Associate of Arts & Associate of Science Programs

School of Arts & Science, University of Alaska Southeast

2016-17 Annual Report

November 2018

Assessment Committee Members

Juneau Campus: Christopher Hay-Jahans, Professor of Mathematics; Sherry Tamone, Professor of Marine Biology and Chair of Natural Sciences

Ketchikan Campus: Colleen Ianuzzi, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Sitka Campus: Jon Martin, Assistant Professor of Biology

Overviews of the AA and AS degree programs. (Sources: academic catalog, past annual reports, and AA and AS Assessment Plan)

As stated in the Assessment Plan prepared by the above mentioned committee, this annual report addresses both the Associate of Art and the Associate of Science degree programs. The reason for submitting a combined report is stated in the Assessment Plan for the AA and AS Degree Programs.

The mission statements for the two degree programs can be viewed as being equivalent:

> *The Associate of Arts (AA) degree, administered by the School of Arts and Sciences, provides a solid foundation in the core academic areas of mathematics, written and oral communication, the natural and social sciences, the humanities and fine arts. Through this, the AA degree prepares students for career advancements, for transfer to baccalaureate programs and for a better understanding of their world.*

and

> *The Associate of Science (AS) degree, administered by the School of Arts and Sciences, provides a solid foundation in the core academic areas of mathematics, written and oral communication, the natural and social sciences, the humanities and fine arts. Through this, the AS degree prepares students for career advancements and for transfer to baccalaureate programs with an emphasis in the sciences.*

The core component of both of these degrees is the 34 credits of General Education Requirements for transfer to baccalaureate degree programs. The remaining 26 credits, including 20 credits of 200 or higher level courses, allow students to take further courses suitable for their intended career/academic paths.

Student Learning Outcomes. (Source: PAC GELO)

The Provost's Assessment Committee for General Education Learning Outcomes (PAC GELO) developed the following student learning outcomes.

- ***Effective Communication***: Communicate thoughts and ideas effectively, orally and in writing.
- ***Critical Thinking***: Demonstrate comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

- ***Creative Thinking***: Present creative works of expression, innovative approaches to tasks, or solutions to problems.
- ***Empirical Reasoning***: Articulate the scientific method and pose well-reasoned questions in the search for answers through data.
- ***Synthesis and Analysis***: Use and extend theoretical concepts to qualitative and quantitative applications and problem solving.
- ***Environmental and Community Engagement***: Use and extend Indigenous and global cultural perspectives with respect for diversity of people, the sustainable use of resources, and awareness of the environment.

Rubrics for assessing the level to which UAS undergraduate students acquire these values (and satisfy the corresponding GELOs) were prepared by the PAC GELO to provide information about the level (Beginning, Proficient, and Mastery) of student learning.

Description of the data collection process (Sources: PAC GELO and UAS Office of Institutional Effectiveness)

Two sources of data are utilized for this report, the first being the UAS Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE). These data are intended for purposes of tracking enrollment trends, persistence and retention rates, and graduation rates. The second source is the 2018 Report of the PAC GELO.

It should be mentioned that conversations with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the AA/AS Assessment Committee are ongoing with regard to the extraction of complete and meaningful data. Additionally, the PAC GELO is in the final stages of testing rubrics on assessing student learning, and establishing an effective and regular assessment process.

Data on GELO SLOs and AA/AS transfers to BA/BS/BBA programs for the previous academic year (Sources: PAC GELO and UAS Office of Institutional Effectiveness)

The only meaningful IE data available for this report were Fall and Spring enrollment headcounts, and the number of degrees awarded for the fiscal years 2015-2017. See Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Full-time and Part-time Fall enrollment headcounts

	Year and Headcounts by Semester					
	2015		2016		2017	
Degree	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
AA	208	193	168	144	149	114
AS	8	16	30	25	27	14

Table 2: Associate degrees awarded

	Year and Degrees Awarded		
Degree	2015	2016	2017
AA	68	38	50
AS	3	3	7

Over the 2018 academic year the PAC GELO assessed student learning for two learning outcomes, effective communication and critical thinking. The data from the 2018 PAC GELO Report are shown in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3 contains summary of scores obtained from Effective Communication artifacts used to assess each outcome; these include mean scores ($\bar{x}$), standard deviations (s). Also included are percentages of items with scores higher than each benchmark.

Table 4 contains summary of scores obtained from Critical Thinking artifacts used to assess each outcome, also including mean scores ($\bar{x}$), standard deviations (s), and percentages of items with scores higher than each benchmark.

Table 3: AY 2018 data from the assessment of effective communication

	Effective Communication Outcomes			**% of work products with a score ≥**		
		$\bar{x}$	*s*	1	2	3
Outcomes	1. Context	1.44	0.71	86.0	33.0	4.0
	2. Arrangement of Material	1.40	0.77	79.0	41.0	2.0
	3. Content Material	1.37	0.58	92.0	27.0	3.0
	4. Supporting Material and Evidence	1.19	0.58	85.0	16.0	1.0
	5. Use of Language	1.41	0.70	86.0	39.0	3.0
	Overall summaries	1.36	0.67	85.6	31.2	2.6

Table 4: AY 2018 data from the assessment of critical thinking

	Critical Thinking Outcomes			**% of work products with a score ≥**		
		$\bar{x}$	*s*	1	2	3
Outcomes	1. Student Position	0.80	0.80	60.0	16.7	3.3
	2. Student Assumptions	1.08	0.84	70.0	37.5	0.8
	3. Issue or Problem	1.40	0.70	91.7	44.2	4.2
	4. Info. From Sources	1.58	0.66	94.2	60.8	3.3
	5. Conclusion or Outcomes	1.45	0.88	83.3	54.2	7.5
	Overall summaries	1.31	0.81	79.8	42.7	3.8

Evaluation/analysis of the data, as applicable to each program (AA and AS)

As is evident in Table 1, there have been Fall-to-Spring drops in enrollments. While this is expected, this decline has been increasing (approx. 7%-14%-23%). The Fall-to-Fall decline is less drastic (approx.19%-11%). It is unclear whether these Fall-to-Fall drops in enrollments are due to the overall decline in student enrollments, or because more students are opting to enroll directly in baccalaureate degree programs.

As is evident from Table 2, over the past three years the number of AS degrees awarded have been very low as compared to the AA degree. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has actually been the case since the inception of the AS degree. It has been observed that most students either tend to favor the AA program, or choose to enroll directly in a BS degree program. For this reason, the Department of Natural Sciences has been considering the possibility of discontinuing the AS degree, but this has generally not been viewed favorably by the branch campuses.

Based on the samples used by the PAC GELO, Tables 3 and 4 indicate that while the majority of the item scores for both learning outcomes met criteria for the “beginning or above” level, a much smaller proportion of the item scores met criteria for the “proficient or higher” level.

It is curious that the critical thinking proportions for the “proficient or higher” level are generally higher than those of the effective communications.

Possible future plans to improve student learning

At this point it is not meaningful to propose any such plans. The PAC GELO is in the process of assessing the remaining learning outcomes, and is evaluating the effectiveness of the artifacts used to assess the outcomes. It is anticipated that the methods for assessing learning outcomes will stabilize over the next year or two.

In the area of Institutional Effectiveness data, it is clear that continued conversations on acquiring meaningful annual (and five-year review) data are needed. It is anticipated that this will be completed by the end of the Spring of 2019, the goal being to have access to data as outlined in the last section of the 2017 AA Annual Report. That is, in addition to data such as in Tables 1 and 2, *possibly* data that provide information on:

- The proportion of students who graduate with an AA or AS in the same academic year that they declare.
- The proportion of students who declare, and who do not graduate with an AA or AS even after completing AA or AS requirements.
- The proportion of students who declare, who do not graduate with an AA even after completing AA or AS requirements, and who continue on to a UA or UAS baccalaureate degree program.
- The proportion of students who graduate with an AA or AS and who continue on to a UA or UAS baccalaureate degree program.