

From: [Wilner Eduardo](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: written testimony for the Senate Finance Committee
Date: Monday, March 07, 2016 7:05:43 PM

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I would like to address the proposed cuts to the University budget.

I'm a professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and I teach students both in the humanities, and in the sciences. As part of my job, I interact with about 60 students each week. Please consider this a report from one of your boots on the ground (me).

I'm not about to harp on the obvious. That a maimed university will maim our community is a fact. What I need to share with you though, is the surprising way in which our students are reacting to the proposed cuts. Systematically, students are considering (many of them planning on) leaving our state to continue their education elsewhere.

We all assumed that a diminished campus in Fairbanks would channel the fleeing students into Anchorage. But I'm here to report to you that this is not what is actually happening (and every other faculty I've asked confirms the same trend). It seems that we've all miscalculated: if students cannot study in their community, they seem to feel that they might as well go for the big adventure, and leave state all together. We are losing the best of our future leaders.

In these times of crisis, we need local Alaskans that are trained to be superb, out-of-the-box, critical and innovative thinkers. Crises are ruthless with the naive. Our future local leaders are not shaped by luck or magic. They are shaped, in great part, by the job our (excellent) university does. If we need to use our PFD's, or new taxes to avoid these cuts, so be it. Let's please invest in our future.

So please help us do our job in preparing these leaders. Please have the courage to oppose these cuts, even if it means stepping outside partisan lines.

Thank you.

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