

# Mission Area Analysis and Statement of Need for Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center Programs at University of Alaska Fairbanks, Kuskokwim Campus in Bethel, Alaska

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## **Background**

The Kuskokwim Campus - University of Alaska Fairbanks (KuC) is located in Bethel, which is the hub of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. KuC offers post-secondary education and training, supports native health research and reaches out to 47 communities with 56 tribes to provide nearly 20 certificates and associate degrees, as well as selected baccalaureate and Master's degrees. The campus specialization is preservation of cultural heritage particularly Central Yup'ik language vitality—it is the only rural campus to offer the Yup'ik Language and Culture bachelor of arts degree that guarantees literacy and speaking ability upon completion. The programs offered by the campus develop professional, community and cultural leaders.

KuC's primary role is to offer academic, vocational and community interest courses while assisting students in the transition to college and successful completion of their study program whether that be at certificate or degree level.

KuC's commitment to life-long learning takes many forms, with an emphasis on offering services at the point of need, and requires strong partnerships. Crucial to mission achievement are the partnerships that engage students, faculty, staff and the communities in workforce training, professional development, and academic success. Our partnerships keep our campus alive and functioning as an intellectual and social hub for the Delta.

This Mission Area Analysis (MAA) will address strengthening several critical programs and related partnerships that operate through the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center (YPCC): the Consortium Library programs, which are funded by the City of Bethel, the state's Department of Education and KuC; the small business and entrepreneurial classes and workshops that tie into the 100+ vendor Saturday Markets funded through US HUD and state Department of Community and Economic grants and partnerships; the Yupiit Piciryariat Museum operated by the Association of Village Council Presidents, the regional tribal services entity; the YPCC conference center operated by KuC; specific training requests from our regional partners, such as the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation using the conference space to train their 1,000+ employees on the conversion to electronic health records; and academic certificates and degrees that support large cohorts that exceed the classroom capacities of other campus classrooms, such as the Rural Human Services certificate and the Human Services Associate of Applied Sciences degree. This MAA

will examine the importance of several programs offered by KuC and the Statement of Need will document the positive outcomes of expanded space in the YPCC.

### **Alignment with UA's Strategic Directions Initiative and UAF Mission and Planning for the Future**

UA's Strategic Directions Initiative is an organizational change effort led by President Gamble and engages people internal and external to the UA system, throughout the state, seeking ideas and innovations to improve UA service and productivity. The SDI themes are:

- Student Achievement and Attainment
- Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Schools
- Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Public and Private Industries
- Research and Development to Help Build and Sustain Alaska's Communities and Economic Growth
- Accountability to the People of Alaska

SDI themes are supported directly and indirectly by the expansion of the YPCC. Improved and expanded space will enhance productive partnerships with Alaska's public and private industries and improve accountability to the public. Expanded and reconfigured space will allow for safer and more secure working environment, and will allow staff to focus on their intended work rather than monitoring problematic behavior and building safety. The librarian will be able to focus on library operations, instructing the library science course, and supervision of staff, rather than policing the public and securing the building. The librarian will not have to work additional hours during vulnerable times, such as Halloween night, to accompany the single staffer.

Directly supporting UA strategic direction *student achievement and attainment*, UAF's strategic goals include:

- Educate Students to be informed, responsible, active citizens by incorporating real-world experiences and applications into the undergraduate curriculum
- Serve Alaska's diverse communities in ways that are more responsive and accessible and enhance the social, economic, and environmental well-being of individuals and communities.
- Improve assistance to students in making transitions across all phases of the education continuum.

Providing required library sciences courses at KuC educates students, is responsive to needs of students in this region, and assists them in making successful transitions throughout their educational career. KuC serves predominantly first-generation, Yup'ik-speaking or ESL students. Early access to effective use of library resources

through face-to-face required classes enhances their success and transitions. Few Y-K delta students succeed at their first attempt of the distance-delivered Library Science 101 (LS 101) class, whereas most immediately pass the on-campus class.

## **Mission Area Analysis**

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### **Forecast of Program Demands**

The continuation and expansion of program capacity will increase partnering with local agencies, take advantage of impending stimulus broadband resource development and meet the future needs of the region. For instance, Donlin Gold is moving forward with gold mining upriver on the Kuskokwim, so construction, office management, food service, engineering, heavy equipment and other jobs will certainly be available. YKHC, the regional health corporation, is opening a new long-term care facility and a new pre-maternal home. Both require trained PCAs, CNAs CMAs, and office workers. The city was successful in securing funds for a new swimming pool and recreational facility. This will also mean more local jobs. Many local businesses request workplace basics training and word processing skills upgrades before hiring new staff.

There is a high demand for locally trained employees in these fields now, and work experience can also lead to starting local businesses. KuC also has the only college residential hall in rural Alaska for students to enroll in intensives, workshops and training in a secure, healthy environment on campus.

### **Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact**

All UAF degrees require LS 101. KuC student headcount has been increasing and as a result demand for that mandatory class will not decrease. Use of the library continues to grow as Bethel's population increases. Most recent reports show nearly 1,800 regular patrons per year. Children's programming through the library is always popular and has been enhanced with more active partnerships with the Cooperative Extension Service's 4-H program. AVCP's Museum has increased programming, exhibits and partnerships with other universities and entities, such as the Aviation Museum in Anchorage. All this additional activity and programming increases use of the building and with that increase comes increased problematic incidents unless the building's configuration is expanded and improved for more safety and security.

## **Statement of Need**

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This request for resources is focused on improvements for and expansion of the existing facility that houses the programs described in the MAA, and does not seek

funding for additional staff or other operating expenses other than those that will be needed to operate the expansion space. The same programs will operate after the expansion with improved configuration that allows safer and more secure operations and increased capacity to meet growing demand.

The Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center was built in 1994-95 to be a community and regional asset and continues to expand activities and programs to meet the needs and engage the residents of the Yukon Kuskokwim delta. Current space at KuC cannot accommodate the increased requests for training. The building houses three community resources: the Consortium Library managed in partnership among the City of Bethel, UAF and statewide library services; the Yupiit Museum, operated by the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) the regional tribal services entity, housing the best Yup'ik Museum in Alaska; and the multipurpose room managed by Kuskokwim Campus, used for trainings, classes, conferences, concerts and meetings. It is the largest facility of its kind in the delta and much in demand. The building is open year round for public use: 8:30 a.m. —7:00 p.m. in the summer, 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. in the winter.

The expansion of the YPCC will improve the layout of the building, allow the KuC to offer trainings and classes that are increasingly in demand, and increase safety and security of staff and the space. Currently the building barely meets the needs of the public and has no extra space available for increasing program or any additional activities. The library actually has less square footage than the old condemned building that housed the former library. The configuration of the library hinders effective oversight of the building by the single staff during extended hours and leaves the building at risk to vandalism. AVCP has expressed a need for more storage and exhibit space for the museum.

As stated above, the YPCC houses three separate spaces and thriving programs: the Consortium Library which supports both university use and public access, particularly children's programming; the YPCC Museum; and, the conference facility. The building is busy, in high demand, and is quite costly to operate and maintain, so minimal staffing throughout its hours of operation is standard practice. There are shared restrooms and egress points for the entire building—the library does not have its own exit. KuC hires a professional librarian to manage the library and to teach required library science classes.

The proposed expansion would add approximately 3,000 square feet to the front of the library and a matching 3,000 feet to the multipurpose side. This addition will improve operations and safety of all programs in the YPCC.

The library expansion would provide an opportunity to reconfigure the layout of the space. Expanded space would allow 10 Internet-enabled computer stations, available daily, up from the current six. Currently, the public has access to the entire facility during library hours since the entrances and restrooms are in the main hallway. With this addition, the library would gain a separate public entrance and a

unisex, handicapped-equipped restroom, limiting the exposure of the rest of the facility during extended library hours. The circulation desk staffer will be able to see the public-access computers to better patrol orderly use, reduce fights among patrons using computers, and reduce illegal Internet use (primarily pornography).

Since there is no direct supervision of the common areas of the building, security has been an issue. Loitering, vandalism, theft, and arson are constant problems. With limited library staffing and no YPCC staffing unless there is an event (and even then they are busy with accommodations for events and cannot provide security to all areas), ensuring adequate security outside of the library is problematic. Records of security and safety issues were reviewed since 2009 and are representative of many cases before this recent 5-year period. Since then, there have been reports of two cases of vandalism, 10 cases of public drunkenness, five cases of theft, four cases of resource abuse (pornography, sending harassing emails, etc.), 26 cases of disruptive behavior, and three cases of arson. Staff have received anonymous and direct threats, particularly from the over 50 people who have been banned from either the library, museum or the Cultural Center for one week to one year, depending on the severity of the offense. After-school latch-key kids, public inebriates, people with mental health issues and homeless people tend to fill the ranks of trespassers.

KuC has attempted to address the safety and security issues by installing cameras, enlisting the Bethel Police Department with timely responses to trespass incidents, and immediate intervention when incidents occur. However, increasing numbers of incidents and the severity of cases is becoming untenable.

Having the YPCC on campus allows KuC to offer classes, especially to larger groups that existing classrooms cannot accommodate. Currently, the facility holds nearly 40 training and classes per year, primarily to support small business and entrepreneurial efforts. This does not include regular KuC classes that are held there due to space limitations within other campus buildings. Some training and meeting requests cannot be met due to existing commitments or scheduled maintenance. Incidences of vandalism, altercations, and arson have affected building hours of operation.

The extension to the multipurpose side will be divided into spaces for the YPCC Coordinator's and Assistant Coordinator's offices, classrooms and a gift shop. This will further facilitate community-driven activities and educational opportunities including computer classes, workshops, trainings, conferences, meetings and public events as part of the cultural multipurpose mission for the facility. The proposed project will be sustainable through KuC rental charges, faculty hire and instruction. KuC - YPCC will be partnering with local businesses and agencies who request computer training for employees, arts & crafts training and small business development.

Expansion of the front of the building will allow the YPCC Coordinator to vacate her current office and for KuC to relinquish use of the current classroom and storage room. This space is adjacent to the Museum and will allow the AVCP Museum additional area for a new gallery, classroom or storage or additional office space, which they have been requesting for some time.

The enlarged gift shop will showcase local traditional and non-traditional artists and crafts people and enhance their financial stability with sustainable income. There will be steady and dependable sales at the gift shop as visitors and tourists who come to the facility for the museum and to attend conferences, concerts and meetings enhance their YK delta experience by purchasing local arts and crafts. Visitors to the region, and specifically to the museum, invariably ask for local crafts and gifts. The space for a gift shop will provide this requested service and access to products from local artisans.

To enhance the usefulness and value of the YPCC, additional classroom space will allow KuC to offer the very popular small business, entrepreneurial classes, traditional and non-traditional fine arts and craft classes, and computer and Internet training for businesses. This expansion will also provide increased space for KuC to collaborate with other partners, such as Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, to create training specific to health care. The use of computers and the Internet to meet the needs of health care in the rural villages surrounding Bethel is critical to the survival of a very vulnerable population.

The expansion will address a basic need for a safe, secure learning and working environment for students and staff. University assets will be better protected and security will be improved. The entire building has to remain open because the only restrooms available to library patrons are in the shared hallway of the building, exposing the rest of the building to the public during extended library hours. The sole staff member on duty cannot adequately oversee the entire building.

### **Existing Capacity to Support Mission**

The expansion will allow the current single-staffing operation of the library to be successful. It will deter vandalism, problematic behavior, and allow staff to focus on their job rather than policing the building.

### **Annual Operating Budget Impact**

By continuing our current staffing scenario, there will not be a need for more staff. The increased space will result in higher heating and utility costs. However, more and larger trainings and classes will provide more revenue to offset the increased operational cost.