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June 6, 2020

Dear UAF community,

This week's University of Alaska Board of Regents meetings had some significant developments for UAF.

On Thursday, the board [passed a motion \(PDF\)](#) to develop a conceptual plan that outlines the pros and cons of a merger of UAS with UAF.

The conceptual plan will be prepared by a working group composed of regents and other individuals selected by BOR Chair Sheri Buretta to represent key stakeholders with interests in higher education in Southeast Alaska. It is my understanding that it will also include the chairs of the Faculty Alliance, Staff Alliance and Coalition of Student Leaders. The conceptual plan will be provided to the BOR no later than Oct. 15, 2020. Once the board chair appoints the working group we will know more about the charge and the ways in which the working group will solicit input and options to consider. Although I expect the working group to develop a communications mechanism, I will share information that I have through my Wednesday column and forums as has been my practice.

In Friday's meeting, the board voted to reduce, discontinue, rename or merge 44 academic programs across the UA system. Twenty-six of these programs are at UAF, and more than half of these UAF programs were suspended over the last few years.

At my request, the board approved to postpone action on two UAF programs — the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in atmospheric science — until January. I felt this was needed so that we could better understand the organizational landscape before the board takes this significant vote. The board also approved establishing one

new academic program at UAF — the undergraduate certificate in local knowledge educator. A [complete list of impacted programs can be found here](#).

Programs that have been approved for discontinuation by the BOR will be “taught out,” meaning that currently enrolled students will receive individualized completion plans to ensure they can finish their degree at UAF. The next step in the process is for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to approve the teach-out plans for the deleted programs. In the meantime, students will be working closely on their plans with their academic advisors and their school or college.

The one program that the board voted on to change but not eliminate is the geological engineering program. It is important to note that the geological engineering decision was to reorganize the GE program in the College of Engineering and Mines, but the degrees offered remain unchanged. There will be no teach-out required for this program as the program will continue under a new structure.

You can find more information about [the expedited academic program review process and FAQ here](#).

I am confident in the future of UAF and the education we provide. Working together, I know we will come out the other side of the pandemic and budget crises and will continue to serve generations to come. UAF is resilient. Thank you for your part in that.

Thank you also for your part in creating a culture of respect, diversity