

Historical Background and Introduction

The University of Alaska Southeast has had a regional presence since 1954, when the first community college in the area was established in Ketchikan. This was followed by the establishment of Juneau-Douglas Community College in 1956 and by Sitka (Islands) Community College in 1962.

When a precipitous decline in the price of oil – the main source of state revenue – forced a restructuring of the university system in 1985, the president and a special advisory task force examined the pattern of programs offered, the clientele served, the organizational structure in support of program delivery, the cost of services, and the strengths and weaknesses of campus programs at each of the five existing major administrative units (MAUs). As a result of this analysis, the task force recommended a consolidation of the system into three MAUs, each assuming the responsibility for the existing community colleges in its service area.

Eight public hearings on the resulting plan, covering all areas of the state, assured scrutiny from campus assemblies, the statewide assembly, and various campus and state organizations. Once the plan was accepted by the Board of Regents in late 1986, ten of the state's eleven community colleges were integrated into three university units on a regional basis: University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Alaska Anchorage and University of Alaska Southeast. Prince William Sound Community College remained as the sole designated community college in the state, due to its more traditional funding pattern of considerable local financial support.

The restructuring plan approved by the Regents called for multipart mission statements, maintenance of local identity for the former community colleges, continued attention to vocational education, and provisions for local participation in governance. Additionally, the board instructed the president to provide for the creation of separate subunits in each of the three new MAUs in order to preserve the accountability of unique missions and budget identity of the existing organizational functions.

Because UAS existed as three separate units for several decades and assumed the current structure only in 1985, each unit individually underwent changes in organization and accreditation status prior to the restructuring. The highlights of the accreditation history and the progression from three community colleges to one regional university with three campuses are as follows:

Juneau Campus

- Juneau-Douglas Community college-established 1956, made part of UA system in 1964
- University of Alaska, Southeast-created 1972 (former UA System accreditation no longer in effect)
- UAS (JDCC/Southeastern Senior College)-develops self-study, prepares for evaluation visit in 1977
- Regents decide to merge statewide community colleges into Community Colleges, Rural Education, and Extension (CCREE) but leave JDCC and SESC under separate administration in Juneau
- Accreditation plans dormant during 1977-1978
- JDCC and SESC merged into University of Alaska, Juneau-1979
- UAJ goes through self-study process and report compiled-1981

- Continued in candidate status until 1983
- Self-study finalized, evaluation team visited, and accredited in 1983
- Restructuring of UAJ to UAS-1987
- Accreditation as UAS affirmed-1989
- Accreditation extended to distance delivery of Masters of Public Administration and Bachelor of Business Administration-1992
- 5-year and focused interim review-1994

Sitka Campus

- Sitka Community College opened-1962
- Operated under UA System accreditation until 1972
- SCC becomes part of UAS-1972
- Maintained candidacy from 1972
- UAJ goes through self-study process and report compiled-1981
- Continued in candidate status until 1983
- SCC seeks accreditation (submits self-study report in 1983 and receives accreditation administered under CCREE)
- SCC becomes part of UAS-1987
- Accreditation as extended campus of UAS affirmed-1989

Ketchikan Campus

- Ketchikan Community College established 1954
- Received accredited status in 1979
- Reaffirmed accredited status in 1984
- Became part of UAS in 1987
- Accreditation as extended campus of UAS affirmed-1989

With the integration of three campuses – each with outreach locations throughout Southeast Alaska – the University of Alaska Southeast emerged as a comprehensive, regional university with the primary purpose of providing post-secondary education to the panhandle – a region which spans 600 miles

from Metlakatla in the south to Prince William Sound in the north.

The total population of Southeast Alaska is slightly over 75,000 residents of which approximately 51,000 are 18 years of age or over. In the region there are 23 incorporated communities ranging in size from 41 residents to Kasaan on Prince of Wales Island to approximately 30,000 residents in Juneau. Southeast Alaska's largest minority residents are 10,400 Alaska Natives. Ketchikan's population is approximately 14,000 and Sitka's population is approximately 9,000. These population figures represent a 25 percent increase in total population over 1989 and a 27.5 percent increase in the number of persons 18 years of age or older.

The University of Alaska Southeast has been operating under the new structure for the past decade. In many ways, it is a substantially different organization than that visited by the 1989 accreditation review team and even that reviewed by the interim team in 1994. A sharper focus on a more limited number of degrees (three undergraduate and two graduate degrees in 1999 as compared with 5 undergraduate and three graduate in 1989); a 62 percent overall increase in the number of full-time students; and a considerable increase in the quantity and quality of distance-delivered programs are indications of the way in which UAS is defining itself.

The story of how UAS has matured from its fledgling status as a regional university in 1989 to its present state is the substance of this self-study. In examining where it has come from in the past ten years, the university community has identified its strengths. It has also identified those areas in which there is still work to be done.

UAS affirms that it continues to meet the eligibility requirements of the Northwest Commission on Colleges. In addition, it believes that it meets the nine standards of the Commission for continued accreditation. The following pages and the materials in the Exhibit Room provide evidence that these standards are being maintained.