



Kenai Peninsula College

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

March 8, 2016

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Gary J. Turner and I have been the director/CEO of Kenai Peninsula College, a unit of the University of Alaska Anchorage for the last 14 years. KPC has two campuses (one in Homer and one in Soldotna) and two extension sites (one in Seward and one in Anchorage). We were founded in 1964 and serve approximately 2,500 students on the Kenai Peninsula and across the state via distance education.

I sincerely appreciate the Senate Budget Subcommittee proposing a smaller reduction than the University House Finance Subcommittee, but I ask that you support the Governor's proposed UA budget.

While I understand the gravity of the Alaskan economy and the budget crisis we are facing, if this number stands or numbers north of a \$15.8 million net reduction (the UA budget as proposed by the governor) become reality you will have started the unraveling of a great university that serves our state in more ways than most realize.

With such a decreased budget your university will be unable to continue to offer the programs that meet, and that our state demands, from its only state university.

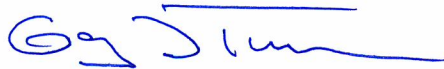
The university's future has been growing ever brighter in large part due to the legislature's past support. Your non-support if it occurs will be shown by the funding you provide which I will interpret that you do not have confidence in what we do and can do in the future. If your lack of confidence drives your budget number, don't succumb to that temptation. President Johnsen and the Board of Regents' Strategic Pathways plan will provide us a lean road map to our future. Give it a chance to work. Dedicated professionals like myself can be counted on to ensure our future success.

From where I sit, here's just one example of what I've seen at KPC: a few years ago a man in his mid-30s came to us and started taking Adult Basic Education courses so he could get his General Equivalency Diploma since he did not have a high school diploma. He was no longer able to perform in his past career due to injury. Due to his discipline and our help and guidance, he received his GED. He then went on to get a one-year certificate and then a 2-year degree. He then attended UAA to pursue and subsequently receive his four year degree. He now holds a well-paying job in Anchorage. If not for KPC, this man's future would have been very bleak. There are thousands of stories just like this being created at your University of Alaska in campuses across the state. We make a difference in people's lives.

Without your support and funding our ability to make a difference will be lessened more than you can imagine or foresee into the future. We have faced large cuts the last two years. Once a university is gutted it can take decades for it to recover due to the loss of faculty and staff talent, and students. I ask that you consider what your legacy will be if you cut the university's budget as currently proposed by your committee, and how your action will have a long term negative effect on our state's economy.

I would hope that your actions will show your confidence in us and that your legacy will show that even in these difficult times you pledged to support the future of our great state by providing the necessary funds for a great university to become even better. A strong state ~~needs~~ *demand*s a strong university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary J. Turner", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Gary J. Turner
Director/CEO