

Pat Pitney
UA President

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Dear UA Community,

It is my honor to announce that we have selected the four Grand Prize recipients of the Empower Alaska Incentive Program! Each will receive a \$5,000 prize and recognition at the September Board of Regents meeting. The four recipients were chosen from the top 12 nominations, three from each university and the System Office, for their extraordinary contributions to the university.

Jessica Salas (UAA) helped develop a new UA transfer credit process in Banner. The new process greatly eases the crunch between semester end and the start of the next semester, which translates into quicker service to students and academic advisors serving those students.

Ashley Munro (UAF) helped facilitate PIT Crew training and develop a strategic plan for the Registrar's office. These improvements to the Registrar's workflows make academic record-keeping more efficient and accessible for students and faculty. The work also achieved considerable cost savings efficiencies, as well as helped UAF modernize countless student processes, saving critical time and resources.

Bernard (Bernie) Yadao (UAS) pulled double duty, keeping the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning systems running and performing services above and beyond his position's scope. By stepping up to provide these highly skilled services, he saved UAS tens of thousands of dollars each year by eliminating the need to hire independent contractors. And he did it all with a great attitude and display of character.

Kolene James (UAS) provides support and guidance for AK Native students in Juneau and via distance. Her focus on *healing through education, harvesting, and community* grows leaders and provides a nurturing environment for Indigenous People at our university, and has contributed greatly to our goals for increasing enrollment of Indigenous students.

The Empower Alaska Incentive Program is a pilot initiative through which each university supports employee contributions, enhances morale, improves processes, celebrates cost-saving measures, recognizes exceptional student services, and fosters employee engagement. UA employees across the system are doing amazing work — and this program helped us identify, recognize, and elevate some of that work and its impacts.

The Board of Regents initiated the program in response to feedback from the UA-wide Employee Experience Survey to offer monetary recognition for exceptional work that advances our mission and empowers our communities.

Congratulations to our Grand Prize winners and the 670 staff across the system who received bonuses as part of this program.

Pat Pitney

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat Pitney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pat" and last name "Pitney" clearly legible.

President University of Alaska