

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAIRBANKS –On Monday, the University of Alaska kicked off Strategic Pathways, the systemic evaluation of university academic and administrative programs designed to realign how UA will focus its efforts and allocate its resources in the years ahead. Nearly 100 people – students, faculty, staff, university administrators and community members from across the state– began the review of three academic and four administrative programs.

At the initial meeting, UA President Jim Johnsen laid out the issues facing the university including high operational costs, the number of degree and certificate programs, declining budgets, perceived top-heavy administration, and how UA will meet the state’s workforce needs in the future.

“As the pressure to diversify our economy increases, we know that our state will need a significant increase in an educated workforce,” Johnsen said, “and there isn’t another leader out there that can accomplish this achievement. We are it. We are leading in preparation of the state’s future.”

The three academic programs under review in the initial phase of Strategic Pathways include teacher education, engineering and business management. The four administrative programs include intercollegiate athletics, procurement, research administration and information technology. The Strategic Pathways framework is meant to create efficiencies, expand enrollments, and underscore the unique strengths and qualities of each of the three universities.

Already the discussions have helped clarify early misconceptions about Strategic Pathways and have led to productive ways forward for UA in meeting state needs.

“Engineering research is needed to build Alaska,” said Bill Schnabel, a member of the engineering review team. “The plan to continue supporting engineering research at UAA and UAF is important to our state.”

Several other key points made in the early review group discussions included clear understanding and agreement that:

- The engineering program will exist at both UAA and UAF;
- An educated workforce requires UA to prepare top quality teachers for our K-12 schools;

- Changes to schools of management need to ultimately focus on a top quality student experience.

The review teams will work through the summer to develop and suggest options, with pros and cons, in these seven areas and submit them to President Johnsen by mid-August. Final options will be presented to the Board of Regents in September for consideration and implementation. Phase Two of academic and administrative program reviews will follow this fall.

Teams, the process and outcomes are and will be posted at:

<http://www.alaska.edu/pathways/>

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