Officials gather June 12, 2007, for the groundbreaking ceremony for the future state virology lab building, a partnership between the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and UAF. The $32 million lab will be connected to the Biological Research and Diagnostics facility, providing opportunities for collaboration. From left to right are Dr. Bernd Jilly, chief of Alaska Public Health Laboratories; Terry Schmidt, director of the state virology lab; Dr. Don Ritter, former director of the virology lab; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Gary Wilken; Regent Cynthia Henry; Buck Sharpton, UAF vice chancellor for research; John Blake, director of UAF’s Office of Research Integrity and attending veterinarian; Karleen Jackson, DHSS commissioner; Dr. Jay Butler, director of the Alaska Division of Public Health; and Steve Jones, UAF chancellor.

Achievements

The Alaska Native Language Center published the Dena’ina Topical Dictionary, now the most complete topical dictionary for any of the 20 Alaska Native languages. Dena’ina is an Athabaskan language spoken by the original inhabitants of the region surrounding Cook Inlet. James Kari, professor emeritus of Athabaskan languages and the dictionary’s author, has worked with Dena’ina speakers since 1972 to compile the dictionary.

UAF is celebrating philanthropic giving by alumni, friends, corporations and foundations—up 45 percent in FY 2007. Unrestricted gifts to the annual giving campaign more than doubled from last year, topping $185,000. From those unrestricted funds, $60,000 was divided among the eight colleges and schools for the new deans’ discretionary accounts to pay for special projects. Scholarships given to students at UAF rose to a total of $700,000, helping us meet our goal of reducing student debt.

KUAC TV won gold in two Emmy Award categories at the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Northwest Chapter award ceremony in June. Aaron Ellerman, program editor, was honored in the individual achievement category for the “AlaskaOne Mission Spots.” Michael Letzring, producer/editor, and Deb Lawton, associate producer, each received an award in the cultural/historical documentary category for The 49th Star.

UAF awarded a record-setting 1,100 degrees, certificates and recommendations for licensure during May’s commencement. The class was the largest both in terms of academic awards and number of people earning awards. A record 377 associate degrees and certificates were awarded, as well as 458 bachelor’s degrees, 33 recommendations for licensure, 199 master’s degrees and 33 doctoral degrees.

In Progress

The Council of the University of the Arctic appointed Chancellor Steve Jones to serve a three-year renewable term on its board of governors. The University of the Arctic is a cooperative network of member institutions located in Canada, the United States, Iceland, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland committed to higher education and research in the North. The board of governors is its highest decision-making body, responsible for overall governance as well as funding.

The Arctic Health Research Building renovation, which will provide modern labs and additional office space for current and future research, is approximately 30 percent complete. The project is expected to be completed in early February 2008, with occupancy by March 1.

What’s Next

A three-year, $9 million grant from the National Science Foundation will fund phase three of Alaska’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, known as EPSCoR. The project will bring diverse disciplines together to offer a more complete picture of northern ecological and social systems.

The 2007 UAF alumni reunion will take place Sept. 20–22. Participants will tour the Arctic Region Supercomputing Center Discovery Lab, the Cold Climate Housing Research Center, the International Arctic Research Center and the Geophysical Institute, and attend a lecture about volcanoes by the GI’s Jon Dehn.

The Cold Climate Housing Research Center hosts the Sustainable Northern Shelter in a World of Diminishing Resources forum Oct. 28–30. This International Polar Year conference will help define future research in northern building technology.
RAHI success! The Rural Alaska Honors Institute celebrated its 25th anniversary this summer with the largest graduating class in its history, including Sheldon Myers from Pilot Station (above center), and Sasha Ruesch from Chugiak and Katya Wassillie from White Mountain (above right).

The Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival returned to campus for another amazing session of more than 400 courses in dozens of disciplines. At right is a scene from the opera and musical theatre class performing songs from *Guys and Dolls*. Below right, guest artist Rita Baragona from New Jersey helps a student with her painting in the Georgeson Botanical Garden. Below center, violin virtuoso Linda Wang from Denver performs during the orchestra concert, and at far right, registrants learn the healthful benefits of tai chi.