



Growing community, inspiring philanthropy

- o Connecting students with local
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The Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Trust Fund board voted unanimously to give \$10,001 to the new Student Support Fund during the university's 2020 Blue and Gold Celebration.

The board's gift came in the spirit of competition, after members learned that a number of high-profile donors had pledged \$10,000 donations.

Weeks later, as the COVID-19 pandemic began to upend students' lives, the ASUAF Senate also unanimously agreed to allocate the remainder of the association's budget to the Student Support Fund. It gave \$20,000, helping to combat food insecurity through the UAF Food Pantry and providing much-needed emergency financial assistance to students.

When unplanned events occur, outgoing ASUAF President Bernard Aoto said, it's important for students to know their fellow students support them. "For me it wasn't really of question why we needed to support students last year," he said, "it's

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In 1991, the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce established its Education Trust. While not regularly participating in philanthropy, the chamber in 2006 created a framework in which it is able to receive gifts and award scholarships through its 501(c)(3) status. Since then, the chamber continues to grow its presence in higher education philanthropy, guided by the Education and Workforce Development Committee.

The chamber has awarded 28 scholarships since 2006 — two scholarships to UAF students each year. In 2018, the chamber's Education and Workforce Development Committee began to explore ways to ensure the scholarship program was organized in the most sustainable way. The committee decided that establishing an endowment with the University of Alaska Foundation was the best way to accomplish the goal of helping students focus on what's most important — education. The chamber had nearly \$22,000 at the time and needed to reach \$30,000 to reach the endowment level and award scholarships. Through the generosity of community and business members, the chamber achieved that goal in 2019.



"We've found a way to actually put One Health into action," Reynolds said. "By the time our students come out of this program, they will know how to go into communities and listen, which is a pretty important skill. They engage with stakeholders and build a management plan that actually works for the community. And that's such a novel approach today, and I think our students are all excited to do it."

It is also exciting to Russell. It makes her proud for Alaska and in the potential for the state to be a model for the entire country. She imagines the program taking a leading role in coordinating and finding commonalities, not only in the diversity of people and bringing them together, but in the topics that can be explored.

Reynolds agrees the potential for the program is tremendous. "To be starting a new program like this and have this kind of support that will allow us to bring this many students on board, and make it so that it's not going to be a financial burden for them, so that they can go out and do the kind of work they're passionate about — it's hard to put words around that."

With the current fiscal challenges across the state and at the university, Russell hopes her p³ tsebrsiseil³— er urq ap¹. qt tforl aupuqtsei s'te etl entr— es'tm t aic

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