

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 20, 2024

3:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Matt Claman, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Kelly Merrick

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: R1 STATUS

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

ANUPMA PRAKASH, Provost, Executive Vice Chancellor
Office of the Provost
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of R1 status by invitation.

JESSICA BLACK, Associate Vice Chancellor
College of Rural and Community and Development
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered testimony on R1 status for UAF.

DARREN TAN, Graduate Student
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on R1 status for UAF.

RACHEL NEUBUHR TORRES, Graduate Student
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on Achieving R1 Status at UAF and Its Value to the State of Alaska.

CARTER FREYMILLER, Graduate Student
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on Achieving R1 Status at UAF and Its Value to the State of Alaska.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:31:26 PM](#)

CHAIR SCOTT KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Wielechowski, Merrick, Claman and Chair Kawasaki. Senators Claman and Bjorkman arrived thereafter.

PRESENTATION: R1 STATUS

[3:32:07 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of a presentation on R1 status.

[3:33:09 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN joined the meeting.

[3:34:00 PM](#)

ANUPMA PRAKASH, Provost, Executive Vice Chancellor, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Fairbanks, Alaska, presented an overview of the R1 status. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to present UAF's proposal to become an R1 university to drive Alaska's economy. She expressed that her family relocated to Alaska to experience the research opportunities at UAF. The university has a large satellite antenna that downloads data for mapping resource exploration and other applications that serve the community.

[3:36:24 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 2 and defined R1 status:

[Original punctuation provided.]

What is R1 status?

- The Carnegie Classification is a national framework for categorizing U.S. doctoral universities into one of three categories
 - R1 is the very high research activity (4 percent)
 - R2 is high research activity (7 percent)
 - Doctoral/professional universities
- UAF has consistently ranked as R2 and is striving for R1
- Evaluation every ~3 years → Next evaluations released in 2025 & 2028 (based on FY24-FY26 data)

MS. PRAKASH stated UAF has been consistently in the top seven percent bracket for research and is making the move to become a top-tier R1 university. She said the Carnegie classification was developed in the early 1970s and was picked up by U.S. News & World Report. The rankings advertise and categorize universities every three years.

[3:38:22 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 3 and explained the benefits of R1 status:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 status benefits

- Provides global recognition of research
 - Attracts globally competitive faculty, staff & students
 - Increases student enrollment
 - Enhances competitiveness for new funding opportunities
 - Economic benefits across the state

MS. PRAKASH added that these benefits are important to drive university enrollment, attract talent in Alaska, and foster skill development among residents. She emphasized that achieving R1 status not only enhances competitiveness and unlocks new funding avenues but also elevates the research profile of each university in the state, addressing statewide needs. Prospective investors are drawn to educational institutions that demonstrate success. She mentioned there are also statewide economic benefits.

[3:40:21 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 4 and explained R1 impacts at universities in the lower 48:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 impacts at other universities

- The University of Colorado Boulder estimated R1 research activity produced \$1.2 billion in state economic activity
- Old Dominion University doubled research expenditures while pursuing R1
- The University of Maine saw all-time highs in enrollment and research expenditures while pursuing R1 status

MS. PRAKASH added that investments in research at the University of Colorado drove other research revenues, infrastructure, and other industries.

[3:41:48 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 5 and spoke to Carnegie R1 metrics:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Updated Carnegie R1 metrics

- \$50 million in research expenditures
- 70 Ph.D.s conferred per year (3-year rolling average)

MS. PRAKASH said Carnegie previously utilized a complex metrics system featuring seven criteria and compared universities to one another, akin to grading on a curve. Determining a university's classification within this system posed challenges. Last November, Carnegie revised its classification metrics to an absolute classification system based on two simple criteria. To classify as R1, a university must exceed \$50 million in annual research spending and graduate over 70 Ph.D. students annually. This is calculated as a three-year average, meaning 210 students must graduate within that timeframe to meet the metric. The new system provides clarity since the targets are clearly defined and is an achievable target for UAF.

[3:43:39 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 6 and discussed a graph that illustrates UAF's strengths and weaknesses in achieving R1 status. She said UAF's upward trend indicates a vibrant research enterprise. According to Carnegie's criteria for R1 status, the threshold for research expenditures is \$50 million. UAF consistently exceeds this criteria for R1 status. The metrics on the right show UAF's objective to reach more than 70 Ph.D. students per year or 210 over a three-year period. She suggested that while a leap is necessary, it is doable. UAF's qualifying years for R1 status are FY 24-26. She expressed confidence that enough students would graduate to meet the expected milestone by 2026, facilitated by a one-time infusion of \$20 million from the state.

[3:46:04 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 6 and described the path to reaching R1 status:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Path to reaching R1 Ph.D. target

Paths include:

- Provide financial support for Ph.D. students in need
- Reduce barriers for existing Ph.D. students
- Transitioning interested students from master to Ph.D. programs
- Accelerate Ph.D. completion where feasible

MS. PRAKASH noted that many Ph.D. students require multiple years to complete their program, often due to the need to balance education with employment demands. There is a strong pipeline of Ph.D. students in the pool, so it is important to ensure support is provided to enable timely graduation and meet R1 metrics. She noted the university is working to reducing barriers for their students. One form of support could involve writing assistance. She also mentioned that due to funding constraints, some students who were interested in a Ph.D. program were enrolled in a master's program. These students will be transitioned to Ph.D. programs and graduating within the 3-year window.

[3:47:55 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 7 and said planning for R1 began in 2018 with ongoing efforts each year to accelerate progress. However, due to Carnegie's change in metrics and the limited timeline, it is important to act quickly to meet the FY 24-26 window for R1 status.

[3:48:32 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 8 and listed ongoing R1 work efforts:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 groups and ongoing work:

- Track R1-relevant metrics for economic benefits to Alaska
- Incentivize multidisciplinary research themes and networks
- Strengthen Ph.D. programs
- Expand competitive Ph.D. fellowships
- Support faculty mentorship of early career researchers
- Recruit and retain excellent faculty
- Recruit competitive Ph.D. students and promote UAF research
- Increase accessibility to UAF research
- Provide resource support for R1 initiatives

MS. PRAKASH mentioned there are about 70 faculty, staff, and students working on different aspects of the R1 efforts.

[3:49:33 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH briefly moved to slide 9 that shows a photo of Steering Committee members.

[3:49:51 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 10 and detailed the funding request:

[Original punctuation provided.]

\$20M requested to achieve R1 status

- \$13 million in graduate student fellowships
- \$4.8 million in faculty mentorship incentives
- \$2 million in staff & technology support

- \$0.2 million for promotion, marketing & recruitment

MS. PRAKASH highlighted that it is especially important for faculty to work through the summer so graduate students can take complete their research. She noted that the graduate school must offer additional supports for students.

[3:51:02 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 11 and gave examples of how Ph.D. fellowship and faculty incentives would benefit Alaska:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Ph.D. fellowships & faculty incentives will benefit Alaska

Examples

- Mitigating impacts of natural hazards
- Retaining and advancing Alaska Native languages and Indigenous ways of knowing
- Improving the health of Alaskans and our environment
- Enhancing Alaska's food security
- Developing energy solutions, infrastructure and technology advancements

MS. PRAKASH added that a substantial amount of research done at UAF directly impacts Alaska and benefits every part of the state.

[3:52:17 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 12:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 prestige will make UAF more competitive

- Development of thematic research networks will unite multidisciplinary research talent to develop innovative research to address issues important to Alaskans
- Enhanced reputation as an R1 leads to increased competitiveness for federal and private grant funding

MS. PRAKASH said it is important for Alaska to enhance, maintain, and bring more talent to the state, which is made possible through the R1 initiative. She noted that R1 networks facilitate collaboration among experts from different areas and help drive innovative solutions.

[3:53:52 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH moved to slide 13:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 helps entice and retain talent in Alaska

- Increased opportunities attract more students
- College-age students more likely to stay in Alaska
- Contributes to Alaska's economic future

MS. PRAKASH expressed excitement and confidence in achieving UAF's metric goals with the legislature's support.

[3:54:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI acknowledged he would not be here today without his connections to UAF and stated it is an important economic driver. He asked for a sense of research competition in other parts of the world.

[3:55:49 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH replied when people have the choice to select an educational institution worldwide, it is essential to have a filter and mechanism to determine the best option. She expressed the importance of maintaining a system to rank each option. U.S. News & World Report adopted the Carnegie classification system based on its trust of the rigorous classification process. U.S. news directly maps the Carnegie classification into doctoral university classifications and R1 is associated with Tier 1. She opined that parents desire to invest in their children attending top universities. Researchers with guaranteed resources can effectively contribute back to society.

[3:57:20 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN stated education not only ensures a high-quality education, but also provides resources for successful research endeavors. Today's students want to give back to society through their research. He asked where in the state budget does the \$20 million funding request reside.

[3:57:37 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH replied that half of the total funding sits in the capital request. Although other determinations have not been made, the R1 initiative is assured \$20 million.

[3:57:59 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked whether the university is seeking the additional \$10 million from the current fiscal year or if funds are split between two fiscal years.

[3:58:10 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH replied that there is a small window of time for UAF to reach the R1 status by FY26. \$20 million is needed.

[3:58:45 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN noted he is a graduate from the University of Texas and saw firsthand its commitment to continual investment in R1. He said he supports UAF's efforts.

[3:59:09 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if she expects more universities to qualify for R1 in light of the change to Carnegie's metric system.

[3:59:31 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH replied that UAF is closely following the metrics. She stated her belief that while the metrics simplify the criteria and bring clarity to a complex system, it does not necessarily elevate universities into R1 status. She stated she anticipates the number of R1 and R2 universities will remain stable. However, some universities may shift from R2 to R1 and R1 to R2 due to the changes.

[4:00:34 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI inquired about other supports graduate students might need beyond funding to complete their degree.

[4:00:48 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH replied UAF seeks a one-time infusion of funding to become an R1 institution. She said the university anticipates growth in its vibrant research portfolio. Growth in research brings external dollars to the institution.

[4:01:25 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked about the competitive nature of R1 institutions. He said there was a significant \$80 million dollar cut to Unrestricted General Funds (UGF) during the governor's

first administration. There was no cut to Designated General Funds (DGF). Former President Mark Hamilton stated this action set the university back ten years since researchers opted to pursue other opportunities. He asked if university administrators are upholding the signed agreement.

[4:02:46 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH acknowledged it has been tough to navigate the situation. She stated there are many world class researchers and high performers who have kept the university and research revenues on an upward trajectory. The university's success is largely due to the strength of the research enterprise. However, continued success requires an influx of state funding along with the research grants to meet the Carnegie metrics.

[4:05:04 PM](#)

JESSICA BLACK, Associate Vice Chancellor, College of Rural and Community Development, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Fairbanks, Alaska, said she serves as Chair for the R1 Committee on multi-disciplinary research and has been periodically involved at UAF since 2005. She said when she chose to pursue a doctorate degree in 2009, she chose Washington University in Missouri because it demonstrated success in research methodologies, preparation for an academic position, and could provide some financial support. Prior to her role as Associate Vice Chancellor, she sought to provide students with the same graduate education opportunities including financial support, mentorship experiences, and attainment of their goals so they could give back to their communities through employment, experiences, and mentorship for others. She emphasized that UAF achieving R1 status would allow her to continue mentoring others and would ensure students could achieve their educational goals. She mentioned that growing up in a small town, her family and most of the community had limited opportunities. The financial support she received to achieve her Ph.D. helped her realize her goals, and she hopes the same for other students.

[4:09:03 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what other benefits influenced her decision to attend Washington University.

[4:09:21 PM](#)

MS. BLACK replied that knowing the university had R1 status, she was confident it had the financial means to support her through her program. She highlighted the university's strength in methodology, mentor opportunities, and a student body with other American Indian students.

[4:10:17 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what else could the university do to achieve R1 status for instance, could it grow its Alaska Native language and Indigenous ways and if the Alaskan Native and Indigenous Languages program has room for growth.

[4:10:49 PM](#)

MS. BLACK replied that the College of Rural and Community Development oversees the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program. She stated she has sat on the review committee in the past. Although many students applied, the capacity for mentorship was limited. Mentoring and financial assistance are major components to acquiring a Ph.D. The Indigenous Languages program is growing in interest among both Native and non-Native students in Alaska. She said she is working on a grant to support students working toward a master's in fisheries, which involves various partnerships.

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At ease

[4:13:10 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced invited testimony.

[4:14:00 PM](#)

DARREN TAN, Graduate Student, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Fairbanks, Alaska, invited testimony for the R1 presentation, said he is a graduate student representative in the R1 Steering Committee and has enjoyed his experience pursuing R1 opportunities. He expressed his belief that R1 would benefit both residents and the state. R1 would pin a globally recognized reputation on the U.S. and enhance the value of UAF's degree program. He stated his belief that UAF is an under-recognized leader in Arctic research. The stellar research produced by faculty, staff and students, as well as the rapport graduate students experience drew him to UAF. UAF strengthened his confidence in accepting its graduate program. UAF is overdue in its recognition as a reputable institution. The R1 status would achieve this and invite additional opportunities for funding, talented faculty and staff, and inter-institutional collaboration. The added variety of expertise and research projects would further enable students to pursue innovative research ideas in state-of-the art laboratories and receive effective mentorship.

He said the journey to R1 entails investing in graduate students by research assistantship and other means of financial support. Graduate students understand there are limited funds and acknowledge uncertainty in compensation during their early years in graduate school. Guaranteed semester funding would eliminate those concerns and grant students a sense of security to focus on research, thereby boosting productivity and encouraging the publication of impactful science findings about Alaska from Alaska. He said he was fortunate to have four-to-five years of guaranteed research assistantship funds upon enrollment. With R1 status, more students could share this sense of security, take advantage of abundant research and career development opportunities, and access a comprehensive support structure. These measures would enhance the graduate student experience, reduce barriers, and ensure timely Ph.D. progress. He conveyed his belief that UAF attracts students who seek to tackle unique problems in remote environments to advance science. Investing in the university means investing in budding researchers in a variety of fields who often have a direct impact on Alaska. He stated he works on volcanic eruption forecasting to understand aviation safety and associated hazards. Students could achieve similar opportunities to advance environmental research or other fields that are meaningful to the state.

[4:19:26 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if he considered other institutions that offer volcano seismology in the U.S. and what the level of competition level was like.

[4:19:50 PM](#)

MR. TAN replied he spoke with various leaders at the American Geophysical Union Conference about graduate school opportunities. He said existing UAF graduate students demonstrated great rapport and a unified stance, so it became his top choice.

[4:21:13 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if there are volcanos in Michigan.

[4:21:18 PM](#)

MR. TAN replied no. He said UAF has a strategic agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and works with the Alaska Volcano Observatory. While there are no volcanoes in Michigan, researchers undertook a project on Mount St. Helens in the state of Washington.

[4:21:55 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI referenced the "Ring of Fire" and alluded that Alaska is a promising state for volcano research.

[4:23:00 PM](#)

RACHEL NEUBUHR TORRES, Graduate Student, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Fairbanks, Alaska, invited testimony for Achieving R1 Status at UAF and Its Value to the State of Alaska.

[4:23:33 PM](#)

MS. TORRES moved to slide 2 and briefly introduced herself:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Introduction: Rachel L. Neubuhr Torres

- Anthropology PhD student and Teaching Assistant
- Research - Culture & Economics
 - Historical ideas about the Arctic and Circumpolar North
 - Impacts of historical ideas on current industries (tourism, resource extraction, etc)

[4:24:14 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI moved to slide 3 and introduced Mr. Freymiller:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Introduction: Carter Freymiller

- Wildlife Biology MS student Teaching Assistant & Research Assistant
- Research - Golden Eagle biology
 - Nesting & breeding seasons
 - Ecological understanding of AK indicator species

[4:24:38 PM](#)

CARTER FREYMILLER, Graduate Student, UAF, Fairbanks, Alaska, said he found a passion for migratory birds and has worked in wildlife conservation across the U.S. He stated he chose UAF to live and work in subarctic ecosystems. As the world is rapidly changing, he said he works to understand how these changes will impact Alaskan Golden Eagles and their wintering behaviors. He hopes to continue his Ph.D. program at UAF and study Alaska's

wildlife. He expressed hesitance due to the institution's unsustainable compensation for graduate students in his financial situation.

[4:26:11 PM](#)

MS. TORRES moved to slide 4 and spoke to research at UAF:

[Original punctuation provided.]

UAF Research & Graduate Students Benefit Alaska

- Grad student research at UAF - AK economy, environment, culture, & health.
- R1 status = more federal funding & addressing AK's greatest challenges.
- Many graduate students come from out of state—this includes engineers, biologists, geologists, educators, fisheries specialists, biomedical researchers, etc.

[4:27:25 PM](#)

MS. TORRES moved to slide 5 and spoke to the appeal of R1 status:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 Status and Graduate Students

- Graduate students enable the research for UAF to reach R1 status.
- Graduate students perform essential work at UAF:
 - teach/mentor undergraduates
 - drive innovation in research
 - help in securing grants
 - expand capacity of faculty and research staff
- Need for Graduate labor in these areas increases substantially with R1
- Recruitment, retention, time to degree of PhD students is essential for sustaining R1 status.
- Grad students, their wellbeing and positive experience at UAF is essential in competing with other universities.

[4:29:12 PM](#)

MS. TORRES moved to slide 6 and spoke to funding for graduate workers:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Funding

- UAF must be able to provide competitive funding packages to current and incoming students.
- To be competitive, funding for graduate workers must be
 - Stable (lasts for entire tenure of PhD program)
 - Sufficient (keeps up with higher CoL in AK)
 - Inclusive (supports parents, visa holders)
 - Risk-ready (accounts for extraordinary costs, like healthcare)

[4:30:13 PM](#)

MS. TORRES moved to slide 7 and explained competition challenges. She said UAF no longer holds a monopoly on Arctic research. She stated that potential graduate students interested in Arctic or polar research have access to a wide range of education options. UAF's research organizations are not competitive with those of other institutions. These are where potential graduate students get significantly higher funding and in turn may not choose to pursue external research program opportunities. She listed the examples shown as school logos on the slide. Competitive research institutes include:

1. The Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR), University of Colorado Boulder
2. Polar Center, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
3. Institute of Arctic Studies, The John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth
4. Arctic Data Center, National Science Foundation (NSF)
5. Polar Science Center
6. University of Maine

[4:31:24 PM](#)

MS. TORRES moved to slide 8 and explained the importance of maintaining R1 status:

[Original punctuation provided.]

R1 Beyond 2027

To compete with peer institutions for graduate worker retention and recruitment, and maintain R1 status, conditions and compensation packages must be improved now.

[4:32:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what is considered competitive

[4:32:43 PM](#)

MS. TORRES replied that the current monthly stipend at UAF for doctoral students is about \$2,262 and the minimum is slightly below \$1,900. In comparison, she mentioned the National Science Foundation (NSF) graduate research fellowship programs, which offer a significantly higher monthly stipend of \$3,083, along with a \$16,000 tuition package. The MIT living wage for Fairbanks is over \$4,000 dollars. This allocates on average 55 percent of a living wage to doctoral graduate workers. She referenced research assistantships (RAs) and teaching assistantships (TAs) at other universities where graduate students receive higher monthly wages.

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if anyone would like to comment on the opportunities they faced before choosing UAF.

[4:35:26 PM](#)

MR. TAN replied there are push and pull factors in competition. He expressed appreciation for the quality of science at UAF. A competitive package also involves the number of years of guaranteed funding, which strengthens confidence in the decision-making process for prospective graduate students.

[4:36:54 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked for clarification on the utilization of the \$20 million in funding over several years.

[4:38:00 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH clarified that the \$20 million request is a one-time need to meet R1 metrics in the review cycle of the 2028 Carnegie classification.

[4:38:25 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI responded that is helpful. He asked Mr. Freymiller to continue speaking to his decision to attend UAF.

[4:38:54 PM](#)

MR. FREYMILLER replied he obtained the opportunity to work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) and secured two

years of funding to complete his degree. He added that Arctic biology research at UAF is high-grade, and he wanted to be a part of an institution that works the boundaries of academic and wildlife ecology research. He expressed appreciation for the community and conducive environment at the university.

[4:40:29 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN opined that the university system and UAF provide value to Alaska through research and excellent opportunities. As the state considers research done at UAF, he wondered about the level of community outreach to ensure the research is relatable to Alaskans. He expressed interest in hearing from Mr. Freymiller about his research findings. However, he opined that some research focuses may be irrelevant to Alaskans. He asked what mechanisms exist in the university system that ensure all Alaskans benefit from its research.

[4:42:25 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH replied UAF is a land, sea, and space grant institute with a mission to ensure research reaches the public. She said engaging and messaging people are critical in research. She invited Ms. Black to speak to co-production of knowledge with Indigenous knowledge from the community that is integrated into research. The data observation networks are often done in collaboration with communities. A lot of the work is done collaboratively at the grassroots level. Research training involves a Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) exercise to allow students the opportunity to effectively translate their research findings for the public.

[4:44:31 PM](#)

MS. BLACK conveyed her commitment to engage with Indigenous communities and scientists from all backgrounds to ensure research is relevant to Alaska. She said her college partners with the International Arctic Research Center (IARC), which is currently doing climate research in collaboration with communities, to obtain and integrate feedback. The college engages young people in high school through the Rural Alaska Honor's Institute, which offers a six-week college preparatory engagement that provides students with an opportunity to experience a research track. She anticipates this could translate into employment in the state.

[4:47:03 PM](#)

MR. TAN acknowledged the element of service that is infused into research. He shared his approach of using data analysis tools while considering longevity to better monitor volcanoes. Part of

the Ph.D. program involves writing lesson plans to educate elementary and middle school students in Alaska.

[4:48:18 PM](#)

SENATOR MERRICK noted there was a University of Alaska (UA) subcommittee meeting to discuss the budget this morning. She stated its main priority is \$35 million for deferred maintenance with a backlog of over \$1 billion. Achieving R1 status is the highest priority following deferred maintenance.

[4:48:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI added that university funding is a large part of the state budget and an economic driver. He opined that all facilities should be kept up.

[4:49:30 PM](#)

MS. PRAKASH concluded that the R1 status attracts talent and skills. She stated she spoke with the governor who shared his belief that Alaska is ready to take this leap. She thanked the legislature for its support.

[4:50:30 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI emphasized the importance of ensuring the R1 status discussion remains visible.

[4:51:16 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:51 p.m.