

CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTS

From UAS Chancellor Rick Caulfield

November 22, 2017

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS IN TURBULENT TIMES

It can be a challenge to focus on student learning and success when we at UAS face turbulent headwinds—enrollment and retention challenges, budget pressures, internal restructuring, and lack of a state fiscal plan. What keeps me focused is speaking with our students about their goals and aspirations—remembering how important post-secondary education is to improving their lives and those of their families and communities. UA President Jim Johnsen makes the case that there is no institution in our state better suited to provide 21st century leadership in creating a robust culture of education. I agree. I hope you share his sense and mine that the work we do every day is vital to Alaska's future.



Facing turbulence requires clarity of direction and goals. UA's Strategic Pathways process—bumpy as it sometimes was—has helped clarify those goals. The President reported to the UA Board of Regents earlier this month that we're largely done with the formal Pathways process; the major decisions are behind us. Based upon that foundation, the Board of Regents has endorsed four major goals for the UA system that will move us toward that robust culture of education:

1) Contribute to Alaska's Economic Development, 2) Provide Alaska's Skilled Workforce, 3) Grow our World-class Research, and 4) Increase Degree Attainment.

UAS has a vital role to play in fulfilling each of these goals. Our role is reflected in the FY19 Operating Budget approved by the Board on November 9-10. The budget totals \$341M. It includes more than \$1.23M for UAS implementation of the Alaska College of Education (AKCOE), including support for Alaska Native and multicultural education (PITAAS), teacher education marketing, MAT and STEM program development, and Educators Rising career pathways. It includes research funding for the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center and for mariculture. It expands our FINISH COLLEGE ALASKA initiative and adds staff to support student success/EAB implementation. The budget now goes to Governor Walker who is required to finalize his overall budget request to the Legislature no later than December 15.

The Board's budget approval was accompanied by support for a 5 percent increase in student tuition in each of the next two years. This difficult decision came following significant public input. On balance, the Board agreed that significant budget cuts had already been made and that a tuition increase will help maintain academic quality. Importantly, the Board also approved the President's proposal that tuition for Occupational Endorsements and undergraduate Certificates will be offset by 25 percent; a move intended to encourage far more Alaskans to complete these programs.

Here at UAS, we're not waiting for final action on the FY19 budget to move forward. We're recruiting for an AKCOE Executive Dean, Sitka Campus Director, and Dean of Arts and Sciences. We're filling vacant faculty positions in Accounting, Outdoor Skills and Leadership, Northwest Coast Arts, and Education. We're hiring a new Director of Recruitment, Admissions, and Advising. Each of these actions is based on careful analysis of program effectiveness and contribution to our mission. On the capital side, we're renovating the UAS Ketchikan Maritime and Career Training Center. We've sold the Administrative Services/Bookstore Building in Juneau. Proceeds from the latter will be invested in our newly-acquired 1.63-acre Auke Bay Marine Station property, enhancing UAS science programs.

Thank you for keeping the focus on success of our students, even in turbulent times. The work you do every day is helping build a brighter future for our students. As always, I welcome your comments, ideas, and questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Caulfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.