

James R. Johnsen, Ed.D.

President

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UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

May 21, 2020

Dear UA Colleagues –

As we face the future, the university's leadership team is united in positioning the university to support a thriving future for Alaska, while resolving our fiscal issues made worse by the COVID-19 global pandemic. We promise that our values will guide us in our actions, we will focus on our mission, and we will continue to put the well-being of our students, staff and faculty first.

Clearly, our budget challenges need to be resolved. Financial details were presented to the Board of Regents [Audit Committee meeting](#) last week. The presentation identified that our challenges and budget gap are substantial and we have a very short time frame in which to provide solutions. The Audit Committee directed me to work with the chancellors to consider options for university transformation for discussion with the Full Board on June 4.

After getting input from the chancellors and governance leaders, we have developed a set of options. Given the immediate need for solutions, it is not possible to complete a rigorous review of any suggestions that came forward. For that reason, the focus will be on doing a preliminary review of a small number of options, which were selected based on several factors, including:

1. UGF cost savings potential
2. Ability to ensure student access/affordability
3. Opportunity to support mission focus
4. Time/ease of implementation
5. Additional considerations [e.g., on-line alternatives]

The preliminary review of administrative options will reside with the university's Business Council; academic options will be led by the Academic Council, both of which include faculty, staff, and student governance representatives; and, the structural options will be reviewed by the Executive Council. I am conferring with the System Governance Council on the structural options. I also want to assure you that we are staying in close touch with our accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

I do not plan to make recommendations on these options to the Board during its meeting, June 4-5. Rather, I will present the results of our preliminary reviews and take direction from the Board on any further consideration.

- [Options for Review](#) (JPEG)
- [Options for University Transformation – Preliminary Review Process](#) (PDF)

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We believe in the strength and integrity of the University of Alaska and appreciate your input about the future of the university. I have no doubt that together we will chart a clear path forward, solve our budget issues, maintain our financial strength, and come out of this challenging time stronger than ever.

Jim Johnsen, President
University of Alaska