

Presented by: Assembly
Presented: 06/01/2020
Drafted by: R. Palmer III

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Serial No. 2897

A Resolution Opposing Options in the University Transformation Preliminary Review Process Regarding the University of Alaska Southeast.

- A. WHEREAS, the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) is vital to educational opportunities for young people and adults in Southeast Alaska and is key to helping young people remain in the region as successful adults, and to maintaining a trained, highly skilled workforce capable of making the most of our region's best economic opportunities; and
- B. WHEREAS, the UAS is an economic driver within Juneau and elsewhere in Southeast, and a resource that we cannot afford to lose or downgrade, particularly during these very trying economic times when our state government employment, tourism industry, ferry system, and many defining aspects of our community and Southeast communities have been devastated; and
- C. WHEREAS, in 2019, UAS successfully achieved reaccreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) during which the NWCCU commended UAS in five areas that speak to student access and success: 1) inclusion of Alaska Native language, art, history, and individuals into all aspects of the university's curriculum and campus life; 2) clear evidence of pride amongst students, staff, and faculty that was reflected in expressions of appreciation for what UAS provides; 3) clear dedication to student retention and student success; 4) effective use of distance education, provision of strong programs of study and student services, and availability of meaningful experiential learning opportunities in our communities; and 5) success at integrating three campus locations into one university with shared vision and values; and
- D. WHEREAS, in 2016, the City and Borough of Juneau committed \$1 million to the University in support of anchoring the College of Education at the University of Alaska Southeast; and
- E. WHEREAS, the University of Alaska's (UA) budget has been significantly reduced and will be reduced further over a three-year period, thereby requiring changes to the University's structure, programs and personnel; and

- F. WHEREAS, the Assembly of the City and Borough of Juneau is concerned about the UA structural option to merge UAS with either UAA or UAF, outlined in the UA May 20, 2020 Options for University Transformation Preliminary Review Process that is being prepared for the UA Board of Regents; and
- G. WHEREAS, the option of eliminating UAS entirely would save only 7.6 percent of the UA general fund, nowhere near enough to address the 10 percent year over year budget deficit; and
- H. WHEREAS, UAS has already taken significant budget reductions over the past five years, and there is little room to achieve major savings from such a merger without a dramatic reduction in programs and services; and
- I. WHEREAS, the option of changing the UA reporting structure to have UAS report to either UAF or UAA will only add another reporting layer that is more likely to increase overhead than decrease it and will stifle any representation for UAS students and Southeast communities; and
- J. WHEREAS, UAS has developed strong relationships and programs serving the needs of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples of our region, including programs in Indigenous languages and Northwest Coast arts which could be jeopardized by merging with a distant university, the leaders of which would be located hundreds of miles from UAS campuses; and
- K. WHEREAS, this is a time of drastic change, COVID-19, and economic uncertainty, in which we need local representation and short lines of communication.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA:

Section 1. Findings: Based upon the information currently available to it and set forth in part in the findings above, the CBJ concludes that the negatives of a merger are not offset by significant budget savings.

Section 2. Objection to Options. The CBJ respectfully objects to all UAS options that would eliminate the UAS as a separate university or change its current institutional arrangement within the UA system that are described in the UA May 20, 2020 Options for University Transformation Preliminary Review Process.

Section 3. Consultation. The CBJ respectfully requests that before proposing elimination, merger, or other significant changes to the structure of UAS to the Board of Regents, the UA Administration consult extensively with the communities in Southeast Alaska and further that the Board of Regents directly engage with the community leadership of Southeast Alaska before taking action on any proposals that are advanced.

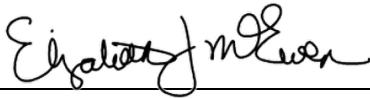
Section 4. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately after its adoption.

Adopted this 1st day of June, 2020.



Beth A. Weldon, Mayor

Attest:



Elizabeth J. McEwen, Municipal Clerk