

## **CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTS:**

### ***From UAS Chancellor Rick Caulfield***

September 12, 2016

**Dear UAS faculty and staff:**

**EMPHASIZING STUDENT RETENTION:** Our mission at UAS is student learning and student success. Even though our fall semester has only begun, we're at a critical juncture for many students—a time when they begin to understand fully what is expected by faculty, a time when they may be questioning their skills and abilities, a time when some may not feel connected or supported, or a time when they may be uncertain about what resources are available for them.

This is a critical time to support student retention—connecting students with resources that enhance academic success. The most important contributor to student retention is a personal connection between the student and our university—a faculty or staff member who knows the student and has their success clearly at heart. This connection can involve any number of people: faculty, advisors, financial aid or student accounts staff, counselors, housing staff, Native and Rural Student Center staff, learning center tutors...even deans and chancellors! I'm always pleased when I ask a student who their most important advisor or supporter is at UAS, and they immediately name a faculty or staff member who they know is in their corner. Having that personal connection makes all the difference.

This is the time to make that connection in support of student retention: faculty encouraging students to stop by during office hours; advisors and counselors reaching out to students who are struggling; providing positive customer service even when students are busy, agitated, or confused; encouraging students to form support/study groups where they can learn from each other and feel connected; staying online after a distance class to chat one-on-one with students. I know many of these efforts—and more—already happen. For that, I thank you! But this is a time to redouble our efforts in student retention so that UAS continues to be known as a place where students come first!

**A BUSY WEEK AHEAD:** The coming week is a busy one with the UA Board of Regents meeting in Juneau on Thursday and Friday, September 15-16. Strategic Pathways and the topic of a possible single accreditation will be on the agenda, which can be found at <http://www.alaska.edu/bor/agendas/2016/sep-15-16/>. It's unlikely that we'll see major decisions about Strategic Pathways coming at this meeting but we will begin to get a sense for the direction that President Johnsen and the Board are likely to take UA in coming months. The meetings will take place in the UAS Student Recreation Center.

Importantly, the Board will hold a community gathering in Juneau on Thursday, September 15, 5:30-7:00pm in conjunction with their regular meeting. All are invited. The goal is for regents to hear informally from faculty, staff, students, and community members. That gathering will take place in the Student Recreation Center/Joint Use Facility.

Moreover, President Johnsen will be on the Juneau Campus this coming Tuesday, September 13, 2-3:30pm, Egan Lecture Hall, to share some preliminary thinking with faculty and staff about Strategic Pathways/Phase 1 and to lay the groundwork for Phase 2 working groups. This will be streamed for viewing at our Ketchikan and Sitka campuses. More details about Strategic Pathways can be found at <http://www.alaska.edu/pathways/>.

Finally, a special invitation to those who are in Juneau: UAS Alumni and Friends (UASA AF) will be holding a 'friendraiser' at the new Dr. Andrew P. Kashevaroff (APK) State Museum on Friday evening, September 16, from 5-7pm. Details at <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/alumni/>. Admission is open to all who are now--or who would like to become--members of UAS Alumni and Friends. Anyone can be a member! Governor Bill Walker and his wife Donna will be present, as will President Jim Johnsen. To join UASA AF and for tickets, call Jessy Post at 796-6569 or email [jipost@alaska.edu](mailto:jipost@alaska.edu).



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Caulfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.