



## From the Save the Seawolf Committee

# Save the Seawolf!

Ten More Elevator Speeches to Save the Seawolf.

Our efforts to save the Seawolf are gaining momentum but we need to broaden public support. The effort to educate the people of Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska about the threat the extinction of the Seawolf poses to them needs to continue. Here are ten MORE “elevator speeches,” talking points you can drive home to someone in thirty seconds or less.

11, The Seawolf student body is unique. UAA Students are not like university students elsewhere. 96% of them commute. Over 80% work. Well over half care for a dependent (many do that *and* work). They don’t like debt. Consequently, they tend to take longer to graduate but they do it in the same number of semesters as four or six year graduates.

12, We don’t poach each other’s students. UAA students come from Anchorage and Southcentral. In fall of 2018 87% of all students admitted to UAA and attending classes came from Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska. The majority of students at UAF and UAS also come primarily from northcentral and southeast Alaska respectively.

13, It’s UAA, Out of State or Nothing. Of the students who were admitted to UAA in fall of 2018 and chose NOT to attend, over half went out of state and nearly 38% didn’t go to school at all. Only a little over one percent went to either UAF or UAS.

14, Our open access mission is in danger. If UAA and UAS get absorbed into UAF under its accreditation, then UAF’s admissions policy takes over. Whatever exists in place of UAA would no longer be an open access institution. So even if all faculty, programs, and classes remained in Anchorage (a really big if), students would lose access.

15, You can’t do 18 months’ work in eight weeks. The president’s plan proposes to do program reviews and all the other work necessary for accreditation over an eight week span starting in mid-September. Reaffirmation of accreditation usually takes 18 months. And while the president’s process might lack integrity, the accreditor’s process for approving or disapproving the accreditation of the “new UA” will not. This risks the accreditation of the entire system

16, A Tailor doesn’t cut the customer to fit the suit! The constitution mentions a university of Alaska under a Board of Regents but higher education in Alaska hasn’t looked like that since 1974. The president’s plan seeks to cram the results of forty-five years of growth and evolution back into a package it has long outgrown. It makes far more sense to revise the constitution to reflect the realities on the ground.

17, Distance Education is not the answer. A major part of the president’s plan is that students who can’t get courses locally will get them online. But the success rates of students in online classes, especially conceptual ones like math or chemistry, are substantially lower than in face to face classes. And if a student really wants to take an online class (another big if) they can take them anywhere in the world.

18, Where are the Chancellors? Despite the fact that they know their institutions best, have experience with accreditation reaffirmation, and have strong relationships with their local communities, Chancellors Dan White of UAF, Cathy Sandeen of UAA, and Rick Caulfield of UAS have been completely marginalized in discussions of restructuring. Indeed, the president has ordered them not to say anything that contradicts his plan. That's reprehensible.

19, Why do most mergers fail? Imposing a plan from the top down on an organization that has no broadly-based institutional buy-in from the people who have to make it work is the number one reason why mergers of any sort of organization fail. The president's plan is being pressed from the top down onto faculty, staff, and students at all three universities who do not agree with its premises or consent to its result.

20, Let's Concentrate on the Two Urgent Tasks. The battle to impose or to resist the President's ill-conceived plan for the "new UA" is distracting us from the two most important tasks we have to deal with in the next two years. First is managing the \$45 million in cuts still to come. The second is ensuring that UAF gets its accreditation reaffirmed. A forced merger into the "new UA" exacerbates both problems instead of dealing with them.