

Good Morning and welcome to Fairbanks! My name is Maria Russell and I am the current Staff Alliance Chair. First of all I would like to thank you for all the work that you have put into this budget process, and for all of the work that is yet to come.

Staff Alliance would like to stress to you the importance of staff. We have staff from Ketchikan to Bethel performing tasks from research, business operations, outreach, education and safety. There is not a part of this university system that staff don't play a significant role in. So I am given the difficult task of being one voice for thousands, to emphasize to you the importance of staff.

Why do I stress this importance? Staff compensation.

Staff Alliance feels that the proposed FY11 3% compensation increase is not sufficient for unrepresented staff, especially when our health care premiums are anticipated to increase and our cost of living is higher than elsewhere. UA employees face higher heating fuel and shipping costs. These costs also affect the price of food and supplies.

In these uncertain economic times, we look to our administrators to stand up for and provide assurance that the staff will receive adequate compensation increases to meet the rising cost of living and health care expenses. University employees will most likely take home less in their paychecks in FY11 with the 3% increase recommended by the Chancellor than they do right now.

Retaining our talented staff is also difficult when our staff compensation increases are eroding and unpredictable. With the abolishment of yearly step increases in favor of across the board (ATB) increases from the legislature, pay increases with commensurate years of service are no longer status quo. There is an urgent need for UA administration to provide the staff with a clear, long-term plan to solve these compensation issues. Employees understand these times are hard for everyone, however, UA administration must also understand that employees, who provide critical services and support for the University, must be compensated fairly in order to retain them.

UAF Staff Council requests that the Board of Regents raise the proposed FY11 3% staff compensation increase to provide parity with union represented staff, and to help meet the rising cost of living and rising health care premiums that we face.

We certainly hope that the Board will agree.

Thank you for your time.