

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST STRATEGIC DIRECTION INITIATIVE (SDI) ACTIONS & PLANS

UA's Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI) is about focusing intensively on meeting the educational and workforce development needs of all Alaskans. SDI encourages 'continuous improvement' within the university's culture—informed by a clear vision and sound data, and leading to meaningful and measurable outcomes.

The following highlights steps taken over the past year at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) to help fulfill the five broad themes of SDI. For each theme, we also provide an indication of actions planned in FY14.

❖ STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & ATTAINMENT

UAS Increases Degree Awards by Ten Percent Over 2012

- UAS increased its endorsement, certificate, and degree awards by ten percent to nearly 700 in 2013, more than double the number (204) in 1998. About half of all awards are master's degrees focusing on teacher education, business management, and public administration.

UAS Meets High Demand Alaskan Workforce Needs

- Eighty-six percent (86%) of all graduates in FY12 received degrees in identified high demand fields—an increase of 8 percent over the previous year. In partnership with industry, UAS continues to develop targeted workforce programs—including business administration, accounting, mine mechanic, and fisheries technology degrees. For example, in FY13 UAS increased Accounting graduates by 50 percent.

Independent Surveys Confirm UAS Quality and Value

- *UA Statewide Graduate Survey* (McDowell Group 2013) reports "UAS graduates were more likely to be very satisfied with their UA experience in every category... Over half (51 percent) of UAS graduates were very satisfied with their overall academic experience, compared to 43 percent of UAF graduates and 38 percent of UAA graduates. Half of UAS graduates were very satisfied with their overall education... UAS graduates were more likely to report being very satisfied with their intellectual growth (59 percent)... For personal growth, 60 percent of UAS graduates were very satisfied..."
- McDowell Group's *UAS Retention Survey* states "satisfaction with the overall educational experience at UAS is generally high, with 84 percent satisfied, and only 5 percent dissatisfied...The highest rated aspects of UAS were instructors/professors, responsiveness of UAS staff, instructional materials, and degree/certificate programs."

UAS Focuses on Program Reviews to Increase Academic Rigor

- UAS is re-doubling efforts to use Academic Program Reviews—required by the Board of Regents—to make substantive improvements and changes to its academic programs. Recent reviews have led to enhanced investments (e.g. in Special Education and Accounting) while others have led to program suspension and deletion (e.g. Masters of Business Administration, Early Childhood Education).
- UAS faculty instituted a new Honors Program and created new *Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression* (URECA) awards to encourage academic excellence. In the past two years, 12 students made public presentations about exceptional URECA research and artistic projects supported by their faculty mentor.
- More UAS students are participating in interdisciplinary studies and programs involving active, engaged learning such as internships, practicum experiences, directed research, and portfolio development.

UAS Focuses on Retention through Mandatory Advising & Early Alerts

- In FY13 UAS implemented mandatory advising for all incoming freshmen, transfer students with less than 30 credits, and students admitted on probation.

UAS Creates *Stay On Track* Awards to Encourage Timely Student Completion

- UAS students can now receive a *Stay On Track* award of \$500 if they increase enrollments from 12 to 15 credits in their junior and senior year—a move to encourage timely degree completion. Between 2009 and 2012 the number of students taking 15 or more credits increased over 50%. 128 students received the *Stay on Track* award during the spring of 2013.

UAS Expands eLearning Programs Statewide

- UAS continues to be a leader in expanding eLearning degree opportunities for students. Most popular are the Bachelor of Liberal Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration, and Masters of Art in Teaching. In AY2013, UAS offered 42 degrees, endorsements, and certificates largely or entirely by eLearning. An additional 40 programs were offered in blended or hybrid delivery, combining face-to-face instruction with eLearning.
- McDowell Group Retention Survey (2012) states “the ability to take online courses is the number one reason that students chose UAS, and it is the most-liked aspect of UAS.” Over 40 percent of UAS students are enrolled primarily through eLearning.
- UAS Education faculty offered the first Alaskan “MOOC”—Massively Open Online Course—focusing on educational technologies and pedagogies.

Outstanding Faculty and Staff Increase Opportunities for Alaska Native Students

- UAS doubled the number of Alaska Native faculty, who teach in the arts and sciences, education, and Alaska Native languages. Students can now complete an emphasis in Alaska Native Studies and Languages as part of the Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BLA) degree.
- Faculty member Xh’unei Lance Twitchell (Tlingit) was recognized as one of Alaska’s “Top 40 Under 40.”
- Faculty member Ernestine Hayes (Tlingit) created the celebrated ART OF PLACE series involving Elders and focusing on traditional and contemporary Tlingit language, art, foods, and cultures.

Looking Forward to Fiscal Year 2014

- FY14 Program Reviews are planned for Construction Technology (AAS), Art (BA), Associate of Arts (AA), Environmental Science (BS), Mathematics (BS), Outdoor Studies (Cert), Reading (MEd).
- Juneau’s new Freshman housing will be situated near classrooms, Egan Library, the Juneau Learning Center, and food service. The housing will be situated in a stunning location with views of glaciers and Auke Lake. The housing will make UAS even more attractive for students and promote student achievement and attainment.
- UAS will use its new FY13 General Fund allocation for Advising to continue improving student recruitment, retention, and completion.
- Faculty continue to work across MAUs to align student learning outcomes for all General Education Requirements. UAS Transfer Credit Capture and Integration project slated to improve course transferability.
- Beginning in the fall 2013, UAS will be using *EMAS Retention Pro* as an early alert system targeting high risk students—enabling them to create an Academic Recovery Plan and receive special advising and mentoring.

❖ PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH ALASKA’S SCHOOLS

UAS Supports UA Teacher Education Consortium

- UAS hosted the UA Teacher Education Consortium in Juneau in March 2013. Faculty and staff continue to work with colleagues at UAA and UAF to strengthen teacher education and placement across Alaska. Provost Caulfield now serves as Higher Education Lead for the statewide K-20 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

PITAAS Educates Alaska Native Teachers and Administrators

- The PITAAS (Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska) Program continues to educate skilled Alaska Native teachers and administrators for Alaska's schools.

UAS Aligns Curriculum with K-12 Schools

- UAS collaborates actively with Juneau School District under a new MOA focusing on enhancing student success in English and Mathematics. Faculty and teachers meet annually to discuss alignment in English and Math.
- Education faculty established MOAs with Copper River and Yukon Flats School Districts to offer dual credit courses for future teachers in Exploring Education Careers.

Faculty Build Secondary-Postsecondary Career Pathways

- Juneau faculty member Mike Bell pioneered statewide delivery of the course "Introduction to Mining Operations and Occupations," offered through the Alaska Learning Network (AKLN). High school students in over 25 communities participated and many were able to complete tours of operating mines as part of the course.
- UAS prioritized hiring a new Tech-Prep Coordinator to revitalize and expand Tech Prep agreements for high school students across Alaska so that talented students can earn college credit while still in high school.

Meeting High Demand Needs in Teacher Education and Certification

- Faculty secured Regents' approval of the new Bachelor of Arts in Special Education certification program and the new endorsement in eLearning and Distance Delivery for Alaska K-12 Teachers.
- UAS faculty conducted College Board workshops for Juneau K-12 teachers and hosted a College Board counselor conference for Southeast Alaska school counselors.

Looking Forward to Fiscal Year 2014

- UAS expects to continue serving as a leader in quality teacher education, with particular focus on high demand areas such as special education, STEM, school leadership, and Alaska Native education.
- Our Southeast Alaska Tech-Prep Coordinator plans an active marketing and advising effort to grow opportunities for high school students to earn college credit in career and technical education fields.

❖ PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH ALASKA'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INDUSTRIES

Collaborative Investments with Industry to Build Alaska's Workforce

- Implemented the Mine Mechanic training program at UAS Center for Mine Training with \$300,000 investment from Hecla/Greens Creek Mining Company.
- UAS plays an active role in UA Fisheries/Seafood/Maritime Initiative—aligning industry needs with education and training partners across Alaska.
- UAS faculty and leadership engaged with Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC) through regional cluster initiative, focusing on mining, tourism, forest products, ocean products, and research.

Creative Responses to Alaska's Employers and Employees

- UAS offers accounting courses in Juneau's State Office Building (SOB) during the lunch hour—meeting employers' need for a more skilled workforce and employees' needs for professional development.
- School of Management faculty collaborated with local accounting firms, private industries, and public agencies on hosting an Accounting Career Information Night to inform students about careers in accounting.
- UAS expanded its Career Services to promote internship and practicum opportunities for students.

Looking Forward to Fiscal Year 2014

- Expanding Statewide Fisheries Technology degree program delivery with support from Icicle Seafoods. New partnerships with Prince William Sound Community College, KPC/Kachemak Bay Campus, and UAF Bristol Bay Campus make this degree available throughout coastal Alaska.

❖ RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT TO SUSTAIN ALASKA'S COMMUNITIES & ECONOMIC GROWTH

Establishing & Enhancing Key Research Partnerships

- The Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center (ACRC) is a multi-agency partnership designed to facilitate research and education about coastal temperate rainforests in the North Pacific. ACRC has 17 public and private sector members and is seeking to leverage resources and talent to address pressing community research needs.
- UAS faculty have active and engaged partnerships with the USDA/Forest Service, including shared use of the new PNW Forest Sciences Lab in Juneau and collaborative management of the Heen Latinee Experimental Forest located 30 miles north of Juneau.
- UAS faculty joined colleagues from UAA and UAF in securing EPSCoR IV research funding, designed to expand our knowledge of bio-geophysical parameters and social impacts of climate change in Berners Bay, north of Juneau. The project will provide many opportunities for undergraduate research education and training.

Looking Forward to Fiscal Year 2014

- UAS' continuing engagement with the Juneau Economic Development Council's Cluster Initiative will help identify action steps to address workforce and educational/training needs in Southeast Alaska's economic sectors.

❖ ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE OF ALASKA

Three Campuses, One University—UAS Maximizes Campus Collaboration

- UAS leverages resources from all three of its campuses. Each contributes assets and resources for the benefit of all of Southeast Alaska. Students transfer seamlessly and take advantage of both face-to-face and eLearning instruction. No one of these campuses alone would be able to fulfill the expectations of the regions' residents; working together creates critical mass and new opportunities.

SDI Aligns with Accreditation & Continuous Improvement

- UAS has a new (2010) mission and four core themes that align well with SDI. We successfully completed a NWCCU Year One regional accreditation review and are now preparing our Year Three Self-Study.
- We continue to focus on offering quality education that aligns with national and professional standards. UAS is currently preparing its business programs for specialized accreditation with IACBE, the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education.

New UAS Master Plan Leads to Facilities Consolidation & Efficiencies

- The Board of Regents approved UAS' new Campus Master Plan in April 2013. This comprehensive update of plans for Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka Campuses provides a template for consolidation and more efficient use of existing and planned facilities.

UAS Implements Streamlined Student Fee Structure on Juneau Campus

- The Juneau Campus now has a streamlined consolidated student fee structure that links fees to campus infrastructure in a more equitable and transparent way. Student response to the new fee structure has been positive.

Looking Forward to Fiscal Year 2014

- The upcoming sale of Bill Ray Center in downtown Juneau, with corresponding consolidation of facilities at the Auke Bay Campus, will allow for more efficient use of space and operational savings into the future.
- UAS will continue to manage its resources and assets to ensure accountability to the people of Alaska and to its students. Careful resource management, use of program reviews, and data-driven decision-making will enable UAS to achieve its mission and strategic goals.