

November 23, 2021

## Recap of Town Hall on October 12, 2021

Thank you to everyone who was able to participate in the Graduate School Town Hall on October 12, 2021. Since then, we have been collecting information on a few of the topics that were covered. While we don't have answers for all questions asked, we are continuing to work on them. If you missed the Town Hall, you can [click here](#) to navigate to our communication page to watch the video.

### **Review of communication methods for the Graduate School**

Information on ways to communicate with the Graduate School can now be found [Graduate School Handbook](#) on our webpage. Our webpage was rebuilt just before the beginning of the fall semester and it's a wealth of information. Information about Graduate School staff can be located [here](#). You click [here](#) to listen to prior Town Halls, and general student information can be found [here](#).

### **Healthcare Coverage Update:**

As a result of last year's forum on graduate student health insurance, we were able to renegotiate the reduction of the out-of-pocket maximum from \$6,850 to \$2,000. Students covered by the graduate student health insurance now have the option of adding vision and dental coverage at their own expense. Also, once the primary enrollment information has been submitted (student information), dependents may be enrolled online using the provided [step-by-step instruction guide](#). Dependents must be enrolled prior to the established cut-off dates:

- Fall Term: November 1
- Spring Term: March 1
- Summer Term: June 15
- In the case of a Qualifying Life Event, students will have 30 days from the event date to enroll new dependents. Should you have further questions about enrolling dependents, please contact [UHCSR](#) directly.

## **Graduate School forms are all on the NextGen platform**

If you aren't sure who needs to sign your forms, you can consult the [Graduate Student Forms Directory](#) for Graduate Coordinators, Department Chairs, and Dean's names.

There is a planning document for each form so you can see what information will be required before you begin completing it online. If you are not familiar with how the forms work or if you have difficulty using them, you can contact our office and request a one-on-one session with our Office Coordinator, Erin Kirchner. Also, we will be hosting more group information sessions on using the forms next semester.

## **Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is coming to UAF campus wide**

Please visit our [3MT webpage](#) for the most up to date information and to register for this exciting campus-wide competition we are bringing to Fairbanks in February 2022. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to participate. Need help putting your presentation together? The UAF Speaker Center has you covered. They are offering a 3MT Presentation Workshop Series to help you prepare. But wait! There's more ... cash prizes!!! Yes, cash prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Honorable Mention, Alumni Association Choice, and People's Choice. Watch for information about an upcoming mock competition that will take place at the beginning of next semester.

## **Questions from our students:**

*Will it be possible to reinstate internet relief for graduate students, to facilitate remote work during the pandemic?*

The previous internet relief was part of the Cares Act funding that has since expired. If additional resources become available we will be sure to let students know.

*If I cannot find PhDs to sit on my committee from UAF, where can I find potential members at other Universities?*

The first step of building your advisory committee is securing the committee chair or co-chairs. You will work with your advisor to build a committee who works well together and they may have ideas or access to others who may be interested in your work and serving on your advisory committee. Your advisor can assist you in inviting non-UAF faculty to serve on your committee. Your program may have requirements about how many of your committee members must come from your department, so check these first and talk to your advisor before you start inviting members to serve.

P.O. Box 757560, Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Eielson Building, Room 202  
907-474-7464 - email: [uaf-grad-school@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-grad-school@alaska.edu)  
[www.alaska.edu/gradschool](http://www.alaska.edu/gradschool)

***Can we arrange for incoming graduate students to get their first paycheck sooner? Currently it comes after the fee payment deadline.***

This process is currently under review and alternatives are being considered. For students who experience hardship the are funds available from the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSSR) and the Financial Aid Office. CSSR has an [Emergency Student Support Fund](#). This fund is designated to off-set a short-term financial need and is not intended to replace or supplement financial aid. The Financial Aid Office offers similar emergency funding through their [Emergency Scholarship](#).

***Why are graduate students not provided with shower access over the summer?***

Students who are enrolled in classes and have paid the consolidated fee have access to showers in Wood Center, the Patty Center, and the Student Recreation Center. For showers in other UAF facilities check with the applicable building coordinator to discuss options for shower use. Hours for shower access are limited to the hours the building is open. [Click here for the list of building coordinators](#).

We are waiting to have confirmation on what shower access might be available during the winter break campus closure, and expect to have the information by the end of next week.

***What do I need to advocate for myself about as a grad student?***

It's important for students to be familiar with the [UAF Catalog](#) and the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and know policies that apply to graduate students. When you begin working with your graduate committee chair, request to establish a document of expectations, so that each of you knows what to expect as you begin working together.

Each college/school has a representative on the [Graduate School Student Advisory Board](#) that students can bring any concerns or ideas to. The Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks ([ASUAF](#)) which is the student government organization on campus also serves as an advocate for students.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities is an excellent resource if you have questions or need assistance with a problem situation.

***How can we get specific information about what requirements are needed by the Grad School at any given point in our program?***

Students can contact the graduate school at any time for information. The Office of the Registrar is currently working to populate information for graduate students in DegreeWorks so that you have access at your fingertips as to what outstanding requirements or forms you have to complete for your academic record. If you are wondering about various deadlines each semester you can visit our [dates and deadlines page](#) for that information.

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*There was a concern raised about drinking water in some buildings being non-potable.*

The water on campus is provided by College Utilities and managed as part of the university services by Facility Services (<https://uaf.edu/fs/services/utilities/index.php>). The UAF Industrial Hygienist, Emily Reiter, informed us that the water on our residential campus is generally potable and tested on a regular basis. Some water sources in laboratories are intentionally non-potable (e.g. reverse osmosis water) to meet specific laboratory needs.

*We were asked if we were looking into the pay equity issues.*

The answer is yes, we are. The issue is one of both the structure (or ladder) for assistantships and the pay rates associated with the steps on the ladder. We are working with Schools, Colleges, and Institutes across our campuses to review the structure and the pay rates. Once we have completed our review we will make the information available.

Please contact our office if you have any questions about the information in this email. We hope you are able to enjoy the long weekend!

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**UAF Graduate School**

202 Eielson Bldg.

PO Box 757560

Fairbanks, AK 99775-7560

[UAF-Grad-School@alaska.edu](mailto:UAF-Grad-School@alaska.edu)

Voice: 907.474.7464

Fax: 907.474.1984

<https://uaf.edu/gradschool/>

We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose traditional lands our campuses reside. In Fairbanks, the Troth Yeddha' Campus is located on the traditional lands of the Dena people of the lower Tanana River.

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