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*February 5, 2019*

**Dear UAA Initial Teacher Preparation Students:**

I'm writing to provide an update regarding UAA initial teacher preparation programs.

Yesterday, the State Board of Education approved UA's request that it consider spring/summer 2019 graduates to be eligible for licensure and to have graduated from a state-approved program.

We very much appreciate the efforts of the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) Commissioner Michael Johnson and the State Board of Education to minimize the impact of UA's accreditation failure on you.

From the successful experience of our graduates—who include numerous Alaska teachers of the year and one of four finalists for national teacher of the year—we know that our students work hard, experience a high quality education and, thanks to our placement partners in local school districts, receive effective practical training and classroom experience. In addition, new leaders in the UAA School of Education and at UAA have made a real difference. Director Claudia Dybdahl and Chancellor Cathy Sandeen are working tirelessly to implement required changes and improvements in UAA's initial licensure programs.

And even after you graduate, we are, and will continue to work together across the University of Alaska system with DEED to ensure that you are fully supported through programs like the Alaska School Development Network, and UA's excellent K-12 Outreach and teacher mentoring programs.

**Seniors Graduating in Spring or Summer 2019**

The State Board of Education's action on February 4 is good news and provides a path to licensure for those graduating from UAA's initial licensure program in Spring/Summer 2019.

At the same time, it is difficult to predict all possible impacts of loss of the CAEP accreditation and related issues on employability or reciprocity for teaching in other states. We therefore offer students planning to graduate in Spring or Summer 2019 the option of an immediate transfer to a fully accredited and approved program. Transfers would allow students to remain in residence at UAA while receiving supervision/courses via distance from UAF/UAS.

UAF and UAS programs are viable options within UA, and are accredited and approved by the Alaska Board of Education. For those students who elect to transfer, UA will waive associated deadlines and fees, reimburse students for any costs and fees associated with transfer, and otherwise do whatever is necessary to minimize impacts on you. Since time to pursue this option is short, we will be contacting seniors who have not previously indicated a desire to transfer to make sure that you are aware of this option.

## Non-Seniors

At present, because UAA's initial teacher preparation programs are not approved by the State Board of Education, they do not provide a clear path to licensure after August 2019. That said, we recommend that those of you who are on track to graduate from UAA's initial teacher preparation programs after August 2019 complete this semester at UAA and consider transferring effective at the end of the semester. In the coming weeks, we will have a clearer idea as to whether there is a path to licensure at UAA, and we will be better able to assist you with your options at that time.

In any case, if you elect to transfer at the end of the semester, UA will facilitate transfers to accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS, make accommodations for place-bound students in Anchorage, and hold you harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers. We will ensure that each of you has a path to licensure either at UAA, or through accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS.

## Next Steps

Representatives from UAF, UAS and UAA will be available to meet with you to talk about transfer options this Thursday Feb. 7 from 4:30-6:30pm in Library 307.

We are working with DEED to assess the feasibility of applying to the State Board of Education to provide ongoing approval of UAA's initial teacher preparation programs after August 2019 if it is determined that UAA will reapply for CAEP accreditation. We cannot predict the outcome of these processes at this time.

We look forward to discussing these issues with you and the Board of Regents on February 12 at a town hall meeting from 4 to 6 PM in the Wendy Williamson Auditorium. That will be a good time for you to provide your input on our options that I will be discussing with the Board of Regents in the coming weeks. Those options may include the following and, perhaps others:

- pursuing reaccreditation, a process which will likely take up to three years to complete and require interim program approval from the State Board of Education
- providing programs on-site in Anchorage from our approved and accredited programs at UAF and UAS, much like UAA now provides nursing programs on-site in Fairbanks, Juneau, and other locations across the state

The Board of Regents will be considering these and other options for the UAA initial teacher preparation programs at its Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting on February 21 and at the full Board meeting on February 28.

Resolving this problem and addressing your needs is our highest priority. With the full support of the Board of Regents and UAA Chancellor Sandeen, we will do all we can to make this right for you.

Sincerely,



Jim Johnsen  
President, University of Alaska