

Chancellor's Report

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

February 2007

ACHIEVEMENTS

Alaska Sea Grant underwent a program review Sept. 10–14 by an assessment team from the National Sea Grant College Program. The panel judged the Alaska Sea Grant College Program as among the nation's best marine research, education and extension programs. The high marks received during its five-year program review could result in an increase in federal funding for Alaska Sea Grant program enhancements.

The Drums of Winter, a 1988 documentary film on Yup'ik culture co-produced by UA Museum of the North film curator Leonard Kamerling, was recently added to the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress. It is one of the few documentaries and only the second Alaska film in the 450-film registry. Nearly 1,000 films were nominated in 2006, and only 25 were selected.

Arctic Region Supercomputing Center Associate Director Barbara Horner-Miller served as the general chair for the November 2006 Supercomputing Conference, the premier international meeting on high performance computing, networking, storage and computational science. The event brought a high profile to ARSC and UAF.

UAF was ranked fifth among small research institutions and in the top 10 colleges in atmospheric science and environmental sciences by the Academic Analytics annual survey of the top-ranked departments and institutions for faculty scholarly productivity by field and discipline.

UAF graduate Katey Walter received the nation's most prestigious honor for doctoral dissertations from the Council of Graduate Schools Dec. 7 at the organization's 46th annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Walter received the 2006 award in mathematics, physical sciences and engineering. The CGS makes two awards each year to recognize recent doctoral recipients who have already made exceptional contributions to their fields.

UAF was well represented at the American Geophysical Union's fall meeting in December in San Francisco, where 14,039 scientists shared research findings. More than 70 UAF faculty, staff and students attended, most from the Geophysical Institute, and 265 papers or posters with UAF affiliations were presented.

IN PROGRESS

The UAF Vision Task Force will convene at UAF March 6–7 as 55 international, national, Alaska and UAF leaders focus on how to achieve the goals of UAF 2010 Strategic Plan's six pathways and what we will need in resources, infrastructure and personnel to accomplish our goals and position the university to meet our vision for 2017.

The Center for Alaska Native Health Research is bringing 10 renowned biomedical scientists to the Fairbanks campus to collaborate with CANHR researchers. Each scientist will rotate through the center's five-year President's Professor of Biomedical Research position for one to two months at a time. The position is funded by BP and ConocoPhillips.

WHAT'S NEXT

International Polar Year 2007–2009 officially begins in March as a concentrated, internationally coordinated research campaign that aims to gain new knowledge about Earth's polar regions. A series of lectures and events will take place on campus over the next two years to increase public awareness about the polar regions.

The 34th annual Festival of Native Arts takes place March 1–3. The student-organized festival celebrates artistic expression of all the major Native cultures of Alaska by holding performances of Native dance groups and a Native crafts fair.

Winter Shorts are student-directed one-act plays produced by the UAF Student Drama Association in the Lee H. Salisbury Theatre, Feb. 23–March 4.

UAF will host the NCAA Rifle Championships at the Patty Center rifle range on campus for the first time March 8–10, with former UAF rifle coach Randy Pitney organizing the event.

The 2007 Science for Alaska lecture series continues in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Seward through Feb. 29. The popular free lectures in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau feature scientists from UAF, UAA and UAS as well as experts from state and federal agencies. The annual series is sponsored by the Geophysical Institute.

The UA Museum of the North hosts the 21st annual Chocolate Bash March 31. The event features an evening of decadent desserts, fine wines and live music at the museum. Net proceeds benefit the museum endowment fund.

musings from the chancellor

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Looking Forward

Happy New Year! Somehow 2006 has fallen behind us, when just yesterday its arrival signaled a new beginning and a fresh year. Well, here we are again—another fresh year before us—this one filled with uncertainty, promise and potential. In many ways, it sounds like more of the same. However, I believe that 2007 stands alone in recent years in terms of the degree to which the year ahead is masked by conditions that have yet to crystallize. I want to reflect a bit on what leads me to this belief.

We've all heard the terms: decision context; operating environment; external conditions. There are more, each referring to the set of factors influencing our decisions, actions and outcomes. Their variable effects range from negative, through uncertain, to positive. How we anticipate and deal with their collective impact defines the shape, scope and scale of our progress and success. Here is a sampling of the conditions, some reflecting very recent events that bear significantly on our university for 2007:

- A new administration—on behalf of UAF I have extended congratulations to Gov. Palin and Lt. Gov. Parnell along with an offer to assist them in learning more about UAF's special role in assuring a brighter Alaska future. New executive leadership always stands as an uncertain variable, but I am optimistic that this dynamic leadership team will recognize our essential contribution to Alaska and Alaskans, and invest in higher education research and service. Gov. Palin spent 90 minutes with us in Signers' Hall the morning of her inauguration, demonstrating a strong appreciation of our university's historic role in forging this 49th state. Likewise, I believe this administration will recognize the essential role we will play in Alaska's second 50 years and beyond.



- New faces in the Legislature—we're already contacting our newly elected Interior delegates, similarly congratulating them and offering to more fully orient them to UAF. Sen. Joe

Thomas, former UA regent, is no stranger to our university. Scott Kawasaki seems eager to serve our collective interests in the House of Representatives. We're fortunate to have a strong and supportive Interior delegation, including Sens. Gary Wilken and Gene Therriault, as well as Reps. Mike Kelly, John Coghill, John Harris, Jay Ramras and David Guttenberg. We'll be imploring our legislative and executive leaders to display the courage necessary to invest in Alaska's future—in higher education.

- Major shifts in the U.S. Congress—we've seen a reversal of power in both houses of Congress, along with a lot of rhetoric about earmarks. The percentage of UAF research dollars from federal earmarks is relatively small—approximately 13–15 percent of our total of well over \$100 million annually. We continue to build our competitive prowess in key research areas, and our faculty members continue to mark great progress in multiple disciplines.
- Federal budget by continuing resolution—we're hearing rumblings from Washington that much of the FY 2006-07 budget may derive from simply repeating the year just ended. Allocation by continuing resolution eliminates inflation adjustments and curtails program expansion resources.

Stephen B. Jones

This is an abbreviated version of Chancellor Steve Jones' Musings from Jan. 12, 2007. The complete text can be found on the web at www.uaf.edu/chancellor/musings/.