Dear Staff, Faculty and Administrators,

I am writing to follow up on UA Interim President Pitney's message highlighting plans for the transition back to in-person campus operations and the work of the Post-COVID Workplace Team, which is shaping the system's long-term protocols concerning onsite, remote and hybrid work.

A message is also forthcoming from UA's COVID-19 management team about the on-site operations plan for the University of Alaska system. One of the key updates is that each chancellor, in consultation with the UA president, will determine the phase of operation for his or her university. Additionally, UAA's community campus directors will determine their respective phases of operation in consultation with me.

Decision-making at our campuses will be based on community pandemic conditions, vaccination rates, local health care capacity, public health guidance, state mandates and municipal orders. The Anchorage case counts as of April 8 were still at 24.4 per 100,000 people, which keeps the municipality in a high-risk category for transmission and community spread. For Phase C, ideally, the 14-day average would be closer to nine or below.

One of the most effective ways for case counts to decline is by increasing the percentage of individuals in our communities who are fully vaccinated. If you have not been vaccinated, I urge you to get vaccinated soon. The majority of employees will be returning to in-person work and being vaccinated means you will be doing your part to keep your colleagues and students safe. Under new guidance from the Biden administration, Emergency Sick Leave can now be used for vaccination appointments and if you are unable to work due to the vaccine's side effects.

The UAA Anchorage campus Student Health and Counseling Center continues to offer opportunities for vaccination by appointment for employees and students. Another vaccine clinic is slated for Friday, April 16. Please stay tuned for announcements in our e-newsletters Seawolf Daily and Seawolf Students.

As the spring semester comes to a close and we look ahead to summer, I want
to provide some clarifying information about what on-site operations will look like for UAA.

Summer: Mid-May and into the summer will be a time of transition as we resume in-person campus operations. In anticipation of that, now is the time for functional leaders to begin planning for in-person operations and communicating with their employees.

Fall: Prior to the start of the fall semester, and assuming health conditions warrant it, we anticipate our campuses will be open and operating normally. This includes the full range of instruction, research, support, housing and campus events. We will continue to take appropriate COVID-19 measures for the safety of our campus community based on current guidance by public health experts. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to read our fall 2021 semester FAQs. More information is available for faculty on the Academic Continuity website.

We’re in this together, Seawolves! I look forward to seeing you on campus in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Bruce Schultz
UAA Interim Chancellor