



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

June 22

Dear UA Staff, Faculty & Students,

Acting President Michelle Rizk and I write to advise you that President Jim Johnsen has resigned as UA System president, a decision that was mutual and made after considerable reflection by the Board. The Board of Regents accepted his resignation this afternoon, authorized me to implement the details of his resignation, and appoint an acting president. President Johnsen will be available to assist with the transition until July 1 when his resignation goes into effect.

Vice President Michelle Rizk will serve as acting president effective immediately and until an interim president is named. That process is still being developed. Many of you know Michelle, who serves as the University's VP of University Relations, Chief Budget & Strategy Officer, and serves as the system liaison for facilities and land management. During her 22-year UA career, Michelle has served the university in areas including finance, human resources, and as the university's chief advocate in Juneau. Raised in Alaska, Rizk earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Thank you, Michelle, for agreeing to serve in the acting capacity.

While we understand that a change in leadership can be unsettling, we are confident this decision, though difficult, is the correct one for the university. We ask that all of you throughout the university community recognize that the state and university's current fiscal situation requires significant change, and that to thrive, UA must come together to address our significant challenges. We must move forward and work together to address these challenges.

In stepping down President Johnsen noted the many challenges as well as the progress made over the past five years. He also reminded us that there is no institution more important for creating opportunities for Alaskans than the University.

I have long admired Jim's commitment to UA. During his five years as president he has led the university through unprecedented challenges with integrity, unparalleled effort, and distinction. We appreciate all he has done for UA and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

The Board will appoint an interim president after consulting with the chancellors, governance leaders and other UA stakeholders. The board expects that appointment to occur no later than July 15, and will commence a formal search for UA's next president later this year.

Thank you for your patience and your dedication to the university. Together we can not only address the challenges facing the university but emerge better prepared to meet Alaska's higher education needs.

Sincerely,

Sheri Buretta, Michelle Rizk

Chair Board of Regents, Acting UA President