

Date: May 8, 2017
To: Alaska State Senators and Representatives
From: University of Alaska Southeast Faculty Senate
RE: University of Alaska System Budget

The Faculty Senate of the University of Alaska Southeast represents faculty from the three UAS campuses; Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka. The UAS Faculty Senate Constitution states the purpose of this group is to act in a representative capacity on behalf of the faculty assembly in matters which affect the general welfare of the university and its educational programs. As the current Faculty Senate President I am writing to express the UAS' faculty's collective concern over budget proposals that, if enacted, will negatively affect the viability of the three universities and multiple satellite campuses that comprise the entire University of Alaska and impair its ability to produce the graduates that will lead Alaska into a sustainable future.

The UAS Faculty Senate believes that the budget appropriations that are under consideration by the House Finance Budget Subcommittee on the University of Alaska must be contemplated with an insightful view to the future of the State of Alaska. In particular we believe the senate-proposed budget of \$303 million, as well as SB103 which proposes decreased access to the Alaska Education Grant Program will result in long-term, critical damage to the University of Alaska and negatively impact its ability to provide the home-grown intellectual and human capital that is most suited to address the many issues that are and will be faced by the State of Alaska. The budget allocation of \$325 million presented by Governor Walker in response to the University's request of \$341 million, and later supported by the House continues to represent a non-trivial cut to higher education in Alaska when considered in the context of the fixed cost increases that are associated with any enterprise. If funded at \$325 million, the UA system will be forced to discontinue educational programs that provide qualified professionals for jobs across the state. If funded at the \$303 million level, the UA system will suffer irreparable damage that will be felt by this and many future generations of Alaskans. The original \$341 million will allow the institution to continue to develop and train experts in engineering, fisheries, education, business as well as numerous natural science, art and humanities-based disciplines, all of which serve as the foundation for the sound decisions the State of Alaska will need to make to ensure a prosperous future. Proposed tightened restrictions on the Alaska Performance Scholars Program will, for many high school graduates in Alaska, eliminate the growth opportunities available at the University of Alaska and further diminish the state's trained workforce. The University's budget and the Alaska Education Grant Program are interdependent.

The UAS faculty understands the need for cost-cutting and have contributed and continue to contribute in multiple ways towards new and revised lower-cost approaches that faithfully maintain the quality education and training programs they offer, but we are quickly approaching the bottom. The UAS faculty's belt-tightening makes them acutely aware of the challenges faced by the legislature as you work to balance the budget and we are immensely grateful for your efforts and service. The UAS faculty believe that by working together with the legislature toward the common good of the State of Alaska, we will navigate the current budget issues, avoid future instances of financial instability and find solutions to all the many challenges that we will confront as we move forward but we cannot meet that goal without a minimum of resource.

The faculty of the University of Alaska Southeast respectfully request that the legislature fund the University of Alaska at the original \$341 million, maintain the current requirements of the Alaska Education Grant Program and help us keep access to quality, affordable higher education a reality for Alaskans.

Passed unanimously by the UAS Faculty Senate on the 5th day of May 2017.

Best Regards,

Lisa Hoferkamp

Lisa Hoferkamp; UAS Faculty Senate President