Dear UAA Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to the spring 2021 semester. I sincerely hope you enjoyed the extended holiday break and feel ready to seize all the opportunities the new semester and new calendar year provide. I am grateful to serve as UAA's interim chancellor and want to take this early opportunity to share a few updates.

First, I am pleased to share that Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services Lora Volden has agreed to serve as interim vice chancellor for Student Affairs during the time that I am serving as interim chancellor. Lora's depth of experience in Enrollment Services will provide stability across all units in Student Affairs. We both plan to return to our regular positions after a new UAA chancellor is hired later this spring, and we are both committed to providing all UAA campuses continuity of forward motion during this time. Interim President Pitney is taking next steps regarding the chancellor hiring process and is forming the search committee. We can anticipate regular updates on the process in the coming weeks and months.

UAA remains committed to a spring semester that is delivered mostly online, the same way we have operated since spring 2020. Please keep in mind since campus access is restricted, you will need your WolfCard for entry to many campus buildings. Our team continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely to determine potential in-person classes and events for summer 2021. By fall, we hope to resume more “normal” operations with students, faculty and staff back on campus.

Among other bright spots in the near-term is the public launch of UAA 2025 this month. I especially appreciate how the plan calls us to narrow equity gaps in student learning and achievement and to increase student, faculty and staff diversity. Vice chancellors, deans and community campus directors will submit their operational plans that support the plan’s aspirations by Jan. 31. Those plans will be integrated into the overall plan framework and that information, as well as ongoing updates and related communications, will be posted on a new UAA 2025 website, slated to launch later this month.

As we move ahead into the implementation phase of the new shared services unit at UAA, we will also turn our attention to building our FY22 budget. The 2019 compact between the UA Board of Regents and Gov. Dunleavy has UAA anticipating a $7.2 million operating budget reduction for FY22.

We are making every effort to meet this reduction through strategic targeting that includes savings from administrative and operational reductions and
efficiencies, and new lease revenues for off-campus buildings. We still have a ways to go before finalizing our reductions and we will keep you informed as our planning progresses. The Campus Planning Advisory Board will be discussing this and providing their feedback to the Chancellor's Cabinet.

Finally, I want to share my confidence and hope about the near- and long-term future of UAA. The strength of this community, and the care, attention and energy each of you devote to our students and their success have always served as beacons, our steadying lights in challenging times. Each member of this community contributes to its resilience and I invite you all to continue that level of care and support — for yourselves as well as for each other.

I wish you all a wonderful week. If you ever have any comments or questions, please feel free to send those to uaa_feedback@alaska.edu. I am interested in your feedback and will do my best to answer questions during my short time as your interim chancellor.

Sincerely,

Bruce Schultz
UAA Interim Chancellor

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