

James R. Johnsen, Ed.D.

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May 29, 2020

Dear UA community,

Prior to the Board of Regents meeting next week, I want to provide you an update about our financial situation and the process of how we came to the options that will be presented to the board. I also welcome and encourage you to continue to provide ideas for consideration.

In the past few weeks appropriate councils have reviewed several options for the board's consideration. I want to thank our community campus directors, governance representatives, chancellors and others who provided ideas and input for these transformative options for addressing our budget challenge. Thanks as well to those of you who have written to the Board of Regents and chancellors, provided public testimony, or offered input through system governance.

This budget reality brought on by reduction in state funding, declining enrollment and tuition, and the financial impacts of COVID-19 has been unsettling and difficult for all of us, and the board has tough choices to make. Your continued input and ideas for finding solutions to our challenges is vital.

During the board meeting next week, I will present the results of the preliminary reviews of the transformation options, without any specific recommendations. The chancellors and governance representatives also will have the opportunity to share their views. The board may make immediate decisions or ask for more information with decisions to be made at a future meeting. The board might also decide to set aside options and ask that we review other options. I encourage all who are able to tune into the livestream of the meeting at alaska.edu/bor/live or to view the recording on board docs, generally posted 3-5 days after the meeting, to stay informed on the Board's actions and discussions. I will continue to communicate with all of you on any outcomes of the board's deliberations.

Also during this meeting regents will recognize outstanding outgoing leaders, UAS Chancellor Rick Caulfield, UA Foundation President Susan Foley, General Counsel Mike Hostina, as well as the 2020 Staff Make Students Count awardees. As with all difficult times, it's important to celebrate the good, even as we face challenging decisions.

Additionally, to help you access all of the information, we have created a new webpage. You'll find it on the Board of Regents website with information on proposed options, timelines, opportunities for engagement, governance resolutions and presentations to the board. Please visit alaska.edu/bor/solutions for the latest information. The webpage will be regularly updated, and the presentation with options for next week's June 4-5 board meeting will be posted later today.

There also will be another opportunity for Alaskans to provide public testimony to the board on June 2 from 4-6 p.m. via audio. Please call 1-866-726-0757 to join the queue. This public testimony session will be live streamed at: www.alaska.edu/bor/live/. You can also provide written testimony anytime by emailing ua-bor@alaska.edu.

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I am reminded that as we consider these options and the impacts on our students, employees and communities, we are not just looking at areas to reduce. We also are exploring opportunities for more inter-university collaboration, refinancing debt to free up funds and reduce expenses, and exploring new avenues to increase revenue. Working with you, there is an opportunity to improve our system and create a stronger university for the next hundred years. Please join us in this important process.

Thank you for all that you do,
Jim Johnsen