UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST

New Program Proposal: Associate of Science (A.S.)

Executive Summary

1. **Degree Title:** Associate of Science  
   **Unit Responsible:** UAS School of Arts and Sciences  
   **UAS Approvals:** UAS Faculty Senate, Chancellor J. Pugh, Provost R. Caulfield, Dean M. Sousa

2. **Catalog Description**

   The Associate of Science (A.S.) degree, administered by the School of Arts and Sciences, provides a solid foundation in mathematics, written and oral communication, the humanities, and the natural sciences, with an emphasis on the sciences. The A.S. degree prepares students for career advancement and for transfer to baccalaureate programs.

   **A.S. Degree Program Requirements:**
   - Admission to the A.S. degree program
   - Completion of 60 credits at 100-level or above, including:
     - At least 20 credits at the 200-level or higher,
     - At least 15 credits completed in residence at UAS
   - All General Education Requirements (GERs) to total 34-36 credits
   - 12 credits of courses in Biology, Chemistry, Engineering, Environmental Science, Math, Physics, or Statistics above the level of GERs, including MATH 108 or higher
   - 12 advisor-approved electives and no more than 4 credits of PE/ODS courses
   - Cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (C) at UAS

3. **Rationale for the New Program, Educational Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes, and Plan for Assessment**

   The rationale for the A.S. degree at UAS is to: 1) promote degree completion for students seeking a career pathway milestone as they pursue baccalaureate study, and 2) better meet the needs of science students at the community college level who anticipate transferring from UAS to another college or university.

   From the standpoint of degree completion, Associate-level degrees are increasingly viewed as a cost-effective and flexible educational goal that can enhance student success. The Lumina Foundation², Kresge Foundation³, Helios Foundation, USA Funds, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are all involved with collaborations seeking to significantly ‘scale up’ approaches to awarding associate degrees to the many students who transfer from community colleges to universities as a means of promoting student completion and success.

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¹ Provides information required by BOR regulation R10.04.020  
The Associate of Science degree is traditionally a transfer degree signifying completion of the baccalaureate core. Depending on the student’s choice of science electives, the A.S. degree may contain sufficient science electives for clear admission into a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program with junior standing. The UAS A.S. degree is designed to provide students with a program of study that will further their academic progress towards attaining the B.S. degree. The A.S. facilitates this goal by enabling students to complete general education requirements (GERs) and to utilize those credits fully in their baccalaureate study. Many of the courses required for the A.S. are available online through eLearning as well as in a face-to-face mode. This fact enhances the flexibility of the proposed program, especially for non-traditional students who are working and/or have family and community obligations.

Student Learning Outcomes for the A.S. degree program include:

- Apply critical thinking skills to conceptualize, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, interpret, and/or apply ideas and information;
- Use appropriate mathematical language and symbols to develop and communicate solutions and demonstrate quantitative and analytical skills and knowledge;
- Articulate the fundamentals, developments, and impacts of one or more scientific disciplines;
- Develop and analyze evidence-based conclusions about the natural world;
- Communicate effectively with diverse audiences using a variety of verbal and non-verbal strategies;
- Respond effectively in writing using appropriate genres and standard written English;
- Use library and electronic research responsibly and appropriately.

UAS already offers the Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree. The numbers of students seeking Associate-level degrees is increasing. Between FY08 and FY12, the number of A.A. degree awardees at UAS grew 80 percent (from 30 in FY08 to 54 in FY12). Similarly, the number of A.A.S. degree awardees at UAS grew 54.3 percent during the same period. These data point to the increasing interest that exists in Associate-level degree offerings and the success of recruiting and supporting student success in these programs. Interest is growing as well in online program offerings; the A.S. will add to options for students seeking an online degree through eLearning.

The A.S. will complement the existing A.A. and benefit from recruitment and advising services already in place. Both UAA and UAF already offer the A.S. degree. An Associate’s degree can be a good investment of time and money for students who are unsure of their future plans, or who need to build confidence in achieving their educational goals. At the same time, the Associate’s degree allows the institution to properly place the student in a program and in courses where they can be successful and also to provide support services (e.g. early alerts, tutoring) for students who are new to higher education. Finally, providing Associate’s degrees allows the institution to distinguish between those students whose goal is a two-year degree from those who are clearly ready for study at the baccalaureate level. This fact is important in data reporting—providing a means of comparing educational achievement at both the two-year and four-year levels.

UAS will assess effectiveness and productivity of the A.S. degree annually and as part of the regular BOR-directed Program Review process (reviews at least every five years).
4. **Relevance to University or Community College Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

The proposed degree helps UAS and the UA system fulfill their community college mission and both MAU-level and system-wide strategic goals. For UAS, the A.S. degree complements existing Associate-level degree offerings (A.A. and A.A.S.), including those already in place at UAA and UAF. The A.S. helps UAS meet the first of its four core themes as identified for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities—that of Student Success. The degree contributes importantly to the UA system’s Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI) in the areas of *Student Achievement and Attainment* as well as in *Accountability to Alaskans* (by providing cost-effective and flexible educational pathways).

5. **Collaboration with Other Universities and Community Colleges**

In developing this proposed degree, UAS faculty reviewed carefully similar offerings by peer institutions and by other MAUs in the University of Alaska system. Both UAA and UAF already offer the A.S. degree. For UAS students, adding the A.S. is expected to enhance the chance of their success early in their college career, enhancing pathways into baccalaureate programs at UAS, and provide a solid foundation for transfer to science, engineering, and math programs at other MAUs.

6. **Demand for Program and Relationship to Other Programs**

Demand for the program is expected to grow modestly as part of our overall UAS recruitment and retention strategy. While demand for the A.S. degree is expected to be modest, particularly at first, we believe that student numbers will grow over time and—importantly—student retention and persistence will increase. Projected enrollments in a new program are expected to be 3 in Year One, 5 in Year Two, 7 in Year 3, and 10 in Year 4.

Required courses taken as part of the A.S. will directly contribute to baccalaureate study in math, engineering, and the sciences:

- BIOL 105/106 and/or CHEM 105/106 are required for junior standing in most BS programs
- GEOG 102/ENVS 102 is required for the B.S. in Geography and Environmental Science
- STAT 273 is required for the B.S. in Nursing
- CHEM 105/106 and PHYS 211/212 are required for admission to the B.S. in Engineering
- MATH 200 (Calculus) is required before taking PHYS 211/212

7. **Effects of Program on Other Academic Units**

Approval of the A.S. degree will enhance integrated, region-wide delivery of community college programs at UAS by involving faculty, staff, and students at all three campuses: Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. Indeed, the original A.S. proposal submitted to the UAS Faculty Senate came from the Ketchikan Campus. The A.S. degree is viewed as one that can be effectively offered at all three UAS campuses, even if the student may well transition to the Juneau Campus or to another MAU to complete baccalaureate degrees in math, engineering, and science.
8. **Availability of Student Services**

Student support services—including advising, financial aid, tutoring, and testing—are available at all three UAS campuses. Existing staff that support the A.A. and A.A.S. degrees already in place will be in a position to provide a full array of student services.

9. **Opportunities for Research and Community Engagement**

Students enrolled in the A.S. degree will be eligible to participate in UAS’ URECA (Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression) program. In doing so, they work with a faculty mentor to develop a planned research or creative activity project and to be eligible for a URECA financial award.

10. **Outline of Schedule for Implementation**

UAS Faculty Senate approved the A.S. proposal in Spring 2013. UAS is seeking SAC and Board of Regents approval in Fall 2013. Once approved by the BOR, UAS will secure approval from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), with the hope that students could enroll in the degree program no later than Fall 2014.

11. **Projection of Enrollments and Graduates Over 5 Years**

Projected enrollments in a new program are expected to be 3 in Year One, 5 in Year Two, 7 in Year 3, 10 in Year 4, and 13 in Year 5. We expect between 3 and 5 graduates annually.

12. **Availability and Quality and/or Requirement for New Faculty or Staff**

Because creating the A.S. degree relies almost entirely on existing courses, we do not envision a need for new faculty. Our existing UAS math, science, and pre-engineering faculty will be advising A.S. students, as will our existing advising teams on the Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka campuses. Some additional effort in delivering the A.S. is expected for staff, including especially for advisors and the UAS Registrar’s Office.

13. **Library, Equipment, and Related Resources**

Because the A.S. will largely draw upon existing courses, we believe that no new library, equipment, or similar instructional resources will be required.

14. **New Facility or Space Renovation Requirements**

No new facilities or space renovation needs are anticipated.

15. **Projected Cost of All Required Resources, Revenue from All Sources and Budgetary Plan**

UAS expects to reallocate internally initially to meet the needs of this new program. Initial additive costs—above and beyond those already expended by advisors, marketing, and support staff for UAS students—are expected to be less than $20,000.
In Year 3, we anticipate having seven (7) students enrolled in the A.S. degree. Assuming enrollment at 12 credits per semester, we expect to receive tuition and fees totaling approximately $34,104 at current tuition rates. Revenues could be modestly higher depending on future rates for tuition and fees.

16. Special Needs or Conditions

None.

17. Consultations

Faculty involved with development of this proposal reviewed similar offerings at UAA and UAF to ensure alignment with baccalaureate requirements for transfer students.

18. Concurrence of Advisory Councils

Advisory councils at all three UAS campuses continue to express strong support for the broad mission undertaken by our institution—including especially Certificate and Associate-level degrees commonly associated with the community college mission.