

28 May 20

University of Alaska Board of Regents
Sheri Buretta, Chair
ua-bor@alaska.edu
University of Alaska
PO Box 755300
Fairbanks, AK 99775

Dear Regent Buretta:

On behalf of the UAS Alumni & Friends Association (UASAA) Board of Directors, I wish to express our vehement opposition to President Johnsen's proposed structural option of eliminating the University of Alaska Southeast. Simply put, we understand that these are challenging financial times but find it incredulous that the university would consider eliminating a major academic unit, providing direct service to entire region of the state, without first looking to find cost savings across the system through the elimination of duplicative academic and even non-academic (i.e. athletic) programs.

UAS has value in our region and across the state with quality distance-delivered programs. Recent accreditations – both by the NWCCU and by professional accreditors in teacher preparation and business – document the high quality of a UAS education. Moreover, UAS has built strong partnerships with community leaders, employers, native corporations and tribes, K-12 schools, and other community stakeholders. This is truly a case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts: you simply cannot dismantle Southeast's local opportunity for higher education and expect the value to remain with UAA/UAF picking up the pieces via remote.

Lastly, let me close by saying that the Board of Regents' continued questioning of UA's overall structure during the past year (i.e. from the suggested single UA accreditation last fall to eliminating UAS currently this spring) is hurting everyone. ***Reasonable people can understand that, in difficult financial times programs may need to be eliminated, but the people of Alaska need to know that their universities will remain.*** This continued uncertainty regarding UA's overall structure, played out in public media statewide, is having a direct negative impact on alumni memberships, charitable giving and, most importantly, student enrollments, and needs to stop.

So I beseech you again, on behalf of the UASAA Board of Directors, do not accept President Johnsen's proposed option for "UA Transformation" of merging UAS into UAA and/or UAF.

Respectfully Yours,



Roberta Stell
UASAA Board President