MEMORANDUM

Date: October 14, 2011

To: John Pugh, UAS Chancellor
    Brian Rogers, UAF Chancellor
    Tom Case, UAA Chancellor

From: Patrick Gamble, President

Re: UA Metric Exploration Process

With UA's strategic direction development getting underway, it is also time to kick off an associated "results" effort. We want to identify, define, and reach agreement on a common set of system-level outcome metrics that evaluate the University of Alaska System's ability to assess outcomes improvement. This effort would reflect the expansion and maturation of our current, somewhat disparate UA and State performance framework, with a noticeable shift from the university's historical focus on input and quantity measures to an expanded focus on outcomes, ratios and trends.

Metric exploration and development will be conducted in parallel to development of UA's strategic direction. We will continue measuring compliance results, but include a new focus on outcomes that are most likely to be identified as part of our strategic priorities, e.g. student completion, workforce job match, and research fallout as an enterprise, to cite a few possible examples. Our effort will encompass fresh takeaways from strategic direction meetings and listening sessions to be held across the state and at our campuses during academic year 2011-2012.

To this end, I am sponsoring a kickoff meeting with Chancellors and other key staff and faculty leaders to discuss and seek consensus on the ground rules, process, timeline and methodology for choosing new metrics. Overseeing the metric exploration effort will be Gwen Gruenig of UA Institutional Research and Analysis. Following the aforementioned short kickoff meeting, she will chair a system-wide Core Metrics Advisory Committee estimated to consist of between six and ten individuals, appointed by the chancellors and president. The committee will employ expert witness participation when appropriate. This group will meet as often as needed through completion of the scheduled Strategic Direction actions, tentatively set for May 2012. The committee will provide topic-specific metric recommendations for decision consideration as they come up. Close coordination among Strategic Direction Steering and Advisory Committees and staff will be essential for committee members in order to ensure good alignment. Said another way, the Core Metric Advisory Committee will identify the most useful metrics with which to measure our overall progress in moving toward agreed upon strategic direction outcomes.

The candidate list of measures to examine includes: existing UA measures of student support, advising and performance; Complete College America metrics; progress and outcome measures; and other select
measures as might be identified by university faculty and administrators. The university can actually begin initial evaluation of the utility of existing metrics associated with this effort right away.

Clearly, different metrics are appropriate for use at different levels of the university organization. MAUs, campuses, units, departments and programs are encouraged to conduct a fresh look at their own efforts to identify and implement specific, meaningful metrics that can showcase performance within the respective MAU, campus, unit, department, or programs.

cc:  Gwendolyn Gruenig, UA Institutional Research and Analysis
     Paula Donson, UA Academic Affairs