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News Release

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University of Alaska Enrollment Hits All-Time High

This fall's opening enrollment in the University of Alaska system is the highest in the university's history.

University President Mark Hamilton said today the UA system has a total of 28,961 students, and a student full-time equivalent (FTE) of 16,449, up 13% over 2001, and 6.3% higher than 2002.

Traditionally, the opening enrollment figures grow over the course of the first semester because of short courses and intensive instruction. Last year, for example, the opening enrollment headcount was 27,623 and by the end of the semester had grown to 33,516. A similar increase is expected this year.

At the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) the opening student FTE is 9,812, up 5.7% over last year and up 12.5% over two years ago. The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) reported a student FTE of 5,210, up 10% over last year and up 17.4% over two years ago.

Last year was a record-high year for the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) and this year's enrollment stayed steady for the semester's opening. UAS reported 1,426 FTE students, down about 1.7% from last year, but up 2.5% over two years ago. By the close of the first semester, the UAS numbers may surpass last year's record.

Hamilton said the unprecedented growth in enrollment is a significant development for the university, but it is just one of the indicators that the university's fortunes have improved considerably over the flat-funding years it survived in the 1990s.

"Beginning in '99, with an increase in public investment by the governor and legislature, the university started turning around," he said, "and now the people of Alaska are noticing the difference."

The modest increases enabled the university to develop and implement programs that respond to the state's highest priority workforce needs, and to attract more Alaska high school graduates to stay in Alaska for college.

Hamilton said the support of the governor and the legislature has enabled the university to achieve momentum that is reflected not only by growth in enrollment, but also by increasing the amounts of revenue the university generates for itself:

- Federal grant receipts are up 120% over FY99.
- University's indirect cost recovery is up 91% over the same period.
- University receipts are up 34% since FY99.
- Tuition revenue is up 44% since FY99.
- Private donations to the university are also increasing.

"Our vital signs are good," Hamilton said, "and during the next legislative session the university will be working hard with the governor and legislature to keep the momentum going."

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