

December 16, 2016

Yesterday Governor Walker released his proposed operating budget for Fiscal Year 2018. Significantly, and for the first time in three years the University of Alaska's funding has not been reduced from the previous fiscal year. The Governor has maintained level funding for the university at \$325 million.

The university recognizes the significant budget challenges facing our state and the challenges of prioritizing program funding across a broad variety of needs, and it is reassuring to know that the Governor's level funding request recognizes the significant strides we are making through your hard work, and through Strategic Pathways, to become more focused and more efficient in how we perform our mission.

The Governor's commitment to education is especially notable in light of his goal to reduce overall state spending as well as to increase revenue. We also are focused on generating additional sources of revenue by continuing to emphasize the importance of research, implementing aggressive enrollment strategies, gradually increasing tuition, monetizing physical assets, partnering with the private sector, and encouraging more philanthropy.

The Regents have identified high priority areas for investment over last year's funding level. During the coming legislative session, we will continue to work with Governor Walker and the legislature to underscore the value of investing in the University of Alaska and advocate for our needs.

Jim Johnsen