

Whereas, the University of Alaska's state funding has been reduced by \$76 million (20%) between FY2014 and FY2020, and an additional \$45 million (15%) through FY22;

Whereas, the University has reduced programs and services in response to the state funding cuts, including the loss of 1,727 employees since 2014;

Whereas, the university plans to reduce or discontinue academic programs which will be considered by the Board of Regents at its meeting on June 4-5, 2020;

Whereas, given enrollment declines since 2011, COVID pandemic related impacts, and planned state funding reductions, by FY21 the University's budget is expected to have a shortfall of \$24.8 million, to be covered by one-time funds, and by FY22 a shortfall of between \$11.3 million and \$36.3 million;

Whereas, while enrollment has declined by 28% across the University since 2010;

Whereas, a standard measure of cost effectiveness—student to faculty ratios—shows that all three universities are lower (i.e., more faculty, fewer students) than peer institutions, the ratio at UAS is the lowest in the UA system and is 39% below its peers;

Whereas, non-faculty staffing at UAS is also substantially above peer levels for the size of its enrollment;

Whereas, UAS accounts for 8% of the total student credit hours generated across the system and 50% of those credit hours are delivered via distance;

Whereas, the Board of Regents is committed to providing higher education opportunities to the people of Southeast Alaska through innovative and cost effective programs in areas of importance to Southeast communities such as fisheries and ocean science, mine training, health research and workforce development, public administration, management, and teacher education; and

Whereas, the institutions that comprise the University of Alaska are separately accredited by the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, and the Board of Regents is committed to complying with all accreditation requirements.

Now therefore be it resolved that—in order to provide higher education programs and services to the people of Southeast Alaska during a time of unprecedented financial challenges, while ensuring the survival of the University of Alaska and long-term excellence—the Board of Regents, utilizing a transparent and inclusive process, intends to inquire and collect data, examine ideas and opportunities, explore potential efficiencies, study the pros and cons

of a structural option involving a merger of the University of Alaska Southeast and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, all the while maintaining the unique identity and environment of each institution.

- Pursuant to the foregoing, the Board directs that a Conceptual Plan be prepared by a working group comprised of regents and other individuals selected by Chair Buretta to represent key stakeholders with interests in higher education in Southeast Alaska, and will include the Chairs of the Faculty Alliance, Staff Alliance, and Coalition of Student Leaders.
- The Conceptual Plan will identify actions required to comply with requirements of the U.S. Department of Education and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. This Conceptual Plan will be provided to the Board of Regents no later than October 15, 2020.
- The Conceptual Plan will assess the efficiencies and benefits that may result from the merger and include an assessment of cost savings, regional program demand, provisions for student program completion (teach out or transfer), compliance with accreditation standards, and opportunities for expansion in such areas as fisheries and ocean science, Alaska Native programs, environmental research, public administration, mine training, and teacher education.
- In addition, the Plan will include an assessment of opportunities for partnerships with regional communities and tribal organizations

This motion is effective June 4, 2020.