

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Regents to consider a single College of Education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks**

**Fairbanks** – When the University of Alaska Board of Regents convenes next week, it will consider President Jim Johnsen’s recommendation that the University of Alaska establish a single College of Education (College) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The selection of UAF to house the administrative functions of the education program is an outcome of Strategic Pathways review of the university’s delivery of teacher education. That review process—which included key internal and external stakeholders—identified several options, including a single college.

“Based on review of the Strategic Pathways report and input received from within and outside the university, I believe there are several reasons for bringing our three schools of education together into one College of Education,” Johnsen said, “most notable are the need for a sharper focus on the state’s needs for more Alaska-prepared teachers and education leaders, and a greater accountability to meeting those needs.” Other key reasons include the importance of increasing consistency in the degree and endorsement programs, supporting more faculty collaboration and innovation, and increasing productivity and cost effectiveness.

“While UAF would become the administrative home for the College of Education, it would build on the existing programs currently being delivered by UAF, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), and the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS),” Johnsen said. “Classes and programs will continue to be offered on all three campuses by faculty at those locations.”

This plan for education was informed by UA’s current approach to the nursing programs, where UAA was selected to be the administrative home with faculty and classes at campuses all across the state. Just as nursing faculty located on the UAF and UAS campuses are UAA faculty, teacher education faculty at UAA and UAS would be UAF faculty under this new plan.

If the recommendation is approved by the regents, the plan would need to be approved by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, which separately accredits UAA, UAF and UAS.

“As I considered the difficult question of which university ought to be the administrative home for the College, I was impressed by the strengths that each university brings to the opportunity,” Johnsen said. He cited UAA’s excellent faculty, strong relationships with local school districts, and an urban location; UAS’s long record of innovative and high quality programs including its strong record in preparing Alaska Native teachers; and, UAF’s strengths in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields, relationships with a large number of rural school districts, research success, and high academic ranking as a Tier 1 research university. Since faculty will continue to deliver programs at current locations, all of the

relationships developed with their students as well as local school districts should continue with little interruption.

Going forward, Johnsen said he will appoint a planning team to work out the details of the change. The team will be chaired by UA Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research Dan White and comprised of education faculty from each of the current programs, the Faculty Alliance, the deans of education, the Alaska Department of Early Education and Development, the National Education Association-Alaska and the Alaska Council of School Administrators. The plan will include provisions to:

- support student continuation and completion of degree programs
- advise on a process to select the permanent Dean of the College
- ensure coordination with programmatic (NCATE/CAEP) and institutional accreditation bodies (NWCCU)
- articulate faculty and staff responsibilities and transitional employment terms (including tenure) consistent with the terms of applicable policy, regulation and collective bargaining agreements
- increase student enrollment and completion rates
- ensure strong relationships between the College and key local, regional and state stakeholders
- ensure effective and inclusive governance of the College
- provide for appropriate allocation of financial and other resources
- include a timeline for key implementation milestones
- address any other matters required for effective implementation of this direction.

Johnsen said he will update the regents this spring on the plan. Subject to accreditation approval, implementation will start before the end of the fiscal year. Full implementation would be targeted for completion in 2018.

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For more information contact Roberta Graham, associate vice president of public affairs at 907-360-2416 (cell).

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