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UNIVERSITY of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

August 24, 2026

Dear UA Community -

I am grateful to the University community for your strength, resilience, and dedication as I begin my work as the University of Alaska's 18th president. The success of our University rests on all of our shoulders.

I'm excited to be back at UA and to support and advance our shared mission of inspiring learning, and advancing and disseminating knowledge through teaching, research, and service, with an emphasis on the Arctic and its people. I firmly believe that the University of Alaska is positioned for immense opportunity. Yes, we absolutely face challenges. However, rather than operating from a mindset of scarcity or fearfulness, I embrace a mindset of possibility: with the resources and opportunities we **do** have, what can we do to empower Alaskans and our state for future prosperity and success? As we focus on putting students first and engage in the work of enhancing recruitment, retention, graduation, and placing our students into Alaska's workforce, our resources - and opportunities - will continue to grow.

I also know this may be a period of real uncertainty for many of you. Your day-to-day work might be changing, there have been leadership and organizational changes, and that creates unease about what the future may hold. I don't take that lightly, and I know I don't have all the answers. Over my first 100 days, I'll be listening and learning about the opportunities and challenges you face, so that together we can build on the progress this institution has already made, and with the presumption that we all want the same thing: a stronger UA for all of us, our students, and our state.

I intend to lead our institution with a focus on **presuming positive intent** - starting from the idea that everyone means well, is working hard, and is doing their best - and **curiosity over convention** - asking "why" from a place of open-mindedness, empathy, and intent to learn. Living those values will help us see where our possibilities lie and use the unique experiences and ideas you all have for our long-term success.

Welcome to another academic year! It's an honor to have been selected to lead this institution. I look forward to getting to know many of you over the coming weeks and months.

Thanks for all you do for our institution and Alaska,



Matt Cooper
President
University of Alaska