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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 14, 2014

Date Revised: October 29, 2014

To: Nettie Labelle-Hamer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
John Blake, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
Kelly Drew, Professor, IAB Biomedical and Health Sciences
Jennifer Harris, Executive Officer, School of Fish and Ocean Sciences
Arleigh Reynolds, Associate Dean, Veterinary Medicine
Milan Shipka, Professor of Animal Science
Steve Sparrow, Interim Dean, School of Natural Resources and Extension
Cameron Wohlford, Senior Project Manager
Ruth Prato, Instructor, School of Management

From: Brian Rogers, Chancellor

Re: **UAF Farms and Large Animal Care Special Program Review –
Revised to include Ruth Prato**

Background

UAF has been engaged in agricultural teaching and research since its inception in 1917 as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. The College site was selected in part to enable co-location with the Fairbanks federal agriculture experiment station established in 1906. Both the Fairbanks experiment station and the Matanuska experiment station were transferred to the college in 1931.

Over the years, UAF animal research broadened to also include laboratory animal and wildlife research. Today, UAF operates several facilities for agricultural and animal research. Some of these facilities are used for multiple purposes, and research of a type might be conducted in multiple facilities.

Some of UAF's larger facilities used for multiple agriculture/animal research purposes are:

- Fairbanks Experiment Farm – 260 acres of cropland and 50 acres of forest land. The property has 17 buildings with about 45,000 square feet. Currently supports a reindeer herd. Also includes the Georgeson Botanical Garden, which is an attraction for both community events and for tourists, and a visitor's center.
- Delta Junction Field Research Site – 360 acres, 2 buildings, mostly used for agronomic and forestry research, but also has been used by some external agencies for other projects.

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- Matanuska Experiment Farm – located in Palmer, 260 acres of cultivated land and 800 acres of forest land and several buildings designed for a range of purposes. Some moose diet research is currently being conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
- R.G. White Large Animal Research Station (LARS) - The site comprises 134 acres, approximately 50% pasture and 50% boreal forest. LARS has 11 different buildings with about 10,000 square feet of space. LARS currently has animal colonies consisting of musk oxen, caribou and domestic reindeer. The animals are a tourist attraction and the facility sells qiviut.
- Biological Reserve Animal Facility – The Biological Reserve is located on the north campus portion of the Fairbanks campus. It has, over the years, supported reindeer and winter bears. The facility is currently inactive.

UAF currently maintains the following animal research facilities:

- Fairbanks Experiment Farm (Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station)
- Matanuska Experiment Farm (Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station)
- Biological Research and Diagnostics (BiRD) Building (Animal Resources Center)
- Irving I Animal Facility (*to be decommissioned in 2015*) (Animal Resources Center)
- R.G. White Large Animal Research Station (LARS) (Animal Resources Center)
- Biological Reserve (*inactive*) (Animal Resources Center)
- Toolik Field State Winter Laboratory (Institute of Arctic Biology)
- Arctic Health Research Building Fish Lab (School of Fish and Ocean Sciences)
- Lena Point Laboratory (School of Fish and Ocean Sciences)
- Seward Marine Center (School of Fish and Ocean Sciences).

UAF's current agriculture and wildlife research is limited, partly because agriculture is a small segment of Alaska's economy and partly because federal research funding has declined. The FY 2014 Planning and Budget Committee was tasked with identifying spending reduction and revenue enhancement steps that could be implemented to address UAF's budget gap. In its final report, the PBC recommended a few steps for near-term budget reductions between the Fairbanks Experiment Farm and LARS, but also indicated that assessment of savings in large animal quarters management should be considered through completion of a full farm review. The UAF Cabinet and I agree that a Special Program Review of the Fairbanks Experiment Farm, the Matanuska Experiment Farm, the Large Animal Research Station and the Biological Reserve is warranted to consider whether there are additional possibilities for achieving savings from shared personnel, reduction or discontinuation of herds of large animals, and/or reducing or ending usage of equipment or facilities.

Special Program Review Scope

Analysis

- What specific activities of the university have the two farms, LARS and the Biological Reserve supported in recent years (2008-2014)? How well are the facilities utilized? Some components to consider:
 - How many students or classes have been served?

- How many ongoing faculty research projects?
- How much external funding (competitive and non-competitive) has been secured due to availability of these facilities? Which specific features of the facilities were crucial in securing funding?
- What publications have resulted from research conducted at these facilities?
- What outreach activities have taken place, how many people served?
- What is the level of animal utilization?
- Have most of the buildings and acreage been used?
- What are the costs/revenues associated with each of these four facilities?
 - Are there base facility costs incurred even if the facilities are not used for teaching, research or outreach activities?
 - What does it cost to support the animals (per animal and/or per herd) at each of the three facilities? Are some types of animals more costly than others?
 - What level of outreach (e.g. gift shop or tour revenue) sales do the facilities support?
 - How much tuition revenue is generated due to each facility? (This might include estimate of prospective revenue for the Veterinary Medicine program.)
- What would be the negative impacts of consolidating or closing each of these facilities?
 - What types of facilities and animals is UAF likely to need/want to accommodate education, research, and outreach/extension activities in the next five to ten years?

Recommendations

- The committee should offer options for reducing costs for the four facilities by 10%, 33% and 50%.
 - Personnel savings?
 - Animal herd discontinuation or size reduction?
 - Energy savings?
 - Equipment costs savings?
- Please address how program reductions at the facilities would affect other UAF entities.
- Please address which portions of the facilities seem most strategically important to retain.
- Please address how facilities might be “mothballed” at the present time, with an eye to revitalizing as needed in future to support research. What combination of facilities would provide UAF most flexibility for ramping up and ramping down operations as needed?
- What type of facilities will the new Veterinary Medicine program need?
- The committee should offer recommendations on other issues as seem appropriate.

Review Committee

I am appointing the following individuals to serve as members of the Farms and Animals Special Program Review Committee:

- Nettie Labelle-Hamer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research (Chair)
- John Blake, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research
- Kelly Drew, Professor, IAB Biomedical and Health Sciences

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- Jennifer Harris, Executive Officer, School of Fish and Ocean Sciences
- Arleigh Reynolds, Associate Dean, Veterinary Medicine
- Milan Shipka, Professor of Animal Science
- Steve Sparrow, Interim Dean, School of Natural Resources and Extension
- Cameron Wohlford, Senior Project Manager
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Process

The goal of this Special Review is to make recommendations regarding changes that could be implemented with the new fiscal year. Because these facilities may need lead time to plan for implementation of changes, initial recommendations are due from the Special Review Committee to me and Cabinet by January 9, 2015.

The Office of Management and Budget and Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research will assist the Committee in identifying sources of data that might be useful in its work. Sylvan Robb, (474-6199, ssrobb@alaska.edu) will serve as an OMB/PAIR point of contact for the Farms and Large Animal Care review committee. Kari Burrell, UAF's Executive Officer, (474-7489, kari.burrell@alaska.edu) is also available to the Committee as a resource in thinking about goals and approach.

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Farms and Large Animal Care Special Program Review Committee. Your work on this Committee will assist UAF leadership in setting near term priorities for these facilities in this dynamic environment.

Cc: Brian Barnes, Director of Institute of Arctic Biology
Kari Burrell, Executive Officer
Susan Henrichs, Provost
Mark Myers, Vice Chancellor for Research
Sylvan Robb,
Fred Schultt, Vice Provost and Co-Director of School of Natural Resources and Extension