SDI Themes	Topics derived from July 23, 2012 Strategic Direction Initiative Planning Meeting; Questions derived from comments made at that meeting and statewide information. Revisions based on feedback from MAU leadership and governance received by November 30, 2012, and revisions based on input received at February 20, 2013 meeting of leadership and governance. * Recommendations made by the Governor's Advisory Task Force on Higher Education and Career Readiness
1. Theme: Student Achievement and Attainment **Questions to aid in identifying the issues related to program quality:**	• **1.a High Quality Programs** • What criteria should be used in assessing the quality of programs? • What soft-skill competencies (e.g., punctuality, attendance, time management, getting along with others, politeness, organization, resiliency, advocacy, reflection, dedication to continuous improvement for self and organization, self-criticism, handling emotions), if any, should be included in programs? • How can programs use high impact teaching and learning practices (e.g., common intellectual experiences, writing-intensive courses, and capstone courses and projects) to improve quality? • How can faculty development be improved to support improved learning and teaching? • How can the student experience be revised to improve student outcomes? • How can UA improve its role in developing Alaskans' skills and knowledge for active, informed, and engaged citizenry?
Questions to aid in identifying issues or problems related to enrollment:	• **1.b Access and Value** • Why does Alaska have the lowest participation rate of low-income students in the nation? • What role does the amount of needs-based aid have on the low-income student participation rate? • To what extent does financial aid (or lack thereof) impact enrollment by part-time students? • What is the value system we should use to assign costs to various programs and what is the basis for doing so? • Why does Alaska export a high proportion of college bound students to other states? • What is the desired mix of out-of-state and international students within UA and why? Consider diversity, quality, and revenue reasons. • How does the lack of desired programs, or lack of desired programs in particular locations, effect enrollment? • What other ways can we grow and sustain enrollment in the upcoming decade? • How can we establish a framework for considering the cost of tuition for 2-year, 4-year, and life-long learning for our students? • How do community campuses address the value of the 2-year certificate programs they offer? • How could a common course numbering system across all three MAUs impact the system as whole? • How can we coordinate programs across all three MAUs such as Nursing, Math, English, and the MBA Program? • What level of debt is appropriate for our students and how do we communicate that?

Questions to aid in identifying issues or problems related to placement and developmental education:	• **1.c Placement and Developmental Education** • How should the University be proactive in helping students, once they come to us, avoid the need for remediation? • Why do so few students placed in remedial course work complete a degree? • Why do placement scores and placement practices differ among the MAUs, especially for English and math? • How can placement of students be improved to create greater student success and attainment? • *What emerging pedagogies and incentives for developmental education show promise and what best practices are being used in other states? • How can remediation efforts be revised without sacrificing quality student learning outcomes?
Questions to aid in identifying the issues related to student transfers.	• **1.d Student Transfer** • What are the administrative barriers for transfers between MAUs and why do they exist? • Why do students complain that their credits do not transfer among UA institutions when the vast majority of credits do transfer? • How can we structure communication with students regarding transfer that provides definitions, GER information, and electives information? • What services can we provide (such as a Course Transfer Center) that can expedite and inform students involved in the course transfer process? • How can the transfer of general education courses and 100-200 level courses across MAUs be better facilitated? • How do we better facilitate military course transfers?
Questions to aid in identifying issues related to e-learning and distance education:	• **1.e E-Learning and Distance Education** • Why does UA have relatively few full programs available online via E-learning? • Why do Alaska students enroll in E-learning courses offered by other institutions? • How do free courses, such as Massively Open Online Courses, impact student enrollment? • How can UA improve faculty development opportunities to expand E-learning program offerings? • How can UA promote the use of blended and hybrid instruction, in addition to E-learning? • How can infrastructure and support be improved to facilitate the expansion of E-learning offerings?

Questions to aid in identifying issues related to advising:	• How should students living in one community campus region but taking distance courses from another campus be served by the local campus and what should the cost/revenue share process be to fund this support? • Should faculty compensation for distance courses differ from in-person courses, and, if so, how and why? • Which programs could collaborate further with community campus faculty in the delivery of e-learning courses, including upper division coursework and complete programs? • **1.f Comprehensive Advising** • *How do we ensure that academic advisors are serving all degree-seeking students at every campus and that campus advising services are organized in a way that best serves the needs of students throughout their postsecondary education? • How can academic advisors better connect to high school counselors/teachers to improve the transition to college? • Which student populations are currently best served and least served by advising and how do we know (e.g., veterans, non-traditional, residential versus commuter)? • What are the most common advising errors that impact retention and time to degree and why do they occur? • How can UA use predictive analytics to identify students at risk and intervene appropriately in support of student success? • Why do students not see an advisor sooner rather than later when they start getting into academic trouble? • Do students have realistic expectations about college and what information do we need to help them understand? • How do we best serve non-traditional students on every campus? • How should individual student goals be tracked to assess whether those are met or not? • *Are there sufficient numbers of advisors and have advisors been sufficiently trained to fulfill the Alaska Performance Scholarship requirements related to course selection, career choice, and personal challenges? • What is our record on timeliness of communications related to financial aid (FASBA) decisions affecting students? What other timely responses are we overlooking that could support us in delivering better service to students? • How can we better use electronic communication to better provide real time responses to student needs and queries?
Questions to aid in identifying	• **1.g Degree/certificate Completion** • Why does UA have low certificate/associate and baccalaureate completion rates? • What barriers are impeding students' progress to timely degree/certificate completion?

issues related to completion:	• Why do some UA programs require more than the minimum number of credits for a degree/certificate if they are not required to do so for specialized accreditation? • Why is Alaska Native enrollment about the same proportion as the state population but the degree completion rate is generally much lower? (Exception is sometimes due to certificate sponsorship) • How do existing academic policies impact the number of credits student take and repeat courses when they fail? What policy revisions, if any, are needed in this regard? • How can UA provide incentives to students to encourage retention and timely completion?
2. Theme: Productive Partnerships With Alaska's Schools **Questions related to identifying issues related to educational alignment:**	• **2.a Alignment of High School and University Curriculum** • How can we better align secondary requirements with admission to and preparation for postsecondary education in Alaska? • How can we better inform superintendents, school boards, teachers, and parents about secondary preparation for college, admission requirements, and the impact of required remediation coursework on time to degree? *4. How can we use the planned longitudinal data system to track students from K-12 into postsecondary then into careers as a feedback mechanism to improve student outcomes? *5 How can we improve effective collaboration between the Alaska Legislature, the State Board of Education, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, and the University Of Alaska Board of Regents including reporting requirements using shared student data? *6 How can the University and K-12 collaborate in the use of skills assessment tools for students to gain realistic appraisal of their existing skill level early-on so they can prepare for college-level work while still in high school? • What are the cost and derived benefits to be achieved for UA-EED collaboration related to PSAT and PLAN (pre ACT) assessment for high school sophomores?
Questions related to identifying issues related to college credits for high school students:	• **2.b Early College and Tech Prep** • How can UA better facilitate students earning college credit while still in high school through Tech Prep and Early College programs? • How can we ensure that Tech Prep and Early College credits will be accepted as meeting degree program requirements at all three MAUs?
	• **2.c Bridging Programs** • How can we combine and/or align certain bridging programs so that the most effective programs are sustained while less effective programs are either shelved or folded into other efforts?

Questions related to bridging programs:	• How many different bridging programs should UA have and how targeted should they be? • How do we improve the transition from K-12 to UA? How can we better align bridging programs with UA programs? • How can we conduct a cost analysis that helps us retain the most effective programs that lead to student success? • How do we partner with K-12 to streamline and advance students from secondary education into the University and simultaneously decrease the need for developmental and remedial coursework? • Which bridging programs are effective and which are not? Which programs can be scaled up? • What role should UA students play in K-12 and bridge program engagement?
Questions related to identifying issues related to providing teachers for Alaska's schools:	• **2.d Teachers for Alaska Schools** • How can UA improve teacher education to graduate K-12 teachers that will better prepare students for post-secondary education? • What should UA advocate for, if anything, to help incentivize Alaskan students to teach in rural communities? *3 How can the Alaska Teacher Mentor Project provide greater opportunities for incoming Alaska minority educators and provide improved Alaska cultural relevance, via recognized Alaska cultural leaders, to its mentoring curriculum for all incoming teachers?
Questions related to identifying issues related to preparation of rural students for college:	• **2.e Rural Student Preparation** • What role does UA play in increasing the proportion of Alaska Performance Scholarship eligibility of rural secondary students with an emphasis on our ever-increasing diverse populations? What specific steps could be taken to increase the eligibility of rural students to the APS? • What role does UA play in reducing the need of remediation for rural and Alaska Native students once they enroll in postsecondary education? • How our programs and current structure support the needs of rural Alaskan students? • What other partnerships should be fostered to improve access and preparedness for higher education, e.g., United Way efforts, Best Beginnings, etc.)
3. Theme: Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Public and Private Industries	• **3.a Public/Private Relationships with Major Alaska Industries, Municipalities/Villages, and State and Federal Agencies** • What can UA do to better prepare the workforce needed by Native corporations that are now global companies?

Questions related to identifying issues related to Public/Private Partnerships:	• How can UA better partner with municipalities, village, and tribal organizations on issues of mutual interest? • What are the public policy issues that UA should address to better serve Alaska's needs? How should students be involved in this work and in learning public policy? • What should UA be doing to better partner with the military locally and more broadly? • How is UA doing in research and development partnerships and how can these efforts be improved? • How can UA improve the partnership between the community campuses and industry to take advantage of funding opportunities? • How can UA better partner with state and federal agencies? • What are the best practices for developing and sustaining partnerships?
Questions related to meeting the industry's needs for high demand jobs	• **3.b Graduates Prepared for High Demand Jobs** • What should UA be doing in on-site training, career mobility development, internships and other experiential learning approaches, including just-in-time training? • How can UA partner with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Department of Education and Early Development to advance career education and training opportunities, track post-completion employment /wage progression, and improve career information for Alaskans? • How are we aligning with innovative partners to develop new certifications that have value in the business sector? What else can we do? • What is UA's capacity in high growth, high demand job area programs? Alaska Economic Trends October 2012 Occupational Forecast lists the following high demand areas (in order): health care and social assistance, retail trade, educational services, accommodation and food services, financial activities including real estate, professional, scientific, and technical services, transportation and warehousing, construction, management and remediation services, administrative and support and waste, mining, local and state government, wholesale trade and arts, entertainment and recreation.
4. Theme: Research and Development to Sustain Alaska's Economic Growth and Enhance Communities **Questions related to research in Areas of Significant Importance to Alaska (ASIA):**	• **4.a Research in Areas of Significant Importance to Alaska, the Circumpolar North, and the Nation** • What is the process for renewing Alaska's research plan? • How well do our research priorities (see the Statewide Council on Research plan To Build a Fire) align with Alaska's research needs and US Arctic research strategy? • How well are we fulfilling our role in broader circumpolar polar research? • How well are research priorities aligned with undergraduate and graduate programs and support for those programs? • What are we doing to build a knowledge-based economy within the communities that sustain our work and growth?

	• Does the University devote sufficient effort and investment to conduct research in its established priority areas? • How diverse should UA's research be and why? • How can the University partner with state agencies and programs to conduct research that advances the communities and the economics of the State? • What are the best models for sustaining partnerships with industry, government agencies, and state programs? • How do we move our individual and joined research efforts to more global endeavors rather than remaining Alaska-centric ? • How do we advance our Arctic research so that we are the gateway or key partner in all future northern tier research efforts? • How can we better utilize and engage the liberal arts to enhance research and development being conducted at UA? • How can UA better its efforts to conduct research that expands and deepens Alaskans' human capacity and well-being?
Questions related to creative activities:	• **4.b Creative activities** • How should UA enhance opportunities for participation in and appreciation of the arts and cultural expression? • How do we provide better access and engagement in the arts and cultural expression across Alaska? • How do we better partner with industry and communities in the arts and humanities? • What is the appropriate level of UA support for the arts and cultural expression and why?
Questions related to identifying issues related to intellectual property:	• **4.c Intellectual Property and Commercialization** • Why does Alaska have a low rate of patents compared to other states? • What are the opportunities to leapfrog technology that could benefit the State and the University?What role should venture capitalists play in the development of intellectual property and commercialization? • How do we advance undergraduate research to fill the pipeline for future researchers required for Alaska and its partnerships?
Questions related to identifying issues related to working with	• **4.d Partnerships** • In what ways are we developing and sustaining community researchers to continue projects and partnerships that are successful? • Are we collaborative, as we need to be with new endeavors and partnerships? • How do we expand our research partnership with the military?

partnerships:	• Why is there so little corporate support for some areas of research? • How can we better work with existing and emerging entrepreneurs and small businesses? • How can we more effectively communicate the scope and quality of our research? • How can we better engage with communities to understand their needs for research-based knowledge? • How can we better document noncredit continuing education and outreach activities to assess impact? • How do we become more strategic in our efforts so that we are a key partner in arctic planning, climate change, global warming, and other elements of that make us an arctic nation?
Questions related to research as an engine of economic development.	• **4.e Research Investment** • How should we better provide support and incentives for faculty research and creative expression? • How can we improve the development of sufficient numbers of researchers for the future? • What is the appropriate mixture of long- and short-term research projects and why? • What is the return on investment model for UA research? How do we better communicate and acknowledge this? • How should we invest in proposal development to be more competitive? • How should we be staffed to be prepared to do more interdisciplinary research? • Why has the State been reluctant to fund research proposals given the clear return on investment? • What alternatives to federal funding should be explored to fund research and why? • What areas of graduate and undergraduate research should we focus on to better compete for federal funding?
5. Theme: Accountability to The People of Alaska **Questions related to identification and alignment with Alaska's needs.**	• **5.a Alaska's Needs** • How well are we aligning our efforts to the current and future needs of the State and of its communities? • What does UA do as an institution to address jobs in this state that go out to non-Alaskans? • How do we address the social climate needs of this state? What is our role in addressing the social needs to reduce the problems of abuse, neglect, suicide rates, alcoholism, and other social problems? • Within our community of learning, we have a Cultural Legacy to uphold and transfer among learners; how is this done throughout the University, and what are the processes that address this responsibility? • How do we involve the business sector in the process of identifying and developing industry demands and needs? • What is our approach in involving ourselves with natural resource development? Do we or should we validate projects? Should we lead in this effort or be proactive to stimulate growth and development? • How do we use our location and resources to take on a broader role in Northern studies and circumpolar

Questions related to identifying issues surrounding quality, assessment, improvement, and innovation:	research? • How do we expand the constructive elements of wellness, lifelong learning, and community development to our responsibilities to serve the people of Alaska? • **5.b Assessment and Improvement** • What approaches and tools should be used to support continuous improvement and monitor change? • What are the service ratings for all of the student services we provide, and how do we use those ratings to improve those services and eliminate the lag-time or poor communications with both internal and external customers? • How do we bridge to a climate that welcomes performance management as part of the work package? How do we provide our performance challenges and successes to the public? • How well are staff members able to access information needed for effective performance of their jobs? • What is the training provided to staff, students, and faculty that allows them to maximize use of online resources to provide better service? Is it adequate? Is it comprehensive? Does it meet the needs of users? • What are we doing to compete on quality in the global community? How are staff and faculty trained to stay up-to-date? • What innovations have we implemented that can be used as example to develop similar changes and improvements? • What University-wide competencies can we use to inspire change in areas where there are needs for improvement? • How are we improving system-wide data reporting and analytics to provide administrators with accurate, user-friendly, and up-to-date information about student success and performance metrics?
Questions related to identifying issues related to stewardship and investment priorities and	• **5.c Stewardship, Investment and Reinvestment** • How should we identify areas for investment and reinvestment? • How should we use system-wide data reporting and analytics to provide administrators with accurate, user-friendly, and up-to-date fiscal information? • How do we integrate practices of stewardship into the delivery of educational services throughout the system? • • How can we improve or maintain performance at a lower cost?

fiscal oversight:	• What additional administrative efficiencies and improvements should be considered? • How can we ensure that required program reviews at each MAU are critical and constructive – leading to strategic decision-making? What revenue enhancement ideas should be considered? What reallocations should occur to maximize existing resources? • How can we encourage/incentivize academic program collaboration/consolidation across the system? • What are the opportunities for administrative services and functions collaboration/consolidation across the system? • How should MAU performance funding pools be used to support performance related strategies? • What is the optimal level within the system to make decision about reallocations for academic programs?
Questions related to identifying issues related to communication with the people of Alaska:	• **5.e Communication** • How do should we communicate measures and results? • How can extension and outreach be used to communicate the breadth and depth of university contributions to the state? • How can extension and outreach better serve the needs of Alaskans? • How do we communicate quality through branding? • How can ongoing dialogue with students, alumni, business and civic leaders, Native leaders, and elected leaders, and the public help ensure that we remain responsive to public needs and expectations? • How will we let Alaskans know where we are with our progress on SDI, and in general, with how we are doing addressing their needs? (or we can put this question in 5.e Communications below) • How do we design our communications to reach outside of the University to build our coalition for change, advancement, and development of the University to meet the future? • How do we frame our communication documents that convey our changes and advancements in teacher education, community involvement, our partnerships, undergraduate and graduate research?