

7/10/19 -- EMAIL TO UAS STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY:

Dear UAS community:

President Johnsen just sent out an update about the fact that the legislature's vote to override the governor's veto was unsuccessful. Despite your extraordinary advocacy efforts and that of many others across Alaska, there were not 45 legislators in Juneau present to vote in favor of the override. The vote was 37-1.

The legislature's joint session will reconvene tomorrow morning at 10:30am. It is possible that absent legislators will come to Juneau and join in reconsideration of today's vote. The legislature has until 1pm on Saturday to make a final decision.

Even if the override is not successful, it is possible that a separate supplemental appropriation bill will be introduced as part of this special session. This approach, or perhaps approval of additional support for UA in the capital budget, are possibilities. However, it remains unclear how much funding would be available through this avenue; whether it would be one-time or recurring, and when it might become available. Also unclear is the significance of the legislatively-approved dual appropriation, and the fact that proposed cuts are focused on the appropriation for the Anchorage and Fairbanks campuses and the statewide system office. Even with this provision, it's not likely that UAS and community campuses will avoid significant cuts.

Given this continuing uncertainty, it is very likely that the Board of Regents—meeting in special session next Monday, July 15--will take up the matter of declaring financial exigency for the UA system as a whole. If the Board takes this action, the expectation would be for UA leadership to bring back a plan for significant downsizing of UA for consideration at a planned July 30 board meeting.

Many of you have asked about the meaning and significance of a declaration of financial exigency. UA Human Resources has developed a set of FAQs about this that I encourage you to review. A copy is attached below. The bottom line is that exigency allows UA to move quickly to reduce its budget through a more rapid downsizing of university programs, services, and facilities.

As Chancellor, I greatly appreciate the work that you do in support of our students and our mission. I realize that this inaction by the legislature is a disappointment and that the continuing uncertainty is profoundly unsettling. Having said this, I ask that you continue to keep the faith as we support the success of our students. I'm confident that our university will make it through these challenging times for the betterment of our students, our communities, and our state.

Sincerely,

Rick Caulfield

Attachment: UA Human Resources FAQs on financial exigency