



Chancellor

Leadership Profile

January 2026



Executive Summary

The University of Alaska Fairbanks seeks a dynamic, student-centered, and visionary leader to serve as its next Chancellor, responsible for all aspects of administration as delegated by the University of Alaska system president and regents.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a land-, sea-, and space-grant university and an international center for research, education, and the arts, with a focus on the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. UAF integrates teaching, research, and public services to educate students for active citizenship and prepare them for lifelong learning and careers. With six campuses statewide, UAF is home to approximately 7,500 students from around the world, 87% of whom are undergraduates. Nanook Nation also includes 824 faculty members, 1,933 staff members, and more than 43,000 alumni.

Fairbanks, Alaska's second-largest city, sits on the banks of the Chena River. UAF's 2,250-acre Troth Yeddha' Campus features some of the state's best facilities. Performances are scheduled almost every weekend during the academic year at the Davis Concert Hall or the Salisbury Theatre. The Rasmuson Library, Alaska's largest, offers extensive print and online resources. An array of computer databases provides access to hundreds of academic journals, and Internet connections allow students at remote rural sites to use library resources. The UA Museum of the North is not only one of the state's top visitor attractions but also a resource for students and community members alike. Its vast collections are used for demonstration and comparative studies in classrooms and labs.

This pivotal role will shape UAF's future by advancing the [2027 Strategic Plan](#) and laying the foundation for a strong tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service that extends well beyond 2027. Internally, the Chancellor will lead UAF's administration of academic instruction, research, innovation, sponsored programs, outreach, finance, operations, and campus safety, engaging employees across the institution to achieve academic and institutional goals with clear metrics for success. The Chancellor will also be a vital contributor to campus life, student development, and community pride, and will support UAF's intercollegiate athletics programs (including our award-winning rifle, cross-country skiing, and hockey teams). Equally important, the Chancellor must articulate a clear vision that connects innovation to the university's mission and public purpose, creating conditions for innovation by encouraging calculated risk-taking, reducing structural barriers, and aligning resources with strategic priorities.

The Chancellor reports to the President of the University of Alaska system and works collaboratively with the other university Chancellors to help UA meet the state's workforce needs. Externally, the Chancellor will represent UAF, strengthen its reputation, build relationships with community members and stakeholders, and develop new philanthropic and research sponsorship opportunities. Serving as an ex officio member of the University of Alaska Foundation, the Chancellor will collaborate on fundraising campaigns and actively participate in outreach and advancement initiatives.

To thrive in this position, the successful candidate will demonstrate the ability and energy to lead a complex, multifaceted university, establishing and managing budgets while balancing competing demands for resources across functional, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries within constrained fiscal resources. The candidate should have at least seven years of progressively greater administrative experience in higher education, along with substantial additional experience as a university executive, faculty member, researcher, or manager at a major research organization. A master's degree from an accredited institution is required, with an earned doctorate or other relevant terminal degree preferred. Above all, the Chancellor will inspire excellence, foster collaboration, and drive the university's mission forward with lasting impact.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy section at the end of this document.



Role of the Chancellor

This position is located on the University of Alaska Troth Yeddha' Campus in Fairbanks, Alaska.

As UAF's Chief Executive Officer, the Chancellor is responsible for all aspects of administration as delegated by the University of Alaska system president and regents. This pivotal leadership role advances UAF's [2027 Strategic Plan](#) while building the foundation for a coherent tripartite vision of teaching, research, and service that extends well beyond 2027.

Internally, the Chancellor will lead UAF's administration of quality instruction, academic research and sponsored activities, outreach, finance, operations, and safety by engaging employees across the institution to support academic and institutional goals with clear metrics for success.

Direct reports to the Chancellor include:

- Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
- Vice Chancellor for Research
- Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services
- Vice Chancellor of Rural, Community and Native Education
- Executive Director of University Advancement
- Athletics Director
- KUAC General Manager
- Chief of Staff
- Executive Assistant

A link to UAF's administration can be found [here](#).

Externally, the Chancellor serves as a visible ambassador for UAF, stewarding the institution's reputation and cultivating strong relationships across the community, state, and beyond. The Chancellor actively develops new philanthropic, corporate, and research sponsorship opportunities while strengthening existing partnerships. In this role, the Chancellor collaborates on fundraising campaigns and serves as an active, public-facing role in outreach, donor engagement, and fundraising initiatives.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The University of Alaska Fairbanks provides a world-class experience — energized by innovative research, community engagement, student-centered teaching, and creative expression. It is a catalyst for innovation and economic development for communities and the state. As America's Arctic University, UAF conducts research with global impact and is well-positioned to capitalize on opportunities in this dynamic geopolitical landscape. The next Chancellor will be asked to address the following significant priorities, among others.

Provide visionary leadership to achieve the goals of the strategic plan.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is excited about its future and seeks a Chancellor who is student-centered and will develop a bold, aspirational vision that inspires excellence, fosters collaboration, and drives the university's mission forward with lasting impact. As part of UAF's 2027 Strategic Plan, the university identified six aspirational goals, including modernizing the student experience; strengthening UAF's position as a global leader in Alaska Native and Indigenous programs; achieving Carnegie R1 research status; transforming UAF's intellectual property development and commercialization enterprise; embracing and growing a culture of belonging; and revitalizing key programs. The next Chancellor must galvanize the entire community, infuse new energy, and build upon UAF's strengths to fulfill the plan's aspirations and ensure successful outcomes.

Focus on enrollment management and student success.

Growing enrollment and increasing retention are essential to achieving the strategic plan's objectives. The next Chancellor should have demonstrated experience in successfully growing enrollment and in bringing innovative ideas and a significant focus to improve student recruitment, retention, and success. It will be important to identify and implement strategies that align budget resources toward student outcomes, while taking a more holistic approach to improving retention and graduation rates.

Work closely with the UA Board of Regents and system office to advance goals and objectives.

The University of Alaska system consists of three separately accredited universities and 11 community campuses across the state. The next Chancellor should have the experience, skills, and temperament to work effectively with this enterprise. The Chancellor will ensure strategic alignment among the UAF executive team, the Board of Regents, and the system office, and will maintain appropriate and timely communication. The Chancellor will also provide leadership to advance the Roadmap to Empower Alaska, a strategic framework for the system's future. Central to that plan is pursuing R1 status for UAF and enhancing workforce pathways through career and technical education, particularly in health care, education, and Arctic studies.

Champion academic innovation and excellence.

The evolving higher education landscape and Alaska's workforce needs to present an opportunity for UAF to elevate its offerings — spanning the range of dual enrollment for high school students to technical training and workforce credentials to bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. programs — to ensure post-graduation student success and meet the needs of the state and nation. The University of Alaska Fairbanks is renowned for its Arctic and climate research, Alaska Native and Indigenous programs, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and hands-on, personalized learning. The Chancellor will engage stakeholders — including faculty, staff, students, and community partners — to develop an ambitious plan that reflects UAF's mission as a land-, sea-, and space-grant university that integrates teaching, research, and public service and aligns current and future educational goals with market demands. The Chancellor will enhance the university's visibility by championing its distinctive research, programs, and opportunities.



Continue to advance research and entrepreneurship.

One of the hallmarks of UAF's success is the 67% growth in research and development expenditures over the last five years. With about \$250 million in annual research activity, UAF is Alaska's research university, and is ready to step up to R1 status. The next Chancellor will guide the campus as it moves toward this ambitious goal, including strengthening efforts to recruit and graduate more doctoral students and securing state funding for doctoral fellowships and faculty mentoring. UAF's research excellence spans a wide array of disciplines, driving innovation and tackling global challenges. The Chancellor will bring creative thinking to encourage research aimed at commercial and entrepreneurial opportunities that support the needs of local communities, Alaska, the Arctic, and the circumpolar North.

Ensure financial and organizational health.

UAF remains strong despite budget challenges. The Chancellor will work effectively with UAF constituents, campus and system leadership, and state and federal entities to ensure the university's financial and organizational health. UAF has more buildings than any other university in the system, and many are among the oldest. The Chancellor will address deferred maintenance, utility costs, cybersecurity, and IT needs to bolster the campus's infrastructure. Additionally, investments in student mental health services and support, recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts, and financial aid must be made strategically. The Chancellor will be transparent in budget planning and decision-making, conscientious in the stewardship of public resources, and creative in identifying new revenue streams that align with long-term institutional goals. The Chancellor should have the demonstrated ability to cultivate and maintain strong relationships with elected officials, serving as a skilled advocate for UAF's interests and fostering partnerships to support the university's strategic goals.

Enhance a positive campus culture.

Especially during this time of change in higher education, the next UAF Chancellor must commit to cultivating a supportive culture for UAF's constituents. The members of the UAF community understand the challenges ahead and seek a Chancellor who will honor and tap into their commitment to working together to foster an environment

that promotes equity, professional development, and personal success for all. The Chancellor will be a visible leader who can instill pride in campus life and foster a sense of belonging. It will be important for the Chancellor to explore opportunities to enhance faculty hiring and development, staff retention and support, and campus infrastructure as ways to bolster the experience for faculty, staff, and students.

Nurture positive relationships with alumni, donors, and community partners.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks has a proud tradition of enriching the lives of Alaskans and engaging communities, the state, the nation, and the world through its teaching, research, and service work. The Chancellor will be a skilled storyteller, capable of effectively articulating the university's distinct strengths and value to inspire engagement, grow philanthropic contributions, and increase industry investment to advance UAF's mission. Additionally, the Chancellor should prioritize and cultivate relationships with K–12 schools and Indigenous and community leaders to facilitate the sharing of knowledge that supports the people of Alaska and positively impacts communities' upward trajectories.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The ideal candidate for the role of Chancellor is a visionary leader with at least 7 years of executive-level administrative experience in higher education and substantial additional experience in executive, faculty, research, and/or management roles at a university or a major research organization. A master's degree from an accredited institution is required, while an earned doctorate or other relevant terminal degree is preferred.

The Chancellor is the public face of the University of Alaska Fairbanks and should embody UAF's unique attributes: Nanooks are dependable, welcoming, unassuming, and industrious. The Chancellor must be as comfortable with speaking on the national and international stage as with greeting new students at orientation.

In addition, the next Chancellor will also possess many of the following qualities, experiences, and characteristics:

- **People-centered, ethical leader:** Personable, compassionate, humble, and values integrity, transparency, and trust; leads with heart while being willing to make hard decisions.
- **Strong organizational and change management skills:** Proven ability to manage large teams, rebuild morale, navigate internal politics, build consensus, and withstand sustained institutional headwinds.
- **Commitment to shared governance and academic freedom:** Respects faculty, staff, unions, and governance entities. Supports scholarship, teaching, research, and academic independence across all disciplines.
- **Deep understanding of Alaska and UAF:** Strong familiarity with Alaska's people, culture, economy, rural campuses, and especially Alaska Native history, values, and Indigenous knowledge.
- **Academic and administrative credibility:** Experience in higher education leadership with time spent teaching and/or conducting research and engaging directly in academic life, paired with strong budget and financial decision-making skills.
- **Strategic, visionary leadership:** Articulates a clear, realistic vision for UAF's future, including workforce development, community college mission, and adapting to changing educational and economic landscapes.
- **Excellent communicator and relationship builder:** Visible, accessible, and able to engage respectfully with students, faculty, staff, government, industry, tribal organizations, and the broader community.
- **Financial and political acumen:** Skilled in funding models, budgeting, advocacy, and lobbying at state and federal levels; data-driven, pragmatic, and creative in resource allocation.
- **Philanthropy and external investment:** Demonstrates strong fundraising ability, donor and alumni engagement, and the capacity to cultivate philanthropic partnerships that support students, research, workforce development, and UAF's long-term sustainability.
- **Cultural competence and inclusivity:** Values equity, diversity, and rural and nontraditional students, and creates a cooperative, caring campus culture over competition.

About the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Overview

Founded in 1917 as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, the University of Alaska Fairbanks is the cornerstone of Alaska's public higher education system. UAF is the principal research center for the statewide university system and is internationally known for its research in the Pacific Rim and the circumpolar North. The university is consistently among the top 100 universities nationwide in funding from the National Science Foundation.

UAF is the nation's northernmost land-, sea-, and space-grant university and international research center, with colleges and schools offering instruction in more than 100 disciplines, including vocational and technical programs, on six campuses across the state. UAF's high academic standards and its highly sought-after programs in engineering, science, business, and Arctic and Indigenous studies attract and retain students and researchers from across the globe. Graduate degrees are available in a wide range of academic fields. UAF serves approximately 7,500 students each year from 52 states and territories and 51 countries.

With campuses, learning centers, research facilities, and offices in communities from Ketchikan to Unalaska to Alaska's North Slope, UAF is an open-enrollment institution with the mission to serve the entire state of Alaska, an area larger than Texas, California, and Montana combined. Unlike many universities, UAF integrates the community college, undergraduate, and graduate missions under a single institution. Alaska depends on UAF to train the teachers, mechanics, biologists, accountants, and firefighters who serve the state's businesses and communities every day.

UAF is Alaska's land-, sea- and space-grant university. Programs like the Cooperative Extension Service, Alaska Sea Grant, the Alaska Space Grant Program, and the University of Alaska Museum of the North ensure that our research is available and useful to the people of Alaska. In addition, UAF's service mission makes university education and research accessible to Alaska's youth, inspiring the next generation of scientists and innovators.

With approximately \$250 million in annual activity, UAF conducts more than 90% of the research in the University of Alaska system. UAF's research enterprise covers a wide array of disciplines, most focused on the unique challenges of the global North, and includes six research institutes, multiple statewide research programs, and dozens more specialized labs and projects. From policy to geology, fisheries to agriculture, UAF lives up to its designation as America's Arctic University.

Quick Links

- [UAF history](#)
- [UAF Strategic Plan](#)
- [The UAF brand](#)
- [Our community campuses](#)
- [UAF Community and Technical College](#)
- [UAF research](#)
- [UAF facts and figures](#)
- [UAF academic catalog](#)

By the Numbers

- 7,486 students
- 3,588 employees
- 200+ degrees
- Approximately \$250 million in research dollars
- 43,000+ alumni
- \$9+ million in annual philanthropy
- 2,000 donors
- 10 intercollegiate athletics teams



Colleges and Schools

UAF has nine colleges and schools that offer 218 degrees and certificates in about 100 disciplines.

- [College of Business and Security Management](#)
- [College of Engineering and Mines](#)
- [College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences](#)
- [College of Liberal Arts](#)
- [College of Natural Science and Mathematics](#)
- [College of Indigenous Studies](#)
- [Community and Technical College](#)
- [Graduate School](#)
- [School of Education](#)

Additionally, [UAF eCampus](#) is the student enrollment and engagement arm of the UAF Center for Teaching and Learning. It has been offering award-winning educational opportunities to students across Alaska and around the world for over 50 years. With eCampus courses, students can learn from anywhere at in-state tuition and access learning, research, and internship opportunities that are uniquely Alaskan and typically UAF.



Community Campuses

Bristol Bay Campus (Dillingham)

The Bristol Bay Campus serves southwestern Alaska: Bristol Bay, the Aleutian Islands, and the Pribilof Islands. There are 32 rural communities in the Bristol Bay region within a 55,000-square-mile area. There are 12 coastal communities served across the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian, Shumagin, and Pribilof Islands. The campus offers in-person classes in the service area and connects students to virtual/online educational opportunities housed within the College of Indigenous Studies, as well as others at UAF, UAA, and UAS. The headcount at the Bristol Bay Campus is around 350 students per semester. Another program based in Dillingham is the Alaska Adult Education Program, which provides Bristol Bay adult learners with the skills needed to prepare them for employment, vocational training, or postsecondary education. In addition, the Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program conducts outreach and provides technical assistance programs to help Alaskans wisely use, conserve, and enjoy Alaska's marine and coastal resources.

Chukchi Campus (Kotzebue)

The Chukchi Campus is located 26 miles north of the Arctic Circle on the shores of the Chukchi Sea. The campus serves Kotzebue and 10 villages in a region of more than 36,000 square miles. Chukchi offers Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as courses leading to baccalaureate degrees in education, rural development, and social work. Courses are offered by local instructors and through the College of Indigenous Studies audio-conferencing and live internet instructional systems.

Kuskokwim Campus (Bethel)

The Kuskokwim Campus is in Bethel and serves approximately 25,000 people in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, including 47 remote Alaska Native Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Eskimo, and Athabaskan villages with 56 tribes in a 57,000-square-mile area the size of Illinois. Bethel is a community of about 6,000 people 80 miles inland on the Kuskokwim River. KuC offers academic, vocational, and community-interest courses, as well as courses leading to associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees, including a Bachelor of Arts degree in Yup'ik language and culture, the home language of many families in the region. Students may attend classes on campus and through distance delivery. Housing on campus is available in Sackett Hall, which provides suites with space for four students in each unit.

Northwest Campus (Nome)

Northwest Campus is in Nome, a community of 3,500 that is the service hub for the 15 villages of the Bering Strait region. This 44,000-square-mile region extends from Shishmaref on the northern edge of the Seward Peninsula to Stebbins on the southern rim of Norton Sound. It includes communities on St. Lawrence and Little Diomede islands. The area contains 570 miles of coastline, which includes all of Norton Sound and portions of the Bering and Chukchi Seas. The Northwest Campus serves a total population of nearly 10,000. Certificates, associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees are offered to the region's residents, with courses taught both traditionally and by distance education. The campus responds to vocational, business development, cultural preservation, and academic needs of the Bering Strait region. Many courses, programs, and degrees are offered in cooperation with regional health and tribal organizations, school districts, and corporations. Northwest Campus offers the high-latitude range management certificate program, which supports reindeer herding and husbandry.

Fairbanks, Alaska

The University of Alaska system office and the UAF Troth Yeddha' Campus are in Fairbanks, Alaska's, second-largest community, which sits on the banks of the Chena River in the heart of Alaska and serves as the regional, economic, and health care center for the Interior and Northern Alaska.

Home to about 95,000 people, the city is steeped in a history of riverboat captains and gold seekers. Its character has been shaped by a large military presence, the construction of the trans-Alaska pipeline, the continuing oil economy, and a thriving university. Alaska Native languages and culture are a vibrant and rich part of Fairbanks. It is a city where old quietly blends with new. Striking modern buildings sit side by side with log cabins built in the early part of the last century.

There are many different paths to Fairbanks — by air (via the [Fairbanks International Airport](#)), rail, or highway. The 362-mile Parks Highway connects Fairbanks to Anchorage and provides access to [Denali National Park](#), just two hours south of Fairbanks. At 20,310 feet, Denali is visible from the Troth Yeddha' Campus (weather permitting).

Known as the "Golden Heart City," Fairbanks boasts a diverse culture, rich history, a thriving population and economy, and plenty to explore. In the summer, Fairbanks bathes in nearly round-the-clock sun for gardening, hiking, hunting and fishing, outdoor festivals, baseball games, berry-picking, and floating down the Chena River. In the winter, see the aurora dancing overhead and walk or ski on more than 25 miles of campus trails.

More about living in Fairbanks can be found by visiting [the Explore Fairbanks website](#).





Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Alaska Fairbanks in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by March 18, 2026.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Melody Rose, Ph.D., Shelley Arakawa, J.D., and Maya Holt-Brockenbrough, Ph.D.

UAFChancellor@wittkieffer.com

The [University of Alaska \(alaska.edu/alaska\)](http://alaska.edu/alaska) is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Employer and Educational Institution. The University is committed to a [policy of non-discrimination \(alaska.edu/nondiscrimination\)](http://alaska.edu/nondiscrimination) against individuals on the basis of any legally protected status.