



CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTS: From UAS Chancellor Rick Caulfield

Dear UAS faculty and staff:

The deep budget cuts proposed for the University of Alaska in Governor Dunleavy's FY20 budget pose a major challenge for higher education in Alaska. It's important to remember that the education we provide to our students transforms lives. It is an investment in the future of our state. We are committed to advocating aggressively in support of our students and their success. I invite you to be a part of that effort, which must include students, graduates, alumni, and community businesses and partners that hire our graduates.

Under President Johnsen's leadership, the UA system is moving ahead proactively on an advocacy plan focused on the Alaska legislature. Using private funds, we anticipate hiring an external firm to help organize that effort. Look for more details in the next week or so. Outreach to alumni and community partners will be key in communicating our message about the importance of UA to a strong and vital future for Alaska. President Johnsen spoke yesterday to the Senate Finance Committee about the profound negative impact that the Governor's proposal would have on our programs, on our students, and on the communities we serve.

On Monday of this week I joined President Johnsen and my fellow chancellors to continue mapping out shared strategies for responding to this challenge. Foremost on that agenda was moving forward on a statewide advocacy plan. We also had preliminary discussions about scenarios for managing potential reductions. Given the severity of what the Governor proposes, it was agreed that all aspects of the University's budget need to be considered. To some extent, Strategic Pathways discussions from recent years provide a useful guide—including seeking greater administrative efficiencies. However, the President indicated that the idea—previously discussed—of one UA reforming under a single accreditation is not something he's inclined to consider. Moreover, he's not inclined to support a 'pro-rata' approach to any reductions spread across the three universities. Instead, he's asked us to focus on the distinctive missions, priorities, and assets at each university. For UAS, that includes our UA-wide leadership role in teacher education and educational leadership under the Alaska College of Education.

In light of these developments, we at UAS are moving forward on several fronts: first, providing timely information to faculty, staff, and students. We held a forum on the budget for faculty and staff last Friday, and we'll hold one for students later today. Participants from all three campuses are invited. We'll hold more such forum events as new information develops. Second, we are expanding our outreach in our communities. Just yesterday, UAS Ketchikan Campus Director Priscilla Schulte spoke before the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly about the impact of proposed cuts. Her testimony undoubtedly contributed to the Assembly's decision to voice opposition to the Governor's proposed cuts. Third, our Executive Cabinet and Provost's Council will begin discussions about mission, priorities, and assets. We'll bring preliminary ideas about these to the *Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee*, which has representation both from UAS administration and from governance groups. I encourage all those with ideas about how to address these challenges to use our governance groups as a channel for doing so.

I'm particularly heartened by UAS students who are organizing on our campuses to hone their skills in communicating with legislators about the importance of a UAS education. Yesterday, three UAS students, including student government president Nick Bursell, took the opportunity to testify before the UA Board of Regents by phone. All three spoke very positively about their UAS experience. Their words affirmed the important and meaningful work you are all doing.

We remain committed to transparent communication with you all as we confront this challenge. I'm grateful for the continuing good work that you do in support of our students—each and every day. Thank you/Gunalchésh!