The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) was created with seed funding from the University of Alaska Foundation, which identified a goal of addressing “the most important educational policy issues facing Alaska.” The foundation funding has enabled CAEPR staff to begin developing the framework and infrastructure for an education policy research institution dedicated to this goal.

The Center’s mission and core values are as follows:

**Mission**
The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research enhances decision-making by policymakers, education professionals, and the public through collaborative, interdisciplinary research, analysis, and dissemination. The center conducts non-partisan research on policy issues around educational access, equity and excellence in the Alaska context, across early childhood, primary and secondary, higher and adult education.

**Core Values**
- The center supports objective, non-partisan, rigorous research
- The center’s work is conducted in partnership and collaboration with faculty from across the university system, key stakeholders and policymakers
- The center promotes community engagement by connecting researchers with policymakers and stakeholders, and by making research accessible to multiple audiences

**Four Year Plan**
The following describes the goals, measures of success and strategies for achieving the goals.

**Goal 1) CAEPR will contribute to improving education policy decision making in Alaska by providing quality research on Alaska education policy issues of concern to key policymakers at the national, state and district level**

**Measures**
1. CAEPR researchers work with policymakers and stakeholders to identify and research critical issues in Alaska education policy.
2. CAEPR research is cited regularly by Alaska policymakers, education researchers and the media.
3. CAEPR researchers receive and respond to requests from policymakers from the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, the Alaska State Legislature, and other stakeholders around the state.
Strategies:
1. CAEPR has an active research dissemination program electronically and in hard copy. Products include working papers, research digests and summaries and newsletters.
2. CAEPR has a web presence that informs Alaska education policymaking via summaries of research from CAEPR, other Alaska researchers, and national scholars, links to key information sources, and analyses of emerging issues.
3. CAEPR hosts an annual meeting for Alaska education policymakers, educators and researchers that includes presentations on current education policy research and issues
4. CAEPR staff regularly brief state and local education policymakers on current research

Goal 2) CAEPR will build the capacity of faculty, researchers, and students to conduct education policy research in Alaska

Measures
1. CAEPR researchers collaborate regularly with faculty, students and researchers across the University of Alaska system on education policy research.
2. CAEPR supports faculty across the UA system in obtaining external funding and contracts for education policy research
3. CAEPR researchers and affiliate faculty produce peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations on a regular basis.
4. CAEPR regularly hosts pre- and post-doctoral researchers, undergraduate interns, and visiting scholars.
5. CAEPR researchers collaborate regularly with researchers and interns at First Alaskans Institute/Alaska Native Policy Center.

Strategies:
1. CAEPR staff will partner with faculty across the UA system on Alaska education policy research projects.
2. CAEPR will provide administrative support to UA faculty in designing their own policy research projects, developing proposals for funding and disseminating the findings of their research
3. CAEPR will coordinate with UA research and sponsored projects offices and campus faculty development centers to identify and support professional development opportunities on policy research and proposal writing.
4. CAEPR will support undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral researchers as well as visiting scholars.
5. CAEPR will work with doctoral programs across Alaska to support students’ education policy research through serving on committees, offering special topics courses and seminars, and involving students in center policy research.
6. CAEPR will support internships for indigenous students in collaboration with the First Alaskans Institute and partner with researchers at the Alaska Native Policy Center on projects of mutual interest.

Goal 3) CAEPR is financially stable and sustainable

Measures
1. CAEPR has hard funding to support ongoing research on key Alaska education policy issues, such as educator supply and demand.
2. CAEPR has long-term seed funding for key staff positions, including at least half of the salary of the director and senior research associate, and a half-time staff person to provide proposal support and administrative/fiscal management, as well as for key center activities.

3. CAEPR receives financial support from a variety of sources including the Alaska State Legislature, education organizations around the state, and competitive federal, state, and private foundation grants.

Strategies:
1. CAEPR works with the UAA Development Office, UA Statewide Corporate & Foundation Relations, and the UAA Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) process to identify potential private foundation sources of support for the center.
2. CAEPR produces and disseminates research that receives recognition and develops a constituency for this work.
3. CAEPR staffers develop relationships with legislators, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and Alaska State Board of Education leadership, and other key education leaders to foster support for state funding.
4. CAEPR collaborates with nationally recognized education research organizations such as Education Northwest and the National Education Policy Center on research and dissemination to develop multi-state projects.

Goal 4) Develop and implement an ongoing research program that addresses key issues of Alaska education policy

Measures:
1. By the end of year three, CAEPR staff will develop a 5-year research plan addressing the most important issues in Alaska education policy.
2. By the end of year three, CAEPR staff will have revised the center strategic plan.

Strategies:
1. CAEPR staff will work with education stakeholders and policy makers across Alaska to set the research agenda and priorities.
2. CAEPR staff will solicit comments and suggestions on the draft research agenda and the revised strategic plan from stakeholders.
3. CAEPR will recruit and maintain an advisory board that represents the diversity of Alaska’s education stakeholders, including rural and urban educators and administrators, local and state education policymakers, indigenous educators and leaders, and key university faculty and administrators.
4. The CAEPR research agenda will recognize and reflect the unique education policy issues in Alaska around indigenous cultures and communities as well as the need for a rigorous P-16 education that prepares Alaskans to compete and thrive in the world economy.
In summer 2010, the Institute of Social and Economic Research was awarded University of Alaska Foundation funding to start the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. This document lays out the center’s mission and core values, and provides an overview of the center’s operations in its start-up year.

**Mission**
The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research enhances decision-making by policymakers, education professionals, and the public through collaborative, interdisciplinary research, analysis, and dissemination. The center conducts non-partisan research on policy issues around educational access, equity and excellence in the Alaska context, across early childhood, primary and secondary, higher and adult education.

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- The center promotes community engagement by connecting researchers with policymakers and stakeholders, and by making research accessible to multiple audiences

**What is education policy research?**
Education policy research is a broad and evolving field of study. There are a number of topic areas and research approaches that fall under this moniker, from economic studies, including cost-benefit or “production function” research to organizational studies, looking at how policies are implemented to evaluation studies, assessing the impact and outcomes of policies. Education policy research can address how policies are developed and the relationship of politics to policies or policies to practice. It also can inform policymaking, answering questions decision-makers have about what is currently happening, why it is happening, and what might be needed to address a particular challenge.
Our goal with this center is to conduct research that both informs policymaking, and that illuminates policy issues that may not currently be a focus of decision-makers. We aim to meet the needs of state and local education policymakers for up-to-date information on issues of concern and also support researchers, educators and students as they examine questions around policy.

While we are not focused on educational practice, we recognize that research on policy often intersects with and should be informed by research on practice. Therefore we will collaborate with deans, faculty, researchers and educators in Alaska and outside the state who have expertise in areas of practice that complement the center’s research focus. We aim to draw on a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and methodological skills from center staff, researchers at the Institute of Social and Economic Research and across the University of Alaska, and from collaborators outside the University.

**Center Activities**
CAEPR will support and conduct education policy research in Alaska in several ways:

1) CAEPR personnel will continue current research on policy issues including educator supply and demand, indigenous education policy and school finance. This work will be done in collaboration with researchers around the state, as well as from outside Alaska, including those at Education Northwest and the new National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado.

2) CAEPR will provide mini-grant funding for education policy research to University of Alaska faculty around the state.

3) CAEPR will provide “rapid response” funding for researchers to respond to requests from legislators and state policymakers.

4) CAEPR will sponsor undergraduate researchers to assist with research projects through the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship at UAA, as well as a summer research intern through the First Alaskans Institute summer internship program.

5) CAEPR will provide proposal development assistance to faculty across the University of Alaska system interested in obtaining external funding for education policy research.

Eventually, we hope to sponsor pre- and post-doctoral researchers, and expand ways in which we build capacity for education policy research across Alaska.
Initial Research Agenda
The center will build on current and recent education policy research at University of Alaska Anchorage’s (UAA) Institute of Social and Economic Research. The areas of study include (but are not limited to) the following:

K-12 workforce issues
Research in this category addresses teacher supply, demand, retention and compensation.

Indigenous and rural education policy
Studies on current policies and alternative options for providing education in rural and remote areas of Alaska are included in this topic area as well as research on current and past boarding schools and a look at the education of indigenous students since the passage of ANCSA.

P-16 issues
A number of topics fall under this broad area, including college and workforce preparedness, school finance, higher education financial aid models, dual credit and college bridging programs.

Early Childhood Education. Research might explore different approaches to providing ECE and their outcomes, such as whether it should be compulsory or voluntary; and whether providers should be public, private or a mix of public and private entities.

Year 1 workplan
Fall 2010
- Continue ongoing education policy research
- Meet with key stakeholders to develop priorities for education policy research in Alaska
- Begin UAA/UA Regents approval process to establish a center
- Award mini-grants to faculty across the UA system to conduct education policy research
- Identify potential internal and external funding sources – work with the UAA Development Office, UA Statewide Corporate & Foundation Relations, and the UAA Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) process
- Develop regional education policy research collaborative with Education Northwest

Spring 2011
- Continue ongoing education policy research projects
- Meet with education policy researchers in several state and national research institutes to discuss how they structure their organizations and work
- Meet with state legislators and other policymakers to discuss their research needs
- Continue discussions with Development, potential funders about support for the center; apply for external grants and foundation support
- Present research at American Educational Research Association annual meeting and meet with education policy researchers
Personnel
CAEPR Co-Principal Investigators are Dr. Diane Hirshberg, Associate Professor of Education Policy, and Alexandra Hill, Research Associate. Dr. Hirshberg has 15 years of research experience on education, public policy and equity issues. Her recent work focuses on indigenous education in Alaska, including studies of boarding school experiences of Native students and the educational lives of Alaska Native students at UAA, as well as on school change issues. She is an evaluator for several federal education grants in Alaska including the internal evaluation of the Alaska Educational Innovations Network, and the external evaluation of the Alaska Pacific University Education Innovations Grant. She received her PhD in Education from UCLA, an MPA from Columbia University, and a BA from UC Berkeley.

Alexandra Hill is a Research Associate at ISER with 20 years experience researching a variety of public policy issues and 10 years of focusing on education policy issues and grant evaluation. She specializes in quantitative analyses of large datasets. She has studied issues of teacher recruitment and retention, education finance and assessment systems, and has worked on the internal evaluation of the Alaska Educational Innovations Network, and external evaluations of the Alaska Partnership for Teacher Enhancement, Alaska Network for Understanding American History, Teaching American History Project Clio II, Rural Educator Preparation Partnership, Alaska PT3 Consortium, and PT3 in Rural Alaska projects. Ms. Hill has a Master in Public Affairs from Princeton University, an MS in Business Administration from Boston University, and a BS in Engineering Science from Dartmouth College.

UA Deans of Education Steering Committee
CAEPR staff will collaborate with the University of Alaska Deans of Education to ensure that the goals of the center are met, including implementation of a broad research agenda of value to the state and capacity building within the schools and colleges of education.

CAEPR Policy Advisory Board
CAEPR will create an Advisory Board to help determine research priorities for the center, identify potential projects and partners, and participate in awarding faculty mini-grants. Advisory board members will include the Alaska Commissioner of Education, a representative of the First Alaskans Institute, the executive director of the Alaska Association of School Administrators, a representative of the University of Alaska Statewide Administration, the chairs of the Education Standing Committees of the Alaska State Legislature, the UA liaison to the Alaska Department of Education and Rural Development, one rural and one urban school or district administrators, indigenous educators, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Acknowledgements:
Funding for CAEPR is provided by BP and Conoco Philips through the UA Foundation.

For more information, contact:
Diane Hirshberg, Associate Professor of Education Policy
(907) 786-5413 (voice)
(907) 786-7739 (fax)
Hirshberg@uaa.alaska.edu
Center for Alaska Education Policy Research
Call for Proposals:
Education Policy Research
For Immediate Release: December 8, 2010
DEADLINE: January 10, 2010

The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage recently received funding from the University of Alaska Foundation to create the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR). One of the goals of the center is building the education policy research capacity of Alaska faculty. As part of this effort, CAEPR is awarding mini-grants of up to $10,000 for education faculty to conduct research on education policy issues.

Proposal Process
Applicants will submit a cover sheet, CV and one-page pre-proposal narrative (see attached form: Faculty Mini-Grant Application Pre-Proposal Narrative), by January 6, 2011. An initial screening will ensure that all applications meet the administrative requirements; PI’s of those that don’t (e.g., missing CV) will be informed and have until January 12, 2011 to revise and resubmit.

The pre-proposals will be screened by a committee comprised of peers from the three University of Alaska Education units, key education stakeholders and CAEPR staff to determine if the proposed research fits within the mini-grant guidelines and priorities. Applicants whose proposals meet those conditions will be invited to submit a 3-5 page detailed proposal of the study. Invitation to submit a full proposal is not a guarantee of funding. The screening committee will rank the full proposals and the highest ranking will receive funding.

Key Dates:
Jan 10, 2011 pre-proposals due
Jan 18, 2011 revisions (if necessary) to pre-proposals due
Jan 24, 2011 Phase I screening complete; invitations issued for full proposals
Feb 14, 2011 full proposals due
Feb 21, 2011 Phase II screening complete; awards announced

For more information:
Diane Hirshberg, hirshberg@uaa.alaska.edu, 907-786-5413
Alexandra Hill, anarh1@uaa.alaska.edu, 907-786-5436
Administrative Requirements: (what the administrative screening looks at)

- Principal investigators must be either term or tenure-track faculty housed in either the UAA College of Education, the UAF School of Education or the UAS School of Education. Faculty members are encouraged to consider working in collaboration with adjunct faculty, faculty from other departments, or from rural and community campuses. However, adjunct faculty and those from outside the Schools/College of Education are not eligible to serve as principal investigators. Preference in scoring will be given to proposals submitted by junior, tenure-track faculty. However, weighting aside, in the end only proposals judged likely to increase understanding of important Alaska education policy issues will be funded.

- **Budget** must be $10,000 or less

- **Application packet** must include two-page pre-proposal form with signatures from both your department chair and Dean and CV of principal investigator(s)

- **Research question** must have a clear connection to an Alaska education policy issue

Proposal Guidelines: (What Phase I screening will look at)

**What do we mean by education policy research?**

There are a number of topics and research approaches within the area of Education policy, from economic studies, including cost-benefit or “production function” research to organizational studies, looking at how policies are implemented to evaluation studies, assessing the impact and outcomes of policies. Education policy research can address how policies are developed and the relationship of politics to policies or policies to practice. It also can inform policymaking, answering questions decision-makers have about what is currently happening, why it is happening, and what might be needed to address a particular challenge.

Possible Areas of Focus:

Below are some of the areas and topics relevant to Alaska education policy. They are intended to provide suggestions for relevant policy areas. Proposals for research on areas not listed below will be considered, but should clearly explain the relevance and significance of the proposed topic to Alaska education policy.

- **K-12 Workforce Issues.** Issues around recruitment and retention of superintendents, principals, teachers, and other school personnel. Policy issues around teacher / administrator preparation or professional development such as mandates for program accreditation, policies around alternative preparation programs, or specific professional development requirements.

- **Indigenous and Rural Education Policy.** Research around cost and effectiveness of different models for serving students in rural communities. Studies of different policies about ESL, heritage language programs, place-based curricula and culturally relevant practice.

- **P-16 Alignment and Issues.** Systemic (as opposed to instructional) approaches to improve college preparedness among high school students, financial aid models, and definitions of college and career readiness. Effective practices in developmental education, dual credit and college bridging programs.
• *Early Childhood Education.* Research around different approaches to providing ECE, such as compulsory or voluntary; public, private or a mix of public and private, state-sponsored or a mix of private, faith-based and Head Start pre-school programs.

**What we are not funding**
The center will not fund studies around issues of practice, such as how to improve pedagogy, the development of new curricula, or development of courses or programs. We do not fund projects that are exclusively proposal preparation for external grants, although we welcome research that enables you to write a stronger external funding proposal to continue or extend your research. If you are unsure of whether your idea fits within the definition of policy research, please contact us to discuss this further.

**Pre-proposal Narrative Guidelines**
The pre-proposal is a one-page description of the project. Proposals that extend beyond one page will not be automatically rejected, but the narrative needs to be as concise as possible. Provide enough information that proposal readers can clearly identify the goals of the project and see that the data collection and analysis are appropriate to answer the research question. The statement of significance/potential impact in the pre-proposal should be a brief, general discussion setting out the main points, but does not need extensive literature review or citation. Likewise, the expected dissemination is just a few sentences laying out the expected results: a draft journal article, a conference presentation, a research summary distributed to stakeholders, etc. Pre-proposals require the signatures of the department chairs/directors and the dean.

**Fiscal Guidelines**
Funding requests may not exceed $10,000. The budget justification requires a description of funding categories e.g., PI summer salary, research assistant salary, transcription, long distance phone charges, etc.

Funding may be used for a broad variety of research support including: summer salary for faculty researchers, salary for research assistants and graduate students, in-state travel, communications,, research participant incentives, and contractual services.

Funding may NOT be used for: indirect cost recovery, tuition, acquisition of equipment, or alcoholic beverages. Food, refreshments, or entertainment expenses are generally not allowed, except where clearly necessary for project activities, e.g., refreshments for focus groups or movie tickets as incentives for research subjects.

**Proposal Check List**
- PI Eligibility
- Cover Sheet: Pre-Proposal Cover Sheet signed by the PI, Department Chair/Director, and Dean
- One Page Narrative: Faculty Mini-Grant Application Pre-Proposal
- CV of PI(s)

**To Submit:** Proposals must be submitted electronically, as an MS Word or .pdf document, to: Hirshberg@uaa.alaska.edu.
Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR)
Faculty Mini-Grant Pre-Proposal
Due Date: January 10, 2011

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Title of Project

Project Abstract (fewer than 100 words):

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Signature Principal Investigator:

Signature Department Chair/Director:

Signature Dean:

To Submit: Proposals must be submitted electronically, as an MS Word or .pdf document, to: Hirshberg@uaa.alaska.edu.
Project Description: Brief description of the project, including the research questions, and project timeline

Data and Methods: Brief description of research methods including data sources, data collection, and analytic framework

Statement of significance and potential impact: How will this inform/impact education policy in Alaska?

Expected product and dissemination: e.g., report, journal article, conference paper, other. Please indicate how you intend to disseminate the findings and whether this grant is being used to seek external competitive funding upon completion of the grant.
Center for Alaska Education Policy Research
Organization Chart (Four Year Strategic Plan)

- CBPP Dean
- ISER Director
- CAEPR Director (Academic Director)

- Post Docs and Visiting Faculty (Project dependent)
- CAEPR Senior Research Associate 1.0FTE
- CAEPR Fiscal/Grant Manager .5FTE
- Education Policy Faculty .4FTE

- Interns (Project dependent)
- Research Associates (Project dependent)

- Education Deans
- Affiliate faculty