



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Alaska Commission on
Postsecondary Education**

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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April 1, 2014

Senator Anna Fairclough
State Capitol Room 514
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Resolution of Support for SB195 and SJR23

Dear Senator Fairclough,

Please find enclosed the Commission's Resolution expressing support for Senate Bill 195 and Senate Joint Resolution 23. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Commission at their spring quarterly meeting on March 31, 2014.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rochelle Rogers".

Rochelle Rogers
Commission Secretary

Enclosure



Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

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Resolution of Support for SB195 and SJR23

WHEREAS, Improving Alaska's postsecondary completion outcomes is critical to the state's economic future, to the cost effectiveness of Alaska postsecondary institutions, and to the career opportunities and earning potential of Alaskans who enroll in postsecondary education and training.

WHEREAS, Alaska has the lowest overall on time college completion rate in the nation at 23%. Among Alaska's adult population, 30% have some postsecondary training, but no degree.

WHEREAS, Postsecondary completion is influenced by a wide variety of factors: academic preparation, degree advising, course availability, and access to merit and need-based financial aid; yet a single cross-cutting factor that clearly stands out is students' enrollment intensity. The differences in completion rates for students who enroll exclusively part-time, exclusively full-time, or who alternate between full-time and part-time enrollment are striking.

WHEREAS, More than three-quarters (78%) of Alaska's exclusively part-time students stop attending postsecondary education – in Alaska or at any other institution in the U.S. - without achieving credentials and only 8% of part-time students achieve any credential within six years.

WHEREAS, In contrast, 50% of Alaska's exclusively full-time students complete their degrees within six years – making full-time students five times more likely to complete than part-time students.

WHEREAS, Public and private costs of high failure rates associated with part-time study are noteworthy. Federal and/or state financial aid goes to more than half of part-time students and those students are also investing their time and personal funds on education which, statistically, is unlikely to result in a credential. Moreover, 44% of part-time students also borrow to pay education costs—20% borrowing in excess of \$12,000, debt that must be repaid regardless of degree completion.

WHEREAS, Policies, including financial aid, should encourage and enable part-time students to increase to full-time (12 semester credits or equivalent) or on-time (15 semester credits or equivalent) enrollment to produce better outcomes for Alaskan students who enroll part time at very high rates.

WHEREAS, Data clearly show part-time study inhibits student success. It's time to do more to encourage and enable Alaskans to acquire credentials by enrolling at the full-time or on-time levels which are positively associated with completion.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION fully supports passage of Senate Bill 195, an act relating to the Commission, the Alaska Student Loan Corporation and Commission membership, duties and financial aid programs—and Senate Joint Resolution 23, placing before the Alaskan voters a proposition to amend the Alaska Constitution to allow the incurring of general obligation debt for education loans—which will fund Alaska education loans at the lowest possible cost to students and with no additional cost to the State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION respectfully urges the Alaska Legislature to take favorable action in passing the related legislation during this, the Second Session of the 28th Legislature.