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News Release

For Immediate Release

Regents Approve Nursing Educator Program

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Members of the University of Alaska Board of Regents unanimously approved a new graduate certificate and master's program in nursing education during a meeting this week at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus.

The new programs are under the University of Alaska Anchorage's School of Nursing.

"The nursing education program responds to a real community need," said UAA Chancellor Elaine Maimon. "In order to educate the nurses that Alaska needs, we need to train the trainers. This program will prepare nursing professionals to educate a new generation of nurses."

The university program is in response to the ongoing nursing shortage in Alaska. UAA's School of Nursing expects to double the number of its nursing graduates to 220 by 2006.

Board members also unanimously approved an extension of UA President Mark Hamilton's contract for another year, and agreed to tie his salary to a market-driven formula. The adjustment is intended to align Hamilton's salary with national market conditions for university system presidents, said board chairman Brian Rogers.

"This board has wanted to recognize the extraordinary service that Mark has given to the university and to try to keep him here as long as we can," Rogers said.

The president's current three-year contract, set to expire in 2006, includes a base salary of \$250,000 annually, with a \$100,000 bonus at the conclusion of the contract. The one-year contract extension sets the president's salary at 10 percent below the national median amount paid to presidents of multi-campus systems.

The board's action restructures the way the bonus due to Hamilton at the end of the current three-year contract will be calculated. Instead of a flat \$100,000, the bonus will represent the difference between the president's current base salary (\$250,000) and what it would be if set at 10 percent below the national median. That could put the bonus in the \$100,000 to \$120,000 range, but the exact amount will be determined, as is payable, at the end of the current three-year contract period.

Board members also approved a plan to design a new \$30 million sciences building for UAA; construction of an \$11.5 million UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences building in Juneau; and the first phase of a \$4.2 million renovation of the Sitka campus.

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In other action, board members approved:

- the sale of nearly 19 acres of land in Palmer for \$5.37 million and 11 acres near Homer for \$411,111;
- a long-term capital improvement plan that looks ahead at major maintenance, renewal and construction needs through fiscal years 2006-2011. The plan totals \$747 million, including \$431 million that would come from state general funds, contingent on legislative approval. The project list includes new student housing at UAS; a biological and computational sciences facility at UAF; a public policy center at UAA; and a cultural arts and research center in Kenai, among numerous other projects. Projects in the six-year plan would require additional board approval as well as legislative approval in most cases;
- a \$3.5 million loan to finish an expansion of the University of Alaska Museum of the North on the UAF campus, to be paid back by the campus;
- the establishment of the Alaska Center for Supply Chain Integration, under the College of Business and Public Policy at UAA. The program is seeded with a \$7.6 million federal grant;
- an annual cost-of-living allowance for approximately 3,200 UA staffers, tied to the Anchorage Consumer Price Index and capped at 2 percent annually.

The board also elected current chairman Rogers to another year in that post. Regent Mary Hughes was elected vice chair; Fran Rose will continue as secretary and Joe Usibelli as treasurer. Board members said farewell to Regents Mike Burns and Elsa Demeksa, who attended their last Board of Regents meeting prior to their terms expiring in 2005. Board members also expressed regret at the recent resignation of Kevin Meyers, who has accepted a position with his employer, ConocoPhillips, in Russia.

Gov. Frank Murkowski will announce appointees to fill the three vacancies by mid-January, 2005. The Legislature then confirms or rejects the appointments.

The board also recognized the heroic efforts of Loren Buck, with the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. Buck is credited with saving a man's life in Kodiak when the man was found wet and hypothermic on a rocky cliff.

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