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**Chapter 26  
Box 26.2**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE FACULTY  
AND STAFF ASSOCIATION:  
PROMOTING THE CAUSE OF HIGHER ED IN ANCHORAGE AND THE STATE**

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The University of Anchorage Faculty and Staff Association (UAAFSA) was established in 1971. It is a voluntary organization working outside the formal structure of the University and supported by membership dues. Its primary purpose is to engage in political activities supporting the development of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and the University of Alaska (UA) in general. UAAFSA is registered with the Alaska Public Office Commission (APOC) as a political action committee (PAC).

The Association advocates for resources to support the academic mission of the University and to create an innovative educational environment with improved physical facilities, equipment, new construction, and a full contingent of staff and faculty. Weekly breakfast meetings are held away from the University campus where the ten-member executive committee, representing both staff and faculty, meet with a variety of people having a direct impact on the development and growth of the University's mission. Among those invited are the President of the University, members of the Board of Regents (BOR), the Chancellor of UAA and other University officials, Anchorage area legislators, Municipality of Anchorage officials,

UAA student government representatives, UAA alumni representatives, and others who have a specific interest in University development.

UAAFSA advocates for the annual UA budget drawn up by the BOR and submitted to the governor and legislature. The Association sometimes also advocates for other resources it deems important for the University that may not be in the BOR's budget. Each year before the governor submits his or her budget to the legislature, a postcard campaign is launched in which the 1,900 or so UAA faculty and staff are asked to send a message to the governor urging support of the BOR's budget. Just prior to the opening of the legislative session in January, the Association schedules breakfast meetings with key Anchorage area legislators to advocate for UAA priorities. Then, during the legislative session, UAAFSA urges faculty and staff to send letters to their legislators advocating for resources for the University. Some Association members fly to Juneau during the session to meet with legislators regarding University funding.

UAAFSA's website (<http://www.alaska.net/~uaafac/>) provides evaluations of individual Anchorage area legislators. Ratings are assigned based on each legislator's active support for the University's budget request and funding for facilities. Those given the top four-star rating are assessed as active advocates for UAA.

During the 2012 election campaign, the Association sent a questionnaire to Anchorage area candidates running for the legislature and asked for their comments regarding the University and support of University growth and development. Their responses were posted on the website. In addition, UAAFSA contributed to the

campaigns of Anchorage legislators who were ranked as earning three or four stars regarding their record of support for the University.

Among UAAFSA's accomplishments over the years have been participation in securing funding for building Rasmusen Hall opened in 2005 and housing the Business and Education schools, the Consortium Library, the Integrated Sciences Building, the Health Sciences Building, and the Seawolf Sports Arena. In 2013, the Association advocated for funding for a new School of Engineering Building and Phase 2 of the Health Sciences facility. Increases in the University budget have occurred each year allowing the development of many new academic programs, including doctoral degrees. However, the major drop in oil prices in 2014 and 2015 will no doubt adversely affect this trend.

The members of UAAFSA believe that they have made a contribution to the improved academic status of UAA. The 2012 *U.S. News and World Report* College Rankings places UAA as 58 of 89 among Tier 1 Western Region Universities and higher than the other universities in Alaska. Just ten years earlier UAA was ranked among Tier 3 universities.

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**Source:** Developed by Patrick Cunningham. University of Alaska Anchorage