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Dear UA Community –

By now you know that today's vote in the legislature did not go our way. Despite all of your hard work to advocate on UA's behalf, and the work of the legislators who chose to go to Juneau and vote for the university, there were not 45 members present to successfully override the governor's vetoes to the university's budget. Notably, of the 38 legislators present today, all but 1 voted to override the governor's vetoes. Clearly, today's outcome is a setback, not only for our university but for the entire state. But the fight is not over. There are opportunities ahead.

Today's joint session was recessed until tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. This allows another day for absent legislators to go to Juneau, join their colleagues and reconsider today's override vote. If that effort fails, there will be a separate appropriation bill introduced as part of this special session. We are ready to work with every legislator to restore some amount of funding through a new bill or through the capital budget. We also will work to reinstate the funding for our performance and needs based scholarships and medical school program, which were lost as a result of this inability to finalize the state's operating budget.

But all of this is going to take more time. The amount of any new funds—if any come our way—is uncertain, and whether they are recurring or just “one-time” is unknown. All this means that we will not have resolution of our funding for some weeks to come. As we continue to stay engaged in the legislative process, we also must go forward and ask the Board of Regents to consider a declaration of financial exigency when the board meets on Monday. Every day that passes without resolution means deeper cuts later this year, not to mention reduced enrollment and flight of faculty and staff.

While this news is disappointing, I encourage you to stay engaged, keep advocating and keep up the excellent work you do every day for the university.

I am grateful for all that you do and for the incredible show of support that you have demonstrated.

Keep UA Strong!

Jim Johnsen

Link to today's video message: <https://youtu.be/iVAYTzs8Efs>

FAQs and more information available at <https://alaska.edu/pres/fy2020-budget/index.xml>