

For Immediate Release
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UA Regents endorse budget investing in K-12, energy & workforce programs

The University of Alaska Board of Regents approved a budget today that places K-12 partnerships and outreach, engineering, energy, health, climate change and workforce programs as top priorities.

The \$345 million request for state investment in the university's 16-campus system now goes to the governor for consideration. The governor crafts the state budget in December and presents it to the Legislature in January.

The university generates its own money from tuition, research grants and other income for a total FY10 budget of \$849.6 million.

"This budget strengthens our partnerships within the public school system and the state Department of Education and Early Development, and provides funding to better support those students once they come to the university," said Board Chair Mary K. Hughes. "The budget also reflects our commitment to double the number of engineers we graduate by 2012, positions the university as a national and even global leader in energy solutions and climate change, and invests in critical workforce programs, including health."

The university's enrollment in high-demand degree programs is at record levels, according to university statistics. Those programs include nursing, allied health, behavioral health, engineering, welding, computer networking, construction management and technology, information technology and many others. In addition, UA's undergraduate retention rate also is at a record high for the institution.

"When you look at how we're measuring performance, we're doing very well," said Regent Tim Brady.

Public turnout at the one-day meeting was considerable, with many students and employers speaking in support of engineering, biology, indigenous studies, health and clinical training and other programs.

In addition to the \$2.6 million for K-12 outreach and partnerships such as Tech Prep, summer bridging programs, testing and placement, the operating budget also includes the following:

- . \$1.4 million in energy solutions for Alaska, including critical faculty members in energy economics, renewable power and alternative energy, plus outreach through the university's Cooperative Extension Service;
- . \$1.5 million toward engineering programs;
- . \$3 million toward the university's biomedical capacity and health programs, including new faculty positions in key areas;
- . And \$2.3 million for campus workforce programs, including the marine transportation program at UAS-Ketchikan; the process technology program at Kenai Peninsula College; and the Career, Vocational and Technical Program at Kodiak College.

UA's proposed capital budget, at nearly \$400 million, puts a top priority on

maintaining existing facilities and equipment (\$50 million); a new Life Sciences Building at UAF (\$82 million); campus entrance improvements at UAS in Juneau (\$4 million); the second installment toward a new UAA Sports Arena, (\$65 million); and reduce a major maintenance backlog across the UA system (\$150 million).

In other business, the board also:

- . Approved the sale of 43 acres of university property in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley to the state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, for \$6.5 million;
- . Reviewed the first draft of a proposed six-year capital improvement plan;
- . Toured some UAF programs and facilities, including several research programs, the School of Engineering and Mines and the UAF Fire Department.

For a video clip of Board of Regents' chair Mary K. Hughes speaking about the UA system's proposed budget, go to <http://www.alaska.edu/opa/video/RegentHughes10-31-08.mov>.

For a complete look at the budget documents and agenda from today's meeting, go to www.alaska.edu/bor and click on "agendas."

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