

Chancellor's Report

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

December 2005

ACHIEVEMENTS

Institute of Northern Engineering and Arctic Region Supercomputing Center researchers designed a program allowing educators and the public to view three-dimensional virtual fly-overs of any location on Earth using a massive NASA data set. Within 30 hours of making the EarthSLOT web-based program available Oct. 14, about 30,000 people logged on, making it the biggest single download event in UAF history.

More than 300 Alaska Native elders gathered at the University of Alaska Museum of the North Oct. 18 for a reception and blessing of the newly expanded museum as part of the Alaska Federation of Natives convention in Fairbanks.

The BP Foundation donated \$10,000 in support of the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society student chapter, the Society of Petroleum Engineers student chapter and the petroleum engineering department.

The UAF swim team broke 17 school records in their first meet, against Loyola Marymount at Hamme Pool in Fairbanks Oct. 21–22.

The Nanook hockey team received recognition in three national collegiate hockey polls after staging the biggest upset in program history with a 4-3 overtime triumph over number one-ranked Minnesota Golden Gophers Oct. 28.

IN PROGRESS

Alaska Sea Grant will donate 10 percent of earnings from sales of marine education books and videos between Nov. 1, 2005 and April 30, 2006 to fishermen affected by hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, an estimated donation of \$10,000.

The Office of Research Integrity secured a \$3.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to assist with finishing the Biological Research and Diagnostics Facility, slated for completion in spring 2006.

The University of Alaska Museum of the North's latest special exhibit, *A New Sense of Wonder*, opened Dec. 2. The exhibit features recent works by artists who donated art to the museum's 1995 *Sense of Wonder* auction, the first fund-raising event for the museum's expansion project.

The Tanana Valley Campus will receive a three-year \$1.99 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to train new workers for jobs in high-growth, high-demand industries such as construction, mining and tourism infrastructure. Industry and community partners played a crucial role in enabling TVC to obtain the grant.

The Strategic Planning Committee expects to forward Strategic Plan 2010 to Chancellor Jones Dec. 15. Visit www.uaf.edu/strategic/ for more information.

WHAT'S NEXT

Theatre UAF presents *Four Farces & One Funeral*, a collection of one-act plays by Anton Chekhov Dec. 2–11.

The Nanook hockey team will play the final two games for the Alaska Governor's Cup against UAA Dec. 30 and 31 at the Carlson Center. The competition stands at one to one after October's games in Anchorage.

James Huesmann has been appointed dean of libraries to provide vision and direction for the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, whose holdings of more than 2.2 million items, including one of the world's pre-eminent Alaska and polar region collections, make it the largest library in Alaska. Huesmann takes up his duties in January.

The University Chorus has been accepted in the Carnegie Hall Concert Residency Program in New York City. The chorus will receive training from world-renowned directors and at the conclusion will perform Gabriel Faure's *Requiem* at Carnegie Hall in April 2006. The chorus will perform in Davis Concert Hall Saturday, Dec. 10 at 8 p.m.

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musings from the chancellor

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Fall Convocation

Fall Convocation and the Chancellor's State of the University address brought my second September to a very positive close. We enjoyed standing room only in Schaible Auditorium. In fact several people told me they were turned away because we exceeded even standing room capacity. Please accept my sincere appreciation for showing your interest and support.

We've posted the Convocation address on the web at www.uaf.edu/news/webcasts/. I will now take the core message on the road—to chambers of commerce, Rotary Clubs, other civic organizations, alumni groups and to various friends and supporters of our university. The essence of that message is that we are Alaska's premier research and teaching university—unique from any other Alaska university. We are America's arctic university—distinct from any other university in the country. And, we can become the 'go-to' university for circumpolar discovery, learning and application of knowledge. We are a university with high aspirations, holding ourselves to greater expectations.

I also observed during Convocation that after 14 months, my own role had progressed from new chancellor, to chancellor in transition, to chancellor in place. Comfortable with that position of greater permanence, I was struck by the simple reference of a *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* letter to the editor the following Monday to "our unqualified and inept new chancellor of UAF, Steve Jones." The public spotlight provides a harsh glare—I accept both the responsibility of the position and the open criticism that accompanies it. We have far too much to accomplish to fear the barbs of those not satisfied by decisions and actions, any one of which may not please someone.

A Time for Bold Action

Recently, I've talked with several people familiar with the university's extended period of flat to negative state funding during the mid-1980s to late 90s. Each observed how difficult being a regent must have been during that period. While that is no doubt true, I offer a different perspective. Cutting budgets across the board was difficult. Singling out programs to cut and reducing staff are emotionally painful actions. When budgets are perennially bleak, planning the next decade occurs only one year at a time—the defining impetus becomes surviving.

Being a regent took on a new focus, one could argue became more difficult, seven years ago when President Hamilton took the helm. He demanded that state funding of the university transition from "survive" to "thrive" levels. Progress made under President Hamilton set the stage for me to assume leadership last year of a flagship university poised to make the step toward recognition as the circumpolar North's "go-to" university. We're making a bold move toward that destination along the six pathways described in the Convocation address: student success; quality in all that we do; enrollment; research; philanthropy; and economic development. We can make the leap to sustained greatness as Alaska's premier research and teaching university—as America's

arctic university—but only with broad support and total commitment to the goal.

We're at the cusp, with vast potential and unlimited promise. Alaska enjoys a huge FY06 budget surplus. The price of oil may never again dip far below its present elevated status. Tremendous gas reserves and accelerated gas line negotiations portend a long period of state bounty. Now is a time for bold decisions, calculated risks, and full public and legislative acceptance that a vital, world-class research and teaching university is absolutely essential for Alaska's bright future. Alaska simply can't afford not to invest in UAF.

This state needs what a world class university can provide:

- Graduates at all levels for tomorrow's jobs
- Knowledge and understanding to ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability in the far North
- Vitality of the arts and humanities to enrich Alaskans' quality of life
- Direct and indirect economic development effects
- A beacon for new business and bright minds
- A society of lifelong learners
- An image and reality of intellectual, social and economic vibrancy

We are at a defining moment in our journey to become a "Destination University." We as a university community are committed to becoming even better than we are—to becoming the university that Alaska must have as it prepares for excellence in its second 50 years of statehood. Now, Alaska must rise to the challenge—enabling us to serve the state in ways that only a pre-eminent global university can. However, we face obstacles. Near term we need relief via the supplemental budget process for an FY06 fuel cost deficit of \$2.3 million, returning to us some of the oil-price derived surplus. But a more daunting obstacle looms ahead in FY07 and beyond. Rapidly accelerating cost increases (PERS/TRS, health benefits, facility maintenance and renewal, and utilities), over which no one at the university has control, threaten to derail our progress. We're looking for the state to cover those base-level costs, and direct some of its surplus to current and long-term program and research opportunities.

This is an abbreviated version of Chancellor Steve Jones' Musings from Oct. 21, 2005. The complete text can be found on the web at www.uaf.edu/chancellor/musings/.