

James R. Johnsen, Ed.D.

President

Butrovich Bldg, Ste. 202, 2025 Yukon Drive
P.O. Box 755000, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5000
Phone: (907) 450-8000; Fax: (907) 450-8012
Email: ua.president@alaska.edu
www.alaska.edu



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Feb. 13, 2019

Dear UA Community -

The Governor's FY20 budget was made public this morning, and the news for the University of Alaska is devastating. In his budget, the Governor is proposing a \$134 million, or 41 percent, reduction from our current operating budget. This is the largest budget cut in the university's 100-year history. The proposed budget is just the first step in the budget process, but if this large cut is approved by the state legislature or as a result of a Governor's budget veto, we would have \$134 million less in state funds to fulfill our mission in the fiscal year beginning July 1.

We have managed cuts to the university budget four out of the last five years. These repeated cuts have been taken through reductions in faculty and staff, programs and services, and facility maintenance. We also have stepped up the tuition our students pay year after year to help make ends meet. But a proposed cut of this magnitude, \$134 million, cannot be managed in the same way.

Our path forward requires two streams of work. The first is advocacy, telling our story, persuading legislators and the public who elect them that UA is critical for our state's economy and our quality of life. We are working on that advocacy plan now and will begin rolling it out in the coming weeks.

The second, unfortunately, is contingency planning for "what if" our budget is cut as deeply as proposed by the Governor. We would have no choice but to make very tough decisions, which would cut deeply into every campus across the state and it would impact our mission – education, research, community service. In making these tough choices, we would work hard to ensure that our students' needs come first and the programs we continue to provide are top quality.

To prepare for the critical contingencies, I have convened an emergency meeting with the Chancellors to discuss next steps, review strategic options and, prepare those options for consideration by the Board of Regents at its meeting on Feb 28.

We are heading into uncharted territory with lots of uncertainty ahead. I would ask you not to focus on what is uncertain. Let us focus on what is certain – that UA is a critical part of our state, that we owe our students and each other our very best, and that we must all pull in the same direction as we advocate for UA's important role in service to Alaska's future.

I realize these next few months will be anxious ones for all of us as we face the uncertainty of a final budget vote, and I will be in regular communication to keep you as informed as possible.

Now let's work together to support our students, our university, and our state.

Sincerely,

Jim Johnsen
President, University of Alaska