



UNIVERSITY  
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FOUNDATION

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**University secures match for \$15 million grant for teacher mentoring**

The University of Alaska has successfully secured \$1.5 million in private matching money required to receive a \$15 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand early career teacher mentoring.

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project, a partnership between the University of Alaska and the State Department of Education and Early Development, estimates an additional 850 early career teachers and 46,000 students over the course of the grant will benefit from the program.

Carla Beam, vice president for university relations and president of the non-profit UA Foundation, announced today that private matching funds, a mixture of cash and in-kind donations, have been secured to meet the grant requirements. Donors include First National Bank of Alaska, The Chariot Group, Alaska Communications (ACS) and the Usibelli Foundation, as well as personal support in much smaller amounts from Foundation trustees, University of Alaska staff and others who support the teacher mentor program.

"The timeframe to meet the challenge was incredibly short, but the opportunity so compelling donors really stepped up to the plate to help us. We raised \$550,000 in new donations and were able to complete the match with BP and Conoco Phillips funds that remained from previously contributed unrestricted gifts to the university," Beam said. "Contributions ranged in size from \$190.73 to \$300,000. Members of the Downtown Rotary in Anchorage even conducted a last-minute outreach effort to garner support. It was quite humbling."

The five-year grant will assist first- and second-year teachers in the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su and Kenai school districts. The Statewide Mentor Project already helps 320 teachers in 48, mostly rural, school districts each year. The grant expands that program to the four new urban regions beginning in January 2012 with mentors in place for the start of the school year in August 2012.

The mentor project's goals are to reduce teacher turnover and improve student achievement. Part of the federal grant will allow for additional research on the effectiveness of the program in both rural and urban Alaska. The U.S. Department of Education received nearly 600 applications for the grant, known as "i3," for Investing in Innovation. The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project's grant application was one of just 23 selected for funding nationwide.