Undergraduate Research Increasing at UAS Fueled by Two Major Grants

For the second time in as many months the University of Alaska Southeast Environmental Science program received a grant to enhance research opportunities for undergraduate students in the area of science. UAS was awarded $465,605 to help identify and educate the next generation of National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration scientists. The funding comes from NOAA’s Interdisciplinary Scientific Environmental Technology Cooperative Research and Education Center, which is a five-year $12.5 million project that brings together seven US colleges and universities, with its main headquarters at North Carolina A&T State University.

The Center’s area of concentration is climate change. Through the grant, NOAA hopes to enhance researchers’ abilities to gather data, advance sensor technology and approve their ability to combine and share data across disciplines, while generating interest for students to work towards careers in those areas. Thirty-one percent of the grant is specifically for scholarships and to fund fieldwork for undergraduates.

Blonde Indian: An Alaska Native Memoir

This fall, the University of Arizona Press released Blonde Indian: An Alaska Native Memoir by UAS Assistant Professor of English Ernestine Hayes. The following is from the review of Hayes’s book on the University of Arizona Press Web site.

Ms. Hayes received the Fiction Writer’s Award from the Anchorage Daily News, and the Explorations Alaska Native Writers Award in 2002. Drawing on the special relationship that the Native people of southeastern Alaska have always had with nature, Blonde Indian is a story about returning. Told in eloquent layers that blend native stories and metaphor with social and spiritual journeys, this enchanting memoir traces the author’s life from her difficult childhood growing up in the Tlingit community, through her adulthood, during which she lived for some time in Seattle and San Francisco, and eventually to her return home.

Neither fully Native American nor Euro-American, Hayes encounters a unique sense of alienation from both her Native community and the dominant culture. We witness her struggles alongside other Tlingit men and women—many of whom never left their Native community but wrestle with their own challenges, including unemployment, prejudice, alcoholism, and poverty.

The author’s personal journey, the symbolic stories of contemporary Natives, and the tales and legends that have circulated among the Tlingit people for centuries are all woven together, making Blonde Indian much more than the story of one woman’s life. Filled with anecdotes, descriptions, and histories that are unique to the Tlingit community, this book is a document of cultural heritage, a tribute to the Alaskan landscape, and a moving testament to how going back—in nature and in life—allows movement forward.
Marine Biology Research Trip

Whale biologist Jim Darling from British Columbia, Canada visited Juneau in mid-September to help launch a new humpback whale research project with UAS biology students. Students will work with Dr. Darling and UAS Biology Faculty Beth Mathews to determine which whales spend time in Alaska and Hawaii. Students will compare photographs of the ventral surface of whales’ flukes taken in Hawaii from 1977 to the present and compare those to photographs taken of whales in nearby waters. Dr. Darling is interested in the behavior of whales in their breeding (Hawaii) and feeding (Alaska) grounds.

The students took their first identifying trip on Sept. 17th and were joined by National Geographic photographer and whale researcher Flip Nicklin. The Gastineau Guiding tour boat departed Auke Bay at 10 am and the group spotted its first humpback minutes later while still in the Bay. The expedition took students to Point Retreat, across Lynn Canal, to St. James Bay. The trip was successful in identifying a non-cataloged humpback and its calf.

Social Science Student Goes Beyond the Call

Angela Anderson, a student of Ginny Mulle’s, is presenting a paper at the national Pacific Sociological Association conference in Los Angeles. Anderson is a graduating cum laude with BA in Social Science. The title of her paper is: “You Have to Work With What You Get: Funding needs for homeless services” and she is in a session on research methodology.

Anderson began working with the executive director of the Glory Hole on a survey project last fall to interview approximately 100 homeless people in Juneau to determine their service needs. As an independent study, Angela worked as the project methodologist, where she coded and analyzed the survey data, as well as assisted in writing a report that was presented to the Juneau city council. This semester she was asked to continue as the methodologist on a second project interviewing homeless teens.

“Not only did [Angela] get great research experience,” Said Professor Mulle. “But she contributed to the community by the many many hours, well above and beyond that required of the independent study, which she donated to the Glory Hole as well as the project itself.”
Key Hires

Richard Dent: Student Services and Enrollment

Richard Dent was hired as the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management. Richard comes to UAS from Bastyr University in Seattle where the last nine years he was responsible for marketing, recruitment, admissions, records, and financial aid. In addition, his student service experiences include work at Duquesne University, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and California State University at Los Angeles. He also served as the Executive Director of the College Scholarship Service of the College Board. Vice Chancellor Dent’s experience in target marketing for specific programs and his extensive experience administering financial aid programs is of particular interest to UAS in improving our success rates in the areas of program recruitment and retention.

Larry Harris: Center for Teacher Education

Larry Harris was hired as the Dean of the School of Education. Dr. Harris served for nine years at Idaho State University where he had experience developing programs for Native American and Hispanic Students. He previously served as Dean of the School of Education and the Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Arkansas at Monticello for four years. He is a member of the Board of Examiners for NCATE, an evaluator for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and a member of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory Board. Dr. Harris will provide leadership in further development of our center of excellence in Teacher Education programs to prepare newly certified teachers and provide professional growth opportunities for the current teaching workforce of Alaska.

Joe Nelson: Provost Office

Joe Nelson was hired as the Associate Vice Provost for Student Success. Joe Nelson, previously the Director of Preparing Indigenous Teachers for Alaska Schools (PITAS) Program was hired to lead the UAS pre-college pathway programs. Joe will travel to all communities in Southeast to work with the schools, students, and parents marketing the opportunities for post-secondary education in the University of Alaska system. This position will work directly with high school teachers to identify, mentor, and prepare specific students for college readiness in all fields of study.

Academic Program

Accomplishments

Arts and Sciences: The School of Arts and Sciences had over 20 graduates in their recently approved degrees in English, Mathematics and Social Sciences.

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Graduation: The School of Education had 32 graduates in June (11 MAT Elementary, and 21 MAT Secondary).

Ketchikan Fisheries Technology Program Grant: Fisheries Technology has been awarded a US Department of Agriculture Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education grant, $200,000 for 24 months; Building Fisheries Technology Program Capacity Through Outreach and Program Expansion. This project will build and expand programs and training related to fisheries and shellfish aquaculture in Southeast.

Sitka Denali Training Grant Phase III: Allied Health Training grants were renewed for distance-delivered Direct Services training and student support (CNA, PCA, CWA)

UA/UAS Tech-Prep Program: UAS now has seven general agreements (Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Wrangell, Haines, Petersburg, Klawock) in place with more in development. In AY07 UAS will grant tech-prep credit for instruction in construction, welding, health science, information systems, automotive tech and fisheries tech within these districts.

Kensington Mine Training Partnership: UAS has partnered with the UAA’s Mining and Petroleum Training Service at Kenai Peninsula College (MAPTS), the Alaska Department of Labor Juneau Job Center, and Coeur Alaska for an ongoing, team-approach to workforce training for the development and operations of the Kensington Mine, 45 miles north of Juneau (http://labor.state.ak.us/trends/may06.pdf p. 25).

Touring Greens Creek Mine

A group of 15 chemistry, geology, environmental science students and faculty traveled to Admiralty Island to tour the Greens Creek mine, mill and tailings disposal sites on Sat. April 8. The trip was organizers Lisa Hoferkamp and Cathy Connor were joined by Dr. Stekoll. Kennicott mining geologist Kerry Lear and Geochemist Pete Congdon provided the tour and explained the mining, milling and waste disposal process.

AEL&P transformers are installed along road to mine site and they will next string wires to run Snettishan Hydro power over by undersea cable which has been laid.