

7/15/19 -- EMAIL TO UAS EMPLOYEES

Dear UAS Faculty and Staff,

You may have heard that the UA Board of Regents, meeting this afternoon, decided to postpone any decision about declaring financial exigency for the UA system. The vote was 10 in favor of postponing, and one in favor.

In making this decision, board members spoke about the need to allow more time for ongoing budget negotiations currently underway involving university leadership, the governor, and the legislature. They heard strong encouragement from Faculty Alliance statewide to postpone action. The likelihood of significant budget cuts remains strong, but board members expressed concern that a declaration of exigency would be premature.

At the meeting, President Johnsen asked the Board to provide some guidance about the direction university leaders should take in tackling budget reductions. He hoped that this guidance would inform development of a UA-wide plan to be presented at a scheduled board meeting on July 30. With limitations on time in this afternoon's meeting, clear guidance was not forthcoming. However, the board decided to add another in-person meeting next week, on July 22, with a goal of using the intervening days to engage in budget negotiations and consider next steps.

As Chancellor, I realize that the continuing uncertainty of this process can be profoundly unsettling for both employees and students. I encourage you to stay positive as we move forward, keeping in mind the very good news about our reaffirmed NWCCU accreditation and the very strong support we enjoy in the communities we serve.

In speaking with continuing and prospective students, please let them know that UAS is open for business and is focused on the success of our students. We have every expectation that UAS programs will go forward as planned for fall semester. It is very likely that changes will be necessary as we look beyond fall, but we will continue to advocate for our students and we will continue to keep you informed about any proposed changes.

And on a personal level, if you need support in these unsettling times, please do take advantage of the counseling services available through our Employee Assistance Program which is available 24 hours a day: <https://alaska.edu/benefits/employee-assistance-progr/>

I greatly appreciate the work that you do in support of our students and our mission here at UAS.

Sincerely,

Rick Caulfield
Chancellor