Dear Regent:

Preserve Seawolf athletics excellence!

President Johnsen’s plan for consolidation of UAF, UAA, and UAS threatens to end the tradition of excellence of Seawolf athletics and erode a major foundation for community support and giving. However, a Consortium model would allow for separate athletic departments at UAA and at UAF providing opportunities for better fan support and donor activity.

UAA has developed some of the most successful athletic programs in the state and has annually played post season tournaments in several sports and won national titles in Division II. The Women’s Basketball team has 5 straight GNAC conference championships and advanced to the “Sweet 16” in 2018-19.

UAA has the best facility in the Alaska Airlines Center; in fact, it is considered a top venue in DII sports nationwide (*USA Today* featured it in “51 Amazing University and College Buildings across the USA” on 3/20/19). During the 2018-19 season UAA saw a 10% increase in attendance at the Alaska Airlines Center.

UAA Athletics has also gained national attention for its excellent coaching staff. Three Seawolf coaches were named Coach of the Year in their conferences in 2018-19. Ryan McCarthy (Women’s Basketball coach) in the GNAC; Tanya Ho for MBSF Women’s Gymnastics and Michael Freiss for both GNAC and NCAA West Region Cross Country.

UAA Athletics earned its 19th straight top-50 finish in the prestigious Learfield IMG College Director’s Cup competition which measures success in academics and athletics on a national level. UAA was ranked 10 out of 229 programs in NCAA Division II.

Seawolf Student-Athletes also excel in the classroom with 45 earning a 4.0 GPA and 123 student-athletes earning above a 3.0 GPA. Many who have come to UAA to pursue athletics have stayed to raise families, start businesses, and be community supporters and leaders.

In order to be competitive and to meet NCAA requirements UA needs to maintain both UAA and UAF Athletics. The minimum of two men’s and two women's team sports, which we currently have in Men’s Ice Hockey, Men and Women’s Basketball and Women’s Volleyball, must be preserved.

Anchorage has the largest population and UAA the most sponsors for the athletic programs. Private support for Seawolf athletics has increased by 5% from FY18 to FY19. In FY19, UAA hosted the first-ever Giving Day for the University of Alaska. This brought in 413 donors and over $45,000 in private donations. Even President Johnsen has said, "athletics is an important part of the UA system." It generates national attention as well as community and corporate support.

UAA Athletics partners with the Municipality of Anchorage to host the Mayor’s Marathon and Half Marathon. This annual event brings thousands of visitors to Anchorage with an economic impact of $328,000 in 2019.

We hope you will listen to the public’s input and heed the voice of reason when making your decisions on the future of the entire UA system.

I appreciate that you are giving this hard choice serious consideration, but we ask you make maintaining the UA Athletic departments a priority.

Sincerely

 Save the Seawolf Committee