

February 13, 2019

Dear UAS faculty and staff:

By now you've probably heard about Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget cuts for the University of Alaska and seen President Jim Johnsen's response. As President Johnsen states, the proposed 41 percent cut is devastating (-\$134M UGF; down from \$327M in FY19 to proposed \$193M in FY20). This draconian cut is the largest reduction ever proposed in the 100-year history of the university. If this cut is not reversed by the legislature, it will undermine the university's mission and commitment to our students. It will hurt Alaska's economy long into the future.

It is important to remember that the Governor's proposal is just the starting point for legislative review. The final FY20 budget will be produced only after debate and action in the Alaska State Legislature. We may not know the outcome until late in the spring, or even later. To counter this proposal, all of us who care about higher education in the state—students, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, and community partners—will need to speak up loudly as part of an aggressive advocacy campaign, reminding Alaskans that UA is critical to our state's economy and to the communities we serve.

As the President points out, this budget proposal would force UA to make very tough decisions which would impact all UA campuses and programs. Here at UAS, we've already gone through four years of budget reductions and programmatic cuts. We've been living with uncertainty and we've made tough decisions. As Chancellor, I'm keenly aware of the burden and additional work that these past cuts have placed on our staff in particular. I'm grateful for the continuing dedication of all employees in uncertain times. But the Governor's proposal goes far beyond what we've ever seen. If approved, the proposal would necessarily lead to major reductions in faculty and staff. Across UA, you could eliminate entire campuses, delete major programs, and raise tuition dramatically and still not get to the proposed \$134M reduction.

I will be joining the President, my fellow chancellors, and the Board of Regents in communicating in no uncertain terms to the legislature how devastating this proposal is to our students, our campuses, and our state. President Johnsen has called an emergency meeting of chancellors and senior university leaders for next Monday, February 18, to chart our course as a system in dealing with this challenge. As we know more, and as UA's response is formulated, we'll share that information with you. Here at UAS we'll be using our SPBAC—Strategic Planning and Budgeting Advisory Committee—along with Executive Cabinet and Provost's Council to keep all informed and to invite your feedback and engagement as we consider how to respond.

Because of the many questions that the Governor's proposal raises, we're planning special forums for both employees and students in the coming week, and will be available via audio for faculty and staff on the Ketchikan and Sitka campuses; details will follow soon. Our goal for the forum is to share what we know, invite questions and ideas for advocacy, and renew our collective commitment to serving our students well—even in extremely challenging times.

Thank you,

Rick Caulfield  
Chancellor