CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

Supporting Alaska’s resource industries

**State operating budget request: $400,000**

The resource and energy industries are a large part of Alaska’s economic foundation. Those industries depend on chemical engineers and the processes they design, yet Alaska has no undergraduate chemical engineering programs. Today, chemical engineers working on Alaska projects are either educated outside the state or hold degrees in other engineering disciplines. It’s time to address the demand.

The solution is a new bachelor’s degree program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. With its strong roots in engineering research and education, UAF is poised to launch this much-needed program with support from industry partners and the State of Alaska.

This proposal is a partnership between the state, the university, industries and students. The $400,000 in state funding would be matched by $450,000 in industry support and student tuition dollars to cover the costs associated with providing this degree. Details of this request can be found in the UA operating budget under “Economic Development Agenda.”

UAF already has the foundation for the degree. The College of Engineering and Mines currently offers some of the required courses in this discipline. To develop and offer the remaining necessary courses, and to have sufficient teaching faculty to meet anticipated enrollment growth in this high-demand field, the university would hire additional faculty members to teach the courses, conduct research in the field of chemical engineering and strengthen relationships with the companies that will employ UAF graduates. The new program will create a platform for research that benefits Alaska’s industries. It will ensure that chemical engineers can walk on the job after graduation with both classroom and practical experience to fill necessary positions in resource development and energy industries in Alaska. And, because they will be Alaska graduates, they will be more likely to stay in Alaska and become longstanding, valuable members of Alaska’s resource and energy industry.

Graduate students Behnam Zanganeh (top) and Shruti Oza (below) set up apparatuses for a procedure in UAF’s Petroleum Development Lab in the Duckering Building.