

**Report to the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)
October 2, 2007**

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service is built on a foundation that reflects the changing needs of the people and economy of Alaska, and for that reason is well-positioned to be a model for the evolving mission of outreach nationally. Concerns about maintaining the legacy developed over 75 years have emerged with changes in leadership, a perceived lack of involvement from stakeholders in these changes, and a lack of communication in terms of direction for the unit.

The CES Vision Task Group presented recommendations to the Chancellor for consideration in April, four steps and supporting actions to serve the redefined mission of American land-grant universities, which are found in the CES Vision Task Group document. The recommendations consider the UA 2009 and UAF 2010 strategic plans as well as College of Rural and Community Development strategic planning documents and Academic Unit Plans for CES. They address the need for the consensus that UAF Cooperative Extension Service create a high profile for CES within and outside UAF; an aggressive engagement in entrepreneurial initiatives with industry and strategic partners – in addition to those with traditional programmatic ties; and serve as a driver of strategic initiatives central to UAF's mission and reflecting national trends that are refined to an Alaskan setting.

UAF Cooperative Extension Service has serious challenges in programming, considering the geographic distances, islands of communities not connected by infrastructure, and an economy of scale that makes it similar to Extension programs in the Pacific more than those in traditional agricultural states.

Current Extension programming needs to increase the quality of education and scholarship in Alaska's Native communities, non-Native rural communities, and urban centers with additional resources from the university. That has been recognized in the \$745,000 increment increase requested in the Fiscal Year 09 budget process. CES is engaged in activities that move away from its agrarian roots and toward urban economic development, health and nutrition, family cohesiveness, and positive youth development. Service and outreach, as practiced in CES and other outreach programs, is not perceived by UAF faculty and administrators to be equal to the teaching and research missions at UAF. Yet, in the UAF Strategic Plan 2010, outreach and community engagement are major themes.

Any organizational change should elevate CES to parity with research and teaching to realize the land grant mission of UAF and the statewide vision of the university to serve Alaska and the nation, enhance community engagement practices, and more fully integrate outreach and engagement with research and education. The unit experiences difficulty in recognition for its outreach and service. There is a great need for strategic marketing of outreach activities, greater appreciation of the value and potential of CES and UAF outreach, a stronger community-based stakeholder approach to program development that serves the needs of the communities in need of informal transfer of research knowledge, and a stronger communications unit, which is at the core of Extension services.