At the UAF School of Management, we are committed to offering programs that serve the needs of today’s students in tomorrow’s economy. We are equally dedicated to preparing them for leadership roles in society. To meet our commitments, SOM focuses on excellence in and out of the classroom, and provides our students with frequent opportunities to interact with the business community. This partnership between SOM and the business community is what ensures our students a state-of-the-art education. As you are well aware, the university system is facing significant fiscal challenges that threaten its financial stability and the quality of its students’ educational experiences. Both UAF and UAA strongly believe their business schools are essential to the communities in which they exist. I am working closely with Dr. Rashmi Prasad, Dean of the UAA College of Business and Public Policy, towards a collaborative plan for both schools. We’re working together to determine how to best serve Alaska with business education under a unified university and the new Strategic Pathways model proposed by UA President Jim Johnsen.

Schools with accreditation from AACSB International - the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business - are considered the best business schools in the world. Their degree programs have passed rigorous standards for quality. AACSB accredited schools have the best programs, the highest quality faculty and the most prepared students. More employers recruit from these schools and their graduates receive higher salaries. AACSB accreditation is an important achievement for both UAF and UAA, which further underscores the need to ensure that both of these excellent business schools remain strong.

To Students
With UAA in the Anchorage bowl area and UAF in Interior Alaska, each business school features a specialized, community-based focus. SOM is as strong as it’s ever been, and we want to continue building on that strength. This academic year, we had a record number of enrolled students and a record number of graduates. We have been internationally recognized for our community outreach. Be confident SOM is poised to continue to offer the type of active learning opportunities you have come to expect and that employers desire.

To Faculty
No doubt there’s some uncertainty about the future. Dean Prasad and I are collaborating with President Johnsen and expect to have a much better grasp of the situation and a clearer direction by the end of this calendar year. We are working with the information we are given and unfortunately it changes frequently. I am committed to keeping you informed of potential changes and other updates as soon as the information is available.

To Donors and Alumni
I am optimistic that SOM is going to remain in Fairbanks. We have received signals from President Johnsen that our school is of critical importance to the community and to UA as a whole. We may look somewhat different in the future, but we are working diligently to maintain our core strengths. Philanthropic gifts will continue to benefit your areas of support, just as they always have. With your help, our students will continue to have extra-curricular experiences as they receive the high-quality education that they, you, and I have all come to expect.

How you can support SOM
Your commitment and support over the next few months are even more important than ever. This support may take the form of writing letters to the Legislature, testifying to the Board of Regents or the President, and sharing your stories about the positive impacts our school and our students make on the community.

If you would like to share your thoughts about the future of the UAF School of Management, please visit the Strategic Pathways website (www.alaska.edu/pathways) and voice your opinion via the feedback email or online form.