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UAA Kachemak Bay Campus' Writers' Conference

Inspiring Setting Draws Diverse Writers for Eighth Annual Conference

From June 6 - 10, a diverse group of accomplished authors, aspiring writers, literary enthusiasts, students, teachers and professionals will gather in Homer for Alaska's premier statewide writing event – the eighth annual Kachemak Bay Writers' Conference.

The nationally recognized conference, which is held at the Land's End Resort in Homer and is sponsored by UAA's Kenai Peninsula College - Kachemak Bay Campus, features five days of workshops, readings, craft talks and panel presentations focused on fiction, poetry, nonfiction and other genres, as well as continuing the business of writing.

"This conference brings writers, students, literary enthusiasts and others from across the U.S. to discuss the art, process and techniques of writing." says Carol Swartz, director of the Kachemak Bay Campus. "This conference is inspiring setting for the literary and visual arts," Swartz says. "We want to create a nurturing atmosphere for people to connect and learn."

Each year, approximately 150 participants, plus 15 to 20 presenters, attend the conference, which usually sells out by the early registration deadline in May. An additional 200 to 300 people attend the "Festival of Readings," which are public readings held throughout Homer during the conference. This year's "Festival of Readings" will be held on Saturday, Sunday and Monday evenings.

The conference's location, in Homer on the shores of Kachemak Bay, provides an inspiring location for conference participants to connect, create and learn.

While many of the conference attendees are from Alaska, there are a growing number who come from the lower 48.

"All year long, I get e-mails from people who are interested in attending or presenting at the conference," says Swartz, who adds that, as of April, more than a dozen registrants from Outside had already registered for this year's conference. "It's definitely on the map for writers' conferences."

This year's conference features 20 presenters, including keynote speaker, Anne Lamott, the best-selling author of the nonfiction books "Bird by Bird," "Operating Instructions," "Traveling Mercies" and "Plan B." Lamott, who has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, has also authored six novels and recently published an essay collection titled "Grace (Eventually)."

While a number of noted writers from Outside participate in the conference, the majority of presenting faculty are Alaska-based.

"One of the conference goals is to feature Alaska writers," Swartz says.

This year's line-up of Alaska presenters include John Straley, a poet, private investigator and novelist from Sitka, who was appointed as the twelfth Alaska Writer Laureate in 2006, and Jo-Ann Mapson, a best-selling novelist and assistant professor with UAA's creative writing and literary arts department.
The conference also features industry experts including Jeff Kleinman, a literary agent and intellectual property attorney, who will participate in panel discussions, such as "Publishing Books in the Digital Age," and lead workshops on topics like "Secrets to Query Letters" and "Agent 101."

The popular, present-day conference grew out of a well-received visiting writers series hosted by the campus in the past. About eight years ago, after the campus received a donation to support and enhance writing skills, it was decided to use some of the funds to organize a writers' conference.

"Initially, it wasn't planned as an annual conference. But there was a tremendous response, and it met the needs of aspiring writers, published authors and literary enthusiasts, and also strengthened the Alaska community of writers. So we've kept doing it and it's grown every year," Swartz says.


"Without them, we could not hold this conference," Swartz says. "The in-kind and direct funding is what makes this possible."

### UAF Career Services

#### Career Services: Your Future is Not Set in Stone

By Megan Otts, UAF Student

Labor statistics indicate the average American will change jobs more than 10 times between the ages of 18 and 40.

Patti Picha, director of UAF Career Services, says that's where her department comes in. Career Services is a free resource available to all UAF students, staff and alumni. The department helps people explore career options, improve job search techniques, sharpen interviewing skills, design and prepare resumes, and ultimately find fulfilling employment. Career Services counselors can also assist with selecting and applying for graduate school.

#### Taking the first step

Picha says she regularly deals with people who are unhappy with their current jobs and would like to change careers, but are unsure of where to start. Picha recommends taking the STRONG inventory, an assessment tool that matches a person's interests with a specific career field.

Once clients have settled on a career field, counselors help them to identify jobs that sound appealing. Picha recommends O*Net, an online system that matches keywords or skill sets with 10 possible occupations.

#### Perfecting the professional package

In 2004, Rory O'Neill, a 2001 UAF graduate, became frustrated with his search for a new job in the engineering management/information technology field. A ccording to O'Neill, he was applying for positions, but was not offered many interviews. He scheduled an appointment with Career Services.

"We attacked the resume first, then I received coaching on interviewing and they conducted mock interviews," he says. "I was amazed how well that employment landscape was mapped and understood by Career Services counselors."

Within a few months, a project manager job two pay grades above O'Neill's current position opened up and, after two interviews, he was offered the position. Seven months later, he was appointed to an interim position and, in August 2006, O'Neill beat out a national pool of candidates to become executive director of the department.

#### Applying for your dream job

Ty Keltner, a 2002 UAF alumnus, came to Career Services last fall with a specific corporate job in mind.

"Career Services helped me formulate a resume to address the direct needs listed in the job description," he says. "They also helped me get in contact with past people who held the position to learn more about the company's expectations and the requirements of the job."

According to Picha, the most important thing to consider when applying for a job is what the company wants and what is expected from applicants.

"I always take the job description, put it next to the potential cover letter and resume, and make sure that the documents they are handing in reflect the job description," she says.

Keltner says he is waiting to hear back on the job, but thanks to Career Services, he feels confident that he submitted a quality resume.

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UA WWAMI Program

Alaska's Medical School Grows to Help Meet Need for Physicians

Alaska's population is growing. The number of Alaskans over 65 is estimated to triple during the next 20 years. One-third of Alaska's currently practicing physicians are expected to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. And the new generation of physicians want a more balanced life, with fewer work hours and more stable schedules.

According to the Alaska Physician Supply Task Force, all of these factors combined mean Alaska will need to add 1,100 practicing physicians to the workforce over the next 20 years—nearly double the 1,347 physicians currently practicing in the state.

The task force, which released its report in August 2006, had a number of recommendations for meeting this need. One of the recommendations was to increase the number of students in the Alaska WWAMI Biomedical Program from 10 students per year to 30. The program, which is based at UAA and billed as "Alaska's medical school," took a significant step toward this goal when it doubled its class size from 10 students to 20 this year. Plans for continued growth are underway.

"We're looking to further increase the class size as funding is provided and facilities are available," says Dennis Valenzeno, PhD, director of Alaska's WWAMI program. He adds that the proposed UA Health sciences building, which is currently in the planning phase, would include classroom space to accommodate 30-40 WWAMI students.

WWAMI, which stands for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho, is a collaborative education program designed to provide medical school opportunities in states without their own four-year medical schools.

"WWAMI is Alaska's medical school and we're training physicians here in Alaska."

Through the state-subsidized program, Alaska students can earn their doctor of medicine (MD) degree through the University of Washington (UW) School of Medicine, while only paying UW's in-state tuition. Students are admitted to the program through UW, and become part of a class of more than 180 students from all five WWAMI states.

Although the WWAMI program is accredited through UW, Alaska students are able to complete three of their four years of medical school in Alaska. Students from Alaska spend their first year completing basic medical science courses at UA A. Students from all five WWAMI states spend their second year at UW. They are then able to complete their third and fourth year clinical clerkships in any of the WWAMI states, including Alaska. Alaska's clerkships are offered at a variety of clinics and hospitals throughout the state.

"WWAMI is Alaska's medical school and we're training physicians here in Alaska," Valenzeno says. "Students can complete up to three of their four years of medical school here in the state."

By increasing the time spent studying in Alaska, program organizers hope to maintain the high percentage of WWAMI graduates who return to Alaska to practice medicine. Since Alaska joined the WWAMI program in 1971, 50 percent of the Alaska graduates have returned to practice in their home state. When including graduates from other WWAMI states who come to work in Alaska, the number increases to 85 percent.

To successfully increase the number of physicians in Alaska, Valenzeno says there also needs to be a focus on building a "pipeline" of future students who are interested in the profession, aware of the WWAMI program, and qualified to apply.

"Due to the time it takes to produce a physician, we need to be planning ahead and anticipating 10 to 20 years in the future," he says. "We need to be educating future students about the opportunities to go to medical school in Alaska. We also need to make sure they are making themselves as eligible and competitive as possible, by taking the right classes in high school and during their undergraduate years."

To accomplish this, WWAMI offers a number of community outreach programs, such as the Della Keats/U-DOC Summer Enrichment Program. Through the six-week,
UA Statewide Corporate Programs

UACP Moves to New Location

UA Statewide Corporate Programs (UACP), the educational organization established in 1999 to serve the training and education needs of Alaska business and industry, recently moved its offices to the former Alyeska Pipeline Service Company building at 1815 Bragaw Street in Anchorage. UACP was previously located in the University Lake Building on the UAA campus.

UACP's move was part of the relocation of all of the Anchorage-based UA Statewide offices. In addition to UACP, UA's Land Management, Office of Risk Services, Office of Human Resources, Alaska Distance Education Consortium, UA Foundation, Video Conferencing Services and Network Operations are now all located in the Bragaw building.

Prior to occupying the new office space, the building underwent a complete remodel, including updated lighting, interior design and the addition of an elevator. UACP's office, which is three times larger than before, features a state-of-the-art classroom and a large conference room that can hold up to 20 people. Both the classroom and the conference room are located close to the main entrance on the ground floor, have convenient restrooms facilities, and offer plenty of parking.

The modern classroom, which can accommodate up to 40 people, also features Wi-Fi and floor-accessible Internet access; convenient wall and floor power sockets; magnetic white boards/projection screens on all four walls; modular tables to accommodate a wide variety of configurations; comfortable chairs for all-day use; and special lighting.

The conference room may be booked now; the classroom will be available in early June. To make a reservation, contact 907.786.1531 or corporateprograms@alaska.edu.

For more information, contact:
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• http://biomed.uaa.alaska.edu

summer program, disadvantaged, minority high school students explore health care careers and get an introduction to college life by living and studying on campus.

The concurrently held Short-term Education Program for Under-represented Persons (STEP-UP) Program is similar, but has more of an emphasis on research. At the end of the summer, STEP-UP students travel to Washington D.C., where they present their research findings at the program's national conference.

"Both of these programs encourage minority, disadvantaged students to prepare for and enter health careers," Valenzeno says.

WWAMI also hosts the annual Alaska PreMed Summit, a one-day event designed to educate potential students about the WWAMI program and prepare Alaskans to enter health careers. Approximately 200 students, parents and teachers attended the third annual summit, which was held at UAA in March.

In addition to training physicians, WWAMI also assists with a physician assistant training program, called MEDEX, and a dental health aide therapist training program, called DENTEX, which is a program of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Both MEDEX and DENTEX are offered in partnership with the UW School of Medicine.

Beyond these programs, WWAMI is also working to develop more research opportunities.

"Through WWAMI, we are trying to fill the mission of a medical school in Alaska, which means we must meet the needs of more than just medical students," Valenzeno says.

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Anthropology – it may not be a career field that makes headlines very often, like construction or health care, but it is a high-demand field, all the same. Just ask UAA’s department of anthropology.

"Agencies in Alaska seem to ask on a yearly basis how many new graduates we will have, because they need the work done now," says Kerry Feldman, UAA anthropology professor who teaches in the department’s master’s degree program. "Our students are often hired even before completing their master’s theses."

The department established its anthropology master’s degree program in 1999, with the support of about 20 federal, state and private agencies and organizations in Alaska.

"The missions and goals of these organizations require that they have employees trained in social science research methods and theory, especially regarding knowledge of Alaska Native cultures, history and pre-history," Feldman says.

The degree offers an emphasis in either general or applied anthropology. Within the applied anthropology emphasis, students can follow specialized tracks, including applied cultural anthropology and cultural resource management. Diane Hanson, coordinator of the graduate program in anthropology, notes that the UAA program is the only applied anthropology training program in Alaska, and one of only 17 programs in the entire U.S. with a cultural resource management track.

"Potential clients have been told that the most popular cultural resource management consultants are already booked two years ahead. Plus, most of the established companies are run by people who will be retiring within the next five to 10 years. Either this will cause Outside companies to move into Alaska to fill the void, or under-qualified individuals will start doing the work."

UAA’s program is working to fill that void. In the first eight years of the program, 18 students completed their master’s theses. Four of those

The demand for graduates in the areas of applied cultural anthropology and cultural resource management is increasing. Feldman says, due to the retirement rate of the current workforce, and the growth of agencies and organizations that require employees with these types of skills.

For example, applied cultural anthropology, which focuses on current social issues, is an increasingly high-demand area in Alaska, due to the state’s growing diversity.

"Alaska’s increasing diversity will require expertise to deliver quality services to diverse populations in health, education, welfare, economic advancement, legal issues and more," Feldman says. "Applied cultural anthropologists can provide this expertise."

The demand for graduates in the area of cultural resource management, which involves the inventory, assessment and conservation of archaeological sites and remains, is also growing. These experts, who are often an important part of project planning and compliance with environmental laws, can educate a client about cultural sites and potential problems, and assist with negotiations and navigating federal regulations.

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students have gone on to pursue PhD programs, while the other 14 have gained employment with diverse organizations including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Fish and Game – Division of Subsistence, Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and private research and consulting firms.

All of the employed anthropology graduates, except two, currently work in Alaska, Feldman says. This high rate of Alaska job placement is due, in large part, to the department's successful internship program, which all master's degree students in the applied track are required to complete.


“The students from our program are often sought after for full-time employment by the organizations they were introduced to as interns,” Feldman says.

Feldman adds it’s important to note the anthropology program goes beyond providing training to get students a job – it prepares students for life-long careers.

“Our program does not simply train students for a particular job, but provides them with the theoretical, methodological and practical experience needed for a career in their ever-changing fields,” he says.

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UAS and the Ketchikan Construction Academy

UAS Partners with Construction Academy to Build Local Workforce

Ketchikan, like the rest of Alaska, is facing a daunting challenge caused by the increasing demand for workers in the construction industry – and the inadequate number of interested, qualified employees. Currently across the state, 1,000 new construction workers are needed each year to replace retiring workers – and that number is expected to grow significantly over the next several years.

“The workforce is aging, the number of jobs is growing, and the construction industry is struggling to find ways to entice people to come into the industry. We need to find qualified employees,” says Pamela Roth, executive director of the Southern Southeast Alaska Building Industry Association (SSEABIA).

These factors were the driving force behind the creation of the Ketchikan Construction Academy, one of six construction academies in the state. In 2006, the Alaska Legislature awarded a $1 million grant to create the Anchorage Construction Academy, a pilot project to recruit, train and place young people and adults into construction jobs.

The success of the Anchorage academy led to a $3.5 million legislative appropriation in 2007 to expand the academies to Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, the Mat-Su Valley and Ketchikan. With the support of local chapters of the Alaska State Home Building Association, the statewide academies are expected to provide construction training to 1,000 high school students and 300 adults this year.

“Our ultimate goal is to meet the needs of the construction industry in Ketchikan and have the people we train become employed.”

“It’s a great way to train a workforce in the community where they’ll live and work,” says Wendy Gierard, assistant director of workforce development at UAS – Ketchikan, which is a partner in the Ketchikan Construction Academy.

In Ketchikan, the inaugural group of 10 adult students recently completed the academy’s first class, (Construction cont. p.8)
(Construction cont. from p.7)

held at the UA S-Ketchikan campus. The three-credit, 50-hour class, called basic construction techniques, used classroom teaching and hands-on experience to provide an overview of tool usage, building procedures and codes, jobsite planning, layout, and foundation, floor, wall and roof framing methods.

"We're teaching them what is expected from an entry-level laborer on the job," says Charles "Chas" Edwardson, a UAS adjunct professor and a local builder.

As a follow-up to the class, the SSEA BIA is working to place the students into on-the-job training opportunities with local builders this summer. With support from the grant, the participating builders will receive a financial incentive to help cover wages, in return for hiring, mentoring and training academy participants.

As a next step, the academy plans to offer a series of other courses at UA S-Ketchikan this fall.

"We want to encourage students to take additional courses to round out their skills, so they can pursue an area they're really interested in. There are all kinds of different pathways students can go and we want to share those pathways with them," Gierard says. "Our plan is to provide training that will give students the foundation they need to get into the career of their choice."

A unique aspect of the academy is that there is no cost to the participants – the academy pays for all tuition, books, tools and other supplies.

"It's a nice way for people to get their foot in the door without putting out a lot of money," Gierard says.

The adult training is just one component of the academy. Like the other academies in the state, Ketchikan's construction academy reaches out to high school students, as well as adult learners.

"We're working in partnership with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District to make sure the curriculum being taught meets the needs of the local industry. We want to make sure students come out with the skills needed to be employed in Ketchikan," Roth says.

Specifically, grant funding is being provided to hire an additional instructor to teach construction trades at the high school. The academy is also working to set up a "tech-prep agreement" with the high school, which allows students to receive high school credit at the same time they are earning college credit for their coursework.

"Our goal is to have the kids coming out of the high school be able to step into the program at the university," Roth says.

Edwardson, who has operated a general contracting business in Ketchikan for the past 14 years, believes the focus on high school students is especially important.

"We're getting older and the younger people are not stepping in," he says. "We need to focus more on vocational training in the high schools. Hopefully, the academy will help generate more students from the high school."

Plus, by piquing the interest of local students and preparing them with the basic skills to enter the workforce, the academy will address another important issue - providing Alaskans for Alaska's jobs.

"If we don't provide Alaskans for Alaska jobs, we'll have a transient workforce," Edwardson says. "Transient workers don't buy homes, cars or boats, or put their kids in our schools. The stability of the local economy depends on us providing Alaskans for Alaska jobs."

In addition to the SSEA BIA, UA S-Ketchikan and Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, other Ketchikan Construction Academy partners include the Associated General Contractors of Alaska, Ketchikan Job Center, Ketchikan Indian Community, Ketchikan Youth Initiatives, and Alaska Works Partnership, Inc.

"Our ultimate goal is to meet the needs of the construction industry in Ketchikan and have the people we train become employed," Roth says.

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UAF Tanana Valley Campus

Fast Track Training Gets High Marks from Employers, Grads

Since launching the Fast Track Training program two years ago, UAF’s Tanana Valley Campus (TVC) has trained 42 students in high-demand job areas, and expects to graduate 57 more this spring. During the third year of the program, which is also the last year students can receive free tuition, program organizers hope to graduate 90 more. The priority application deadline for 2008 – 2009 was in April, and classes begin this summer.

The primary goal of the Fast Track Training program, which debuted in June 2006, is to meet interior Alaska’s workforce needs by providing students with intensive certificate programs in high-growth, high-demand areas. The program offers nine- to 12-month certificate programs in six areas, including diesel/heavy equipment, automotive, instrumentation, health/safety/environmental awareness, drafting/CADD, and power generation.

A quick look at the employment of Fast Track graduates indicates the program is working. Nina Tartakoff, Fast Track Training coordinator, says many graduates are now working in jobs directly related to their training, with companies such as CH2M Hill, UAF, NANA Services, Warbelows Air Ventures, Flint Hills Resources and Northern Alaska Tour Company. Meanwhile, other students have chosen to continue their education by pursuing higher degrees.

“With today’s shortage of skilled automotive technicians, TVC’s Fast Track Training program is a great resource for us.”

Employers have been giving us feedback that they are very happy with the skills students are learning in the program,” Tartakoff says. Seekins Ford is just one company seeing the benefits of the training program.

“With today’s shortage of skilled automotive technicians, TVC’s Fast Track Training program is a great resource for us,” says Al Haynes, parts and service director at Seekins Ford. The program has also been a success with students like Doug Chichester, who received a certificate in instrumentation through the Fast Track Training program, and also obtained an associate’s degree in process technology from TVC.

”There are lots of places to use these skills. You could be working at pump stations on the pipeline, in the gold mining industry monitoring crushers, or at fish processing plants making sure all the systems are functioning at optimum levels. This program is teaching us things on the leading edge of a worldwide technological expansion,” says Chichester, who now works as an instrumentation technician for BP.

The Fast Track program was initially funded through a three-year, $1.99 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, which allowed TVC to offer free tuition to students for the first three years. While the free tuition will only be available through the 2008 – 2009 academic year, the six certificates will continue to be offered, but in a less intensive time frame. Future students will be able to take a few courses at a time, rather than committing to complete the entire program in nine to 12 months.

“Many students found it difficult to complete the certificate in a year, while working and taking care of their families,” Tartakoff says. “The more flexible timetable for taking courses will be a benefit to some students, though many students liked being able to complete the certificate and get on to further training or out to work in the field.”

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UAF International Arctic Research Center

UAF Hosts Ninth International Conference on Permafrost

From June 29 – July 3, 2008, approximately 800 people from 30 different countries will gather at UAF for the Ninth International Conference on Permafrost (NICOP). Professors, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, engineers and other professionals, and government agency representatives are expected to attend the conference, which was convened by the U.S. Permafrost Association, and is themed "permafrost on a warming planet: impacts on ecosystems, infrastructure and climate."

"This meeting is important because it is drawing attention and participation from scientists and engineers around the globe who are all struggling with similar issues."

"The goal of the conference is to bring together a large group of scientists and engineers, so that information can be shared on current topics of interest relating to permafrost in a changing climate," says Elizabeth Lilly, NICOP coordinator. "Gathering individuals from so many countries in one place fosters an environment for sharing and cooperation, which will help all of us prepare and better deal with changes that do occur."

"This meeting is important because it is drawing attention and participation from scientists and engineers around the globe who are all struggling with similar issues," adds Larry Hinzman, director of UAF’s International Arctic Research Center and a professor of civil and environmental engineering at UAF.

"Permafrost affects every aspect of our lives in the north," he says. "Our permafrost is warming and, in many places, degrading. This is initiating a myriad of problems for infrastructure stability, but it also initiates changes in ecosystem dynamics. It is important that we share information on our understanding of the changes and our ideas to mediate or adapt to these changes."

The five-day conference will feature daily plenary sessions on a variety of topics, including "living in Alaska: a permafrost-dominated region," "thermal state and fate of permafrost," "engineering challenges in the 21st century," "hydrology and terrestrial processes" and "alpine and polar periglacial processes."

In addition, there will be approximately 400 oral and poster presentations, and a public lecture titled "Mountain Hazards," featuring Andi Kaab. The conference will also include local field trips to the U.S. Army's Cold Region Research and Engineering Laboratory Permafrost Tunnel, the Cold Climate Housing Research Center, Caribou-Poker Creeks Research Watershed, Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, and other areas with permafrost features.

Two short courses, including a graduate-level course on permafrost and an educational outreach class for K – 12 teachers, and a one-day technical workshop on permafrost foundation construction methods will be held prior to the official start of the conference. Optional field trips, to destinations such as the Dalton Highway, Pogo Mine, Seward Peninsula, Denali National Park, and Arctic Coastal Plain, will also be offered before and after the conference.

This will be the second time the conference has been hosted at UAF; the Fourth International Conference on Permafrost was held in Fairbanks in 1983. This year's conference is significant, as it marks the 25th anniversary of the first conference at UAF, as well as the 25th anniversary of the formation of the International Permafrost Association. Plus, this year's conference coincides with International Polar Year, a two-year initiative focusing international research efforts and public attention on the Earth’s polar regions.

In addition to the university, the conference has a number of major sponsors, including Arctic Foundations, Inc., Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Duane Miller & Associates, and BP Alaska.

While the deadline for paper submissions has already passed, conference registrations continue to be accepted. Registration and cost information, as well as a calendar of events and field trip details, may be found at www.nicop.org.

For more information, contact:
- 907.479.8891
- elilly@nicop.org
- www.nicop.org
UAF's Interior-Aleutians campus (IAC) recently received a $1 million, three-year grant to launch a nutrition education program in rural Alaska. The Troth Yeddha' Nutrition program, which is currently recruiting students for fall 2008, will combine education and outreach efforts with the goal of increasing the number of Alaska Natives working in the nutrition field. In the words of Aleut elder and advisory council member Alice Petrivelli, the program will ultimately "help us to help our people stay healthy."

The program addresses both industry and health needs in Alaska. According to a post-secondary nutrition education needs assessment prepared for UA in 2005, 64 percent of all Alaskans are overweight or obese – conditions that increase health risks, such as diabetes, kidney problems and high blood pressure.

Alaska Natives are at no less risk for the development of obesity and other health-related challenges. In fact, this population is experiencing the greatest increase of diabetes in all of North America. This is attributed, in part, to the replacement of traditional foods with convenient snacks and highly processed staples.

In addition to outlining health challenges, the 2005 needs assessment identified that additional educational opportunities were needed to train workers to fill vacancies in Alaska's nutrition-related occupations.

"IAC's interest is in providing nutrition education, combined with cultural relevance, to our rural Alaska workforce and students that want to enter this workforce," says Clara Johnson, IAC director.

Currently, the nutrition-related education available in Alaska is limited. UAS's Community Wellness Advocate program offers a nutrition concentration, and the UAA Culinary Arts, Hospitality, Dietetics and Nutrition department offers a minor in nutrition. However, there are no certificates, associate's degrees or four-year degrees in nutrition offered in Alaska.

"Post-secondary nutrition science education is a significant gap in Alaska. Our project will create multiple new entry points to nutrition science education."

"Post-secondary nutrition science education is a significant gap in Alaska," says Sarah McConnell, Troth Yeddha' program coordinator. "Our project will create multiple new entry points to nutrition science education, designed for Alaska Natives and rural Alaskans."

Through the Troth Yeddha' program, students can take the one-credit nutrition and lifestyle change course; the seven-credit, one-semester rural nutrition leadership academy; or rural nutrition services courses that may be used as an area of concentration or for an occupational endorsement that is currently being designed. A certificate and an associate's degree in nutrition will also be developed in the future, McConnell says.

With its multiple points of entry, the program truly offers something for everyone. For example, the one-credit class is "for anyone in the community who wants to improve their health," McConnell says.

Meanwhile, the leadership academy is designed for students who are already working in the community and want to use the information in their current jobs, and the rural nutrition services area of concentration and occupational endorsement is targeted at students who are just entering the workforce or are exploring a new career.

The program is currently recruiting students for the first leadership academy, which will begin

(Nutrition cont. p.12)
UAS and UAA School of Nursing

UAS Partners with UAA to Train Nurses Locally

Not long ago, students in Southeast Alaska who wanted to become registered nurses (RNs) had very limited opportunities to train locally. Meanwhile, local health care providers were importing nurses from Outside, and the entire state was facing a critical nursing shortage.

While Alaska continues to grapple with the need for nurses, a partnership between UAS and the UAA School of Nursing's associate degree outreach delivery program at UAS, receives instructions in working the equipment in the Bartlett Regional Hospital obstetrics ward from her preceptor, Sandy Frickey, Alaska March of Dimes 2006 Maternal/Child Care Nurse of the Year. (Photo by Michael Penn)

Not long ago, students in Southeast Alaska who wanted to become registered nurses (RNs) had very limited opportunities to train locally. Meanwhile, local health care providers were importing nurses from Outside, and the entire state was facing a critical nursing shortage.

While Alaska continues to grapple with the need for nurses, a partnership between UAS and the UAA School of Nursing's associate degree outreach delivery program is starting to make a difference for students and the health care industry in Southeast. UAA's outreach delivery program is also making an impact statewide.

"Nurses are needed in very large numbers," says Karen Schmitt, dean for the career education program at UAS. "This program has definitely made a dent. UA partnered with the health care industry to set a goal of doubling nurse graduates within five years, and we've done better than that, going from slightly under 100 to more than 200 RN graduates per year statewide."

Through UAA's outreach delivery program, students in 10 communities across the state who wish to obtain associate's degrees in nursing can be admitted into the UAA program, but complete much of their education in their hometown at local UA campuses. Classes are primarily delivered via the Internet, and the students obtain most of their clinical experience locally. In addition to the 10 outreach sites, students can also pursue the associate's degree at the main UAA campus in Anchorage.

"In the past, students who wanted to become nurses had to go to Anchorage or leave the state. By offering this program, people can get the education they need and find employment in their hometown."

The outreach delivery program was established in 2002, after a task force comprised of members of the health care industry, UA and the UA A School of Nursing was developed to explore ways to increase the number of RN grads in Alaska. One of the task force's recommendations was to expand UAA's associate's degree...
Partnering with UAA’s highly regarded nursing program makes the most sense for UA S, Schmitt says. “It is much more cost-effective and efficient for us to be in partnership with UAA,” she says. “Building a program from scratch in Juneau would take more than money - it would take years before such a program would be accredited. The nursing shortage in Alaska requires immediate attention.”

The outreach delivery program was first delivered in Fairbanks and Kodiak. In January 2004, it was expanded to Bethel, Juneau and Ketchikan. Kenai and Sitka were added the next year, and in 2006, Homer, Kotzebue and the Mat-Su campuses joined as program partners. Valdez was added as an outreach site in January 2008, and additional sites may be added in the future.

In Juneau, where 10 students are accepted into the program every two years, a total of 16 students have graduated with associate’s degrees in nursing to date – nine from the first cohort in 2005 and seven from the second cohort in 2007. A third cohort of 10 students began in January 2008; they are expected to graduate in December 2009.

“In the past, students who wanted to become nurses had to go to Anchorage or leave the state. By offering this program, people can get the education they need and find employment in their hometown. People who want to stay here can stay here,” says Chris Urata, UAA assistant professor of nursing at the UAS-Juneau campus.

In addition to the benefits for students, local health care providers are also seeing the value of the program.

“The program has provided our community and our hospital with nurses who are from the region and want to continue to live and work here,” says Bartlett Regional Hospital’s education services manager, Dianne Bigge, who adds that the hospital has hired several of the graduates from the last two cohorts at UAS-Juneau.

Partnerships with local health care providers, such as Bartlett Regional Hospital, are a central component of the success of the program, which requires students to gain work experience in clinical settings.

For example, in Juneau, students gain work experience through local clinical rotations at Bartlett Regional Hospital, Wildflower Court long-term care facility, Hospice and Home Care of Juneau, Reifenstein Dialysis Center, and Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, as well as local physicians’ offices. During their third and fourth semesters, students also spend time in Anchorage, where they obtain clinical experience at places such as the Children’s Hospital at Providence and Alaska Psychiatric Institute.

Following completion of the program, graduates take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) to obtain their RN licensure. They are then eligible to work in hospitals, physicians’ offices and home care. Students interested in furthering their education may also pursue a bachelor’s degree in nursing, through UAA’s RN to BS program.

For more information, contact:
• 907.796.6128 (UAS-Juneau), 907.786.4550 (UAA)
• afcju@uaa.alaska.edu (UAS-Juneau), aynurse@uaa.alaska.edu (UAA)
• www.uas.alaska.edu/academics/undergrad/assoc/aas/nursing_uaa(UAS-Juneau), http://nursing.uaa.alaska.edu/students/aas.cfm (UAA)

UA Increases Graduates in High Demand Areas by 50 Percent

The number of University of Alaska graduates system-wide with degrees or certificates in high-demand jobs areas (including technology, engineering, health and transportation) increased by 50 percent between 1999 and 2007, according to a forthcoming report by ISER. The report, entitled “University of Alaska: How Is It Doing? Understanding Alaska Research Summary No.12,” will be available on the ISER Web site at www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/.

Institute of Social and Economic Research
www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu
Understanding Alaska: www.alaskaneconomy.uaa.alaska.edu
Citizen’s Guide to the Budget: http://citizensguide.uaa.alaska.edu
With major projects, such as a natural gas pipeline, on the horizon in Alaska, the need for qualified project management professionals is becoming more and more apparent. That makes the ProMAC 2008 conference, which will be held September 15 – 18 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage, a very significant and timely event.

"The project management discipline is a fundamental requirement for companies interested in improving their productivity, effectiveness and bottom line, and UAA’s Engineering, Science and Project Management (ESPM) department is poised to change how technology-oriented projects are managed in the state of Alaska and the Pacific Rim," says Dr. Jang Ra, chair of the ESPM department, which is hosting ProMAC 2008 for the Japan-based Society of Project Management.

ProMAC 2008 will be the fourth international project management conference; previous conferences have been held in Singapore, Japan and Australia.

"The conference will serve as an important forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences to revolutionize today’s project management knowledge and techniques for the future," says Danny Elmore, project manager for ProMAC 2008. "Holding this prestigious, international forum in Anchorage provides Alaska’s elected officials, leaders of business and industry, and project-minded executives with the opportunity to engage in productive dialog with their international colleagues, and to share ideas and develop relationships that will benefit their own organizations and the state of Alaska."

"The conference will serve as an important forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences to revolutionize today’s project management knowledge and techniques for the future."

Approximately 400 people from around the globe, including Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Australia, Singapore and Canada, as well as from across Alaska and the U.S., are expected to attend the conference.

additional events, such as bus trips to Seward and the Matanuska Glacier, dinner at the Anchorage Museum, and trips to tour the North Slope, are also planned. The full conference schedule may be found at www.uaa.alaska.edu/promac.

registrations are currently being accepted online at www.uaa.alaska.edu/promac; the early registration deadline is July 10, although registrations will be accepted after that date. The deadline for speakers to submit abstracts and biographies is May 15.

for more information, contact:
• 907.786.1940
• promac2008@uaa.alaska.edu
• www.uaa.alaska.edu/promac
ProMAC 2008 Organizing Committees

A total of 70 individuals on six organizing committees are involved in planning ProMAC 2008. Local organizing committee members include:

- Chair, Danny Elmore, UAA
- Jon M. Ah You, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company
- Chris Block, Captain Cook Hotel
- Robert Bulger, PMI Alaska Chapter
- Paula Donson, Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Joyce E. Douglas, State of Alaska
- Mike Fisher, Northern Economics
- Steve Gebert, Alaska Communications Systems
- Teresa Helleck, PMI Alaska Chapter
- James Hemsath, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
- Ki Kim, UAA
- Patricia Opheen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- LuAnn Piccard, UAA
- Burt Rosenbluth, ConocoPhillips
- Tom Sheffrey, AACEI Alaska Section
- Bill Thompson, CH2M Hill
- Charles Wagner, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Heather Wagner, GCI
- Michael Wortham, BP
- Roshelle Wright, Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Right Career Move

Fall 2008 Class Schedule

UAA Engineering, Science & Project Management

Classes held in the Anchorage University Center

Registration information & assistance: 907.786.1924 or ayespm@uaa.alaska.edu

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PDC = Professional Development Credit (non-academic credit)  
NOTE: Continuous registration no longer enforced.
Inside this issue... We've selected eleven University of Alaska workforce stories to highlight in the UA @ Work Summer 2008 newsletter.

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If you would like more information about articles in this newsletter, please contact UA Statewide Corporate Programs at 1815 Bragaw Street, Suite 102, Anchorage AK 99508.

- 907.786.1531
- corporateprograms@alaska.edu
- www.alaska.edu/uacp

UA @ Work is produced by UA Statewide Corporate Programs to connect Alaska employers with the University’s workforce training and professional development resources.

Manager: Cathy Collier
Writer/Copy Editor: Rachel Grenier
Graphic Arts: Dave Longley

For information on partnering with the University of Alaska for employee training and professional development for your business, agency or organization, contact UA Statewide Corporate Programs today.