

November 4, 2017

Dear UA Community,

When the Board of Regents meets in Fairbanks next week, I will recommend that UA establish a single College of Education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). While UAF would become the administrative home for the College of Education, it would build on the programs currently being delivered by UAF, UAA and UAS. Classes and programs will continue to be offered on all three campuses by faculty at those locations.

This recommendation is an outcome of the Strategic Pathways review of the university's delivery of teacher education. Based on the Strategic Pathways report; consultation with key internal and external stakeholders, university leadership and educators; public forums at UAA, UAF and UAS; UA Regent perspectives; and other factors, I chose UAF as the administrative home.

I believe there are several reasons for bringing our three schools of education together into one College of Education. Most notable are the need for a sharper focus on the state's needs for more Alaska-prepared teachers and education leaders, and a greater accountability to meeting those needs. Other key reasons include the importance of increasing consistency in the degree and endorsement programs, supporting more faculty collaboration and innovation, and increasing productivity and cost effectiveness.

This plan for education was informed by UA's current approach to the nursing programs, where UAA was selected to be the administrative home with faculty and classes at campuses all across the state. Just as nursing faculty located on the UAF and UAS campuses are UAA faculty, teacher education faculty at UAA and UAS would be UAF faculty under this new plan. As faculty will continue to deliver programs at current locations, relationships developed with their students and local school districts should continue with little interruption.

If the recommendation is approved by the regents, the plan would need to be approved by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities which separately accredits UAA, UAF and UAS.

As I considered the difficult question of which university ought to be the administrative home for the College, I was impressed by the strengths that each university brings to the opportunity. UAA has excellent faculty, strong relationships with local school districts, and an urban location; UAS has a long record of innovative and high quality programs including its strong record in preparing Alaska Native teachers; and, UAF has strengths in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields, relationships with a large number of rural school districts, research success, and a high academic ranking as a Tier 1 research university.

Going forward, I plan to appoint a team to work out the details of the change. The team will be chaired by the UA Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research Dan White and comprised

of education faculty from each of the current programs, the Faculty Alliance, the deans of education, the Alaska Department of Early Education and Development, the National Education Association-Alaska, and the Alaska Council of School Administrators. The plan will include provisions to:

- support student continuation and completion of degree programs
- advise on a process to select the permanent Dean of the College
- ensure coordination with programmatic (NCATE/CAEP) and institutional accreditation bodies (NWCCU)
- articulate faculty and staff responsibilities and transitional employment terms (including tenure) consistent with the terms of applicable policy, regulation, and collective bargaining agreements
- increase student enrollment and completion rates
- ensure strong relationships between the College and key local, regional, and state stakeholders
- ensure effective and inclusive governance of the College
- provide for appropriate allocation of financial and other resources
- include a timeline for key implementation milestones
- address any other matters required for effective implementation of this direction.

This spring I will update the regents on the plan. Subject to accreditation approval, implementation will start before the end of the fiscal year. Full implementation would be targeted for completion in 2018.

Jim Johnsen