Funding Summary

Total Project Cost:  $121.6 M*

Total construction funding secured to date:  $74.8 M
- State funding:  $70.3 M
- UAF operating funds: $3.5M
- Privately contributed: $1 M

Total remaining funding needed:  $46.8 M*
- UA’s FY17 capital request for new construction: $34.8 M
- Capital deferred maintenance funds (Duckering backfill) : $6.5 M
- Additional private funds: $5.5 M

* If fully funded in FY17. With every year of delay, estimated costs for completing this facility rise at roughly $3M per year.

Project Status

The UAF Engineering Learning and Innovation Facility is a warm and dry-shelled facility. Major mechanical and electrical systems are installed, but the interior is unfinished, rendering this state-of-the-art building unusable. The State of Alaska has invested more than $70 million in the project to date, but is receiving no return on that investment. In addition, UAF is incurring operating expenses of approximately $500,000 annually to provide minimal heat, insurance coverage, fire protection systems and limited maintenance operations for the building.

With funding in the FY17 budget, UAF will restart construction and have the building ready to train tomorrow’s engineers starting in the spring of 2018.

Economic Benefit to Alaska

The Department of Labor estimates Alaska will need 137 engineers and another 62 engineering technicians annually between now and 2022. Completion of the engineering building at UAF will allow the university to fulfill its pledge to meet that need. Alaskan employers prefer to hire Alaska graduates, but that has proved difficult. In some disciplines, up to 35 percent of the engineers hired to work in Alaska come from out-of-state. They often lack education and experience in Arctic engineering.

Providing in-state educational opportunities makes it more likely that these high-paying jobs will be filled by Alaskans. Of UAF’s approximately 100 bachelor’s-level engineering graduates annually, about 70 will establish careers in Alaska. Their average salaries approach $100,000 annually, which translates to economic activity in Alaska’s communities.
Programmatic Need

UAF’s College of Engineering and Mines is working collaboratively with UAA’s College of Engineering to deliver relevant curriculum and programs to meet the engineering needs of Alaska industries.

In addition to offering master’s and doctoral engineering degrees, UAF has seven undergraduate engineering degree options, including mining, geological and petroleum engineering, which are not available elsewhere in Alaska. The college has nearly doubled its engineering enrollment and graduates over the last decade, despite the limitations of its current facilities.

The new engineering building was designed to serve the needs of an additional 300-350 students annually. The new facility will also support Alaska-focused applied research programs in energy and power, transportation, oil, gas and mineral development, and environmental and water resources. It will contain new laboratories and other dedicated space needed to support specialized Arctic research, including a high-bay lab, which will allow near-full-scale testing of structures, a service currently not available in Alaska.

Engineering Project Fast Facts

- Completion of UAF’s engineering building is the university’s number one capital priority.
- Alaska business and industry needs nearly 200 engineers and engineering technicians each year. This building will allow the university to meet that need.
- Alaska employers prefer engineers trained in Alaska.
- UAF engineering graduates successfully find high-paying jobs in Alaska, contributing to the state’s economy.
- The state has invested more than $70 million in a building that can’t be used without additional investment.
- Finishing the building will allow Alaska businesses to reap the rewards of the state’s investment.
- Waiting costs the state real dollars: Each year we delay completion, the project cost increases by $3 million.