On March 5th, 2012, the University of Alaska welcomed 52 representatives from fisheries, seafood and maritime companies and organizations to the Alaska Joint Fisheries Seafood Maritime Workforce Forum. The purpose of the day-long event was to establish a mutual understanding of the benefits and value of industry and education and training partnerships, and to share fisheries, seafood and maritime workforce development needs.

University of Alaska President, Patrick Gamble, thanked all for coming and for their interest in collaborating to “raise the bar.” He asked attendees to help focus the fisheries, seafood and maritime workforce development effort. He emphasized the University was here to “listen to your needs, and to also take today’s information to coordinate efforts, to put workers out there, ready to work.” He also recognized this would not be an overnight process, and stated commitment to the long-term effort.

Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium’s Dave Rees, Chair Emeritus, and Todd Bergman, Executive Director, described their organization’s effort to build consensus around workforce development needs identified by the varied process industries’ stakeholders. Mr. Rees stated industry leadership and partnership with the University has been successful. “[The] agenda in 1999 look[ed] just like the Fisheries Seafood Maritime agenda - needs assessment, priority occupations, engage stakeholders, figure out training gaps, training, recruit, retain. Industry has to decide it is going to take a role in making the standards and define technical needs. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board is important, [and so are] utiliz [ing] state resources. Finally, you have to extend outreach to young and the future.”

Mr. Bergman called attention to APICC’s ongoing, periodic reviews of programs, placement and occupations. APICC conducts a ‘Priority Occupations Report’ every three years that focuses on need and surveys where there are gaps. He also shared the structure of the APICC organization and how it facilitates between industry and education and training providers.

The McDowell Group’s analyst Scott Miller presented ‘What we think we know about the state of Alaska’s Fisheries, Seafood and Maritime Workforce’ and gave an introduction to the Occupational Needs Assessment Survey Instrument. “The bottom line? We need to know more about fisheries, seafood and maritime occupations, and we need to identify common denominators among occupations to understand what skills and knowledge are required”.

Following the morning session, representatives from fisheries, seafood processing and maritime organizations adjourned to small group break-out sessions to discuss:

- What is working now to meet your workforce needs?
- What challenges do you face in meeting your workforce needs?
- What are your current and future workforce needs and priorities?
- What education and training is needed to prepare the workforce?

Attendees reconvened in the afternoon to share results of their small group discussions. Common themes emerged including: definitions of each sector, e.g. what does “fisheries”, “seafood” and “maritime” include; seasonality of work; lack of outreach and communication to young people and parents about occupations and careers; competition for employees; entry-level vs. skilled; broad range of types of occupations.

Attendees were asked if they would be willing to participate in further work to identify occupations, education and training needs. Based on the Fo-
Participants at the March 5th Alaska Joint Fisheries, Seafood & Maritime Workforce Forum

- Wannetta Ayers, Dept. of Commerce Community & Economic Development
- Helen Mehrkens, Dept. of Education & Early Childhood Development
- Candice Bressler, Department of Fish & Game
- Greg Cashen, Department of Labor & Workforce Development
- Jim Browning, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation Inc.
- Brad Wilkins, Alaska General Seafoods
- Michael Neusl, Alaska Marine Highway System
- Dave Rees, Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium
- Todd Bergman, Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium
- Doug Ward, Alaska Ship and Drydock
- Ron Peck, Alaska Travel Industry Association
- Jay Stinson, Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association
- Larry Cotter, Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
- Laura Delgado, Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
- Stephanie Madsen, At-Sea Processors Association
- Fred Esposito, AVTEC
- Celeste Novak, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation
- Robin Richardson, Copper River Seafoods
- Joel Neimeyer, Denali Commission
- Cheryl Sutton, Fisherman Former Legislative Aide UFA board member
- Kris Noroz, Icicle Seafoods
- Sean Ruddy, Kachemak Shellfish Grower’s Cooperative
- Norman Van Vactor, Leader Creek Seafoods
- Captain Ed Page, Marine Exchange
- Scott Miller, McDowell Group
- Buck Laukko, North Pacific Fisheries Association
- Chris Oliver, North Pacific Fishery Management Council
- Steve Reifenstuhl, Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
- Doug Walrath, Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center
- Dianne Blumer, Office of Governor Sean Parnell
- Glenn Reed, Pacific Seafood Processor Association
- Ed Rasmussen, Rasmussen Foundation
- Ian Dutton, Rasmussen Foundation
- Valerie Burd, Saltwater Inc.
- Penelope Goforth, SeaCat Exploration
- John Kelley, Signature Seafoods
- Brenda Dale, Snug Harbor Seafoods
- Elaine Price, Southeast Conference
- Erik O’Brien, Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference
- Adelheid Herrmann, Southwest Alaska Vocational Education Center
- Steven Angasan, Southwest Alaska Vocational Education Center
- Chris Plassiance, Unisea Seafoods
- Arni Thomson, United Fishermen of Alaska
- Jeff Stephan, United Fishermen’s Marketing Association Inc.
- Ansel Sandone, United States Senate Office of Senator Begich
- Bob Walsh, United States Senate Office of Senator Murkowski
- Thomas Ostobe, US Coast Guard
- Aggie Blandford, Western Alaska Community Development Association
- David Hatton, Westward Seafoods Inc.
- Jason Hale, Yukon River Drainage Fishermen’s Association
- Tom Case, UAA Chancellor
- Bear Baker, UAA College of Business & Public Policy

In light of leaders’ dialogue and subsequent work, the UA FSM Initiative will undertake these next steps:

- Complete Alaska FSM Workforce Needs and Priorities Survey (April 2012; access survey at http://fmsurvey.com/Mini/AWP1/AWP1logn.htm)
- Follow up phone interviews (April 2012)
- Update UA Education and Training Inventory
- Inventory offerings from other Alaska education and training providers
- Inventory occupations
- Second Forum with industry to review survey findings, education and training gaps analysis, hear industry priority education and training needs

Complete summaries from the morning, small group, and afternoon sessions and presentations as well as other project information are available at the UA FSM Initiative project website, www.alaska.edu/fsmi.