

Getting Started – Writing a letter to your legislators

Legislators want to hear from their constituents. They want to know what is important to Alaskans and their communities. Over the course of the 90-day legislative session, they receive lots of requests for support of issues and budgets. You want to capture their attention and make your request stand out.

One of the most effective means of communicating with legislators is a simple, one-page letter written in your own words describing what is important to you. Consider some of the following points to support your issue. While this list focuses on the university, it can be used for any issue you want to support.

Points you might want to consider:

- *The University plays an important part in the economic, cultural, and social well-being of the state.*
- *Why is the university important to you?*
- *What educational benefits have you received from the University? What classes, degree programs, certificate programs, and faculty have contributed to your success?*
- *Why is the university important to Alaska?*
- *How has your UA degree/certificate/program/class helped you to improve your life?*
- *Where are you working now? How did your education at the University help you in securing your current job?*
- *What programs in the UA [FY10 operating budget](#) are important to the state?*
- *From your perspective, how does the university contribute to the well-being of your community?*

Helpful resources:

[Who are my legislators?](#)

[Where are the legislative districts?](#)

[District maps](#)

[Legislature addresses](#)

Sample letter of support

Here is a sample format for your consideration to assist you in getting started:

February 21, 2009

Representative Joe Sample
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Sample:

(Tell them a little bit about yourself - who you are, where you live, where you work, and any salient facts that introduce you as a constituent.)

I am a 30 year resident of the state of Alaska and an active member of my community. I am employed by the local hospital as a certified nurses assistant, and am taking night classes to further my education. My spouse works full-time a local daycare facility, and we have three school-aged children. We have lived in your legislative district for the past 15 years.

(Why are you writing this letter? Why is this issue important to you?)

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to support the UA Board of Regents FY10 operating budget. I am convinced furthering my education will give me the opportunity to move into areas of the health care industry that are in high-demand. UAF is providing me with the skills and tools I need to improve my life. I see the university offering a multitude of courses to address the workforce needs, and it is important to assure the continuation of the funding to meet the demand.

Before I received my CNA certificate, I was working two jobs – one at a grocery store, cashiering and one doing a night-shift stocking shelves. These jobs did not provide me with the means to support my family. Now that I have been working in the health care industry, I see great potential for promotion, providing I have the educational credentials to do the job.

Thank you for your consideration of support of the University of Alaska FY10 operating budget request. It is important to all of us.

Sincerely,

Sam Nelson
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