University of Alaska
Teacher Education Plan:
Deans’ Report

Dr. Deborah Lo, Dean of the UAS School of Education
Dr. Eric Madsen, Dean of the UAF School of Education
Dr. Mary Snyder, Dean of the UAA College of Education

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University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan: Executive Summary of Deans’ Report
I. OVERVIEW

Alaska’s public schools face many challenges that complicate the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers: low salaries; the high cost of living; schools in corrective action; limited teacher housing in rural Alaska; new policies related to teacher certification; the State’s retirement system; and more lucrative career opportunities elsewhere are all variables outside of the immediate control of teacher preparation programs. Yet these variables have profound impacts on recruitment of individuals into the profession of education. It is necessary to recognize that there are a number of obstacles facing the success of today’s teachers, many of which are unique to Alaska. However, the ongoing challenges have also created opportunity for K-12 education and teacher preparation programs, as there has been significant attention focused on educational issues by both policy makers and the media.

In response to the demands our graduates face, all of the educator preparation programs have revised curriculum; integrated coursework about, and experiences with, diverse learners; and devised instructional delivery strategies to best prepare tomorrow’s teachers. For example:

- The UA education units have increased opportunities for students who reside outside Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau to complete degrees and certificates in a variety of education fields.
- The three MAUs graduated a total of 380 educators for Alaska during academic year 2008, 404 during academic year 2009 and 415 in 2010.1
- UA’s educator preparation programs produce 20 – 25% of the new educators hired each year, and almost 30%2 of all active FY10 certificated school staff earned a certificate or degree through UA. In the districts immediately surrounding each campus, UA program completers fill as many as 45% of the professional positions.3
- The education units have established numerous collaborative partnerships with local school districts for initial training, ongoing professional development, research, and grant writing.

The University of Alaska Education Plan builds on these successes by increasing awareness of the profession; expanding access to educator preparation programs; and enhancing academic and professional support to students as they complete programs and move into the profession. Nevertheless, we know that challenges remain. This plan describes how we will increase the diversity of Alaska’s teaching workforce by making teacher education more attractive to underrepresented populations; increase the number of UA education program completers who enter the profession each year; and contribute to the research base on Alaska’s educational policies and practices, which is foundational to enhancing P-20 education in Alaska.

The three deans will annually submit a report to the Statewide Academic Council of the University of Alaska summarizing progress on initiatives and priorities. As illustrated in the table below, the goals and priorities contained in the current version of this report reinforce

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1 SB241: Alaska’s University for Alaska’s Schools. September, 2010
2 Alexandra Hill, personal communication, 10/28/10.
3 Education unit data
those identified by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, and by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development in the 2010 Alaska Education Plan: Building Alaska’s Future One Student at a Time.

**Goals Alignment**
University of Alaska Teacher Preparation Plan
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
Alaska Commission on Post Secondary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan Goals</strong></th>
<th><strong>Alaska Postsecondary Education Commission Goals and Strategies</strong></th>
<th><strong>DEED Alaska Education Plan</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit and retain more students in Education, particularly Alaska residents.</td>
<td>Increase public awareness of postsecondary education and training value.</td>
<td>Students will have access to safe schools, where they develop healthy and safe practices for life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase program access through multiple delivery methods</td>
<td>Increase Alaskan’s successful participation in postsecondary education.</td>
<td>Schools will form strong partnerships with families and communities, and will respect and embrace local cultures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance educator preparation programs in special education and in math and science teaching.</td>
<td>Collaborate with Alaska school districts and workforce development partners…</td>
<td>All students will graduate prepared for careers or postsecondary training and education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska.</td>
<td>Leverage the AlaskAdvantage grant program to provide financial aid to students with greatest financial need.</td>
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**Comments**
- Goals and strategies for the University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan and those of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education are clearly aligned and mutually supportive.
- Department of Education and Early Education goals are designed for a P-12 public school environment and thus, are not as clearly aligned.
- DEED goals are supported by the UA Teacher Education Plan as well as the ACPE goals and strategies.
II. GOALS

The Education Planning Group has set four goals for the University of Alaska Education Units.

A. Recruit and retain more students in education, particularly Alaska residents
B. Increase program access through multiple delivery methods.
C. Enhance educator preparation programs in Special Education and in Math and Science teaching.
D. Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska.

A. RECRUIT AND RETAIN MORE STUDENTS IN EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY ALASKA RESIDENTS.

Rationale
The future of Alaska requires that every child have access to quality educators dedicated to individual student success. The education profession offers rewarding career opportunities. However the general public, policy makers, parents and students are not always fully aware of these opportunities and the rewards of the profession. Recruiting top students into the teaching profession is paramount to improving the Alaska education system.

According to data collected through statewide Supply and Demand studies and from partner districts directly, school administrators rank special education positions as their hardest to fill. All three MAUs are working to determine common requirements and core coursework in Special Education that will apply across the System. This effort, which is currently well underway, will allow students to obtain a special education credential by taking courses at any MAU and, in particular, pursue specialized studies that may not be available at their local campus.

Action 1: Collaborate to strengthen Special Education programs.
According to data collected through statewide Supply and Demand studies and from partner districts directly, school administrators rank special education positions as their hardest to fill. All three MAUs are working to determine common requirements and core coursework in Special Education that will apply across the System. This effort, which is currently well underway, will allow students to obtain a special education credential by taking courses at any MAU and, in particular, pursue specialized studies that may not be available at their local campus.

Milestone
UAA/UAF/UAS Special Education MOA will be completed by May, 2011.

Action 2: Expand Recruitment, Retention, And Completion Efforts, Particularly Recruiting And Graduating Underrepresented Students

2A. Build on existing efforts to attract and graduate Alaska Native students and students from underrepresented populations. In Education, UAS has demonstrated success with their program, Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska’s Schools. UAF’s Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Program has proven to be effective. And UAA has recently opened a dorm wing for education majors specifically targeting Alaska Native and rural students. In addition, all three institutions have successful programs in other disciplines that focus on serving underrepresented populations. Examples include the Alaska Native Science and
Engineering Program (ANSEP), the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI), and Upward Bound. The Education Units will learn from the successes of such programs.

**Milestones for 2A**

a. Collaborate with ISER to design RFPs for faculty research on “best practices” in preparing members of Alaska’s underrepresented populations to become educators.

b. Distill, share, and build on best practices from the three MAU’s experiences preparing Alaska Native educators, particularly the successes of the education units. Invite APU to participate.

c. Increase the number of all program completers by 4% AY10 to AY11 as indicated in SB241 data process.

**2B.** Each education unit will hire one additional staff member to serve as a Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, or to allow existing personnel who have the expertise, but do not have the time, to fulfill this function. Recruitment and Retention Coordinators will work with school districts and communities to develop more effective strategies for recruiting qualified candidates for Alaska teacher preparation programs, particularly students from underrepresented populations, and will help assure that each candidate who desires to complete an education program does so.

**Milestone for 2B**

Secure budget, complete recruitment and hire recruitment & retention staff 6/30/11.

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**Action 3: Reestablish the Alaska Education Consortium**

The UA Education units will assume a leadership role in reestablishing a statewide, education professionals working group that meets on a regular basis. Participants will include representatives from education entities such as the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, NEA Alaska, Alaska Parent Teachers Association, the Association of Alaska School Administrators, and the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. Because similar workgroups, including TEAC (Teacher Education Advisory Committee) and TEPLAC (Teacher Education Professional Licensure Advisory Committee) were effective models of cross-organizational collaboration, we anticipate that the Consortium will be enthusiastically received. The Alaska Education Consortium will be collaboratively supported by the participating entities and will provide an excellent forum to increase institutional cooperation and leverage resources and expertise.

**Milestones**

a. Invite partners, secure participation commitments, 1/30/11.

b. Hold first audio conference meeting, 2/28/11.

c. Hold one face-to-face meeting before 6/30/11.
**Action 4: Endorse Alaska Educator Loan Repayment and Incentive Options**
The UA Education Deans take this opportunity to strongly endorse strengthening Alaska educator loan repayment and incentive opportunities. We support the ACPE’s existing Teacher Education Loan to cover education expenses for high school graduates nominated by rural school districts, but in addition, we also advocate broader repayment and incentive plans to attract, prepare, and retain excellent educators for Alaska’s schools.

**B. INCREASE PROGRAM ACCESS THROUGH MULTIPLE DELIVERY METHODS.**

**Rationale**
The University of Alaska will meet the needs of traditional and non-traditional students with flexible face-to-face, distance and onsite delivery options. UA teacher preparation programs will expand partnerships to offer cohort-specific training as another form of program delivery that allows for more customized, service-oriented approaches to education. We will use synchronous and asynchronous delivery, scheduling flexibility, and inquiry-based learning.

**Action 1: Refine and develop UA education programs**
Continue to:
- a. refine existing successful access methods such as distance delivery, intensives, summer programs, cohort models, and site-based faculty;
- b. research and test new instructional strategies that hold potential to enhance effective teaching and learning;
- c. develop existing faculty expertise to support expanded program access

**Milestones**
- a. 50% of all AY12 Education courses at each campus will be accessible to non-traditional students or those residing outside our respective metropolitan areas utilizing teaching and learning formats such as online, hybrid, cohort, site-based, alternative scheduling, etc.
- b. Building on existing relationships with the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Alaska Teacher Preparation, produce by 5/30/11 a plan to enhance our understanding about districts’ needs for specific types of educators and the knowledge, skills, and professional characteristics they seek.

**Action 2: Increase Alternative routes to licensure**
Build on current efforts to improve and create alternate routes to certification that build on proven teacher preparation models and maintain university rigor. UAA is currently preparing 18 future educators in Chevak, Alaska through a cohort model that features both onsite and distance instruction. Over the past five years, UAF has successfully partnered with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District to quickly create two highly individualized alternative route preparation programs that leveraged the
availability of short-term funding. UAS has created a secondary cohort program and a graduate program in special education to meet the needs of teachers recruited to teach special needs students but who lack the formal credential.

**Milestones**

a. Utilize consortium partners to determine if and where sufficient demand for alternative routes to certification may exist, and respond as warranted.

b. Coordinate with Career and Technical programs to help prepare candidates for Type M certificates, and provide professional development for current Type M certificate holders to meet the needs of partner school districts.

**Action 3: Invest in instructional technology and professional development**

Continue to research and invest in technology that will enhance teaching and learning, both on UA campuses and by distance; and continue to invest in staff and faculty professional development toward using such technology effectively.

**Milestone**

Establish predictable technology and professional development budgets, developed collaboratively between education units and central administrations at each MAU.

**C. ENHANCE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN HIGH DEMAND JOB AREAS, PARTICULARLY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND IN MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHING.**

**Rationale**

Because of the State’s demographics, Alaska’s requirements for teachers in high demand job areas are not the same as those in lower 48 states. It is imperative that the Education Units monitor district needs carefully to ensure we are graduating teachers to fulfill those needs. Additionally, dwindling resources require that we partner closely with each other, other UA disciplines, partner districts, community entities, and state departments to optimize opportunities.

**Action 1: Increase recruitment into Alaska high demand job areas.**

The Education deans will work with administrators at each campus to find ways to financially support recruitment efforts to include projects like FEA and summer camp experiences for junior high and high school students directed toward increasing interest in special education, math and science teaching, and other Alaska high demand job areas.

**Milestone**

Utilize results of a needs survey conducted in partnership with the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Alaska Teacher Placement to guide decisions regarding recruitment into high demand job areas.
**Action 2: Collaborate with colleagues in UA academic disciplines to align program offerings in high demand job areas.**

**Milestone**
Each campus will work with Arts and Sciences and Engineering colleagues to complete a program alignment analysis by 8/30/11.

**Action 3: Collaborate with external entities to increase recruitment into, and completion of education programs in Alaska high demand job areas.**
Enhance existing—and establish new--collaborative relationships to leverage resources and expertise of Alaska education organizations that are particularly relevant to this plan. Examples include the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED), Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL), and the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE). This action will:

a. Increase public awareness of opportunities and value of careers in education.
b. Partner with Alaska school districts and workforce development entities to recruit high school students and adult learners into careers in education.
c. Leverage the Alaska Advantage Grant Program to provide financial aid to students with greatest financial need.

The annual data match collaboratively conducted by EED, DOL, and UA provides an excellent example of existing inter-agency collaboration to enhance accountability for individual agencies and for collaborative efforts.

**Milestone**
Establish a Memorandum of Agreement with the state agencies to create a data system that utilizes unique identifiers to track students into careers.

**D. CONDUCT RESEARCH TO IDENTIFY CAUSES AND PROPOSE SOLUTIONS FOR EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN ALASKA.**

**Rationale**
Alaska has a significant need for educational research focused on policy, instructional practice, and the links between policy and practice. In particular, research will help Alaska address the numerous challenges related to teacher recruitment and retention, high dropout rates, finance, and access to education in rural areas. Beneficiaries of such research include policy makers, University departments and programs, the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, the K-12 community, and the general public.
Action 1: Increase UA Education faculty research capacity
The UA Education units will enhance internal capacity to conduct research and disseminate results in specific areas important to public education in Alaska. This action includes strategies such as:

a. Continuing to internally fund faculty research to the extent financially possible.
b. Enhance professional development opportunities related to research by making better use of campus resources such as expert colleagues and faculty development offices.

Milestones
a. With Provosts, research officer(s), and education faculty, establish strategies, priorities, resources, and responsibilities to increase education research capacity at each campus.
b. As result of (a), develop by 6/15/11 a three-year plan to enhance education faculty research capacity at each campus, including research budget commitments and research agenda and priorities.
c. Issue RFPs and awards
d. Establish appropriate dissemination mechanisms, including the UA Online Journal of Education (eJournal).

Action 2: Conduct Education Research in Collaboration with the Institute of Economic and Social Research
The UA Education Units will work with the Institute of Social and Economic Research to match Alaska education research priorities with UA Education faculty members who have the skills and interests to conduct research and publish results addressing those priorities in a timely manner.

Milestones
a. Issue RFPs to UA faculty, fall '10 and spring '11.
b. Issue awards for research to begin spring '11 and fall '12.
c. Disseminate research results appropriate to nature of each topic by spring '12 and spring '13.
d. Work with ISER to publish findings in the UA Education eJournal, as well as in ISER publications.

III. SUMMARY
We recognize we have the opportunity and the obligation to aid the State and its school districts to address historical barriers that have kept our education system from realizing its full potential. Responding to this opportunity will require alternative approaches, additional resources, and ongoing collaboration. Taken together, the initiatives described above will allow the UA Education Units to address in meaningful ways the educator shortage identified in SB241 and to enhance the P-12 education system’s effectiveness in developing Alaska's workforce and socioeconomic future.
### TEACHER EDUCATION PLAN 2010-2011

#### BUDGET

| A. Recruit and retain more students in education, particularly Alaska residents |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1:** Collaborate to strengthen Special Education programs, **Action 2:** Expand Recruitment, Retention, & Completion Efforts, Particularly Recruiting & Graduating Underrepresented Students** |
| **UAS** (RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COORDINATOR) | 90,000 | 90,000 | 90,000 | 270,000 |
| **UAF** (RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COORDINATOR) | 90,000 | 90,000 | 90,000 | 270,000 |
| **UAA** (RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COORDINATOR) | 90,000 | 90,000 | 90,000 | 270,000 |
| **Action 3:** Reestablish the Alaska Education Consortium** |
| **UAS** (CONSORTIUM TRAVEL & IMPLEMENTATION) | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 9,000 |
| **UAF** (CONSORTIUM TRAVEL & IMPLEMENTATION) | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 9,000 |
| **UAA** (CONSORTIUM TRAVEL & IMPLEMENTATION) | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 9,000 |
| **Action 4:** Endorse Alaska Educator Preparation Loan Forgiveness Options |

| B. Increase program access through multiple delivery methods. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1:** Refine and develop UA education programs** |
| **Action 2:** Increase Alternative routes to licensure **Action 3:** Invest in instructional technology and professional development** |
| **UAS** (FACULTY SUPPORT & TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT) | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 60,000 |
| **UAF** (FACULTY SUPPORT & TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT) | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 60,000 |
| **UAA** (FACULTY SUPPORT & TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT) | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 60,000 |

| C. Enhance educator preparation programs in Special Education and in Math and Science teaching. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1:** Increase recruitment into Alaska high demand job areas,** |
| **Action 2:** Collaborate with colleagues in UA academic disciplines to align program offerings in high demand job areas. |
| **Action 3:** Collaborate with external entities to increase recruitment into, and completion of education programs in Alaska high demand job areas. |
| **UAS** | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 36,000 |
| **UAF** | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 36,000 |
| **UAA** | 12,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 36,000 |

| D. Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action 1:** Increase UA Education faculty research capacity **Action 2:** Conduct Education Research in Collaboration with the Institute of Economic and Social Research |
| **UAS** (RESEARCH SUPPORT & eJOURNAL ) | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 75,000 |
| **UAF** (RESEARCH SUPPORT & eJOURNAL ) | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 75,000 |
| **UAA** (RESEARCH SUPPORT & eJOURNAL ) | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 75,000 |

| TOTAL FUNDING REQUIRED, BY MAU |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **UAS** | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 450,000 |
| **UAF** | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 450,000 |
| **UAA** | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 450,000 |

**Funding necessary to support initiative**