

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
ADDRESS

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Anchorage, Alaska

James Johnsen

President

University of Alaska

Who would have known in 1862, when President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act creating land-grant universities, that the University of Alaska would become one of the great land-grant universities in America?

The second is concern, concern for our state's fiscal uncertainty and for the terrible effects on the university of four straight years of state funding cuts to our budget and, consequently, to our ability to carry out our mission for Alaska, to our promise of opportunity for Alaskans.

And the third is confidence, confidence

- Confidence in our elected officials to recognize the importance of the university to our state,
- Confidence in our university to deliver on its promise to Alaska, and
- Confidence in Alaska, in the wealth of our land, in the grit, diversity, and intelligence of our people, and in the future of the greatest state in the greatest nation in the world.

PRIDE

Why should we all be proud of the University?

We should take pride in our university's unique and important mission to the people of Alaska; providing opportunity for Alaskans to lead prosperous and fulfilling lives in a state with a competitive and sustainable economy.

We should take pride in our founders, too many to name. One of them passed away recently, Judge Roy Madsen, Alaska's first Alaska Native judge. He fostered a long line of exemplary Alaska Native leaders, decades of higher education in Kodiak resulting from his role in creating Kodiak College, and a culture (d) -2 (a) -1

We should take pride in our students. UAA's Samantha Mack, for example, is the University's first Rhodes Scholar. A double major in political science and English, Samantha goes on now to study political theory at Oxford. We look forward to her return to the state and to counting her among the university's faculty.

In addition to Samantha, our ranks include Carnegie Fellows, Truman Scholars, UA Scholars, and Fulbright Scholars. These bright Alaskans will become tomorrow's leaders, with a fresh vision for new opportunities.

We should take pride in our tremendous faculty and staff, some of the smartest and

CONCERN

With so much to be proud of, w

impaired our growth for decades and unless remedied, will hobble us for many years to come.

And we should be concerned because the businesses that require a skilled workforce will be forced to hire from outside Alaska or do without; both of which cost money and constrain opportunity for those businesses,

We should be confident because the University has demonstrated, the hard way, that it can make tough decisions. The Strategic Pathways process helped us determine how to structure our system in a way that would reduce our costs and, more important, enhance our service to Alaskans. We have cut redundancy, reduced our Statewide organization by 37%, improved transferability of course credit across our campuses, increased the number of on-line courses and programs, reallocated funds in order to pay for much needed facility maintenance, improved collaboration among the campuses, and focused our universities on what they do best.

We should be confident because we are working hand in glove with school districts and the State Department of Education to increase student success in our primary and secondary schools, and increase college going and college readiness. Our middle college high schools, concurrent enrollment programs, RAHI, and ANSEP are a few examples of important work in creating a culture of education in Alaska.

We should be confident because we are announcing this week the opening of our first business incubator, the Center for Innovation, Commercialization, and Entrepreneurship (Center ICE) at UAF. Center ICE is an innovation hub designed to accelerate innovation, promote economic diversification, and encourage entrepreneurialism in the University of Alaska system.

The first Center ICE class will consist of five university spinoff companies and 10 individual innovators and entrepreneurs. The intellectual property produced at the university represents great potential to benefit the private sector. We are hard at work on similar initiatives at UAA and UAS.

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We should be confident because we are responsible managers of the resources we

We should be confident because, so far this legislative session, we are getting a fair hearing in Juneau. Based on our initial meetings in the Capitol Building, I am hopeful our elected officials will come together on a sustainable fiscal strategy for the state, including funding for the important and promising programs and services provided by the University of Alaska.

Now more than ever, it's up to us. Do we continue to disinvest in the University of Alaska, with only negative consequences for Alaska? Or do we follow the lead of our founders—and of every successful state and nation in history—and invest in our university, in a culture that values education?

I am proud to join my colleagues across the University of Alaska, and I ask all of you to join the Board of Regents, our faculty, students, staff, donors, and alumni, in this most noble and practical cause, with confidence, to value education and help advance that simple and timeless truth—that it takes a great university to build a great state.

Thank you.