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April 19, 2016

Dr. Sandra E. Elman
President, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
8060 165th Ave. NE, Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052

Re: Single Accreditation for the University of Alaska

Dear Dr. Elman,

The University of Alaska (UA) system is comprised of three main Universities: UA Anchorage, UA Fairbanks, and UA Southeast. Currently, each University operates under its own Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation. For reasons described below, we have been asked by our State officials and our governing body, the Board of Regents, to investigate moving to a single University/single accreditation model. I hope to consult with you on this matter.

Alaska is experiencing declining State revenue, a situation that is not expected to change in the near future. As our State revenues decline, so does the revenue for the UA system. This decline, on top of state revenue declines over the past couple years, will translate into higher tuition and fees for our students and a reduction up to 500 employee FTEs. Roughly 60 academic programs are under consideration for elimination. With the continuing budget reductions and a 12.8% decrease in student headcount from Fall 2011-2015, the UA system must focus on keeping our universities moving forward in the most efficient manner.

In addition to consideration of single accreditation for the University of Alaska, we are developing a *Strategic Pathways* framework that will move us through the next 10 years of change. A major component of *Strategic Pathways* is to name "lead universities". Although some programs will cease to be offered at certain campuses, we will keep our accreditation standards in line with NWCCU standards. The lead university model will assist us with streamlining efforts and increasing efficiencies through shared services models.

Alaska is unique in comparison to other state universities in that our community campuses are included in the University system. A number of the community campuses and other rural centers and sites are not accessible by road. Even for our main campuses, the distance between

each is 350 miles or more. The distance has allowed each university to focus on and serve regional needs.

The University of Alaska Anchorage is scheduled for the Fall 2017 year seven evaluation while UA Fairbanks and Southeast are scheduled for Fall 2019. If the single accreditation model is pursued we anticipate a two-year implementation.

As we make our way forward and consider innovative ways to keep our services and programs affordable and competitive for our students, we would appreciate an early dialogue on this matter. I look forward to working with you as we look to positive change for our University and our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. White', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Daniel M. White, Ph.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research