



UNIVERSITY  
*of* ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

**PRESIDENT**  
**UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA**

The University of Alaska Board of Regents invites nominations and applications for the position of President of the University of Alaska. The regents seek a seasoned, wise, and successful leader who can provide strategic, creative and innovative leadership for the university. With 15 campuses and numerous outreach centers stretching nearly 1,200 miles from Ketchikan to Kotzebue, the University of Alaska serves over 33,000 students from diverse backgrounds in a place of awe inspiring geography and immense distances. The university's broad charge encompasses everything from the community college mission to research intensive, post-doctoral study.



**ALASKA**

Alaska's land mass spans one-fifth the size of the contiguous United States. It includes numerous mountain ranges, tundra, coastal shores, rainforests and the only portion of the Arctic in the United States. Alaska was first inhabited by its diverse Native peoples and later by Russian immigrants and gold seekers of the late 19<sup>th</sup>

and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Alaska's population has tripled since statehood was granted 50 years ago, and now numbers almost 700,000 residents. Alaska today includes the growing urban area of Anchorage, the state's largest city and headquarters for most major corporations; Fairbanks, which serves as the economic hub for the Interior and northern regions of the state; Juneau, the state capital in the southeastern panhandle; and many other smaller towns, villages and communities.

The 800-mile trans-Alaska oil pipeline forms Alaska's economic spine. The petroleum industry is responsible for one-third of the state's economic output and makes up 90 percent of the state's general fund revenues. Government and a few private industries--oil, tourism, commercial fishing, mining and logging--bring in most of the new money that makes Alaska's economy grow. Federal dollars support military bases, obligations to Alaska's indigenous people and large federal land



*The Trans-Alaska pipeline travels over 800 miles from Prudhoe Bay to the port of Valdez.*

holdings in the form of parks, refuges and recreational lands. The federal government owns 221 million of Alaska's 375 million acres; individual Alaskans own less than 1 percent of the land. See [http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/Publications/UA\\_summ06.pdf](http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/Publications/UA_summ06.pdf).

While these revenue sources have reliably supported Alaska in the past 30 years, new challenges lie ahead. Oil production is slowing. There is hope of a new gas pipeline from the North Slope, but that is likely to be influenced by the national and international price of natural gas markets. The current recession may stress the federal budget prospectively. As Alaska looks to its future, diversification of its economy offers visionary leadership great opportunity. As a major leader in Alaska, the president of the University of Alaska will be significantly engaged in shaping this state's future through higher education.

### **The University of Alaska**

The University of Alaska includes all of Alaska's public colleges and universities in the state. It is a statewide system of higher education that consists of the system office, three regional universities, twelve community colleges and numerous outreach sites. In conformance with the state constitution, the governor appoints members of the University of Alaska Board of Regents and the legislature confirms them. The board of regents is the governing body for higher education, designated in the Alaska State Constitution. The University of Alaska's operating budget for 2010 totaled just over \$823 million, including federal, state and university receipts.



*Open fields at the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station are an annual resting place for migratory birds. The Butrovich Building, home of the Alaska System Office, perches on the hillside. It features a view of the Alaska Range and Mt. McKinley.*

### ***System Office***

The president serves as the chief executive officer for the University of Alaska Board of Regents. He or she is a strong advocate for the university. Chancellors of the system's major campuses report directly to the president. The major campuses are the University of Alaska Anchorage (Anchorage campus, four community campuses and several outreach sites), the University of Alaska Fairbanks (Fairbanks campus and six community campuses and numerous outreach sites) and the University of

Alaska Southeast (Juneau campus and two community campuses).

The University of Alaska System Office is located in Fairbanks, as is the president's residence. The system office plays important internal coordinating roles as well as external advocacy ones. Its primary ongoing responsibilities are related to maintaining the accounting and management systems including legal, financial, human resources and information technology; development of annual operating and capital budgets; leadership, coordination and policy for UA fundraising initiatives; public and governmental advocacy for the University of Alaska; and coordination of academic offerings. See <http://www.alaska.edu/bor/strategic-plan-2009/>.

### ***University Campuses***

The University of Alaska was founded in 1917 in Fairbanks. Today, UA is a thriving system of 33,000 students across the state. The university employs over 7,000 dedicated faculty and staff. Outstanding faculty members take pride in offering a broad range of academic programs, on campuses, through distance learning, or a blend of both. The University of Alaska's mission is to inspire learning and advance and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research and public service which emphasizes the North and its diverse peoples. Led by highly able, widely respected chancellors, the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the University of Alaska Southeast are separately accredited institutions, as is Prince William Sound Community College in Valdez. (<http://www.alaska.edu/active/about-ua/>). As the university reaches out to meet the needs of both urban and rural Alaska, the structure of the statewide system has expanded to incorporate community campuses and to establish learning

centers across the state. It is a highly diverse, complex system of higher education in a state where accessibility by road is extremely limited.

The individual character of UAA, UAF and UAS is influenced by history, mission and today's demands. UAF, a land, sea and space-grant Carnegie RU/H doctoral degree granting campus, has grown from its early founding into an outstanding center for research, particularly as it relates to northern environments. It is home to strong arts and sciences programs as well as numerous research institutes, such as the world-famous Geophysical Institute, which operates the Poker Flat Research Range (the only collegiate rocket range in the country), and the Arctic Region Supercomputing Center. UAF students number approximately 10,000. UAA serves over 20,000 students in the growing Southcentral region surrounding Anchorage. UAA is a comprehensive university with a Carnegie M-L designation. With a commitment to strong scholarship and research, faculty take pride in offering exceptional academic programs in the arts and sciences, along with meeting Alaska's most pressing professional needs for well-educated nurses, engineers and business leaders. UAS provides an engaged, supportive arts and sciences learning environment for a diverse student body of 3,500 and significant distance learning opportunities across Alaska. With a Carnegie M-S classification, UAS promotes student achievement and faculty scholarship, lifelong learning opportunities and quality academic programs. The community campuses and outreach sites in Alaska provide strong focus on workforce training at the two-year degree and certification level of accomplishment.

There is a strong commitment to environmental issues, sustainability and diversity, particularly as it relates to Alaska Natives, on University of Alaska campuses. The next UA president will benefit from clear insight into the nature of Alaska and its people, as well as the complexity and values of its higher education system.

### **Context of the Search**

Superimpose a map of Alaska upon the Lower 48 and one will find that it stretches from California to Florida and covers most of the Midwestern states.

This area includes remote communities with small populations in isolated regions noted for their mountains, coastlines and tundra. Sixty percent of

the population lives in Anchorage and the Southcentral area. The city of Fairbanks serves as a hub for rural communities throughout the vast Interior region of Alaska, while the state capital is located in Juneau.



*Alaska Native dancers perform during UAF commencement.*

The educational needs of Alaskans vary as significantly as the geography. Students include many first-generation college attendees; employed adults who desire workforce training; military families who complete undergraduate degrees; resident Alaskans, both traditional and non-traditional; and graduate students pressing research boundaries.

Alaska also presents varying attitudes about higher education and its role. To some state residents, workforce training should define higher education's key function, while others seek growing emphasis on academic excellence to position the University of Alaska as the first choice for a college education among residents. A growing percentage of high school graduates attend the University of Alaska today compared to a decade ago, but a significant number still leave the state for a college education.

Intellectual expertise needed by Alaska-based corporations is often imported. For some Alaskans, high-quality research is greatly valued and seen as a major contributor to the state's capacity to compete. For others, research is little known or appreciated. The University of Alaska and its president must be about the work of structuring a system of higher education that will increase the level of well-educated Alaskans who can build the economic and cultural future of the state. The following opportunities and challenges frame the search for the next president of the University of Alaska.

### ***A University in Transition***

As the University of Alaska stretches to fulfill its mission, it does so through campuses of varying degrees of academic maturation and focus. Each major campus has impressive strengths and capacity to serve within a developing system. Each desires to become the best it can be, even as system leadership wrestles with adequacy of resources to support all aspirations, to protect established investments and to assure accountability to the people of Alaska.



*The UAA campus is the most urban of Alaska's universities.*

A population shift from rural to the Southcentral part of Alaska has elevated expectations of UAA. Conceived as an urban university, UAA today seeks to serve broad interests in Alaska's largest city and to attract high-quality faculty who come with strong research as well as teaching interests. The campus vigorously pursues partnerships to achieve larger city goals. Campus facility expansion has extended UAA's capacity to serve, but in other parts of Alaska, there is concern that this growth comes at the cost of their regional institutions. UAA, for its part, often feels constrained in reaching its full potential by the bonds of the system regarding doctoral degree provision and perceived funding inequities.

Since its founding UAF has built a solid reputation for strong research, especially in its Geophysical Institute, the Institute of Arctic Biology, the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, the Institute of Northern Engineering and the International Arctic Research Center. Its research revenues, mostly awarded through competitive federal research grants, exceeded \$123 million in 2008. The campus currently is being called on to link undergraduates more closely to UAF's



*UAF is America's Arctic University.*

research strengths as well as to relate research efforts to economic development needs in Alaska. New and appropriate research ventures need to be stimulated, perhaps in collaboration with strengths of other campuses. UAF is the sole doctoral degree granting university in Alaska, though there is a joint doctoral degree with UAA in psychology. As UAA has experienced rapid growth in enrollment and facilities, UAF worries that its facilities needs are not being fully addressed and that doctoral programs may be offered elsewhere.



*UAS, nestled near Auke Lake, is in Alaska's capital city of Juneau.*

The UAS and all other campus sites seek the strong support of the University of Alaska System Office to ensure their stability and longevity. Their smaller size, yet highly important service, makes them a vital part of the University of Alaska's mission. UAS feels that high quality, distance-delivered education, and system support of that endeavor, is critical to smaller campuses. UAS believes the needs of campuses in the Southeast region are very different than road-accessible, urban areas such as Anchorage and Fairbanks. A solid appreciation of educational

technology and an understanding of the very different challenges faced by off-road communities are essential for UA's next president.

These regional rivalries need to be constructively channeled by the next president. He or she will need to work closely with the board of regents, the campus chancellors and the body politic to formulate constructive strategies to move the service of each campus ahead in ways that are advantageous to the campuses and overall system goals.

There also is expressed campus concern regarding the role, organization and size of the System Office. Striking the right balance between policy leadership at the system level with management, performance and accountability at the campuses remains a work in progress. Recommendations from a recent report on this matter have been partially implemented, but others remain for the next president's attention. See <http://www.alaska.edu/pres/downloads/2008-02-12MACTAGGART-STUDY-FINAL.PDF>.

The above issues will require continuing strategic thought by the Alaska Board of Regents. The president should have a clear understanding of organizational development of large academic systems, what works and what does not, at the various stages of institutional development. It will require that the president work closely with the board to forge a strong understanding of strategies for change that will yield desired results.

### **Adaptable Leadership**

The next president of the University of Alaska will benefit from being nimble and adaptable. Factors influencing higher education are constantly in flux. Current budgets are solid, unlike those in much of the United States, where even tenured faculty positions are at risk. However, funds that gave the current president and board the capacity to make new investments are now diminished. The next president should have command of strategic budgeting. New dollars will likely have to come from increased efforts to attract private giving as well as reallocation.



*Workforce training provided by the University of Alaska is a vital part of Alaska's economy.*

As one of the most influential and visible leaders in Alaska, the president of the University of Alaska must constantly draw the connections between higher education and the state's economic viability. He or she must be a tireless, persuasive advocate willing to travel widely within the state, encouraging support for education and training beyond high school. The next president should elevate UA's national visibility and be effective with relevant agencies of the federal government. She or he should work effectively with University of Alaska Foundation leaders. He or she must be a coach for chancellors, a wise counselor for the board and trustworthy resource for the legislature. The president must craft partnerships that move agendas forward.

### **Desired Characteristics**

The presidency of the University of Alaska is an outstanding opportunity for the leader who enjoys the challenge of moving a complex academic organization forward to even greater levels of achievement. The board of regents seeks a highly experienced, politically astute leader who understands how to advance agendas in higher education and to manage a developing university system in a highly competent fashion. The next president must have the capacity to work

effectively and well with board members, chancellors, legislators, the university community, faculty, staff and students, University of Alaska Foundation leaders, donors and alumni. He or she must have command of strategic planning, budget, facilities and personnel issues, a clear appreciation of higher education's academic values as well as commitment to student, faculty and staff development. She or he must be comfortable working within a unionized setting and with campus governance representatives.

The next president will be an excellent communicator, convincing in speech and adept at listening. She or he will be a leader and partner in the economic development of Alaska, bringing insight and innovative thought to these issues. Familiarity with Alaska will be an advantage.

The president of the University of Alaska will join other leaders to provide the needed workforce, skilled professionals and research base to take Alaska into the future. With historically low enrollments in higher education, Alaska requires a University of Alaska system leader who can reach out to the general populace to articulate the benefits of higher learning. He or she will work closely with K-12 superintendents, the Commissioner of Education and Early Development, Alaska Native leaders and Alaska business and industry.

The next president will recognize opportunities to move ahead. He or she will create collaborative and innovative solutions to challenging issues, think creatively and will be technologically informed. With an approachable style, a genuine respect for others and hard work, the next president will create friends and supporters of the University of Alaska.

### **Application Process**

Interested parties are invited to view the Board of Regents' website at [www.alaska.edu](http://www.alaska.edu) for more insight into the board's work. Candidates should forward a letter of interest, curriculum vitae or resume and a list of at least five references with full contact information at their earliest convenience to:

[UAPresidentsearch@academic-search.com](mailto:UAPresidentsearch@academic-search.com) .

For most complete consideration, applications should arrive by January 20, 2010.

The University of Alaska Board of Regents will begin screening candidates immediately. The position will remain open until it is filled.

Inquiries may be directed to:

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