



## UA's budget emphasizes preparing Alaskans for jobs

The University of Alaska Board of Regents at its Nov. 16, 2007 meeting unanimously approved an operating budget request for the upcoming fiscal year that focuses on preparing Alaskans for jobs in Alaska.

Programs slated for expansion include health care, engineering, construction management and fisheries. The day-long meeting took place on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus.

**The budget request** includes \$319.6 million in state general funds, a 9 percent increase over the current state share, and \$536.5 million in university generated revenue from non-state sources such as tuition, federal research grants and other sources. UA's 16-campus system stretches from Ketchikan to Kotzebue, and includes large universities in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau along with a dozen community campuses.

The board agreed the budget request supports the state's highest needs in workforce training. UA research and student success initiatives also are high priorities in the FY09 system budget. "This is a responsible budget request that builds upon the university's strengths," said board chair Mary K. Hughes.

UA President Mark Hamilton said the university's revenue growth in grant-funded research, tuition and private donations---all up dramatically compared to 1999 levels---has leveled off and isn't expected to continue at the same rate in the future. Increased state support toward key programs is crucial, he said.

"We're very fortunate in that our governor, her administration and members of the legislature understand the university's deep involvement in workforce training," Hamilton said. "That's in addition to the other important aspects of our mission-

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*The University of Alaska Board of Regents is the governing body responsible for the university policy and management through the president. Regents are appointed by the governor for eight-year terms, subject to legislative confirmation. A student regent is appointed for two years from candidates nominated on each campus. (Regents' term of office shown in parentheses.)*



*Mike Powers, CEO of Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and Denali Center, addresses the Board of Regents. Photo by UA Staff ©2007 University of Alaska.*

--providing an overall well-rounded education and conducting the research important to Alaska."

**Mike Powers, chief executive officer for Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and Denali Center,** testified in support of UA's budget request. "We have no stronger partner, relative to work-force training, than the University of Alaska," he said.

Powers said five years ago, the hospital and long-term care facility had a 17 percent ongoing vacancy rate in its nursing staff. The hospital prefers to hire locally because recruiting Outside costs thousands of dollars per position, he said. Since 2002, FMH has hired 55 nurses and 22 imaging technicians—all UA trained—at a savings of \$1.5 million. In the past year alone, Powers said FMH has assisted 150 nursing students, 36 paramedic students and 17 radiology students with their clinical rotations. In the past five years, FMH has contributed \$565,000 toward UA's healthcare programs, he said.

Powers said his own three children have benefited tremendously from arts and science camps and recreational opportunities while growing up in Fairbanks. Two of his three children now attend UA--one attends the University of Alaska Fairbanks and one, the University of Alaska Anchorage.

The university has added 100 new degree and certificate programs in the last nine years, predominantly in areas deemed "high demand" by the Alaska Department of Labor. Because of the increased offerings, the university now attracts over 62 percent of Alaska high-school students who opt for training and education beyond high school, compared to 44 percent nine years ago.

**On the capital budget,** the regents approved requesting \$50 million in state general funds for ongoing major renewal of facilities as the highest priority, before new construction projects. The capital request, which totals \$306 million in state general funds, also includes the following priority projects:

- \$66 million toward the first phase of UAF's proposed biological research facility (BIOS);
- \$46 million for a new joint health-care training facility with Anchorage-area hospitals at UAA;
- and \$70 million to address a backlog on maintenance projects across the system.

The university's operating and capital budget requests now go to the governor and legislature for consideration.

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### Future Board Meetings

December 5-6, 2007  
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February 6-7, 2008  
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