

James R. Johnsen, Ed.D.

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Many Traditions One Alaska

March 6, 2019

Dear UA Colleagues,

Yesterday, you received a letter from Governor Dunleavy about his proposed budget cut to the university. The Governor's office asked me to distribute his message, and although he has many ways to communicate to Alaskans, I believe you should be fully informed of his views on this critical issue. It was in that spirit that I agreed to distribute the message to you on a one-time basis. Please review it carefully.

Whether the Governor's proposed cut to the university is 41 percent of our state funding, or 17 percent of our total budget, it is still a cut of \$134 million. For purposes of context only, \$134 million is the equivalent of the total state funding received by UAA and UAS combined.

Such a huge cut clearly would have negative impacts on current students as well as on all Alaskans for years to come. Our students sign up for programs that last from one to four or more years. With a \$134 million cut, UA would have no choice but to immediately eliminate academic programs mid-stream, along with about 1,500 faculty and staff that support students in those programs.

That large of a cut also would mean campus closures and reductions in other academic and administrative programs and services, resulting in less access and service to Alaskans.

Over the last five years UA has experienced \$195 million in cumulative budget reductions. An additional cut of even \$10 million or \$20 million would impact students and services. Such cuts also would significantly reduce other sources of university programs and services that generate revenue the state does not supply, including tuition and research funding. With fewer programs, fewer students, fewer faculty, and fewer services, UA's ability to generate income from tuition and research would diminish dramatically. As the governor notes, these items currently make up 58 percent of UA's total budget.

Last year, the Legislature recognized the university's critical role when it provided a modest budget increase. For the past several years, we have been working diligently to reshape the university. We are making tough decisions based on resources and priorities with measurable goals important to Alaskans, and we are rolling out a compelling long-term vision for the university and Alaska. We will continue on this path, and we should not do so in a way that creates chaos and harms students.

The governor justifies cuts to education, healthcare and other government services by citing a \$1.6 billion deficit. However, the budget proposal includes a \$1.9 billion appropriation for PFDs. This budget then is a policy choice for Alaskans, not a fiscal necessity.

This year's state budget puts clear choices before the people of Alaska. Please take the time to inform yourself regarding these choices and communicate your thoughts to the Legislature and Governor.

I thank you for your advocacy, for your passion and for all that you do to support the University of Alaska and its important mission for Alaska.

#SupportUA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jim Johnsen