



Achieving R1 Research Status at UAF

December 2023 Update

What is R1 Research Status?

The Carnegie Classification is a national ranking system for universities. R1 is the highest ranking of doctoral granting research universities in the U.S. UAF currently ranks as an R2, “high research activity” university, which puts UAF within the top 7% of U.S universities in research achievement. Attaining “very high research activity”, or R1 status, would place UAF within the top 4% of U.S. universities with respect to research and have wide ranging positive impacts on UAF, the UA system, and Alaska’s economy.

Why R1 in Alaska?

Securing R1 status at UAF has the potential to transform Alaska’s economy. UAF has the opportunity to not only increase research revenues in the university, but more importantly support local businesses and drive Alaska’s economy. Achieving R1 status at UAF will attract the nation’s top students and faculty to UAF, further improving business opportunities in Alaska. This prestigious ranking will provide global recognition for UAF and Alaska.

Some impacts seen in other R1 universities include, but are not limited to:

- In 2019, University of Colorado Boulder estimated their R1 research activities alone produced [\\$1.2 billion in economic activity](#) for the state.
- [Old Dominion University](#) tripled research expenditures in the process of pursuing R1.
- [University of Maine](#) saw all-time highs in both enrollment and research expenditures in the year it transitioned to R1.

Updated Carnegie Classification Metrics - How will UAF get there?

On November 1, 2023 the Carnegie Classification System updated the metrics used to calculate research activity. R1 status now requires \$50 million in research expenditures and 70 doctoral degrees awarded per year.

UAF exceeds Carnegie’s R1 research expenditures threshold by nearly \$150 million, such that no growth is required in this aspect to achieve R1 status. UAF consistently enrolls approximately 260-280 PhD students and graduates an average of 40 PhDs per year. Achieving R1 status will require graduating at least an additional 30 PhDs each year. This makes achieving R1 status by 2027 an ambitious yet attainable goal.

Carnegie conducts its evaluation on specified 3-year review periods. UAF is striving to achieve R1 status in the 2027 review cycle. UAF, through UA President Pitney and the UA Board of

Regents, is seeking a one-time investment of \$20 million in FY25 state capital funds to achieve R1 research status. The funds will be spent on actions and activities to increase PhD student graduation over the next three years.

UAF achieving R1 research status is not just about growing research, it's about growing Alaska. Further quantifying the economic return for the \$20 million invested into UAF's quest for R1 is a key priority. UAF will continue to analyze benefits of achieving R1 status through evaluation of peer institutions. In the meantime, this investment will:

- Provide global recognition of research strength to draw talent to UAF, the UA System and the State of Alaska.
- Support the recruitment, retention, and mentorship of graduate students and strengthen PhD programs to help UAF sustain R1 in the future.
- Strengthen UAF's research portfolio while helping to advance Alaska-relevant priorities such as building climate resilience, mitigating natural hazards, revitalizing Alaska Native languages and Indigenous ways of knowing, improving the health of Alaskans and our environment, and developing sustainable energy sources and infrastructure.
- Yield long-term financial growth through increased research revenue, student enrollment, and endowments.

REVISED Summary Budget FY25 Capital Request	Est. Amounts	Impact
Graduate Student Stipends (Research Assistantships)	\$12,950,000	~37 New Stipends Annually Target of 70 Total PhDs/Year
Faculty Support/Incentives	\$4,850,000	100-600 Faculty Support
Graduate School, Technology & Staff Support	\$2,000,000	Increasing R1 Capacity & Systems for Student Support
Recruitment, Graduate Student Outreach & Enrollment Marketing	\$200,000	~67-200 Prospective Student Visits
Total	\$20,000,000	UAF R1 Research Status

Appendix - UAF REVISED Budget Summary Details (December 2023):

Graduate Student Stipends (Research Fellowships/Assistantships) are envisioned as one or two years of funded graduate student support, to help graduate students achieve a PhD degree. This support may include tuition, fees and a cost-of-living stipend and will be complemented by external grants and/or teaching or research assistantships to financially support graduate students for the duration of degree completion. This commitment to long-term financial stability for graduate students will help UAF better recruit competitive graduate students, will reduce the financial burden for advisors, and will facilitate degree progression and completion. This support will provide at least 37 stipends per year, or a total of up to approximately 185 stipends over the 5-year period. Through this effort, UAF aims to facilitate completion of an average of 70 PhDs per year for the 2027 Carnegie evaluation, and a total of 350 PhDs during the funding period. Previous analysis has suggested that limited financial support is one of the main barriers to faculty accepting new PhD students and achieving degree completion. Graduate student research assistantships are a key mechanism to help UAF support and facilitate degree completion by existing and new PhD students.

Faculty play a critical role in mentoring doctoral students and postdoctoral research fellows, therefore *Faculty Support Incentives* are a critical component to increasing research productivity and advancing UAF to R1 status. Examples of faculty incentives may include, but are not limited to: buying-out faculty teaching time to provide capacity to conduct research and mentor graduate students, one to three months' salary support to conduct research, seed funding to purchase equipment and/or explore new research topics, and travel support for faculty to conduct field work or attend international research-related conferences. Based on estimated award amounts ranging from \$5K to 30K, this investment will support up to 600 individual faculty grants or support incentives. While a relatively modest portion of the overall budget, this investment will be critical for keeping faculty engaged and motivated to help UAF achieve R1 status.

Graduate School, Technology Tools, and Staff Support will allow the Graduate School and related departments to increase efficiency related to tracking graduate student admissions, retention, graduation, and job placement and other support services for graduate student success. This support can help build capacity and improve efficiency of relevant departments to ensure that the needs associated with a higher volume and faster degree completion rates of PhD students can be met.

Recruitment, Graduate Student Visits, Enrollment Outreach and Marketing efforts are necessary to promote UAF's world renowned research, research graduate student fellowship opportunities, and long-term commitment to graduate students. An organized prospective graduate student visitation weekend will help bring competitive prospective graduate students to UAF to learn and see first-hand the opportunities and environment they will be working in. These visits are a great opportunity to draw research talent to Alaska and is a common recruitment strategy used by R1 universities, coupled with strategic enrollment marketing communications. Depending on travel costs and cost-sharing opportunities, these awards will support up to 200 individual UAF student visits, and help reach prospective students in-state, out-of-state, or internationally and increase overall graduate student enrollment.