Chancellor’s Report

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

June 2012

Achievements

Research labs across campus were open to the public for the fifth annual UAF Research Day. Visitors could see a brain breathe, examine tiny zooplankton or tour a working theater scene shop. The 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Professor Emeritus F. Stuart “Terry” Chapin III, one of the nation’s leading ecologists and the only Alaskan to hold an appointment to the National Academy of Sciences.

Jacqueline Rahm was named UAF’s first recipient of a Peace Corps Paul D. Coverdell Fellowship to fund work on her project to help define Alaska Native peoples’ perceptions of health and wellness. In addition, her work will explore ways to integrate those perceptions into the health care system. Rahm served in the Peace Corps in Nepal as a teacher from 1987 – 1989.

The Community and Technical College and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District have teamed up on a new Partnerships to Pathways project to help students seamlessly transition from high school to postsecondary education and careers. The program ensures that district and CTC programs and curricula are aligned, and enhances opportunities for students to participate in apprenticeships and training while still in high school.

College of Engineering and Mines Assistant Professor Margaret Darrow received a National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Program award for her work on permafrost. The CAREER award is one of the NSF’s most prestigious. It recognizes early-career faculty members who exemplify the role of teacher-scholar and show strong potential to be leaders in integrating education and research in their fields.

UAF celebrated its land-grant roots with a series of free classes, lectures and other events in April to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act, which was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862.

The Cooperative Extension Service and Sea Grant’s Marine Advisory Program collaborated to offer a workshop on starting a specialty food business — low-volume food products created from high-quality ingredients — in Fairbanks and at videoconference sites in Anchorage, Delta Junction and Sitka.

In Progress

The Arctic Region Supercomputing Center will soon be home to Fish, a new Cray XK6m supercomputer named for Alaska’s fisheries and ocean and water resources. Fish will be a valuable tool for researchers working to understand and predict changes in arctic systems, including weather and climate, oceans and ice, permafrost and other materials.

The School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences and the Cooperative Extension Service, along with the Mat-Su Valley Arts Alliance, are seeking artists to participate in the OneTree project. The project began in April with the harvesting and drying of a single birch tree. Wood from the tree will be distributed to local artists, who will use the wood to create objects from furniture to art.

A new $1.8 million National Science Foundation grant will help the Geophysical Institute expand a program that encourages Alaska Native middle school students to pursue science and technology careers. The grant will fund the PREPARES project, short for Preparing Responsive Educators Using Place-based Authentic Research in Earth Systems.

Work is in full swing with the build-out of the interior spaces of the new Life Sciences Facility. Interior rough-in, framing and preparation for drywall is on schedule, and the pedestrian link between Irving II and Life Sciences is installed. Overall the project remains on schedule for a spring 2013 completion.

What’s Next

The R/V Sikuliaq, under construction in Marinette, Wis., is scheduled for launch Oct. 13. After its launch the Sikuliaq will undergo a series of trials, then it will be transported through the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway transit system, south to the Panama Canal and then north to Alaska. The ship will be ready for unrestricted science operations from its base in Seward in 2014.
Photos, clockwise from left

Soyun Chi works with children in the Bunnell House on campus to complete her internship in early childhood education.

Associate Professor Mat Wooller, left, and PhD candidate Jim Shobe test a new vibra-coring system through a hole in lake ice to sample long cores of sediment deep below the lake’s bottom.

UAF students Ian Wilkinson and Raphaela Sieber enjoy a morning loop around the Fairbanks campus ski trails.

Art major Joel Isaak fills a mold in the UAF Fine Arts Complex with molten bronze as part of the process of creating a life-size sculpture for his senior thesis.

UAF’s Society of Automotive Engineers team took top honors in the zero emissions category of the 2012 SAE Clean Snowmobile Challenge held at Michigan Technical University in Houghton, Mich. This electric model was modified by Adjunct Professor Mike Golub, back left, and engineering students Isaac Thompson, back right, Karlin Swearingen, front right, and Ben Neubauer, front left.