

# UW Colleges and UW-Extension: Dr. Cathy Sandeen named University of Alaska Anchorage chancellor

Posted on Thursday, May 31, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact:

Katy Byrnes Kaiser

UW Colleges/UW-Extension

[katy.kaiser@uwex.uwc.edu](mailto:katy.kaiser@uwex.uwc.edu)

(608) 577-4228 (cell)

(608) 890-0667 (office)

MADISON, Wis. – Dr. Cathy Sandeen has been named the next chancellor for the University of Alaska Anchorage following a nationally competitive search. [University of Alaska President Jim Johnsen made the announcement Wednesday.](#)

Sandeen currently is chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges and University of Wisconsin-Extension. During her tenure, Sandeen led the charge in increasing operational efficiencies without sacrificing the student experience. She developed and implemented a new organization for the UW Colleges based on regionalization/consolidation, resulting in over \$5 million annual savings; modernized the 100-year-old organizational structure of Cooperative Extension—working closely with county partners and statewide professional groups—to create a “next-generation” extension service that is relevant, flexible and digital; and expanded the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to provide a broad array of programs to support deeper conversations about equity and inclusion

on UW Colleges campuses.

Prior to her current position, she was vice president of education attainment and innovation at the American Council on Education. She has held various leadership positions in the University of California system including at UCLA, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco.

“It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges and University of Wisconsin-Extension. I am enormously grateful for the opportunity to lead these unique statewide institutions, working with an incredible group of dedicated individuals, as well as getting to know the many interesting, intriguing, and important communities—large and small—throughout the state of Wisconsin. I have learned so much along the way, knowledge that will stay with me forever.”

The University of Alaska Anchorage is a growing urban access institution in the largest city in the state, serving over 16,000 students on the main Anchorage campus and three vibrant community campuses. True to its mission as a public institution, faculty and students engage in community-based research and programs to serve the varied needs of surrounding communities and the whole state, earning the special Carnegie classification for Community Engagement. With its focus on access, student success, relevance, and connecting with the community, the institution will benefit from Sandeen’s knowledge and experience.

“In joining our leadership team, Cathy will bring a fresh perspective on engaging our faculty and staff on strategies to increase enrollment and student success,” Johnsen said. “My discussions with Cathy convinced me that she understands the range of issues facing UAA, and she is committed to supporting our faculty and engaging our alumni community. I’m confident that she will quickly become part of the Anchorage community. UAA is a great university poised for growth in all three aspects of its mission—research, teaching, and public service—in support of the higher education needs of our students, our region, and our state.”

“Along with her keen understanding of the evolving needs and challenges facing students and employers, Cathy has always shown an unwavering commitment to helping students succeed. In a time of transition, she provided a steady hand at the helm and continued to move the UW Colleges and UW-Extension forward,” said Ray Cross, president of the University of Wisconsin System. “On behalf of members of the university community, we thank her for her service and dedication to the UW

System. We wish her well in this exciting new opportunity.”

Sandeen earned a master’s degree in broadcast communication from San Francisco State University and a bachelor’s degree in speech pathology from Humboldt State University. She received her master of business administration from the University of California Los Angeles in 2005 and her doctorate in communication from the University of Utah in 1992.

Sandeen will assume her new position on September 15.

[UW Colleges](#) is an institution of the UW System comprised of 13 freshman-sophomore campuses and UW Colleges Online that offer an associate degree in arts and science and a single Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree, and prepare students of all ages and backgrounds for baccalaureate and professional programs. [UW-Extension](#) serves Wisconsin families, businesses and communities statewide through offices in all 72 Wisconsin counties and three tribal nations, continuing education services through all 26 UW System campuses, the UW Flexible Option partnership with UW System campuses, the statewide broadcasting networks of Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television, and entrepreneurship and economic development activities by county throughout the state.