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May 20, 2020

RE: On-site operations plan

UA Community,

This month, we marked the end of an extraordinary spring semester and shifted our sights toward what's next.

During the last several months you have shown incredible resilience in making the best of a difficult situation. Your patience and perseverance have been truly inspiring. Thank you.

It has become increasingly clear that our state, nation and world will be living with this novel coronavirus for the foreseeable future. With that in mind, we have developed a plan for operating the University of Alaska throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, however long that may be. The plan is the result of many long hours of work by the members of our incident management team. We approached this plan with safety, health and educational quality as guiding principles. You can read the full details of the plan [here](#).

It's important to remember what this plan is and is not. It is a plan to continue to serve Alaska as safely as possible throughout the coming months or years. It is not a linear path to reopening, in part because our universities were never closed. Our teaching, learning, research and service work has continued in the virtual space, as evidenced by the nearly 3,000 students who earned degrees this spring.

In addition, it is very likely that we will move back and forth among the phases as the incidence of COVID-19 ebbs and flows in our state and communities.

Our goal has been and will continue to be creating a safe learning and working environment for our students and employees. We hope that as many of those activities as possible can resume in person. However, it's likely that our university communities will have more restrictions and safety measures in place than are mandated by the state or local cities and boroughs.

That's because public health experts note four situations where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is increased: travel, group housing, mass gatherings and asymptomatic people. Universities have a high incidence of all four, which means a conservative approach is warranted.

As we launch this new plan today, you will notice few immediate changes. Phase A of the plan closely mirrors our current operations, with most employees working from home and most classes delivered remotely. You will notice that some of the travel restrictions have been loosened and we have removed the requirement for self-quarantine after in-state travel. Some of our summer courses are being offered in person and many of our researchers have been heading back to their labs to continue their important work.

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More change is coming as we transition to the fall semester. Teams at each of our universities are working diligently to prepare for Phase B and beyond. We hope to move to that phase very soon, with an eye on being ready for Phase C in the fall, with more in-person classes and on-campus housing, as well as more employees being able to rejoin their colleagues back in the office.

Information on each of the phases, as well as operations at each university, is available on our updated coronavirus information [website](#). I will also speak about our plan at the governor's press briefing today at 5 p.m. Watch live at <https://livestream.com/govdunleavy>.

If these last few months have confirmed anything, it's that the University of Alaska community is tenacious. You rose to meet the challenges thrown at you and have kept your universities strong. I am proud to be part of such an amazing team and an amazing organization and am confident in our ability to tackle tomorrow's challenges together.

Jim Johnsen