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March 26, 2013

The Honorable Sean Parnell
Governor of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Parnell:

Diane Barrans of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) and the University of Alaska (UA) have been in contact regarding the February 28, 2013, letter sent to you by Complete College America (CCA). In that letter you were once again asked to have Alaska join the Complete College America Alliance of States. Based on the thorough review of this issue summarized in my August 24, 2012, letter to you, and an extensive reconsideration by the UA Statewide Academic Council this spring, we are reaffirming our recommendation to you to decline the invitation. UA is already working hard to provide the same benefits to UA students that CCA is advocating, but with the addition of academic and accountability methods tailored specifically for Alaska.

A comprehensive Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI), underway all across UA, has identified a broader scope of intentions than those identified in the CCA agenda. We based our need for institutional changes on inputs from some 80 listening sessions across the state. Furthermore, responding to full engagement by the UA Board of Regents, UA is in the process of revising system-wide metrics to assess the impact of SDI on the strategic goal of much improved K-16 institutional outcomes. Our recommendation to pass up joining the formal CCA effort is not to insinuate that they are lacking. Many of their outcomes clearly parallel ours. But our higher education structure in Alaska is markedly different in many ways from the national norm and as such does not lend itself to the universal reporting commitments called for in CCA. We believe our SDI approach will make UA more responsive and accountable to you, the legislature, and our students. Accordingly, selecting a customized alternative to CCA notwithstanding, we are

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confident that our approach using SDI, now well along in its second year and displaying much positive momentum, is the right choice.

I would be pleased to present more supporting details on SDI to you. In the meantime, I hope this response is useful as you consider your way forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "PAT GAMBLE". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Gamble".

Patrick Gamble, President
University of Alaska

cc: Diane Barrans, ACPE Executive Director