



Support the University of Alaska 2020 Fairbanks Chamber Position Statement

Ensure Fairbanks remains the flagship campus of the University of Alaska and home to its statewide leadership and maintains its capabilities in the areas of education, research, business development, and public-private partnerships for the development of intellectual property. A vibrant university is vital for the education of our citizenry, the development of a well-trained workforce, and the research necessary to address the state's critical challenges. The Chamber urges the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor to ensure that University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) continues to supply the essential workforce needs of Alaska's businesses and continues to be an economic driver in Interior Alaska.

Position Details

A strong system of higher education is an economic necessity for a thriving state economy. Alaska's founders saw the wisdom in locating the leadership and flagship campus of the University in Fairbanks. Since its earliest days, the University has been a major economic driver, and has helped Fairbanks to grow into an important economic center for Alaska. UAF is one of only a few universities in the nation to combine land, sea, and space grants. Because of its unique position at the edge of the Arctic, UAF is able to attract outside funding to support world-class research in arctic studies, unmanned aircraft systems, natural phenomena such as the aurora borealis, climate change, and national security. These federal and philanthropic dollars will go to universities or organizations outside Alaska if the respected research programs developed at UAF are dismantled.

In these challenging economic times, Alaska needs an educated workforce that can lead us into the next phase of this state's development. The skilled professionals who are developed locally are the people who stay, contribute to our community and economy, and become the future leaders that will continue a legacy of growth and development. Leaving a rural area for education or training often results in those students staying away long term – contributing to the brain drain and reducing rural economic activity. Providing ongoing education and training in Fairbanks allows both local high school graduates and working professionals to advance their skills without being forced to move elsewhere.

In a state as geographically large as Alaska, distance learning is a key method to provide higher education access to all communities. Within the University of Alaska, the Fairbanks campus is furthest along in developing these distance learning programs and tools. It is best poised to address the changing needs of the student population.

EXECUTIVE PARTNERS

DIAMOND

Alaska Airlines
Denali State Bank
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Foundation Health Partners
Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, TVC Orthopedics & Sportsmedicine
Lockheed Martin
Mt. McKinley Bank
Vivamore Companies

PLATINUM

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.
ConocoPhillips
Doyon, Limited
Fred Meyer Stores
GCI
Golden Heart Utilities
Kinross Fort Knox Mine
MAC Federal Credit Union

GOLD

Alaska Executive Search
BP Exploration
Carlson Center
Design Alaska
Doyon Utilities LLC
First National Bank Alaska
Matson Alaska
Northern Star Pogo LLC
Ravn Alaska
TOTE Maritime Alaska
Usibelli Coal Mine
WAL-MART Stores, Inc.
Wells Fargo Bank Alaska
Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge

SILVER

Ahtna Incorporated
Alaska USA
Alaska Railroad
AT&T
Crowley Fuels Alaska
Everts Air Cargo, Everts Air AK
Exclusive Paving/University Redi-Mix
ExxonMobil
Fairbanks Natural Gas
Flowline Alaska
Gene's Chrysler, Jeep & Dodge
Golden Valley Electric Association
Hale & Associates, Inc.
Hilcorp Alaska, LLC
HUB International
JL Properties, Inc.
Key Bank
LifeMed Alaska
Lynden
McDonald's of Fairbanks
Northrim Bank
Personnel Plus
Seekins Ford Lincoln
Sourdough Fuel
Spirit of Alaska Federal Credit Union
TDL Staffing
Tower Hill Mines-Livengood Gold Project
Trilogy Metals
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Verizon Wireless
Yukon Title Company



Every region of the state deserves to have access to higher educational opportunities. We do not seek to support UAF at the expense of other University of Alaska campuses. Rather, we seek to build upon the unique strengths and character of each university. Currently, each campus serves Alaska's diverse populations in a slightly different way, and losing any of them would degrade the educational opportunities available in this state. However, the state's overall economy benefits from anchoring this center of learning in the Interior.

The Fairbanks Chamber is composed of member organizations who rely heavily on the University of Alaska Fairbanks to educate and train qualified employees, perform the research which makes us successful in a challenging arctic environment, and attract new talent to Interior Alaska. Removing the economic driver of a major university campus and the federal matching funds that amplify its effect would cripple the economy of the Interior and potentially of the whole state. We strongly urge all residents to reaffirm your commitment to Fairbanks as the flagship campus of the University of Alaska system.

Action Required

The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce urges the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor to maintain strong support for the University of Alaska and its cost effective and responsive programs.

Fiscal Impact

The state's investment in the university is significant and impacts potential returns on investment in the form of revenue into the state economy, research activity, leverage of existing resources, and producing graduates in high-demand job areas.