

Dear UA community,

As our students and faculty approach final exams week and commencement, I wanted to update you on several important developments.

Strategic Pathways Phase 3

Strategic Pathways Phase 3 review teams met with the Summit Team this week to present more than 36 options in seven key academic and administrative areas for further discussion and consideration. All options are available online for your review at www.alaska.edu/pathways/phase-3.

In this final phase of Strategic Pathways, the seven academic and administrative areas were reviewed by 66 faculty, staff, students, and community members serving on the teams.

I appreciate all of the time and talent these teams brought to our process and I encourage everyone – especially affected departments / units, students, faculty – to read through the reports and leave comments about the options using the Google form for each review area.

I will be meeting with affected units and holding public forums at each university to discuss these options. These opportunities for additional input by faculty and students will be announced when finalized.

Budget Issues

Our current budget situation in the Alaska Legislature is bleak. The House has passed a budget funding the university's general fund appropriation (UGF) at the governor's requested \$325 million – that's the same as we received for the current fiscal year. The Senate, meanwhile, has passed a budget funding our UGF appropriation at \$303 million – a \$22 million cut from this year. The impact of this cut is compounded by the lack of capital funding to maintain our 400 facilities and unfunded fixed cost increases.

Since the two houses have many differences in each of their bills, a conference committee made up of legislators from each house will be created to work out those differences and decide on the final budget numbers. It's our hope that the conference committee will fund the university at \$325 million UGF. If the Senate's number passes, the university will have taken a \$75 million, or 19.8 percent, reduction over the past four years. The Senate's cut would be devastating to the university.

What can you do?

A postcard has been designed to provide an opportunity to choose from a variety of reasons why you support funding the university's budget at the House number. More than 20 variations of the postcard are available to empower students, alumni, business owners, community members and Alaskans of every kind to express why you support the University of Alaska. The postcards can be downloaded at <http://www.alaska.edu/state/postcard> and then e-mailed to your legislator to urge support of the House version of the university's FY18 budget. Share your e-cards on social media using the hashtags #supportUA and #AKleg to raise awareness of this crucial decision affecting the University of Alaska.

When contacting legislators regarding issues such as the budget you should avoid using university email or other resources, and if you are a UA employee, you should do so on your own time, such as lunch time or after work. The university's budget is not a partisan political issue or a ballot measure -- those issues are subject to very strict prohibitions or restrictions on use of state resources. However, your advocacy will have the greatest effect if it does not raise use of resource issues.

Board of Regents Special Meeting Thursday

Given the serious budget issues we face, the Board of Regents has called a special meeting this Thursday, April 13, to discuss the university's budget scenarios. The meeting will be held from 1:00-3:00 PM in room 204 of the Butrovich Building on our Fairbanks campus and can also be livestreamed at <http://www.alaska.edu/bor/live>.

Jim Johnsen