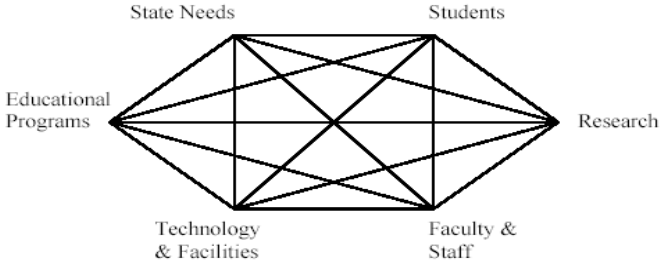
# X. REGENTS GUIDELINES:




**University of Alaska Board of Regents**
Program Approval **Summary Form**

MAU: UAF (CRCD, KuC)
Title: Certificate in Ethnobotany (EBOT)
Target admission date: Fall 2009

How does the program relate to the **Education** mission of the University of Alaska and the MAU?

The development of the Ethnobotany (EBOT) program has grown out of an expressed desire by Y-K regional communities to increase student participation in the sciences, and is the result of collaboration between rural community members, professional ethnobotanists, native elder plant practitioners, University faculty, the Georgeson Botanical Gardens, the UA Museum, and the Alaska business community. Consultations with stakeholders have shown that because native plant use is already an integral part of many rural peoples' life-skills, ethnobotany is an area of high interest to rural students and is one that has immediate applicability.

By utilizing distance delivery the EBOT certificate program is designed to provide students, within their home communities, a new avenue into a variety of existing associate and baccalaureate degree programs; including biology, anthropology, botany, and natural resource management. This training will also provide students with the opportunity of developing the necessary credentials required to gain entry-level employment in local agencies and businesses, assisting them to affect social changes in their communities and helping to enrich the quality of their lives and cultures.

The EBOT program will serve to bolster several goals listed in UAFs 2010 Strategic Plan Goals by: increasing student participation in and opportunities for experiential learning, improving student success in distance education courses, and documenting and disseminating indigenous knowledge.

There is little or no impact on other units across the MAU, including GERs.

What **State Needs** are met by this program.

Like most other states in the US, Alaska does not currently offer an Ethnobotany program anywhere in the educational system. The EBOT program represents a significant level of academic innovation by creating the first Certificate in Ethnobotany at the lower division level available at any institution of higher learning in this state and, indeed, the entire nation. The EBOT Program has been designed to provide students with culturally relevant coursework that has not been previously available.

What are the **Student** opportunities and outcomes? Enrollment projections?

The skills and competencies that EBOT students will learn are part of the overall training required to work effectively at an entry level in the fields of ethnobotany, biology, botany, and anthropology. As the demand throughout rural Alaska for regionally-relevant education increases, EBOT certificate recipients will have achieved the training skills necessary for entry level employment in natural and cultural resource management, including: local/regional native corporations, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Other

occupational opportunities for Ethnobotany Certificate recipients include entrepreneur, environmental and traditional knowledge educator, and ecotourism guide.

A timely example of how ethnobotanical opportunities have already begun to be realized in Alaska is the ethnobotanical company *Arxotica* (*http://www.arxotica.com/*), the top award winner ($60,000) at the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) 2007 Alaska Marketplace competition (*http://www.alaska marketplace.org/50.cfm)*. Another successful Alaska Native-run ethnobotanical business is *Yup'ik Way*, created and operated by Gloria Simeon (EBOT Advisory Board member), also from the Y-K region of Alaska. While the potential of these entrepreneurial endeavors is evident, it is important to note that these entrepreneurs were forced to go outside of Alaska to obtain the expertise needed to realize these accomplishments because we they were unable to find adequate training here. We will begin to rectify that situation with the EBOT certificate program at UAF.

In the past several years KuC has been laying the groundwork for the EBOT program by offering several programs that emphasize training in the fundamentals of science, technology, engineering and math fields. Given that this type of science training groundwork has been laid, the EBOT program is poised to take advantage of this situation and, with a minimum of eight students per year, this program could be serving 24 students by 2011.

Describe **Research** opportunities:

The primary focus of the EBOT certificate is to provide students with a strong academic foundation in science that is also culturally relevant. This type of background will open many doors for rural students in their own future academic endeavors because the program is designed to dovetail into the Associate and Bachelor's of Science degrees. The problem of finding enough trained rural professionals will begin to be addressed as students become familiar with scientific concepts, research faculty and methodology, and begin to find entry level employment with projects and agencies that conduct research in rural Alaska. With this increased awareness will come increased understanding and an increase in the amount of rural/urban collaboration within the state.

Describe **Fiscal Plan** for development and implementation:

Funding for development and faculty salary for the EBOT certificate have been provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (AN/NH) Higher Education program, whose mandate is to increase the presence of Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians in USDA careers.

Current USDA funding for the program extends to 2011. Because the success of the EBOT program is of such high priority, KuC will cover a total of 55% FTE faculty and 60% FTE support staff for EBOT instruction. KuC also provides 3879 SF of instruction/office/lab space, as well as $52,810 in-kind contribution of networking hardware and software.

The EBOT program will be available to University campuses throughout the state and could generate between at least $9,600 if the minimum of 8 students take an average of 10 credits ($120/credit) per year. We anticipate that as student participation increases these fees will be covered by sources other than grant funding, including village and regional Native corporations and paid internships with state and federal wildlife management agencies. These partnerships have sustained many successful rural programs at UAF (Rural Human Services, Tribal Management, and Construction Trades, for example) and have the potential to do the same for the EBOT program.