

Pat Pitney
Interim President

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December 11, 2020

Dear UA Community,

Today Governor Dunleavy released his proposed fiscal year 2022 operating and capital budget, and consistent with the operating budget adopted by the Board of Regents, the governor has proposed \$257 million in unrestricted general funds (UGF) for the university. Unfortunately, and despite the regents' request for capital funding for deferred maintenance, debt, and COVID-19 relief, the capital budget does not include any requested funds for the university.

The release of the governor's budget is the first step in the legislative process. Throughout the session, along with our regents and advocates, the chancellors and I will meet with legislators to demonstrate the value our universities bring to every industry and community in the state. Additionally we'll emphasize that capital funding for UA's deferred maintenance, debt, and COVID-19 relief is essential.

As you know, we have managed successive budget cuts since 2014. This fiscal year, the impact of the reduction was magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our focus continues to be on our key academic and research programs. These programs include nursing, business, engineering, fisheries management, unmanned aircraft research, Native language restoration, Arctic science, strategic mineral mining, and many more. To keep these priority programs accessible at UA's three universities and community campuses, we have reduced administration, sold and taken down old facilities, monetized assets, and have made the hard choice to discontinue some academic programs. We have maintained our strong industry, K-12 and community partnerships, which are central to our success. We are seeing increased enrollment in several programs and increased applications from new students.

We all have much to celebrate going forward. This weekend, UAA will graduate more than 1,000 new alumni, many of whom will remain right here in Alaska to work and start their professional lives. Our nursing graduates are on the front lines fighting the pandemic and our teachers, engineers, pilots, and biologists are just a part of the home-grown, UA-educated workforce contributing to ensuring a strong economic future for our state.

We will continue to focus on our students, key programs, and research excellence. Additionally, current and future external partnerships and private giving broaden and strengthen our quality programs. In this soft job market, now is a perfect time for Alaskans to return to school, to up-skill and train for new jobs in growing industries such as health care, IT, education and maritime industries.

Over the coming months I will share regular updates on the university's budget, other legislative priorities and opportunities for you to engage in advocacy efforts and outreach. I am proud of UA's faculty and staff as they have operated successfully in the face of the challenges we have endured.

Sincerely,
Pat Pitney
UA Interim President