



From the President



To United Academics Bargaining Unit Members:

UNAC is embarking on a letter writing campaign in support of AAUP's national call to action to protect and preserve U.S. research funding and student aid to universities, much of which comes from federal agencies. The University of Alaska system would be significantly affected by President Trump's proposed budget cuts to federal agencies such as NSF, NOAA, NIH, NASA, and National Endowment for the Humanities to name a few. The proposed cuts would impact grants you and your colleagues have earned, access to future grants, and student aid.

The FY26 budgets for these federal agencies must be settled by Congress by October 1, 2025. This letter writing campaign is to urge our Alaskan federal delegation to vote in favor of budgets that preserve agency funding. We are fortunate in Alaska to have connections with elected officials and the people who staff their offices. Over 25% of UA's revenue comes from federal funding, and the majority of that is spent on wages (2023 UA Economic Contributions Report). *NOW is the time to write*. Individual letters have more impact than those from pre-written letter-writing software.

To support the process, we have compiled information providing context and talking points about the current situation, articulated our expectations of legislators, and offered a sample letter you can use as a starting point for your letter.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when writing your letter:

- Create a unique subject line (ex: Vote to protect agency funding, Save UA research, Protect UA innovation, Invest in Alaska, Vote for Alaskan Research, etc.)
- Use the information provided below as a base (*our talking points, our sample letter*) and then adapt the wording and add your perspective
- Include at least one 'ask' in your letter
- Send your letter *from your personal email address*
- Find interesting economic information in this 2023 ["UA Economic Contributions](#)

Use the Congressional email addresses linked at the bottom of this email to send your letter from your personal account, on your own time, from your own device. Please cc me or forward to my UNAC email address when you send your letter (jill.dumesnil@unac4996ak.com). Join me in making a difference for Alaska!

In solidarity,
Jill Dumesnil, PhD
United Academics President

UNAC/AAUP TALKING POINTS (choose one or two to focus on)

- We don't accept the [president's proposed steep funding cuts](#) for most federal research programs in his 2026 budget proposal. Federal research investment saves Alaskan lives, grows Alaska's economy, and supports Alaskan students. Polling shows that [most Americans](#) want research funding to continue, and [most Alaskans](#) support the UA system.
- The federal government's ongoing attacks on research funding are part of an extinction-level threat to higher education. Slashing this funding means ending research on real-life Alaska problems (*fish populations, petroleum and mining extraction, permafrost mitigation, cold-climate construction, sea ice patterns, AK health trends, to name a few*).
- 154 UA faculty and postdoc positions are funded through federal grants and contracts; additional staff and graduate student positions would also be cut. Cuts would curtail undergraduate and graduate research opportunities, flatlining the state's ability to train its next generation of scientists and problem-solvers.
- Federal investments in UA research and UA students trickles down to our local communities and enhances Alaska's economy. When UA loses research funding, Alaskans lose jobs and leave the state, labs close, graduate students don't put down roots in Alaska, and local economies see less revenue. Cuts to UA research trickle down to local restaurants, retail shops, gas stations, real estate markets, etc.
- U.S. dominance in global scientific research, including at the UA system, relies on federal funding to universities. America is currently the world leader in cutting-edge medical and scientific research, and we want to keep it that way—but even at current rates of investment, [China may surpass the United States](#) in scientific investment soon.
- The health and well-being of U.S. citizens, including Alaskans, depends largely on U.S. investment in NIH funding to universities. Each of us, our loved ones, our colleagues, and our neighbors, will depend on medical research at some point in our lives, relying on scientists to protect us from serious illnesses like cancer and Alzheimer's. Continued NIH funding now will lead to medical breakthroughs in the future, which benefits every single U.S. citizen.

SAMPLE LETTER (make your version shorter)

(SUBJECT: make up your own)

To Senators Murkowski and Sullivan, and Representative Begich:

I am an Alaskan constituent and a faculty member with United Academics AAUP/AFT 4996 at the University of Alaska, and I am writing to express my deep concern about proposed cuts to federal science and biomedical research funding and to student aid. The current Alaska economy is somewhat fragile, and this will make things much worse. The proposed cuts will create a negative domino effect on the economic welfare of the entire state.

"The university fuels Alaska's economy through spending with local businesses and the employment of Alaska residents...In total, the university's programs and services resulted in nearly \$1 billion in total economic activity in FY2022."

(UA Economic Contributions of the University of Alaska, February 2023)

As an educator, I know that budget cuts that target research and students hurt all of us and make education less accessible and less affordable for students in Alaska and across the country. Alaska's future workforce will have fewer opportunities to learn their trades. Alaskans deserve an opportunity to contribute to Alaska's communities by filling critical professions, including those that require a college degree or credential.

The federal investments in research and in students, which you will soon vote whether to fund, are critical to supporting Alaska's economy. If the University of Alaska loses research funding at the magnitude proposed by President Trump, then Alaskans will lose jobs, labs will close, graduate students won't move to Alaska, and future economic opportunities in our state will collapse. In turn, Alaska's restaurants, gas stations, real estate markets, and much more will be affected. This will have an enormous impact not only within the University of Alaska system, but also on Alaska's struggling private businesses.

President Trump's proposed cuts to agencies would endanger more than 150 UA faculty and postdoctoral fellow positions, not to mention additional job losses among support staff and graduate student positions.

Alaskans' health and safety rely on scientific research. America is currently the world leader in cutting-edge medical and scientific research, and we need to keep it that way—and even at current rates of investment, China may surpass the United States in scientific investment soon. More personally, myself, my loved ones and family depend on medical research to provide us with safe medicines and treatments for serious illnesses like cancer and Alzheimer's.

I urge you to use your power to protect our state from these devastating cuts by voting to:

- Maintain the funding levels for all federal agencies that invest in Alaska by passing the budget proposed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- Preserve the critical appropriations provision that prohibits presidents from making unilateral changes to indirect costs; changing the formula for how grant funds are disbursed would seriously endanger key operations across the UA system.
- Strengthen the legislative language and oversight efforts to ensure the Trump administration disburses federal grants in accordance with existing appropriations law and free from political interference.
- Protect access to education by opposing cuts to Pell grants for students with financial need, the TRIO program supporting first generation college students, scholarship programs for undergraduate researchers, loan programs for graduate students, and income-based repayment plans that protect college grads against default.

Thank you for your support of the University of Alaska system and its students, faculty, staff, and local communities.

Sincerely,
(your name)

**Email
Senator
Murkowski**

**Email
Senator
Sullivan**

**Email Rep.
Begich**

Remember to use your personal email address to send these emails while you are not working.



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United Academics Local #4996 (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents all post docs, non-tenure track (term), tenure track, and tenured faculty at the University of Alaska. UNAC is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) as well as the Alaska Public Employee Association (APEA) and Alaska AFL-CIO.

www.unitedacademicsak.org

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