

University of Alaska Southeast

Strategic Priorities: Updated 2016-17

UAS MISSION & CORE THEMES

Our mission: *Student learning enhanced by faculty scholarship, undergraduate research and creative activities, community engagement, and the cultures and environment of Southeast Alaska*

Our core themes: *Student Success, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, Research & Creative Expression*

UAS VISION

The University of Alaska Southeast is recognized as a destination of choice for students seeking excellent academic programs and engaging learning opportunities that integrate the environment and cultures of Southeast Alaska

BACKGROUND

These strategic priorities will guide implementation of our UAS mission and core themes in 2016-2017. This is a living, dynamic document that will be updated over time. The priorities are an outcome of a process involving faculty, staff, and administrative leaders from our three campuses who met in an August 2016 retreat to review the current mission, vision, and core themes.

REAFFIRMING MISSION & COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

UAS' mission, vision, and core themes—developed over six years ago—enjoy continuing support across the university community. Discussions about these priorities highlight the continuing need to focus on educational equity and inclusiveness. We are committed to a vision and a practice of education that promotes equity and opportunity for all. This includes demonstrating respect for the diverse cultures, languages, and histories represented in Alaska's population—and especially in Southeast Alaska. It means reaching out to promote the success of all students, including first-generation students, those who previously felt excluded from the university community, and/or who have been typically underrepresented in higher education. It means continuing to expand our curriculum to incorporate knowledge and perspectives reflective of our increasingly diverse world. It means recruiting, hiring, and promoting qualified faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds—faculty and staff who broadly reflect the changing character of the students and the communities that we serve.

UAS ACCREDITATION: QUALITY ASSURANCE & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

As an overriding goal, UAS must sharpen its focus in the coming year on continuous improvement in meeting accreditation standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). The five NWCCU standards for accreditation (listed below) are interconnected and build upon each other in a recursive, seven-year cycle of

continuous improvement. UAS is expected to produce its next major accreditation review and to undergo a site visit in 2019. The NWCCU standards focus on:

- The institution's mission and core themes
- Translation of the core themes into assessable objectives supported by programs and services
- Appraisal of the institution's potential to fulfill the mission
- Planning and implementation in achieving and assessing the desired outcomes of programs and services, and
- Evaluation of the institution's efforts to fulfill the mission and assess its ability to monitor its environment, adapt, and sustain itself as a viable institution.

A major focus for the coming year at UAS needs to be continuing attention to the following:

- 1) Refinement and utilization of metrics that link UAS strategic priorities to our mission and core themes
- 2) Use of the Strategic Planning & Budgeting Advisory Committee to ensure linkage of budget priorities to mission and core themes
- 3) Continued focus on assessment to know that our priorities and efforts are producing desired outcomes
- 4) Document mission fulfillment through metrics that are mission-centered, systemic, and meaningful

SUMMARY OF 2016-17 PRIORITIES

The following are strategic priorities identified through this process, listed in no particular order:

- **Increase Enrollment** through strategic marketing and enrollment management
- **Improve Retention** through a faculty-lead effort to promote success of a diverse student body
- **Improve/Enhance IT Services** by implementing Maas Report recommendations
- **Be a Leader in Instructional Design** and technology-enhanced learning
- **Strengthen the UAS Baccalaureate Experience** & high-impact interdisciplinary learning
- **Increase Diversity** in our student body, workforce and curriculum
- **Enhance Campus Safety and Security**: Title IX, safety, and emergency preparedness

PRIORITIES AND ACTION STEPS

- **Increase enrollment through strategic marketing and enrollment management**
In the face of enrollment declines and budgetary challenges, redouble efforts to increase smart marketing and recruitment. This requires alignment of recruitment activities for students of all types and even greater attention to effective and creative enrollment management tools and techniques. We need to be smarter and more coordinated in telling our UAS story, highlighting what is distinctive about our university, and using all appropriate tools for data-informed recruitment and marketing. We need to identify and reach out to sub-groups of prospective students who can benefit from what UAS has to offer. Recruitment efforts need to be more connected with deans, campus directors, and faculty. External consultants and further investment may be needed to employ social media and other recruitment and marketing tools.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- Develop and utilize data-informed targets and metrics for assessing success in marketing and enrollment
Recruit more traditional-age Southeast Alaska students to our campuses. Build on successes: ExploreSoutheast and Sitka Start; aggressive marketing in SE high schools; strategic use of scholarships and tuition waivers; expanded campus visit opportunities for students, parents, teachers and counselors; free mileage travel to campus for serious applicants; outreach to smaller communities in SE Alaska. Continuously assess outcomes and return on investments in marketing.
 - Implement a new Chancellor’s Award for Housing on the Juneau Campus designed to bring more academically-gifted students to the Juneau Campus and filling JRP Freshman Residence Hall. Criteria to include APS Tier I eligibility or 3.5 high-school GPA. Award is 50% reduction in Year 1; 25% reduction Year 2
 - Selectively recruit high schools students from other Alaskan locations with strong promise of recruitment and retention success (e.g. Dillingham, Bethel)
 - Expand marketing for *COME HOME TO ALASKA*. Use targeting social media—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter—to reach PNW students with Alaska family and those in Alaska who have prospective students in the Lower 48. Disseminate marketing materials by working with Sealaska, CCTHITA, and others
 - Increase and sustain marketing of *FINISH COLLEGE ALASKA*. Secure data about likely FCA students and reach them via social media, online, and print/televised media
 - Develop and implement a tuition waiver program that reduces the cost of a ‘community college’ degree, certificate, or occupational endorsement while advancing degree completion
 - Increase recruitment of ANSEP students in biology, marine biology, environmental science and fisheries
 - Identify ways to have faculty engaged in program recruitments, including targeted program scholarships
 - Strengthen dual enrollment relationships with SE Alaska high schools, home schools, and Mount Edgecumbe High School
 - Expand relationships with Lower 48 community colleges to encourage transfers into strong UAS degree programs, including biology, marine biology, environmental science, and outdoor studies
 - Examine options to build stronger enrollments from US Coast Guard and Alaska National Guard
 - Use Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Native Education to identify steps for increasing enrollments of Alaska Native students and developing more effective retention and student success strategies
 - Emphasize respect for diversity and equity in marketing, recruitment, and training—to include issues of gender diversity, race and ethnicity, and an understanding of the history of place
 - Continue critical analysis of enrollment trends over time and the impact of specific strategies to increase recruitment
- **Improve student retention through intensive advising, enriched campus life, & student support**
Retention of existing students—both campus-based and online—is every bit as important as recruiting new students. Positive retention efforts include excellence in customer service, faculty leadership, proactive advising, strong learning/writing center support services, robust campus life opportunities, counseling and support systems, and responsive financial aid support.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- o Establish a faculty-led retention committee to guide a campus-wide effort to increase student retention
- o Designate a retention coordinator who can work with faculty to provide accurate, early and consistent reports on at-risk students
- o Develop and utilize data-informed targets and metrics for assessing success in student retention
- o Continue critical analysis of student retention over time and analysis of specific retention strategies
- o Contract for updated UAS retention study as the basis for action
- o Use Early-Alert systems effectively to identify 'at-risk' students and to provide needed support
- o Provide proactive advising for all students so that they have good information about academic requirements and support services
- o Continue offering student success courses, e.g., UNIV 101
- o Establish a robust peer mentoring program
- o Continue review of course scheduling/Six Year Course Sequence to offer optimal array of courses
- o Develop 2 year and 4 year templates for all degree programs using DegreeWorks
- o Develop and implement financial aid strategies to encourage retention
- o Emphasize opportunities for community engagement and service learning in support of retention
- o Increase faculty involvement in Campus Life
- o Cross-train Campus Life team in Financial Aid and Academic Advising basics
- o Continue to provide high quality dining services

- **Improve and enhance information technology services**

UAS recognized the importance of improving/enhancing IT in its AY15-16 priorities, and commissioned the Maas Report ("MR"), completed in 2016. That report, coupled with similar reviews of IT statewide, provide specific recommendations for action in AY16-17. On our UAS campuses, these include filling two vacant IT positions that enhance customer service and reinforce the service mission. Recommendations included attention to IT governance, both within UAS and across the UA statewide system, and developing stronger linkages between IT and users: be they faculty, staff, or students.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- o Implement recommendations from the Maas Report, to include:
 - Take steps to ensure that IT functions within a collaborative framework (MR#1)
 - Continue attention to IT staffing needs (MR#2)
 - Conduct a study to identify current and prospective network bandwidth needs and options, especially at Ketchikan and Sitka campuses (MR#3)
 - Continue implementation of single-instance Blackboard (MR#4)
 - Review and implement best practices for IT governance within UAS and within UA, emphasizing principles in Weill and Ross governance framework (MR#5)
 - Focus on improvements in proactive communication relating to IT needs and services, emphasizing regular communication with UAS governance groups (MR#6)
 - Identify and implement specific IT process improvements (MR#7)
 - Implement team-building strategies for IT staff across our three UAS campuses (MR#8)
 - Continue active and constructive engagement in UA-wide IT governance (MR#9)
- o Develop readily-accessible metrics for documenting continuous improvement in IT

- **Be a leader in instructional design & technology-enhanced learning**

To continue as a leader in Alaska in online and technology-enhanced learning, UAS needs to enhance resources supporting faculty in instructional design and technology-enhanced learning for both classroom-based and online instruction. Faculty skills with these tools and techniques vary considerably, and yet faculty express a strong desire to implement best practices and new approaches and techniques (e.g. peer review). A new Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) is now in place to provide UAS-wide training and readily-available instructional design support. Attention should be given to the needs of both faculty and staff.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- Continue implementation of the regionally-focused UAS Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) with positions and resources located at all three UAS campuses
- Identify faculty and staff champions on each campus to guide CELT services and training
- Use Regional Teaching and Learning Roundtable (TLTR) to provide guidance and recommendations about CELT and technology-enhanced learning
- Ensure active faculty leadership engagement in CELT programs and services
- Inventory existing learning technologies and identify specific strategies and steps for improvement of both classroom-based and online technologies and services
- Develop and implement use of data-driven metrics for assessing programs and services in instructional design and technology-enhanced learning

- **Strengthen the baccalaureate experience & high impact interdisciplinary learning**

UAS needs to continue its faculty-led effort to distinguish itself academically within the UA system, emphasizing a rich baccalaureate experience (both on campus and online) and opportunities for high-impact interdisciplinary learning. Some programs at UAS have interdisciplinary learning as a foundation, but nearly all programs have opportunities to incorporate elements of such learning in classrooms and labs.¹ UAS' small size and rich instructional environment make interdisciplinary instruction and research accessible to nearly all students.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- Accelerate faculty-led discussions leading to clarity about how our existing baccalaureate structure can be streamlined and enriched through high-impact interdisciplinary learning.
- Continue improvements in data-informed program assessment and academic program review processes to design and enhance current and proposed offerings
- Articulate, develop, and more effectively market UAS' identity as the Alaskan university focused on high-impact, experiential, and student directed learning
- Prioritize interdisciplinarity within and across programs, and provide professional development opportunities to enhance awareness of how this can be achieved
- Reduce barriers to innovative teaching opportunities and, using available resources, support faculty seeking to enhance high-impact learning
- Seek new funding for high-impact learning opportunities, and especially for those that target under-represented groups
- Assess and improve the associate to baccalaureate transition

¹ <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/X%20Boix%20Mansilla%20Interdisciplinary%20Learning.pdf>

- **Increase diversity in our student body, workforce & curriculum**

All UAS students benefit from higher education that opens their eyes to our increasingly diverse world. Achieving this goal is strongly associated with having a diverse university community—faculty, staff, students, administrators. To achieve this goal, UAS must strive to develop a more diverse workforce; one that reflects the populations and communities we serve. Similarly, our curriculum must reflect this diversity. All students benefit from receiving an education that presents a narrative enriched by diverse understandings of cultures, languages, histories, and economies.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- Enhance HR services in education and training that promote fulfillment of BOR policies and regulation relating to diversity and equal opportunity employment
- Seek Diversity Action Committee and HR recommendations about improvements to existing UAS practices in recruitment, hiring, and retention of diverse faculty and staff members
- Support faculty-led efforts to develop and implement a globally-focused, decolonized and indigenized curriculum; to include improvements to general education requirements
- Invite ideas from Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Native education and others about steps that faculty can take to reflect diverse perspectives in our curriculum
- Support faculty conversations about continuing to reflect diverse perspectives in our curriculum
- Develop and utilize meaningful metrics to assess mission fulfillment in the areas of diversifying our student body, workforce and curriculum

- **Enhance campus safety and security: Title IX, safety, and emergency preparedness**

Board of Regents policy requires that each university have robust Title IX processes and services in place, plus crisis response, communications, and business continuation plans. Title IX services must contribute to a safe and supportive university environment; free of fear from sexual assault and harassment. Emergency preparedness requires planning and provisions for prompt and effective response to disasters and crisis situations to protect life and property. UAS has made strides in the past year to meet these obligations, and these effort need to continue. UAS needs to review its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for each campus on a regular basis, provide appropriate training and crisis response education to faculty, staff, and students, and conduct tests and drills of response systems.

Action steps, AY16-17:

- Update existing EOP for each campus and ensure awareness by all community members
- Provide appropriate education and training for all students, staff, and faculty about Title IX
- Continue appropriate education and training for emergency preparedness
- Use the new regional safety and emergency readiness coordinating committee to bring forward recommendations for improved policy and practice
- Implement appropriate recommendations from campus leadership and the committee regarding safety and emergency preparedness, including identification of needed resources
- Develop and utilize meaningful metrics to assess mission fulfillment in the areas of campus safety and security