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UNIVERSITY of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

February 05, 2026

Dear Mayor, Community Leaders, and Bristol Bay Campus Advocates,

Thank you for taking the time to join the virtual town halls held in December 2025, the on-site community town hall in January during Vice Chancellor Bryan Uher's and my visit to Dillingham, and for submitting your written comments.

I appreciate the time and care taken to articulate your concerns about the sale of the Applied Sciences Building to Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). Additionally, I truly appreciate and respect your commitment to the success of Dillingham, the Bristol Bay region, and the Bristol Bay Campus (BBC) and its mission to serve the region's students and workforce needs.

The message we heard from the community was clear. Access to the Applied Sciences Building is very important and it needs to remain a community asset. Furthermore, the community, in partnership with the campus, needs time to develop plans that will reinvigorate and sustain enrollment through the commitment of local organizations.

In response, while we value our partnership with AHFC, we have decided not to proceed with the sale of the Applied Sciences Building at this time. Keep in mind though, as a public organization, we must responsibly steward our limited public resources. We must demonstrate strong utilization of our facilities for education and training in the region. At this time, both BBC facilities are woefully underutilized, and student enrollment is as low as I've seen in my 30+ years career at the University of Alaska (UA). The higher education market is changing, and the university must change with it.

During our visit in January, there was enthusiastic community support for re-establishing the BBC advisory group. The first meeting of that group is scheduled for February 2026. We welcome the plans you inform that will bring students from across the region to campus, focused on the education and training programs most vital to the region's sustainability and growth. I was encouraged by all the good ideas shared at the town hall, and it will take a commitment to change to see if any take root.

In parallel, we will pursue additional strategies, including:

- Seek community-based or regional buyers for the Applied Sciences Building. Entities such as the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, Bristol Bay Native Association, Choggiung Limited, and Bristol Bay Native Corporation all share UA's interest in seeing Dillingham and the Bristol Bay Region thrive.
- Seek community-based or regional and other partners to lease space in one or both BBC facilities to improve utilization.
- Seek ways to improve operating cost efficiency, especially related to the Applied Sciences Building housing units, and use of the main BBC building.

The University of Alaska Board of Regents is holding its meeting in Dillingham, February 18-20, 2026. A community reception is scheduled the evening of February 18, 2026. The full Board meeting schedule can be found at: https://www.alaska.edu/bor/agendas/.

In response to your request for additional dialog, Board Chair Scott Jepsen, UAF Interim Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Charlene Stern, UAF Interim Vice Chancellor Bryan Uher, BBC Director Alyssa McDonald, and I will meet with invited community partner representatives at 5pm, February 18, in advance of the community reception. Several of you, have or will be receiving an invite to join us for this dialog.

I want to emphasize that the University values its partnership with the Bristol Bay region and recognizes the unique role the BBC plays in workforce development, particularly in fisheries, healthcare, and other fields vital to the region's economy. Our shared objective is to ensure that educational access and opportunity are preserved and strengthened in a manner that is sustainable over the long term. UA has never wavered from its commitment to maintaining a presence in Dillingham, and must continue to examine the physical campus footprint, costs to operate, utilization, and changing academic and student needs.

Thank you again for your candid input and for your willingness to work collaboratively with us. We look forward to continued dialogue and to identifying a path forward that reflects both fiscal responsibility and our shared commitment to the students and communities of Bristol Bay and the Aleutians.

Sincerely,

Pat Pitney, President