



Teacher Mentoring Project

The University of Alaska Board of Regents at its February meeting received a presentation on the Alaska Teacher Mentoring Project, a collaborative effort between the state, university and school districts across the state initiated by Education Commissioner Roger Sampson and UA President Mark Hamilton.

The project matches 350 new K-12 teachers in Alaska with 22 experienced teachers trained specifically as "mentors" who offer professional support, regular communication and personal visits. The program's goal is to reduce teacher turnover, which is demonstrably tied to student success.

The board heard from Sampson; Lorrie Scoles, a nationally board certified teacher who is director of the Mentoring Project; Troy Larson, a new teacher in Kotlik who is taking part in the program; and Jan Littlebear, an Anchorage teacher who is mentoring 19 new teachers.

Sampson said typically, in districts across Alaska, an average of 15 teachers quit over the holiday break. This year, just eight months into the new program, "we had zero (quit)," Sampson said. "That's pretty powerful."

"We can't have a sink or swim kind of culture for our teachers... We've found the piece that is going to make the difference."

- Lorrie Scoles, Mentoring Project Director

Teachers most often leave because they don't have someone to turn to for feedback or solutions to difficult situations.

"We can't have a sink or swim kind of culture for our teachers," Scoles, director of the mentoring project, told the regents. "We've found the piece that is going to make the difference."

The goal of the Teacher Mentoring Project is to create a seamless connection between the university—particularly the schools of education at UAF and UAA—and the K-12 schools across Alaska, said Dave Veazey, UA assistant vice president for academic affairs.

New Academic Programs

The board approved four new academic programs: a new bachelor of science in engineering degree at UAA; a bachelor

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The University of Alaska Board of Regents is the governing body responsible for the university policy and management through the president. Regents are appointed by the governor for eight-year terms, subject to legislative confirmation. A student regent is appointed for two years from candidates nominated on each campus. (Regents' term of office shown in parentheses.)



From left: Regents Jeff Staser, Cynthia Henry, Brian Rogers, UA President Mark Hamilton, Regents Bob Martin, David Parks, Michael Snowden, Mary Hughes, Carl Marrs, Joe Usibelli, Fran Rose, and James Hayes. **Photo by Kate Ripley © 2005 University of Alaska**

of science degree in computer engineering at UAF; a two-year certificate in pre-radiologic technology qualifications at UAS; and a certificate in drafting technology at UAS.

The engineering program at UAA was designed collaboratively with local industry and UAA faculty to meet market demand for engineers in the Anchorage region and across the state. Over 900 engineering job openings were posted in Alaska during the past year. The program expects to attract 40 students the first year, with enrollment anticipated at 200 students by 2007-2008.

The computer engineering program at UAF merges the fields of electrical engineering and computer science. It is expected to attract 10-20 new students per year with projected enrollment at 30-60 students in four years.

The pre-radiologic technology qualifications certificate from UAS would prepare students to enter professional medical imaging programs. The health industry has emerged as a major employer in Southeast Alaska, and the program expects to attract 20 students its first year.

Meanwhile, the certificate in drafting technology at UAS would address a shortage of locally trained, entry level drafting technicians in the Southeast region. Projected enrollment is four students the first year, growing to 14 students by the 2008-2009 academic year.

Governor Calls for Cooperation

Gov. Frank Murkowski made a rare personal appearance before the board to request the university match its research capacity with the state's economic development opportunities and scientific needs.

One result from the governor's visit was an agreement by the board to discuss the matter further during a future meeting or retreat.

Museum Costs Receive Backing

The board approved a new total project cost for the University of Alaska Museum of the North, on the Fairbanks campus, for \$42 million.

Earlier estimates accounted separately for construction, a \$3.5 million loan approved by the board in December, and another fund--largely comprised of private donations--for furniture, fixtures and exhibits. While the board had been apprised of all costs in earlier meetings, at the February meeting they combined those funds and included a \$1 million increase to complete the project.

The new funds come from accrued interest earnings on previously approved capital projects. The museum expansion, which includes new laboratory space, storage for collections, an art gallery and a multi-media auditorium, is expected to open in September.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

The board also unanimously approved revised collective bargaining agreements with United Academics, the Alaska Community Colleges' Federation of Teachers and the Alaska Higher Education Craft and Trades Employees, which together represent 1,450 faculty and staff statewide. The unions and the Legislature must still approve the contracts--which include substantial modifications to the health benefits plan in response to rising health care costs as well as a one-year extension of the contracts--before they would become final.

Good-bye and Thanks—Welcome New Regents

Board members approved resolutions honoring and thanking the work of former regents Mike Burns, Elsa Demeksa and Kevin Meyers. The terms of Burns and Demeksa expired; Meyers left his post as president of ConocoPhillips in Alaska to take a similar position with the company in Russia.

Meanwhile, February's meeting was the first for newly appointed regents

Jeff Staser and Carl Marrs of Anchorage, and Bob Martin of Juneau.



Congratulations Cooperative Extension Service

The Cooperative Extension Service hosted a reception for regents, lawmakers and others to celebrate 75 years of service to the state. The regents unanimously approved a resolution of congratulations for CES. Sen. Ralph Seekins and Rep. Jim Holms, both R-Fairbanks, presented a legislative citation supporting CES while attendees enjoyed the music of the family band of Paul and Melissa Zhasky, along with their children, Laura and Quinn.

CES was founded in 1930 as part of the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. Today extension offices are located throughout the state, helping Alaskan residents with everything from controlling pests in summer vegetable gardens to building energy efficient homes in the Arctic.

Future Board Meetings

April 13-14, 2005
Bethel

June 8-9, 2005
Fairbanks
