



UAF news and information

Friday Focus: The rhythm of fall

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Provost Anupma Prakash (standing, second from left) joined members of the Admissions team to help welcome students during New Student Orientation in August 2019. UAF photo by JR Ancheta.

— by Anupma Prakash, provost and executive vice chancellor

I love the fact that the start of the fall semester just resets the academic clock. Regardless of how frantic or turbulent the summer may have been, the fall semester brings us back to a fresh rhythm: a rhythm that is filled with weekly routines and schedules that help us move from task to task and increase productivity; a structure that reinforces a sense of normalcy; and cohorts of new and returning students who trigger the semester with high hopes, aspirations and enthusiasm.

This week UAF welcomed hundreds of new students. For a majority of them Alaska is home, and for many others Alaska will be home, at least for some part of their lives. Among these are 56 international students from 22 different countries, 45 new Honors students, and more than 50 military and veteran students, all of whom will attend additional orientation and fun events tailored for them.

The Fairbanks campus has been abuzz with activities.

Parents and family members joined in as over 360 students participated in New Student Orientation. Student Support Services held the Emerging Scholars Academy, which included a field trip and train ride to Denali. The Residence Life and New Student Orientation teams collaborated in the special Rev-It-Up event to help move new students into their residence halls. Eager students were met by equally excited staff, faculty, administrators and current students who moved boxes, checked students into the residence halls, issued PolarExpress cards, connected students with advisors, answered financial aid questions and gave campus tours. Word is out that there will be a campuswide scavenger hunt this Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon. The orientation leaders are none other than our current students who have been working tirelessly around the clock. Thank you for your investment in the success of the new Nanooks.

The enthusiasm and orientations are not limited to the students. Faculty and staff are also gearing up. The new faculty orientation at the Troth Yeddha campus was led by the Faculty Development Team and included an engaging storytelling project, where new faculty, staff, and executives created a felt avatar and used it symbolically to relay the role they and their unit play at the university. The first story, by Vice Chancellor Evon Peter, centered on an acknowledgment of the Indigenous lands on which UAF is founded, then participants continued to connect through a network of stories. Another faculty orientation at the CTC campus included new and returning faculty who bonded while also completing their required annual Title IX and FERPA training. The Registrar's Office released the 2019-2020 academic catalog, and the academic advising centers and Student Affairs offices are functioning at full steam.

This week's activities are an excellent reminder that UAF is built on a solid foundation that has served and will continue to serve thousands of students from within and outside Alaska. I hope everyone takes a moment to reflect on the strengths of the institution and starts off on a high note in the rhythm of the semester.

Friday Focus is a column written by a different member of UAF's leadership team every week.