



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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**Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
Commissioner Biographies**

Trish Zugg – Chair

Trish currently serves as the CTE Program Administrator for the Mat-Su Borough School District. She brings 30 years of enthusiastic service to Career & Technical Education (CTE) at both the secondary and post-secondary level. Trish has taught Business Education and Computer Science - specifically, the routing & switching based instruction in the Cisco Networking Academy. She has served as President for the Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and currently serves 18 Western States on the ACTE Region V Policy Committee. She also currently serves on the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). While in the classroom she was awarded the Alaska Career & Technical Education Teacher of the Year, BP Teacher of Excellence, and the Business Education Teacher of the Year. She easily claims teaching and catching up with her students' life journeys as the most rewarding part of her career.

Trish holds a master's degree in vocational education, and before entering education, she received a bachelor's degree in accounting and spent time working in accounting & finance, the oil & gas industry, and in legal services. Growing up in a military family of 9, hard work was expected; so, putting herself through college by performing general labor in the oilfield, driving semi-trucks, front-end loaders, and experiencing work at 50 below zero, didn't surprise many! Trish's passion for all things Career & Technical Education and the workforce has truly been hands-on, she has taught it, administered it, worked it, and lives it!

John Brown – Vice Chair

John Brown was appointed to the Commission by Governor Dunleavy in March 2020. During John's under graduate studies at the University of California, he studied remote sensing geographical information systems. He received his Master's of Arts in Teaching at Alaska Pacific University and Master's in Educational Leadership from the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

During the 1980s, John worked in his family run business with his father; the company, Alaskan Chalets, developed and built recreational properties throughout south-central Alaska. He has spent the past 30 years committed to providing non-traditional educational opportunities to students in the Mat-Su Borough School District. John is currently the principal of Mat-Su Central, an innovative personalized learning program, the largest school

in the MSBSD. He takes pride in empowering people to make meaningful opportunities for students.

John is a third generation life-long Alaskan; he and his high school sweetheart are proud of their three daughters and their families, including two grandsons, all of whom live in Alaska. John enjoys all outdoor activities that Alaska has to offer.

Joshua Bicchinella- General Public

Josh Bicchinella is a Special Education Teacher Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. Josh holds a MS in Management and Leadership from Western Governors University and is actively pursuing a Doctorate in Public Administration.

Born and raised in Alaska, Josh is an avid Alaskan embracing all things outdoors. When not actively engaged in work, community activities, or public service, Josh enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, and of course hiking.

Representative Ashley Carrick – Alaska State House of Representatives

Bio to come

Dr. Keith Hamilton - Private Higher Education

Bio to come

Donald Handeland – General Public

Donald Handeland is a Professional Engineer who has worked on a variety of construction projects across Alaska. Most of his work involves transportation projects in south-central Alaska. He was born and raised in Nome and graduated from Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka. He earned a B.S in Civil Engineering and Finance from Oregon State University and an MBA from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

While a high school student, Donald served on the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development and the Alaska Advisory Task Force on Higher Education and Career Readiness as the student member.

Paula Harrison – UA Board of Regents

Governor Dunleavy appointed Paula Harrison in 2023. She has 40 years of experience in human resources and labor relations across the public and private sectors. Regent Harrison is the past chair of the Alaska Labor Relations Board. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in political science/economics from the University of Colorado-Denver and her Master of Arts in management from Webster University. Regent Harrison and her husband, Dirk Craft, a retired internal medicine physician, have three daughters who are graduates of the University of Alaska and one son who is a graduate of the University of South Dakota.

Kathryn McCollum – Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development

Bio to come

Karen Perdue – UA Board of Regents

Karen Perdue, vice chair of the board, was appointed in 2017 by Governor Walker. She is a lifelong Alaskan with a background in health care, public policy and interests in the history

and culture of Alaska. Regent Perdue is a graduate of Stanford University. She is semi-retired, focusing her work on critical public health issues and serves on the board of the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Most recently she represented the interests of Alaska's hospitals and nursing homes as the CEO of the Alaska Hospital and Nursing Home Association. She served a decade as the Associate Vice President of Health Programs at the University of Alaska working with industry, chancellors and faculty in the expansion of the nursing, medical education, pharmacy, therapies and behavioral health academic programs.

She served as Commissioner of Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services for eight years - the longest serving health commissioner since statehood. During her commissionership, the state launched the Medicaid waiver system, closed institutions that serve the developmentally disabled and implemented Denali KidCare. She served as a congressional aide and press secretary to Senator Ted Stevens.

She is the recipient of numerous awards including the National Rural Mental Health Association Victor Howery Award and the Alaska Historical Society for her role in the Lost Alaskans Morningside Project, which traced the history of mental health care in territorial Alaska and the ancestral information of over 5,000 Alaskans sent outside for care. She has been honored by both the Girl and Boy Scouts as a Distinguished citizen.

Senator Löki Tobin – Alaska State Senate

Born and raised in Nome, Alaska, Senator Löki Gale Tobin is a University of Alaska Anchorage graduate and holds a master's degree in rural development from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Peace Corps Master's International Program, having served as a Youth Development Volunteer in Azerbaijan from 2008-2011.

Currently, she's a PhD candidate at the University of Alaska Fairbanks; her research topic is focused on culturally responsive education. Löki has worked in marketing and communications for Alaskan nonprofits like Boys & Girls Clubs, Kawerak, and the Alaska Community Foundation. She was also a certified fundraiser for the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center. Löki met her mentor, Tom Begich, on one of his many trips to Nome. This started a long friendship that eventually led to her joining his legislative team in Juneau as Policy Director, where for the past several years Löki has worked to serve Alaskans by expanding universal, voluntary pre-K across Alaska, protecting renters and homeowners from predatory insurance practices, and recognizing the resiliency and continued saliency of the Alaska constitution.

Löki is active on several nonprofit boards and cares deeply about serving her community and doing good in the world. She's an avid bicycle commuter and community volunteer.

Brittany Williams – Community Colleges

Brittany Williams received her BA in Elementary Education from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She taught for a year on the Kenai Peninsula and then transitioned into higher education, where she has been for the last five years.

She now works for Alaska Christian College as the Registrar and Assessment Coordinator. She coordinates semester schedules, helps faculty build out their courses, and coordinates the completion of various reports for ensuring compliance with the State of Alaska and federal guidelines. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and their three boys.

Student Commissioner - Vacant

General Public – Vacant

Administrator/Private Institution - Vacant