The University of Alaska Fairbanks draws its strength from the vitality of its students, employees, alumni and friends. To harness that strength and help guide UAF into the future, I convened the Vision Task Force 2017 in March 2007 to review our Strategic Plan. Community, agency and business leaders, together with UAF students, faculty, staff and supporters—55 strong—brainstormed along the six strategic pathways of the plan to develop a blueprint for progress, an outline for action.

I appreciate the work of the task force. UAF and Alaskans are committed to our future, knowing that only with a strong university can Alaska ever be truly prosperous—socially and economically. That prosperity depends upon having the wisdom and courage to invest in workforce development, higher education and research.

The time for Alaska to grab the brass ring will never be more propitious. Read on to find out how UAF is working to ensure that the state, and the university, remain special, vibrant places.

Steve Jones, UAF Chancellor

Honors and awards
Nanook rifle team’s ninth national title • Emil Usibelli Awards: Yelena Matusevich, teaching; A. David McGuire, research; Shirish Patil, public service • Newshounds: KUAC’s two regional Emmy and three regional Edward R. Murrow awards, multiple Alaska Press Club awards. Student newspaper’s Alaska Press Club awards. Online student publication’s Society of Professional Journalists regional award • Miho Aoki: TORA Y Digital Creation Award grand prize, one of the world’s biggest digital art awards • Fulbright Award: George Guthridge • International Arctic Research Center building renamed in honor of Syun-Ichi Akasofu, and Natural Sciences Facility renamed for Paul Reichardt • Leonard Kamerling’s The Drums of Winter added to National Film Registry of Library of Congress • TVC’s Aviation and Maintenance Technology Program: Federal Aviation Administration’s Diamond Certificate of Excellence • Alaska Sea Grant College Program named one of the best marine research, education and extension programs in the U.S.

New growth, new potential
$9 million from National Science Foundation to study changes in the North • More than $6.5 million from NSF for arctic research • $1.8 million from NSF to study and map circumpolar permafrost • $3.8 million from National Institutes of Health to study influenza viruses • $1.3 million from Department of Education for K-12 teacher training in second-language acquisition in Southwest Alaska • $1.8 million DOE grant to develop K-12 tsunami education program • Groundbreaking on new $32 million State Virology Lab • $500,000 from Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. for education and outreach programs • Record-setting 1,100 degrees, certificates and recommendations for licensure at Commencement 2007 • Opening of the $23 million Biological Research and Diagnostic Facility

Campus connections: across town, across the country
UAF’s first Alaska Book Festival • Leadership Program’s spring break trip to help rebuild post-Katrina Louisiana • Science for Alaska lecture series draws more than 5,000 Alaskans statewide • National radio broadcasts of PBS Talk of the Nation: Science Friday and What’Ya Know • Rural Alaska Honors Institute’s record-setting enrollment of 69 students • Alaska Summer Research Academy’s record 130 students

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010
UAF has identified six strategic pathways to guide the university toward its vision:
• Teaching and learning for student success
• Research and scholarship
• Enrollment and retention
• Community engagement and economic development
• Advancement and philanthropy
• Faculty and staff development

The title of this annual expanded chancellor’s report is taken from the University of Alaska’s motto—Ad Summum: “To the top” exemplifies the philosophy of UAF: working toward ever greater success for our students, our employees and our fellow citizens.
TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Patuk Glenn’s path leads back to rural Alaska through the Rural Development Program

For many students, finding their passion is an integral part of the college experience. Patuk Glenn’s natural curiosity and enthusiasm led her to enroll in a range of classes, exploring one intriguing path after another — until she got hooked by an introductory course in rural development.

“The class was all about planning for balanced development, and how globalization can affect rural areas,” she says. “I just loved it, so I had to keep pursuing all the RD classes.”

Flexible programming has allowed Glenn to stay on track. In addition to attending classes in person on the Fairbanks campus, she’s used distance education technology from the Bethel campus, where she lived for two semesters, and from her Fairbanks home while she cares for her three-year-old daughter.

The Rural Development Program’s many options attracted Glenn, who plans to graduate with a bachelor of arts degree in May 2008. “I knew I wanted to use my degree to work in rural Alaska. RD has different emphases I’m interested in, like business, economic development, and health and human services.”

She took an in-depth look at many of those issues during seminars in Juneau and Washington, D.C.

“We learned how government really works. You ask questions that directly affect your home communities, which is really powerful …”

ADVANCEMENT AND PHILANTHROPY

The Babulas’ amazing gift will grow for decades

After caring for thousands of youngsters during 35 years of practicing orthodontics in Fairbanks, Dr. Walter Babula and his wife, Marita, wanted to do something special for children. Since both are avid gardeners, they decided to fund a children’s garden in Georgeson Botanical Garden, part of the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station on the Fairbanks campus.

“We felt a children’s garden would be a lasting gift and the ideal setting would be the Georgeson,” Walter says. “That way the garden would benefit many youngsters who visit the garden, not just the children of Fairbanks.”

The Babulas envisioned the garden as a mix of whimsy and learning opportunities, focusing on what makes Alaska unique. Entered through a child-sized willow tunnel, the garden includes an Alaska pioneer garden and a stream with a hydroelectric wheel. Fairbanks children planted and nurtured the Siberian pea shrubs that are growing into a complex maze. A treehouse will be used for observing birds and insects; another area will include instruments to measure and record weather data.

The Babulas plan to provide for future enhancements as well as long-term maintenance for the garden.

“Marita and I feel that unconditional giving and having people get a lot of happiness out of what you’re giving is very rewarding,” Walter says. “We’re trying to make this world a little nicer place.”

“We felt a children’s garden would be a lasting gift and the ideal setting would be the Georgeson.”
From tutored to tutor: Laura Grage finds success and adventure at UAF

When Wyoming horse wrangler Laura Grage decided she needed a little more excitement, she lit out for Alaska. She liked the outdoor adventures but not the precarious nature of seasonal work, so to develop some marketable skills, she took a summer English class from UAF. Now, she’s working on a nursing degree at UAF through a cooperative program with UAA.

Grage is also a tutor with UAF’s Student Support Services, an office that helped her adjust to university life. Since she was older than the typical freshman when she started taking classes, she felt out of her element the first few months.

“SSS has seen me go from pretty clueless to being able to help other students who might drop out if they don’t get the help,” Grage says.

She’s been so successful, in fact, that she won an award for academic excellence and perseverance in overcoming barriers and accomplishing her educational goals.

Her next goals are professional ones, after she gets her degree in late 2008.

“I decided on nursing because it was a field that needed workers, so I knew I could support myself, and I had friends in the program who were saying good things about it. I got very enthusiastic about it.

“Hopefully nursing will guide me into more adventures, like Alaska did.”

Professor Gary Laursen helps students rock and roll into UAF

Academics and cost are important when deciding which university to attend, but so are the people who teach there. That’s where Gary Laursen excels. He gets students excited about science and math, and he reaches many of them through the Alaska Statewide High School Science Symposium, part of the national Junior Science and Humanities Symposium.

“I’m always interested in giving opportunities to young people who want to be challenged in science, technology, engineering or math,” Laursen says. In the last nine years the UAF-based Alaska symposium has had three first-place, three second-place and two third-place winners, and two honorable mentions in the national competition.

First place means a scholarship to the student’s university of choice, which Laursen hopes will be UAF. A senior research professor with the Institute of Arctic Biology and an adjunct professor in the Biology and Wildlife Department, Laursen has built a network of faculty and staff to help students develop academic plans that reflect the breadth of expertise at UAF. Among the current crop he’s recruited are students majoring in anthropology, biology, chemistry, education, engineering, fisheries and mathematics.

“I invite these kids to come to UAF and link them immediately to faculty so they get involved right away in undergraduate research. I find that terribly rewarding to see young people get a good academic foothold and just rock and roll.”
Amy Tidwell was running a day care center when her husband suggested she consider becoming an engineer.

“I said, ‘Engineering, are you crazy? But I thought, OK, I’ll fail miserably and I can go back to teaching, which is what I’m really good at.’

To her surprise, Tidwell found that she liked understanding how things work. After finishing a civil engineering degree at UAF summa cum laude and a Ph.D. at Georgia Tech, she returned to Fairbanks as an International Polar Year postdoctoral fellow.

“IPY is a nice opportunity for folks in the Arctic,” she says. “It brings us together to say ‘OK, during this time we’re going to gather the best scientists and we’re going to jump-start them on dealing with these issues.’”

“I was very excited about coming back because it feels like home,” Tidwell notes. “Alaska in general, but Fairbanks for sure.”

Her passion for community spills over into her research investigating the effects of climate change on water resources in the Arctic.

“In Alaska, we have some unique water resource challenges and vulnerabilities that differ from the Lower 48, but the issue is the same. We need to carefully plan and manage the resource for the well-being of our communities.”

Engineer Amy Tidwell comes home to study climate change

Museum curator Daniel Odess unveils ancient mysteries with the help of grants and undergraduates

Nine thousand years after human hands first shaped them, stone tools from Anangula Island in the Aleutian archipelago have found a new home in a modern laboratory in the UA Museum of the North.

The tools, numbering in the thousands, come from the oldest archaeological site in the Aleutians and the oldest fully maritime economy found in North America.

“It is a very unusual collection in that it contains no bifaces, that is, tools worked on both sides,” says Daniel Odess, the museum’s archaeology curator and an associate professor of anthropology. “When it was excavated in the 1950s and 1960s, it was the only such collection in the Americas and was considered very enigmatic. It still remains a puzzle.”

What’s not a mystery is how archaeology students are helping prepare the collection for further study. Thanks to grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Odess is able to train and pay undergraduates to properly transfer the artifacts from their old containers to new ones.

“The grant is important in training the next generation of arctic researchers at the same time that we are preserving this important collection and making it available for study,” Odess says. “Anangula is a prominent collection in arctic prehistory. It is another example of an important archaeological collection that arctic scientists come to Fairbanks to study.”

Photo by Patricia Fisher/Fisher Photography
Soon after she came to UAF in 2001 as director of equal opportunity, Earlina Bowden began offering training on campus. The program focuses on the laws and language of equal opportunity and how they apply to UAF. The goal is to create work and learning environments free of harassment and where people can deal effectively with difficult situations. Participants tell her this approach makes sense.

“We spend a lot of time and money recruiting talented employees; we also need to work to keep them,” Bowden says. She describes a new faculty member’s administrative assistant taking the time to help her adjust to living in such a different place. The admin created such a welcoming environment it eliminated a lot of the faculty member’s anxiety, Bowden says. And it didn’t cost the university a cent.

“Being an equal opportunity institution means working toward a point where every person has chances to succeed,” she says. “There is no deadline. We continue to work towards it.”

An avid outdoorswoman, Bowden says she believes in giving her best to her job. “But also giving my best to the other parts of my life — my family, hunting and fishing, my home — that keeps me refreshed for my job. We make a difference one person at a time, but the impact creates a ripple effect that reaches others.”
A budding Renaissance man, 10-year-old Jared Post’s interests range from the cerebral to the physical. A mathematician, pianist and basketball player, he also loves art of any kind: ceramics, painting, sculpture, even metalsmithing.

Metalsmithing? Hardly an art form the typical grade-schooler is versed in — unless he has enrolled in the Visual Art Academy. For two weeks every summer, young people immerse themselves in nearly every form of art — including computer art — offered through UAF’s Art Department.

Summer programs on the Fairbanks campus get kids out of their routines and into whole new worlds. Students enrolled in the Alaska Summer Research Academy learn how to build a robot, make a movie, study muskoxen or delve into several other subjects. Aspiring musicians hone their skills at the Summer Music Academy; young athletes tear it up at sports camp.

Some students enroll without knowing much about the subject they’ll study for the next two or three weeks, but along the way they find fascination and inspiration in something totally new and exciting. Others, like Jared Post, have a pretty good idea of what they want to do in life, and how the summer program will help them realize their dreams.

“I want to be a sculpture designist person,” Post says with confidence, “and an artist, which I already am.”