous and creative curriculum; provide students with clearly articulated programs of study and dual-enrollment where appropriate; expand high quality professional development opportunities; and expand partnerships with universities and technology-based companies and nonprofits.

UAS is responsible for the registration, logistics, professional development and data collection of the system. AKLN offers cross-district collaboration, serving students

through distance education across the state. While it may not be cost-effective to offer a course for only a few students at one campus, AKLN allows students state-wide to attend via distance to create a more economically-feasible system. UAS hires AKLN teachers who perform work outside contracts with their respective school districts. AKLN faculty works with teachers to develop and vet the specific courses. Districts may choose to purchase a class, license, and hire a teacher, but UAS would still handle the logistics and oversee the course. In terms of professional development, the objective of AKLN is to strengthen the program through strengthening the school districts. AKLN trains teachers in advanced placement courses; a mutual benefit to AKLN and the school districts. AKLN teachers also have the option to obtain a new certification and endorsement in e-learning and distance education. In some circumstances teachers may teach a course under mentorship while earning their credential for the particular course. AKLN boasts all the courses needed to prepare for the Alaska Performance Scholarship, eight courses offering dual enrollment university credit through tech-prep and one hundred ninety-three paraprofessional courses. The system's technology offers synchronous and asynchronous scheduled courses, although most are currently asynchronous. Dean Lo advised there has been criticism relating to the program offering career and technical pathway courses. Lo disputed the critique, noting she sees importance in offering the courses and will continue to do so while UAS is charged with implementing the system.

Commissioner Covey wondered how AKLN is managing the technology available to ensure its efficacy in rural Alaska. Dean Lo advised the system has utilized Blackboard with mostly success. Kelly Sorensen, Technology Coordinator for the Department of Education & Early Development, also has the ability to cache lessons to be sent to schools. In one case a site supervisor was invited as a guest to Blackboard to assist students with technical language.

Frank Coenraad was recently hired as the AKLN Director after working for the Juneau School District. His main initiative to increase enrollment, with the ultimate goal being all fifty-four districts involved in the program. AKLN began with thirty-three districts and has grown to forty-three participating districts. Enrollment doubled between academic years 11/12 and 12/13 with a total of 608 students now participating in AKLN. AKLN should impact education for its students and increase retention. Last year featured a completion rate of 67%, this year the rate is anticipated to be around 82%. Ten masters-level teachers are developing summer enrichment courses to allow students credit recovery through distance education.

Commissioner Covey asked about the delivery cost per course and how AKLN is finding ways to reduce costs for districts. Dean Lo advised AKLN courses include both the course and the teacher salary. It may seem cheaper to simply buy the course license, but that does not account for teacher compensation. The legislature is currently discussing the possibility of AKLN operating without reliance on state funding; a concern because AKLN is struggling to operate within its current funding structure. Commissioner Johnsen noted the National Center for Academic Transformation offers self-paced, asynchronous remedial education off campus for students requiring remediation. He wondered if AKLN may consider that option going forward. Dean Lo

advised there is a lot of remediation occurring at the university, offering remedial courses to the general public is something to consider.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Barrans provided a legislative update. Senate Joint Resolution 23 was heard in Senate Finance Committee. A single individual provided public testimony expressing concern about interest rates on education loans. Ms. Barrans answered a series of questions for the group relating to the Alaska Student Loan Corporation's current situation, underwriting criteria and bond structure. The resolution passed out of Finance and awaits calendaring in Senate Rules Committee.

REVISED ALASKA STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS FINDINGS

Brian Rae, Assistant Director for Research and Policy Analysis, presented preliminary findings on borrowers who had taken out forgivable student loans in 1972-1987 at the January quarterly meeting. After the meeting it was discovered a 1993 upgrade to the processing system prevented certain loan information from converting to the new system. The inclusion of previously unidentified omitted loans did affect the numbers and percentages presented. The updated presentation will correct the numbers on student loan forgiveness. In the final analysis, the efficacy of the forgivable loan program in fostering degree completion, enticing students to remain in or return to Alaska, and helping students successfully pay off their loan was suspect.

The three requirements for a borrower to receive loan forgiveness were residency, on-time loan repayment and degree completion. Loan provisions allowed for a 10% reduction per year of a borrower's principal and accrued interest so long as they met the eligibility requirements. Borrowers were required to provide proof of residency and degree completion which ACPE validated. ACPE does not, however, hold information relating to residency or degree completion for borrowers who did not apply for forgiveness. Aside from default, ACPE must utilize proxies to assume why borrowers may not have applied for forgiveness or which requirements they failed to meet. ACPE maintains record of borrowers who defaulted on their loans, and Mr. Rae analyzed Permanent Dividend Fund (PFD) applications as a measure of residency status. The only unknown is degree completion as ACPE does not track that data.

Although PFD data only dates back to 1982, only about 10% of borrowers began repayment prior to the implementation of the PFD program. Using PFD records Mr. Rae found 74% of borrowers filed at least one PFD within five years of beginning repayment, indicating residency. Roughly 26,000 of these borrowers filed a PFD and did not default on a loan; and, of those, 60% received at least some amount of forgiveness. While ACPE does not track much socioeconomic demographic data, institution of attendance is recorded. There was little difference in forgiveness benefits across the states. Borrowers attending school in Alaska represented approximately 50% of forgivable loan borrowers.

However; there were four states that averaged higher in forgiveness than Alaska: Colorado, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

The average borrowed amount was slightly over \$10,700. Those who received forgiveness borrowed substantially more, likely a result of the longer term of study to complete their degree. Borrowers who received some forgiveness averaged \$13,100 in loans, while borrowers not receiving forgiveness averaged \$9,600. Updated findings showed 68% of borrowers received no forgiveness. 10% of borrowers received some loan forgiveness, and 22% of borrowers received the full 50% forgiveness. Eight-hundred, fifty borrowers who received the full amount of forgiveness went on to default on one of their student loans. In total, borrowers of forgivable loans took out nearly \$605 million in loans; \$425 million in forgivable loans and an additional \$180 million of non-forgivable loans. Nearly four in ten borrowers ended up defaulting on their loan, and 10,000 of the 56,400 borrowers had some portion of their loan through ACPE written off. In total, over \$76 million was forgiven, only slightly greater than the amount eventually written off.

2014 ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP OUTCOMES REPORT

Mr. Rae also provided an overview of the 2014 APS outcomes report. The third annual Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) report was released in January. The 2011 inaugural class is now in its third year of study allowing the comparison of three years of data. Over 3,000 students have received APS funding and \$16.7 million has been awarded to high school graduates. There are now 7,180 graduates eligible for the scholarship. Fifty of the state's fifty-four districts have graduated APS-eligible students.

The award funding has grown from under \$3 million in the first year of the program to \$8 million this academic year, with 2,300 students receiving APS funding this fall. This academic year had the highest percentage of APS-eligible graduates at 31.5%. Twelve hundred of the twenty-five hundred eligible applicants were eligible for the Level 1 award, and for the first time since the program's inception Level 1 applicants were most likely to make use of the award. The Level 1 recipients have always been most likely to pursue postsecondary studies, however; they historically were more likely to attend out-of-state. This year top level graduates were nearly as likely to attend in-state as out-of-state. These shifts are likely due to the ability to better plan for use of the award.

Scholarships are overwhelmingly being used toward full-time bachelor's programs. Because the scholarship has an eligibility window and limit on number of payments, it is beneficial to recipients to attend full-time. An increase was seen in career and technical (CTE) scholarships, likely the result of a new high school requirement in 2012 to take the WorkKeys assessment along with decreased WorkKeys score requirements to qualify for the CTE award. Commissioner Covey noted rural districts are increasingly using their resources for CTE education courses, and, in turn, the graduation rate of rural students enrolled in CTE coursework is increasing rapidly. He noted that in a five-year time span the graduation rate in the Bering Strait doubled, likely a result of a

significant amount of coursework through Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center. Looking forward, CTE has great significance in public policy in rural education.

Mr. Rae noted that according to the University of Alaska Statewide Institutional Research & Analysis office, a measure of postsecondary preparedness is the reduction of remediation required for incoming college students. In the fall of 2013 the University of Alaska enrolled 3,191 first time freshman, 842 of which were APS recipients. Nearly 60% of non-recipients took at least one remedial course in their first semester, while only about 20% of APS recipients required remediation. The University of Alaska also found persistence in APS recipients was higher than ineligible students. Nearly 70% of recipients who graduated in 2011 were still enrolled in the fall of 2013 compared to 38.3% of non-recipients.

Commissioner Johnsen wondered about the efficacy of the APS program and how it compared to other public policy approaches to drive desired outcomes. He compared the goals of the APS to the Alaska Student Loan Forgiveness program; retention, return, degree completion, and a skilled and engaged workforce and citizenry in the state. He surmised it may be too early to compare the two approaches, but asked Mr. Rae's opinion. Mr. Rae replied without a control group it is hard to compare the effect of the APS. However, based on the three years of APS data, one can speculate on emerging trends. High performers are performing better, and students are making use of the award increasingly at in-state institutions. There is some progress being made in the areas the program was intended to incent. Commissioner Weaver wondered how the eligibility standards are developed and who decreased the WorkKeys qualifying score. Ms. Barrans advised program administration is shared by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and ACPE; the State Board sets the eligibility standards in regulation while ACPE sets standards on the administration of awards and continuing eligibility.

MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORTS

Finance – Ms. Morrison referenced her written report. She noted the 2015 operating budget request was presented to the legislature and does not anticipate any changes. She expects the operating budget will be passed as submitted by the governor. In terms of Senate Bill 195, the bill does include a fiscal note with \$460,000 for a capital project to enhance or replace the agency's current grant and scholarship servicing system to better meet the needs of schools and students.

Ms. Morrison provided an update on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) audit of the Corporation's tax-exempt revenue bonds. There has been no change in the status of the review, and no information has been provided in terms of the anticipated outcome of the examination. The only activity was a phone call between the Corporation's bond council and the IRS to answer questions.

Program Operations – Ms. Butler offered a few updates relative to her written report, and introduced Program Operations staff members Cindee Brown-Mills, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, and Ben Shier, Quality Assurance Officer.

Ms. Butler noted the implementation of new call center telephony software has been successful. The new system allows Customer Service Agents to work in a blended environment relative to incoming and outgoing calls. The new technology provides screen information to help agents rapidly identify callers and address the question while transferring authentication of the caller. The system increases efficiency for the agents while eliminating burdensome questions of the caller as well. Commissioner Johnsen questioned the increased hold time between fiscal year 2013 and 2014; Ms. Butler explained the increase was a result of reduced staffing and adjusting to the new system. Hold time has already decreased and she expects the decline to continue.

In relation to the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), members may be aware of related federal negotiated rulemaking that is now underway. Through the U.S. Department of Education, proposed regulations would require an institution offering distance education across state borders to be authorized in each state the institution offers distance education. Currently individual states make the determination of whether an institution must be authorized, exempt, or offered a blended status. The proposition has drawn attention because institutions are concerned about the increased burden of the process, and due to the concern that the proposed regulations represent a federal intrusion into a state responsibility. A few states have raised concerns about SARA because it accepts national accreditation as documentation of academic soundness, and some states vary on their requirement of regional versus national accreditation. Specific to SARA requirements, participating institutions must abide by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions interregional guidelines for distance education.

Each January the agency calculates cohort default rates on alternative loans made by the Commission. Rates are calculated on loans that entered repayment during the cohort year, remained in repayment for twelve months, and are in default at the end of the twelve-month period. The Alaska Supplemental Education Loan's cohort default rate is 6.14% for 2012.

Outreach and Early Awareness – Ms. Matrosova provided highlights from her written report. In terms of the implementation of strategic changes, Misty Klodt was moved to a leadership role in the Success Center. Since the transition, one-on-one services have nearly doubled and direct contact workshops have more than doubled. Staff have been wrapping up College Goal Alaska events. These constitute the annual Federal Application For Student Aid (FAFSA) completion initiative. Past years have shown a decline in attendance, and as a result staff have implemented cost and time saving measures. The new strategies reversed the three-year decline and events reached 50% more individuals this year than in the prior year.

The past quarter presented the most comprehensive data relating to the Alaska College and Career Corps' (ACAC) impact on schools served by the program. National

Student Clearinghouse data on college enrollment rates showed an overall 6% increase in enrollment of graduates from schools with a College/Career guide presence. There is some variation between schools which will be investigated, but overall the program delivered higher results than the national average rate for similar programs. The College/Career guides just began reporting student scholarship offers. This year to-date the ACAC program has assisted students in receiving over \$1.3 million of scholarships; more than the cost of the entire ACAC program. On the horizon, staff will work with the ACAC sustainability workgroup to plan the continued operation or successful transition of the ACAC after grant funding is exhausted.

In other activities, the development of the College Access and Success partnerships have continued. The group has been examining ways to leverage partner initiatives and ensure collaboration with practitioners engaged in college access and success in Alaska. The College Access and Success Network planning team reconvened to formally adopt the mission statement and new name – Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network. Membership was also expanded to include additional nonprofit and secondary education representation.

The College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) continues to take a significant amount of time this quarter. Ms. Matrosova along with several staff members from Outreach & Early Awareness and Program Operations formed a team to participate in the interim evaluation for the CACG program with an external evaluator. The two primary initiatives funded by the grant are the ACAC program and Alaska's College Access and Success Network. Next quarter will mark the final application for the CACG so sustainability efforts will be important going forward.

Information Support Services – Mr. Dodson referenced his written report noting Information Support Services has been focused on three main areas in the past quarter. Staff has continued to support the ANSWERS project by working on specifications and designs for technical aspects of the project. In terms of loan servicing, staff is in the process of converting the Higher Education Loan Management System (HELMS) from the mainframe to a server environment. The transition will be beneficial to the agency both in savings and productivity. Staff remains committed to providing network support to ensure the agency has the infrastructure necessary to keep activities running as smoothly and effectively as possible.

Internal Audit – Ms. Thomas noted the internal audit committee met prior to the spring quarterly meeting to receive an annual update. Ms. Thomas continues to be involved in the Process Analysis Systems (PAS) team. In the upcoming quarter the PAS team will begin a customer service correspondence review. The team will also implement a model to evaluate, identify and prioritize internal reviews going forward.

There is a lot of activity occurring with the ANSWERS project. GeoNorth was selected and contracted with to design and develop the ANSWERS data system. The ANSWERS project team has also begun designing and developing the public portal, which includes selecting reports for publication and building reports. A kickoff meeting

was conducted in Juneau with the University of Alaska, Department of Education & Early Development, Department of Labor & Workforce Development and ACPE. The meeting was successful with significantly more participation and engagement than was seen in the beginning of the project. There are approximately fifteen months remaining on the grant project.

Ms. Thomas announced ACPE staff member Liz LaPierre was selected to fill the ANSWERS Project Analyst position.

Human Resources/Administrative Services – Mr. Barthel announced the past quarter had been busy for Human Resources and Administrative Services as a result of the ANSWERS project. Cheryl Sams, Procurement Officer, has been heavily involved in the procurement of GeoNorth's services. Mr. Barthel will be working with Ms. Thomas and Ms. Butler to create positions to staff the ANSWERS program management office.

Administrative Services has been partnering with the division of finance to work on the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) project, a statewide initiative to implement new accounting, financial, procurement, payroll and human resource management software. Mr. Barthel will commence the human resources portion and expects to spend the next several years assisting with the project.

In the next quarter Mr. Barthel will begin the development of an agency-wide performance evaluation template.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Board of Regents – Commissioner Jacobson reported the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents meeting was held February 20-22 in Fairbanks, Alaska. The board approved the fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget request to offset increases in fuel and utility costs, amended the FY15 operating budget request to increase funding for the United Academics representing faculty and for base funding for utility cost increases. The board approved a Master of Movement in Performance and the deletion of Master of Arts in Music at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and approved the merger of the UAF School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences and the Cooperative Extension Service to form the School of Natural Resources and Extension. Also approved was the schematic design for the University of Alaska Anchorage's health campus pedestrian bridge as presented in compliance with the campus master plan. This authorizes the university administration to complete construction bid documents to bid and award a contract within the approved budget and proceed with completion of the project.

Members approved a resolution of support for the Alaska Science and Technology plan as presented. The Alaska State Committee for Research (SCoR) is an advisory body created to assist the university in focusing and enhancing its capacity for research and development through a partnership of UA colleges and universities, promote research and development in and between universities and industry, promote economic

development in Alaska, and to provide oversight and guidance to the Alaska SCoR. SCoR has developed a roadmap for the future of Alaska by collaborative effort by the state, university, federal agencies, communities and the private sector. The regents strongly support the plan developed by SCoR.

Student Commissioner – Commissioner Lessig noted student governments across the state have been busy. Students from all the University of Alaska campuses had the opportunity to travel to Juneau for the annual legislative advocacy trip. Commissioner Lessig was pleased to share news of the ANSWERS project with President Gamble and one of the legislative committees. Ms. Butler attended the statewide meetings to discuss ACPE’s programs and services and related legislation with the group. The Coalition of Student Leaders, along with President Gamble, took a stance opposing the concealed campus bill. Student governments statewide unanimously oppose the bill.

Commissioner Lessig shared he will be graduating in May from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) as its youngest student to receive a bachelor’s degree. Because he will no longer be a full-time student at UAA he must offer his resignation to the Commission. Commissioner Lessig will be pursuing law school in the fall.

General Public – Commissioner Covey shared he has been working to make changes in education public policy to afford new opportunities to students in small rural high schools. In fiscal year 2013 there were 71 high schools in rural Alaska that enrolled ten or fewer students; 126 high schools have 30 or fewer students. Small rural high schools host approximately 1,400 students. These schools are remote and students are disconnected from the opportunities they need.

Proprietary Education – Commissioner Crum addressed career and technical education (CTE) statistics. He discussed the growing gap between workforce needs and skilled workers. He believes more outreach is needed in high schools relating to CTE. Students are interested in CTE but are unsure about the financing aspect and the career opportunities. Alaska workers produce some of the most environmentally sound, consistent production rates and have great safety records. Workers are in high demand both in and out-of-state making CTE a valuable resource in Alaska.

2015 SPRING MEETING DATE

Commissioner Weaver moved to schedule the spring 2015 commission meeting for Friday April 3, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crum. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was offered.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Huggins nominated Commissioner Johnsen and Weaver to continue to serve as Chair and Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Covey. By roll call vote, all members present voted Aye. The motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Johnsen adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:05 PM.

Jim Johnsen, Chair