

For Immediate Release

November 8, 2012

UA Regents Approve Budgets Focused on Student Achievement and Attainment and Investments in Alaska's Future

University of Alaska Board of Regents approved an overall budget request for FY14 that emphasizes enhanced student advising and a continuation of the tough battle to reduce deferred maintenance across the 16-campus UA System.

Public testimony included faculty, students and industry representatives— all of whom had a shared focus of continued support and funding for the UAF and UAA engineering facilities. UAF student Najmus Saqib, currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, kicked off the public testimony and discussion. "The proposed engineering facilities would be a great leap forward. To say that these programs have potential to compete against some of the best in the nation is by no means an exaggeration," said Saqib.

Industry professionals also spoke in favor of the combined effort. "You will notice that my UAA counterpart, Richard Reich, and I speak on behalf of both campuses. It is very gratifying to me to see that we are promoting engineering education needs in the state rather than trying to compete on a regional basis," said Peter Stokes, local licensed engineer and UAF graduate in mechanical and mining engineering.

The FY14 operating budget, which will now go to Gov. Sean Parnell for his consideration, emphasizes student-focused programs and enhanced services, advising plans and retention, completion and graduation rates. Investment requests include \$1.5 million toward student-focused and service-based efforts to improve retention, completion and graduation, including expanded academic advising for students. Other key areas that would receive additional funding include high-demand job training in health and biomedical fields, workforce development, teacher education, fisheries, seafood and maritime programs and mining programs. Research areas critically important to Alaska would also receive state funding under the proposed plan.

The operating budget requests \$963 million in spending authorization. It contains a 4.2 percent increase in operating funds over the current year. Of that amount, \$383 million would come from the State of Alaska, and the university would generate the remaining \$580 million through federal dollars, contracts, tuition, earnings from land leases and sales and other revenue sources.

The regents also passed the proposed FY14 capital budget, which includes a sustainment funding plan for University of Alaska facilities. Funding requests address deferred maintenance and continuation funding to complete the UA Engineering buildings. At a proposed \$233.9 million in state funds, UA's capital budget would put \$112.5 million toward deferred maintenance, including \$37.5 million proposed by Gov. Sean Parnell plus an additional \$75 million toward reducing the maintenance backlog. The capital budget also supports investment in Alaska-focused research in areas including Alaska Chinook salmon, energy technology testing and development, energy analysis and fossil fuels, arctic oil spill response and enhancing base maps for Alaska resources. UA owns more than 400 buildings across the state that total 6.7 million square feet, with a total infrastructure value of more than \$2.5 billion.

UA President Pat Gamble ended the meeting by saying, "This budget presentation was designed to be integrated into the five themes of the strategic direction initiative for the University of Alaska. By doing this successfully it sends a clear signal that we are proceeding with phase two of SDI. With the full support of the board of regents the next step is for us to go to the legislature with this budget and gain their support. SDI has successfully framed our message and will allow us to be more effective in our communication to the legislature by telling the story of how this budget can best serve the university, our students and the State of Alaska."

For more information, call Kate Wattum at work 907/450-8102, cell 907/699-3262 or kewattum@alaska.edu.
NR23-12 UANews-L mailing list UANews-L@lists.alaska.edu