UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

CHANCELLOR’S REPORT

September 2014

ACHIEVEMENTS

UAF received an $18.8 million award from the National Institutes of Health to fund statewide biomedical research and student training focused on the interface of health, disease and the environment in people and animals. The five-year award will continue support for an NIH Institutional Development Award Network of Biomedical Research Excellence linking university-based researchers and students from UAF’s campuses in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau to meet both the research and workforce needs of Alaska’s cities and rural communities. Brian Barnes with the Institute of Arctic Biology will serve as the principal investigator.

Researchers with the International Arctic Research Center collaborated with the National Park Service to produce a 24-page booklet, State of Change, describing climate change in Alaska’s national parks. The guide is available in Alaska’s 15 national parks and online.

UAF graduate student Laura Starr is pairing ecology and economics in her research. Starr, who is studying natural resources management, was recently awarded a $25,000 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant to continue her work. She is only the second UAF student to receive a SARE award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the past 26 years.

The Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration planned to host the Alaska Unmanned Aircraft Systems Interest Group annual meeting Sept. 15–18 in Anchorage. The meeting was open to interested government, industry and private participants in the field of unmanned aircraft systems and robotics, and potential users.

The UAF Alaska Satellite Facility celebrated the opening of its newest NASA-sponsored antenna, AS3, in June. Satellite observations monitored by AS3 will contribute to detailed mapping, observation of sea ice and severe weather patterns, and global climate change research. The 11-meter dish antenna supports the NASA Near Earth Network, which provides various satellite information services. The Alaska Satellite Facility is part of UAF’s Geophysical Institute.

IN PROGRESS

UAF’s Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity offered a series of trainings on sexual harassment and the federal Title IX law during the summer. Materials are being distributed throughout the campuses to inform students, staff and faculty of their legal rights and responsibilities. The federal Office of Civil Rights is conducting a compliance review of UA campuses.

The review of UAF’s Sustainability Master Plan draft is underway. The report identifies ways to make buildings more efficient, cut electricity consumption and reduce vehicle traffic to campus.

WHAT’S NEXT

The 2014 Arctic Science Conference, sponsored by the Arctic Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, will take place Sept. 27–28 in the Murie Building on UAF’s West Ridge.

Nanook Rendezvous Alumni Reunion will take place Sept. 26–27 in Fairbanks. We will celebrate all classes, with special recognition for the classes of 1964 and 1989. The weekend will take place in conjunction with Starvation Gulch, a Nanook tradition going back to 1923.

The UAF Launchpad initiative provides university software programmers with an e-commerce platform to distribute their software. The initiative, developed by the nonprofit Nanook Innovation Corp., builds on the efforts at the Office of Intellectual Property and Commercialization to license technology and create startups. Through this initiative, inventors are able to gauge the marketability of their products with the advantage of learning what consumers want. They can then modify their technology to quickly adapt to a changing market.

UAF took delivery of the Research Vessel Sikuliaq on Lake Michigan in June. The Sikuliaq, pictured here during winter testing in the Great Lakes, is now en route via the Panama Canal to Hawaii, where it will pick up a team for its first funded science cruise in October. The ship will operate in the Pacific Ocean until January, when it heads to Alaska. Bering Sea ice trials begin in March. The ship will be available for funded operations in Alaska waters in summer 2015. (Photo by Val Ihde.)
The leading edge of Frozen Debris Lobe A has crept to within 142 feet of the Dalton Highway, pictured here in the central Brooks Range in June. The trans-Alaska pipeline’s buried route through the Dietrich River valley is visible at lower left.

UAF and state researchers have identified 23 frozen debris lobes less than a mile uphill of the highway. Lobe A, the closest, could hit the highway within a decade. Another lobe is visible on the mountainside behind Lobe A.

The lobes are made of rock, gravel, sand, silt and organic matter. Researchers also were surprised to find liquid water at below freezing temperatures inside Lobe A.

Read more at www.uaf.edu/aurora/.

Photos, clockwise from left

Students and staff of the Alaska Business Week summer camp pose on the Fairbanks campus in August.

Current and former firefighters with the University Fire Department march in the 2014 Golden Days parade through downtown Fairbanks in July. The department celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

Michael Cook, with UAF’s Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration, holds a quadcopter with Alaska State Trooper Elondre Johnson after a demonstration in July of how emergency responders can use unmanned aerial vehicles.

Toolik Field Station, on Alaska’s North Slope, bustles with activity in June. The UAF Institute of Arctic Biology operates the station, which hosts scientists from around the world who conduct Arctic-based research.