

Dear colleagues,

Welcome back to campus and Happy New Year! I enjoyed time with friends and family over the holiday break and hope you did, too. Now we ring in the new year with the beginning of both spring semester and the legislative session next week.

But first, we take time on Monday, Jan. 15, to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and to celebrate Alaska civil rights. All UA campuses and offices will be closed in honor of our civil rights icons whose strength, conviction and courage brought about positive change in our state, our country and our world. The struggle for equal rights under the law was a long and painful one. Please take this personal time to reflect on those who fought against injustice, inequity and discrimination.

On Tuesday, students will return to campus. As we welcome them back, I am constantly reminded that everything we do at the university is for the benefit of our students. They are our mission, our key purpose, our future and our state's greatest hope.

Lastly, we welcome back to Juneau our legislators who, over the next few months, will be making tough decisions that will affect the university and our state. Our Government Relations team and I will be hard at work advocating on the university's behalf, but one way you can help the university throughout the year is to share your positive university stories with your personal network of friends, family, associates and community. Tell them why the university is important, and how the university is working hard for a better, more prosperous Alaska. These conversations are vital to building support and understanding about the university, our mission and our many contributions.

As we ready for a productive semester and a new legislative session, I wish you a happy, healthy 2018 with thanks for all that you do for our university.

Sincerely,
Jim Johnsen