



UAF news and information

Friday Focus: Trying times

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Anupma Prakash. UAF photo by JR Ancheta.

— by Anupma Prakash, provost and executive vice chancellor

Over the past several weeks, print and digital media have been flooded with news about Alaska's budget debacle. There were times when I read every comment that followed a news brief, just to keep myself well-informed of the diverse views and sentiments of others around me. There were other times when I switched off my electronic devices, just to get a brief respite from the constant flow of largely disturbing information. Neither approach worked too well for me because my mind continued to regurgitate the same stories, heightening my disbelief, shock and worries.

I tried to channel my concerns to more productive outlets of advocacy for our university and for our state. I added my voice to thousands of others who chose to share their personal stories about what UAF meant to them and how they have contributed to and benefitted from the caring community we live in. I heard heartwarming anecdotes from colleagues and alumni that energized me to continue with an even stronger fight for UAF. Nobody likes standing in long queues, but last Wednesday it actually felt good to be standing in the meandering line of supporters at Pioneer Park to urge legislators for a veto override.

Our voices were loud and clear, and many legislators have supported us, for which I am very grateful. However, it was not enough. There are other legislators who have the capacity to save our university and the state and who are still ambivalent. It is easy to get angry at their stand and even resort to retaliatory language, but seldom does that do any good. I found this [TED Talk](#) on the possibilities of dialogue, helpful in recognizing that we need to reframe our messages so that they positively resonate

with individuals at a personal level.

Our struggle is going to be a long one, and that is exhausting. Please remember, you are not alone in this fight. It is important to draw energy from each other in this collective effort. It is also imperative that we take care of ourselves and of each other as we move forward. Even with the strongest advocacy, our budget uncertainties will continue. There is fear and anxiousness at all levels — from executive leadership to junior staff. Some fear a job loss; others worry about increased workload and low morale as they stay on. Students are worried about their academic programs. Today, we have more questions than answers. I cannot share with you what I don't know, but I am committed to sharing with you as much as I know as quickly as I can. One thing I know for sure, that to tide over this rough patch it is important that we remain responsible and accountable for each other's wellness. Alaskans take pride in being a caring community, and we need to preserve that value more than ever before.

In the midst of this chaos, there is a need to consider all ideas that will help us reshape our university and its academic programs. If you have creative thoughts, please do not hesitate to share them with me or submit them anonymously in the Box of Big Ideas available on the [chancellor's website](#). Your voice matters and is valued. Thank you for everything you do.