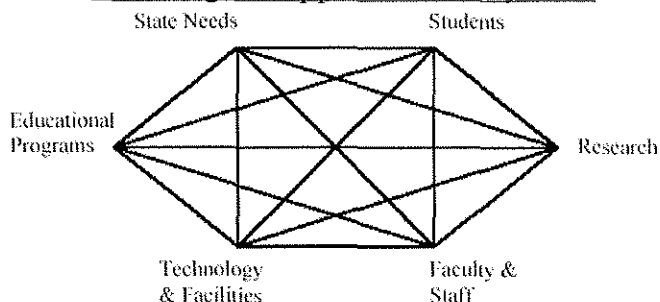


University of Alaska Board of Regents

New Program Approval Summary Form



MAU: University of Alaska Fairbanks

Title: Ph.D., Indigenous Studies

Target admission date: Spring, 2009

1. How does the program relate to the **Education** mission of the University of Alaska and UAF?

The Ph.D. program in Indigenous Studies will directly address the following goals of the UAF 2010 Strategic Plan by offering an advanced program of graduate study focusing on issues that are deeply rooted in Alaska's past and are destined to be a vital part of Alaska's future.

- Increase Alaska Native enrollment in graduate programs by 50%
- Increase the representation and retention of women and minorities in staff and faculty
- Increase research programs that address the Arctic and its indigenous people
- Document and disseminate indigenous knowledge
- Generate innovative and useful applications of research that benefit the state of Alaska

The proposed program was developed by faculty in the UAF College of Liberal Arts, School of Education and College of Rural and Community Development in response to a growing need for "advanced graduate opportunities for Alaska Native scholars and leaders," as expressed in a 2004 resolution of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Details of the program grew out of a two-day "Indigenous Ph.D. Planning Workshop" hosted by UAF in conjunction with the 2007 Alaska Federation of Natives Convention and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We invited 55 Alaska Natives (out of a list of over 100) with a Master's degree who had expressed an interest in pursuing a Ph.D to provide input into the planning of the proposed Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies. Following the workshop a survey form was sent to all the participants to obtain a more systematic picture of the level of interest and the conditions under which students would enroll in a Ph.D. program. The survey responses have served as the basis for many of the elements and structure of this proposal. The level of interest in the program is high from both Native and non-Native potential doctoral candidates, provided there is a strong Indigenous core emphasis, multiple avenues for access to the program (on-campus, distance education, intensive seminars, etc.) and sufficient fellowship funding for financial support.

2. What **State Needs** will be met by this program?

Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program Proposal

In 2002, the Alaska Federation of Natives conducted a statewide survey to identify all the Alaska Natives who had earned a Ph.D. (30), J.D. (32) or M.D. (12). Of the 30 Alaska Native Ph.D.'s at the time, three had earned their degree from the University of Alaska, with one more graduating in 2007. The dearth of Alaska Natives with advanced degrees has meant a paucity of indigenous perspective in upper level leadership and professional roles, including as university faculty members, where at UAF they currently constitute 3% of the faculty but 16% of the students. Most often, upper-level expertise has to be imported from outside Alaska to fill advanced professional and technical positions in the state. Businesses, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, policy institutes, Native organizations, academic institutions, and other groups in Alaska today need professionals who have competencies in a wide set of Indigenous issues, while also having the in-depth expertise in a specific problem area. The Indigenous Studies program strives to meet these needs by training professionals with analytical skills for understanding human resource problems and cultural sustainability issues.

3. What are the **Student** opportunities, outcomes and enrollment projections?

The proposed Ph.D. program will draw and build upon long-standing academic and research capabilities at UAF to offer an integrated course of advanced graduate study consisting of a common core curriculum that all students will complete, coupled with five thematic areas of emphasis from which students will choose a concentration: indigenous research; indigenous knowledge systems; indigenous education; indigenous languages; and indigenous leadership. The specific skill set of the graduates will include quantitative analysis, scientific applications, qualitative research methods, research design and program management, along with broad conceptual frameworks for understanding the dynamics of social-cultural-ecological systems. Based on current staffing levels and resource commitments, the program will accommodate six new students each year for an average total enrollment of approximately 20 students spread over three to four years.

4. Describe the **Research** opportunities:

Ph.D. candidates will participate in research activities across a variety of academic disciplines and applied fields at UAF and with an international network of partner institutions. They will be encouraged to engage in comparative studies with other indigenous peoples around the world and to focus their dissertation research on issues of relevance to Alaska and the Arctic.

5. Describe the **Fiscal Plan** for development and implementation:

The faculty resources for implementation of the program will be drawn from reallocation of existing workload in cooperating departments across the campus, with the only additional funding being to support program operations during the summer. Facilities and equipment of the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies will be utilized to house the administration of the program. These existing institutional resources will be augmented by funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to provide doctoral fellowships and student support services.