



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 19, 2013

**TO:** Patrick K. Gamble  
President

**FROM:** John R. Pugh  
Chancellor

**RE:** Instructional Technology Success Strategies at UAS

Attached are two UAS reports describing innovative instructional technology strategies that directly contribute toward fulfillment of the UA Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI). Specifically, they support the SDI themes of *Student Achievement and Attainment* and *Accountability to the people of Alaska*.

These reports describe UAS strategies for: 1) integrating innovative technology to enhance teaching and learning, 2) enhancing student success through instructional technologies, and 3) assessing the results of these efforts.

Key Findings about Student Use of UAS Course Management System:

- ✓ UAS course management system is widely used by students
  - 89% of course sites have moderate or high levels of activity
  - 63% have high levels of activity
- ✓ UAS provides an active course site for all course sections
- ✓ UAS uses course site design/content standards to promote consistency and a user-friendly format
- ✓ UAS collects its student course ratings at the end of semester using this system
- ✓ UAS has a single web portal, UAS Online, that provides easy access to instructional resources

For many years, UAS has worked to integrate technology effectively with instruction. While the use of technology is essential for delivering eLearning, it offers significant benefits to students in traditional classes as well. Technology enables communication outside the boundaries of the classroom, it encourages active learning and prompt feedback, and it can prepare our students for the strategies and tools used in private industry.

#### Cross-campus Collaboration in Use of Learning Technologies:

While embracing the use of technology, UAS has been mindful that it can be a barrier for some students. In light of this, UAS has adopted strategies for ensuring consistency in the technologies and how they are used. To achieve this consistency, UAS formed a regional Teaching, Learning and Technology Roundtable (TLTR) which actively explores the uses and pitfalls of technology in instruction and engages all members of the university in this important, ongoing conversation.

#### Auditing the Effectiveness of Instructional Technologies:

Finally, UAS recognizes the importance of auditing the effectiveness of its technology strategy. Assessments are obtained both through traditional surveying and through direct measurement of when and how students use technology. This auditing has implications beyond IT strategy. For example, accreditation groups continue to question credit policies. The UAS IT persistence metrics offer a unique perspective on how students participate in their classes throughout the entire semester.

#### Attachments:

- 1) IT Success Strategies for New Students  
This one-page document offers an executive summary of IT policies, support strategies and assessment outcomes.
- 2) Analysis of Course Website Activity, Fall 2012  
This two-page document summarizes the use of course website technology at UAS for the fall 2012 semester.

### Alignment to UAS Mission and Strategic Goals

UAS values the integration of technology in education, and has long recognized the potential for technology to support institutional goals. This recognition is reflected in the UAS policies guiding the course web site strategy by including active course sites for every section, retaining course sites indefinitely, maximizing student interactivity and faculty control, requiring a posted syllabus for every course, and delivering student course ratings at the end of each semester.

These policies align course web strategies with the following UAS Core Themes<sup>1</sup>:

**STUDENT SUCCESS:** In addition to course information and activities, UAS access policies allow prospective students to make informed decisions about specific courses and programs of study.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING:** Course web site technologies directly support many best practices<sup>2</sup>. These include fostering communication among peers, delivering prompt feedback, encouraging active learning, communicating expectations and emphasizing time on task.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The UAS policies provide transparency, allowing the community a peek inside the classroom, while protecting confidentiality and intellectual property.

The purpose of this analysis is to assess if these efforts have created an online environment that is valued by students. This assessment is based on the metric of *student persistence* – measuring when students first visit their course sites and the proportion of students who return week after week throughout the semester.

### Key Finding:

The UAS course management system is widely used across UAS. Students visit their course sites long before classes start, and use persists throughout the semester:

- In the typical week, only 6% of course websites are unused by the students.
- 63% of course websites have high activity (accessed by 75% of the class roster.)
- On average, students first visit a course site 24 days prior to the start of classes.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.uas.alaska.edu/UAS\\_StrategicPlan/docs/strategic-plan-public\\_10-17.pdf](http://www.uas.alaska.edu/UAS_StrategicPlan/docs/strategic-plan-public_10-17.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/seven.html>

**Courses Analyzed:**

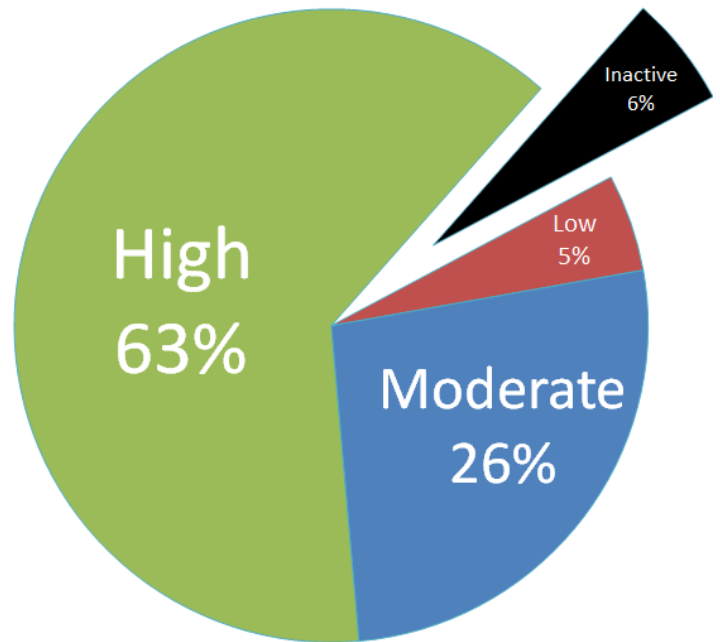
This analysis is focused on traditional university courses (both eLearning and on-campus.) While a course web site is provided to every course section, this analysis is limited to courses coded as “lecture” with four or more students enrolled. Specifically excluded were ED593 and continuing education courses. In the Fall 2012 semester, there were 343 courses which matched these criteria.

Figure 1 Course Site Activity, Fall 2012 Average

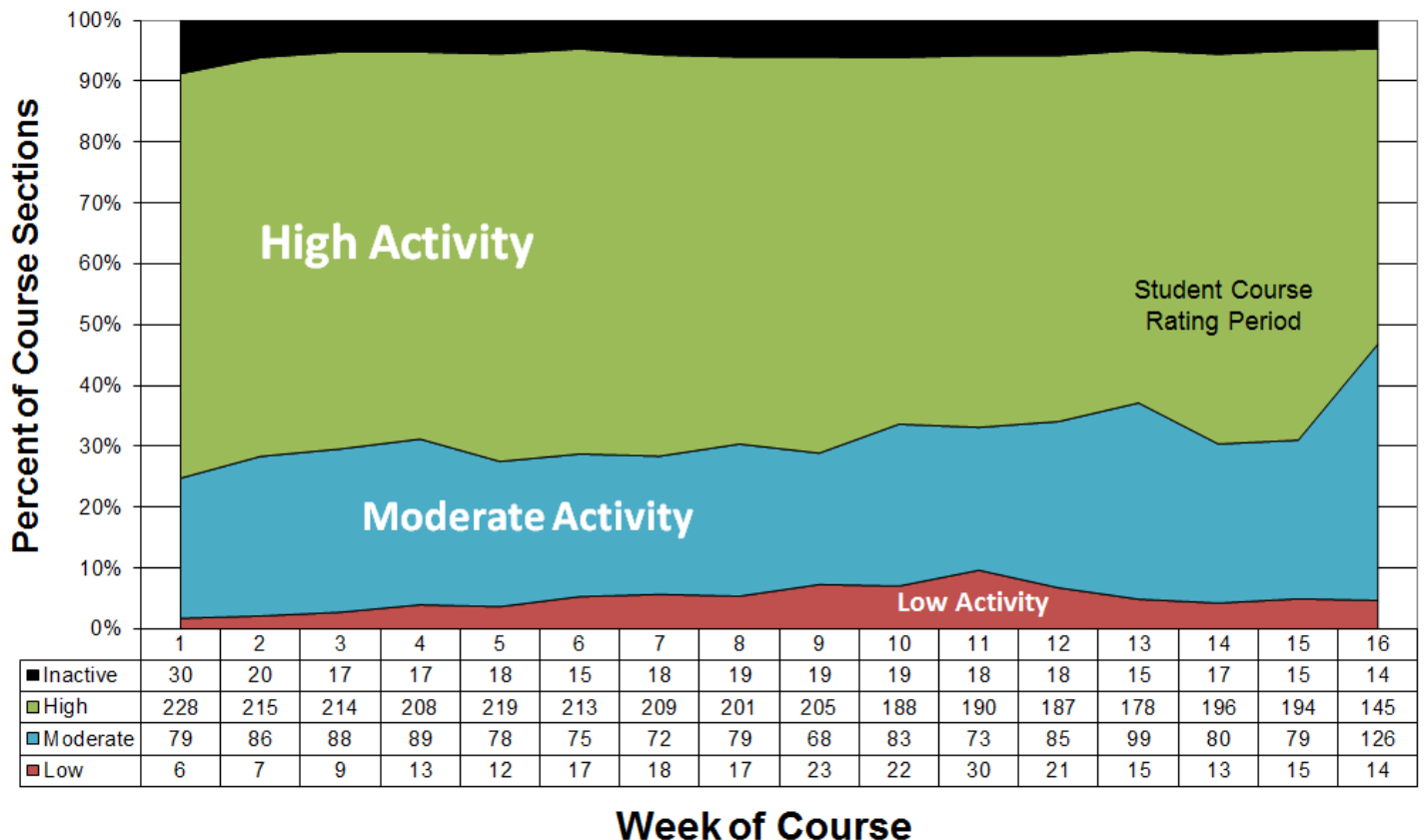
### Persistence Metric:

The UAS web portal tracks connections to course web sites. This analysis assessed each class by identifying how many students on the class roster visited their course site each week. Each week, courses were assigned to one of four groups:

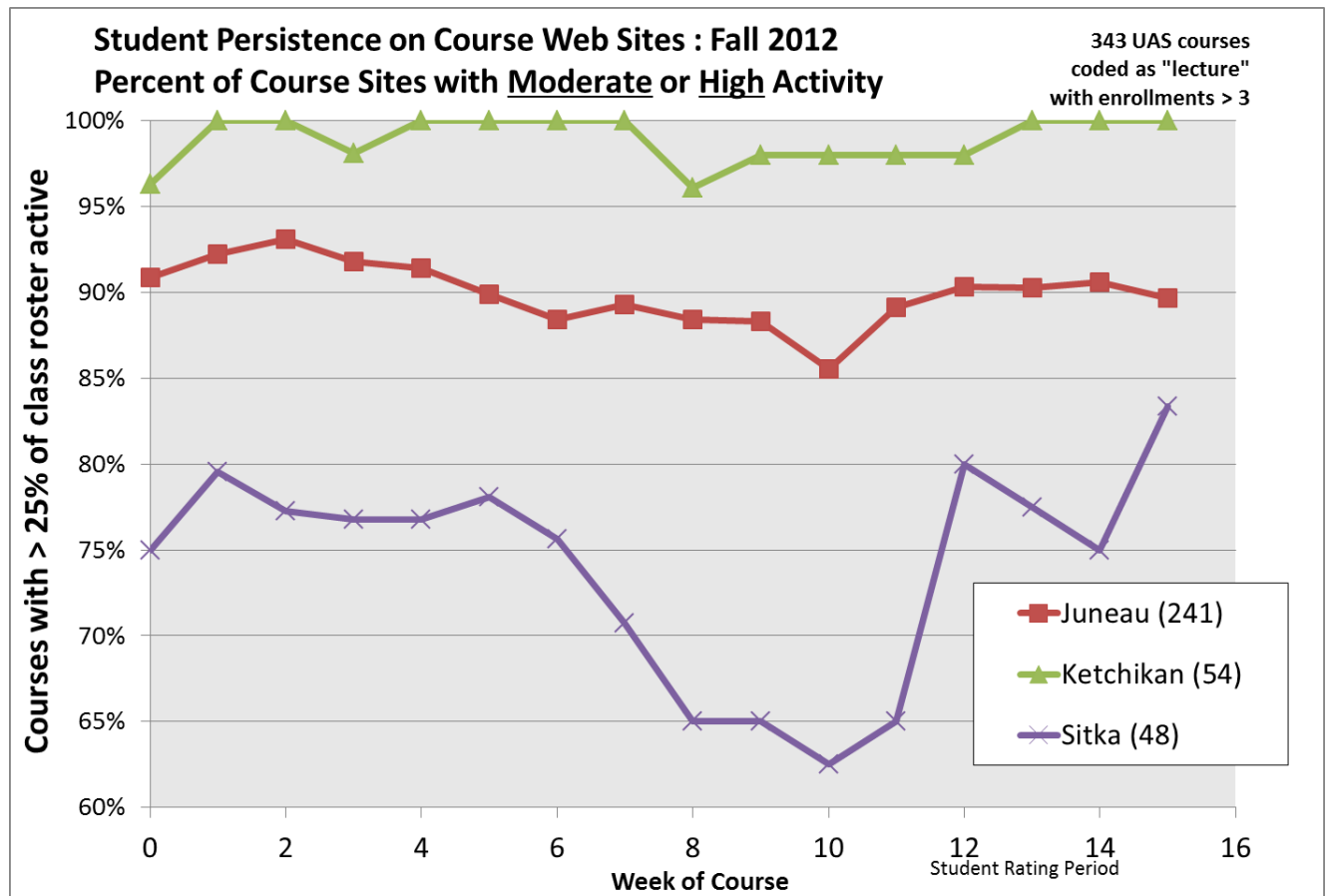
<b>Inactive</b>	No students on the class roster visited the web site
<b>Low</b>	The site was visited by less than 1/4 of the class roster
<b>High</b>	3/4 of the students on the roster visited the site
<b>Moderate</b>	1/4 to 3/4 of the students on the roster visited the site



Since the data are assessed week by week, the approach allows UAS to assess how course website use changes over the course of a semester:



In addition, use can be differentiated by originating campus:





## Alignment to UAS Mission and Strategic Goals

UAS values the integration of technology in education, and has long recognized the potential for technology to support institutional goals. This recognition is reflected in the UAS policies and strategies concerning course web sites and other instructional technologies. These serve to align UAS IT strategy with the UAS core themes of *student success*, *teaching and learning*, and *community engagement*.

## IT Strategies at UAS

UAS strives to maintain a standard set of instructional resources. This strategy helps ensure that skills learned for one class will transfer to other courses and programs. In addition, UAS faculty and administration have worked together to establish the following policies and standards:

- An active course site is available for every UAS course section.
- UAS has course design and content standards to ensure course sites are consistent and easy to navigate.
- A course syllabus must be posted online.
- Course sites are used to collect student course ratings at the end of each semester.
- Access to web resources is provided through the UAS web portal. This portal provides easy access to instructional resources both at UAS and at the other MAUs.

## Student Orientation and Targeted Training

As part of the overall technology success strategy, UAS includes a number of mandatory and optional technology sessions during student orientation. Students are introduced to UA Online and DegreeWorks, as well as the UAS Web Portal and their course web sites.

Interestingly, most new students report that they logged into the web portal and accessed their course sites prior to orientation. When asked how they know to do this, students cite the information on the UAS web site and in Banner, and a general expectation of web accessibility.

Some classes use tools which are more complex than a typical web page (live web conferencing, for example.) In order to prepare students for these classes, UAS offers targeted training before and after the start of classes.

## Outcomes

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### *Use of course web sites (Fall 2012)*

- On average, students first visited their course sites 24 days prior to the start of classes.
- In the typical week, only 94% of course websites are used by the students.
- 63% of course websites have high activity (accessed by 75% of the class roster each week.)

These findings are explored in more detail in a separate report: *Fall 2012 Analysis of Course Website Activity*.

## Student Ratings

Each semester, UAS asks students to rate the effectiveness of technology for their classes. The results are very consistent, with nearly half of UAS students “strongly agreeing” that the technology and equipment for their classes worked effectively.

A summary of student rating results is provided in the following table.

<b>"The technology and equipment for the course worked effectively (online utilities, satellite, audio-visual, lab, powerpoints, etc.)?"</b>							
Term	Average Score	0 = Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4 = Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Fall 2005	3.3	2.1%	3.2%	10.3%	22.0%	44.7%	17.7%
Spring 2006	3.2	3.0%	3.5%	10.3%	20.2%	44.2%	18.7%
Fall 2006	3.1	3.4%	3.9%	11.5%	20.8%	41.5%	18.9%
Spring 2007	3.2	1.9%	3.2%	10.9%	23.6%	42.5%	17.9%
Fall 2007	3.2	2.3%	3.9%	11.4%	22.6%	43.5%	16.3%
Spring 2008	3.2	2.7%	4.1%	10.6%	22.5%	41.7%	18.5%
Fall 2008	3.2	2.2%	3.8%	11.4%	23.5%	42.3%	16.8%
Spring 2009	3.2	2.6%	3.3%	10.3%	24.7%	42.4%	16.8%
Fall 2009	3.2	2.1%	4.2%	12.1%	23.2%	43.9%	14.4%
Spring 2010	3.3	1.9%	2.8%	10.6%	23.0%	46.5%	15.2%
Fall 2010	3.2	2.3%	5.1%	11.1%	23.6%	42.4%	15.5%
Spring 2011	3.2	2.7%	3.5%	10.3%	23.4%	44.6%	15.5%
Fall 2011	3.3	2.2%	3.1%	10.0%	22.7%	44.2%	17.8%
Spring 2012	3.2	2.5%	3.2%	10.8%	23.7%	43.0%	16.7%
Fall 2012	3.2	2.5%	3.7%	11.9%	24.7%	44.3%	12.8%