

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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University leadership hears options in Phase II of the Strategic Pathways process

ANCHORAGE – Eight review teams presented 37 options to UA President Jim Johnsen and senior university leaders on Jan. 18, completing the initial program review in Phase II of the three-phase Strategic Pathways process. Strategic Pathways is designed to study the university's academic programs and administrative services for strengthening both service to the state and cost effectiveness.

Team reports offered options in four academic areas – Community Campuses, e-Learning, Allied Health and Fisheries – and four administrative areas – Institutional Research, University Relations, Student Services and Human Resources. Team reports and options with pros/cons are available at <http://www.alaska.edu/pathways/phase-2/>. Feedback forms also are available on the site for university and community input.

Next steps in the Phase II timeline calls for Johnsen and campus leadership to gather input and perspectives on proposed options from those in programs immediately affected by potential changes. Additionally, the Board of Regents' quarterly public testimony call-in session from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 21 presents an opportunity for direct discussion with the board. President Johnsen will hold a general discussion on all options with the regents at the March 2-3 board meeting in Anchorage. Thereafter, additional internal campus forums and external community meetings will be held. Final decisions will be taken up by the Board of Regents at its June meeting.

“This is a dynamic process and we're learning and improving as we go,” Johnsen said, “and one of the things we've learned over the past few months is to pursue a more focused approach to reviewing options and soliciting input from the affected programs as well as from university governance and community leaders.”

Review teams comprised of faculty, students, staff, alumni and community members, have been working diligently since October

on productive options for rethinking the eight areas. Teams were charged with assessing the pros and cons of the suggested structural realignments and to focus on options that would establish efficiencies, reduce redundancies and/or find a means of funding that would reduce dependence on state general funds. Each team was asked to consider options in context of the core principles: focus, access, scope, excellence, consistency, and fiscal sustainability.

“I am particularly pleased that these groups have put forward some really innovative ideas to realign university resources,” Johnsen said “I thank each of the team members for their time, work and energy, and look forward to gathering additional feedback from our university community.”

The university instituted Strategic Pathways to better focus on areas of strengths and to operate more efficiently in the wake of budget reductions. “But this effort isn’t just about reduced expenses – it’s also about creating the best possible University of Alaska,” Johnsen said. “Not every decision will generate savings, and I’ll add that we’ve had some significant successes as well as challenges. Most notable include the increased cooperation among our campuses, increased efficiency and accountability through assignment of lead responsibility to a single campus in several areas, and support for reallocation to meet high priority state needs.”

By the end of this month, Strategic Pathways teams will have reviewed 15 of the 23 major academic and administrative areas of the university. As part of the review, 1,938 comments offered by email or feedback form have been received and reviewed. The decisions made in Phase I alone have increased UA accountability and streamlined UA bureaucracy by 30 percent.

Phase III of Strategic Pathways begins Jan. 30, 2017. In this final phase, seven additional programs will be under review, details of which can be found on the Strategic Pathways website along with the list of 89 review team members.

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