



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Biography of James R. Johnsen, Ed.D.



Dr. Jim Johnsen was appointed to serve as the 14th president of the University of Alaska on July 28, 2015. His experience includes executive leadership positions in the private sector with Alaska Communications and with Doyon, Limited, and in higher education between 1996-2008 in several executive roles including vice president of administration and chief of staff.

President Johnsen is passionate about higher education and economic opportunity, having served as chair of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, vice chair of the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, vice chair of the University of Alaska Foundation, commissioner on the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, member of the Alaska State Committee on Research, and member of the Board of Directors of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

As president, Dr. Johnsen is a commissioner on the Denali Commission and the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, a member of the Alaska Aerospace Corporation Board, a director on the UA Foundation Board, and a member of the Homeland Security Academic Advisory Council. His education includes a B.A. in politics from the University of California, Santa Cruz, master's in political science from the University of Chicago, and doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania.

In his short time as president, he is leading a major systemwide Title IX compliance effort, a comprehensive restructuring of the academic programs and administrative services of the university, a major initiative to align with Alaska's primary and secondary education sectors, and a systemwide push to achieve the state's goal of higher attainment -- 65% by 2025.

Dr. Johnsen and his wife, Mary, who is retired, have two grown children, both born and raised in Alaska.