Facts
Not Fiction

• Rural campuses are far more efficient than many people might think, and are moving towards even greater efficiencies.

• Modern business practices have saved millions of dollars in operating costs and maximized the use of our work force.

• Our health care costs are lower than other public employers – $1,200 per employee, per year, in FY 06.

• The university does not compare itself with obviously larger institutions to justify costs. UA campuses use nationally established peer comparisons as guidelines. Peer campuses include Missouri State at Rolla, Utah’s Weber State, and University of Wyoming.

• Despite the unique challenges of serving a vast area, UA consistently comes out as either average or below average on administrative costs and staffing levels compared with our peers.

• UA has steadily decreased its dependence on state funds - from 60 percent of its overall budget to about 40 percent in 10 years; however, fixed cost challenges (retirement and health care) may require more state funding in the future.

Dispelling the Myths

Did you know:

• UA enrollment is healthy - student credit hour production has increased 18 percent since 1999, with a headcount increase of more than 7 percent.

• In 2005, 50 percent of college-bound high school graduates chose UA schools over colleges Outside. That’s up from 40 percent 10 years ago.

• Over 80 percent of jobs in Alaska and the nation require at least one year of post-secondary education.

• UA research is one of Alaska’s largest industries. In 2005, UA received over $130 million for research from public and private sources outside the state.
Facts

FICTION
Top administrator salaries are too high

FACT
UA pays executives based on market comparisons. However, due to decades-long budget constraints, they are paid, on average, 10-20 percent below their colleagues at comparable institutions.

The President’s annual salary of $256,500 is the second lowest salary for a system president in the nation. According to a recent survey in the Chronicle of Higher Education, the average salary for similar positions is $311,000 per year.

FICTION
UA wants to be the “Harvard of the North”

FACT
Though UA strives to be a quality institution, its costs and administrative levels are based on comparisons with schools of similar size and mission.

Unlike the “big name” private schools of the Lower 48, UA campuses are open admission institutions with few restrictions on enrollment. UA also embraces the community college, vocational and technical mission that more restrictive universities overlook.

FICTION
UA’s tuition is too high

FACT
Other universities across the nation have raised their tuition at higher rates. UA is still less expensive than other four-year public schools, including Arizona, California, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington state.

Tuition covers less than a quarter of the actual costs. On average, working college graduates earn 113 percent more annually than working high school graduates.

FICTION
The university is fat and inefficient

FACT
That claim is ancient history. UA was cut $20 million in the late eighties, was flat funded through the nineties, and has absorbed numerous cost increases.

In inflation-adjusted 1986 dollars, the university’s budget request in 2007 was not one cent more than it received in 1986. In 14 of the last 20 years, the university has begun its funding year with less money to cover fixed costs than the year before.

FICTION
The university offers too many degree programs. It shouldn’t try to be all things to all people

FACT
According to the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), the University of Alaska offers 30 percent fewer degree programs than the average offered by other universities in the Western states.

New programs in recent years have been aimed directly at addressing high priority state workforce needs, such as engineering, nursing and allied health careers.

FICTION
There are too many rural campuses

FACT
UA’s rural campuses consume only 5 percent of total funds received by the state. Serving our rural neighbors is an integral part of the University of Alaska’s mission.

FICTION
If the university would sell some of its land it would have all the money it needs

FACT
Even after the 250,000 acres of new state grant lands are transferred to the university, it will take many years before these remote, undeveloped lands produce regular income. In 20 years, it’s estimated that proceeds from UA land will support 5 percent of the university’s budget.

FICTION
Professors don’t spend enough time in the classroom

FACT
University faculty workloads are consistent with institutions throughout the United States. Faculty members are required to perform multiple functions outside the classroom -- including student advising, research and public service -- as a condition of their employment.

FICTION
The university is top heavy with administrators

FACT
National data on administrative staffing levels and costs consistently show UA at or below average for peer institutions.