

## Partnerships and Collaborations

A speech to the Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee

by

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for your introduction Brian. I also want to thank you for your leadership of the Alaska Sea Grant Program. I have been the Dean of the UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences for sixteen months, and one of the pleasures I have as Dean is having the opportunity to work with a great group of directors. Brian, your dedication to our Sea Grant program makes my job easy and Paula, I thank you for your guidance of our Marine Advisory Program.

One of the great things Brian has done is to establish a tremendous Advisory Committee. When the Topical Advisory Team or TAT headed by former Oregon State President John Byrne visited us last winter, they told me how impressed they were with the talented membership of our Advisory Committee and I agree.

It is my great pleasure to be here with you tonight, and to be able to thank all of you in person for your contribution to Alaska Sea Grant. The advice and assistance you provide to our Sea Grant program is invaluable. Your participation during the Program Assessment Team (PAT) review next year will be a significant part of our success.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Jeff Stephan (STEVEN) who chairs the Advisory Committee and assists the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences in so many ways. I see Jeff at meetings all over the state working to make the Sea Grant partnership better. Thank you Jeff.

You may have heard this story about a doctor. He is about to give a speech. In between attending to his patients, he organizes his ideas and jots them down.

That evening, when he stands in front of his colleagues, he finds to his horror that he cannot read his own handwriting. Thinking on his feet, as doctors often do, he pleads, "Is there a pharmacist in the house?"

Knowing the importance of this speech, I took the opportunity of typing out my speaking notes to make sure I could read them.

Tonight, Brian has asked me to speak on Partnerships and Collaborations. This is a difficult task for me for two reasons.

First, I believe that Fran Ulmer addressed the same topic during her luncheon Keynote Address. I know it will be difficult to match the eloquence of the former Lt. Governor. She is a hard act to follow.

Second, since Sea Grant is all about partnerships and since you spent most of the day discussing partnerships and collaborations, you obviously know more about the topic that I do.

It is always difficult to keep the attention of an audience that knows more about the topic than you do.

So, I decided to prepare for this talk by trying to gain some additional information about the topic – maybe learn some things you would not know. As a scientist, I know how to collect data and analyze it, so I thought that would be a good way to prepare.

For a start, I did what my daughter probably does when writing a term paper in one of her classes at Auburn University, I went to Google to find the information I needed.

I found that if you Google the word “partnerships”, you will get 244,000,000 hits.

If you do the same for the word “collaborations” you get 45,800,000 hits.

So you see, the world wide web is full of partnerships and collaborations.

Realizing that I had only limited time to prepare this talk and do everything else the Provost expects me to do, I decided to limit my search, so I Googled “partnerships and collaborations” together.

With this combination, I received only 81,000 hits on November 1. On November 7, I got 129,000 hits with the same combination of words. Partnerships and collaborations on the web are growing quickly it seems.

129,000 seemed to be a reasonable number to work from, so I began browsing the 129,000 web sites to find ideas to discuss with you.

This talk will be a report of my findings. Here is what I found.

Web site number 1. I suggest you get comfortable.

The first web site I reviewed discussed why partnerships are needed. It stated, “Limited resources (people or funds) force us to value the benefits of effective partnerships and collaboration to get things done.” This is likely a significant benefit of partnerships. But

I better move on as I have a lot of web sites to cover. Actually, I will return to this topic in my second hour.

Web site number 2. The second web site I found was one of the more interesting sites. It was “Revolution in Earth and Space Science Education.” I found this interesting because I am an educator and we study earth science in our school.

In considering the essential role of partnerships and collaborations in the revolution in Earth and space science education, it is interesting to reflect on Earth itself as a model of a "partnership."

It started, “The concept of Earth as a dynamic system of interacting components and processes has become the dominant model for understanding our home planet in its full complexity. The geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere all interact in myriad ways.”

For example, energy from the sun warms the oceans (hydrosphere) and causes evaporation of water. Clouds and wind (atmosphere) transport water and energy onto the continents.

This site went on to discuss, mountain ranges and plate tectonics, etc.” I did not find this site very useful since, when we think of partnerships and collaborations, we usually think of actions of people, not interacting physical processes.

Partnerships are crafted by people like you.

I even found a book on partnerships on the Amazon.com web site:

***Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey***  
by Michael Winer and Karen Ray published in 1994, 178 pages. Obviously if you can “enjoy the journey” the Earth is not a collaboration.

The description of the book said “Provides an understanding of the process of collaboration. Defines collaboration by detailing its four stages along with each respective challenge. Concludes with appendices of resources, documentation forms, and work sheets.”

After your sessions today: I assume you can name the four stages of collaboration. But, we have other web sites to cover, so we should move on.

Next I looked for some collaboration and partnership sites that might mention Sea Grant.

I found a site with a comment by Dr. James Baker, former Under Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Administrator. On the 30th anniversary of Sea Grant in 1998 – Dr. Baker commented:

"Sea Grant stands as one of the best examples in the country of a successful partnership between the federal government and the nation's best universities". "The economic and environmental circumstances in our coastal regions that led to the enactment of the first Sea Grant Act over three decades ago, and its subsequent reauthorization, are even more compelling today. The Sea Grant Program has great potential to contribute to the many challenges and opportunities in coastal resource management and sustainable development in the years ahead."

This seemed relevant to my topic, so I felt I was making some progress.

This statement by Jim Baker is certainly true for Alaska Sea Grant and we are realizing that potential through the activities of our Sea Grant staff, our Marine Advisory Program faculty, and our partners in industries related to fishing and the ocean.

I think that one way to measure the success of this partnership is to take a look at some of the ways that Alaska Sea Grant has served the citizens and government of Alaska. I am sure you covered many of these in your sessions this afternoon.

The first thing I thought of was Sea Grant's work with all of those who have a stake in a healthy fishery in the waters of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. This is important because of the importance of the fishing industry to Alaska and its citizens.

If you look at the Anchorage Daily News web page and click on the business (Money) section link. You will find two subsections. One is Fishing and the other is Oil and Gas. This is not surprising since these two areas along with tourism represent the largest areas of employment in the State of Alaska.

All of these areas – commercial fishing, oil and gas extraction, and tourism – involve the ocean. Sea Grant is involved in most of these areas and certainly our School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences is involved in all of them through our teaching, research and service activities.

For just a minute, I would like to mention two partnerships we have in the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences.

The first is the Rasmuson Fisheries Research Center. The mission of this center is to promote excellence in research related to fisheries, and to develop young fisheries scientists.

The Center was founded in 1994 by Elmer E. Rasmuson with a million dollar endowment to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The endowment continued to grow through a \$100,000 donation by Wards Cove Packing Company and additional contributions by

Mr. Rasmuson. After his death on December 8, 2000, a second major endowment in support of the Center was created through a bequest from Mr. Rasmuson's estate.

The endowments are managed by the University of Alaska Foundation, and interest on the principle is used to support the research of graduate students that contributes toward the scientific or applied knowledge base of Alaska's marine waters and resources. This endowment has grown to over \$5,000,000.

I am pleased to announce that an additional \$870,000 was added to the endowment last month. These additional funds came from the sale of land in Homer that Mr. Rasmuson donated to the university before his death. With the interest on these funds we will be assured of being able to fund ten graduate students each year.

The second partnership I wish to mention is the Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center, the PCCRC. The PCC is made up of the seven members of the At-Sea Processor Companies, most based in Seattle.

The companies are

[Alaska Ocean Seafood](#)

[American Seafoods Company, LLC](#)

[Arctic Storm, Inc.](#)

[Glacier Fish Company, LLC](#)

[Highland Light Seafoods, LLC](#)

[Starbound, LLC](#)

[Trident Seafoods Corporation](#)

Together they donate \$1,000,000 per year to the SFOS to endow faculty positions and fund research. They have donated \$6,000,000 total. These donations are mutually beneficial to the companies and our faculty.

The benefits to our faculty are obvious, they are funded to conduct research they are interested in.

The benefits to the companies come in two ways. First, the Alaska Educational Tax Credit Act allows the companies to donate money to the university instead of paying taxes. The companies receive a tax credit on many Alaska taxes including

Income Tax

Fisheries Business Tax

Fisheries Landing Tax

Also,  
Oil and Gas Property Tax  
Oil and Gas Production Tax, if they paid those.

Companies can receive a credit on almost any tax they pay to the State of Alaska by donating to the university. This is not just a tax deduction, it is a tax credit.

With their donations, we fund about \$400,000 per year in research and put \$600,000 into a faculty endowment.

The companies also benefit in another way. By having a partnership with our faculty, they are assured of having our talented fisheries faculty work on research problems they are interested in. This partnership is a true win win situation.

Now back to the web: There was a common thread among many of the web sites I reviewed – the thread was FUNDING.

One Australian web site stated, “Partnerships and collaboration are not new concepts but in recent years they have become increasingly common. This may be due in part to the growing emphasis on partnerships and collaboration of funding agencies interested in promoting comprehensive approaches to solving problems and reducing duplication of efforts.”

Indeed, many Federal funding agencies are placing an increasing importance on partnerships and collaborations in making decisions on how to allocate their resources. The National Ocean Partnership Program (NOPP) is a recent example. In fact, a growing number of funding opportunities from both private and government sources now require some sort of partnership or collaboration. Or if a partnership or collaboration is not a requirement, funders may look upon applications more favorably if they involve cooperation between two or more groups or organizations.

For the oceans, I would argue that partnerships and collaboration are about more than saving money or allocating talent effectively.

Take for example, something I found on the PICTs web site, that is the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs)

They noted that “Partnerships and cooperation provide an enabling environment and are an essential part of achieving sustainable ocean management. The ocean environment that links PICTs also serves to connect activities that occur on land with ocean processes. In addition, some of the ocean’s most valuable resources are migratory (such as salmon) and /or transboundary and subject to exploitation by both PICTs and other nations; this serves to heighten the need for collaboration in management of the ocean environment.”

The challenge of collaborations is to meld the capabilities and expertise of all the partners to solve ocean resource management problems. This is accomplished by sharing

information, pooling resources, and combining management skills and technical expertise.

Ocean related partnerships accomplish tasks that no one group could accomplish alone because the problems to be tackled include land activities, coastal activities, and open ocean activities – perhaps in multiple countries.

Understanding ocean issues requires partnerships because of the complex interaction of processes that control the ocean and its resources. For understanding the ocean, partnerships and collaborations are the only option.

In Alaska, while university researchers advance knowledge through basic research, universities and colleges faculty also collaborate extensively with the federal government and with national and international industry partners on research and technology questions of interest.

At the same time, our university offers students the best possible educational and technological experience in regular and professional training programs. These partnerships enable us to conduct research more effectively and to train students more broadly than we would be able to otherwise. Sea Grant is the partnership that makes much of this happen.

It should be no surprise that the University of Alaska Fairbanks values its partnerships with government and industry.

Alaskans have a natural instinct for partnerships and collaboration.

From the earliest years as immigrants in a vast and forbidding land, Alaskans understood that survival depended on working together.

By collaborating, Alaskans overcame the enormous challenges of a harsh climate and a small population spread over huge geographical distances.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks, the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences and Alaska Sea Grant serve the citizens of Alaska better because of the partnerships we have formed.

I thank you for sustaining our partnership efforts through your support of Alaska Sea Grant.

We look forward to working with you in building an even stronger partnership in the future.

Thank you.

