

Executive Summary

In June 2011, University of Alaska President Patrick Gamble appointed an 18-member University of Alaska Allied Fisheries Working Group, a cross-campus group of deans, directors and faculty members.

Allied Fisheries is a cross-campus University of Alaska collaborative initiative to assess and enhance the development and delivery of programs, courses, research and information that meet the employment needs of the fisheries, seafood and maritime industries.

The goals of the University of Alaska's Allied Fisheries initiative are:

- *To sustain and enhance the economy and the communities of Alaska by developing education and training that supports a responsive workforce enabling the fishing, seafood and maritime industries to stay vibrant and substantial contributors to the state.*
- *To support Alaskans, particularly young Alaskans, in discovering and preparing for the wide range of employment opportunities in the fishing, seafood and maritime industries.*

One of the first charges to the group was to “identify and inventory existing UA institutional capacity for training and education that supports all aspects of the fishing business industries, fisheries support and fisheries development in Alaska.” The Allied Fisheries Working Group has broadened the inventory to include also the institutional capacity for training and education in support of the seafood and maritime industries. This inventory provides a starting point for the University of Alaska to begin working with industry and community leaders to improve the educational and training opportunities for fisheries, seafood and maritime careers.

Inventory Conclusions

- Collectively, the fisheries, seafood and maritime programs offered within the UA system meet many of the education and training needs of prospective employees in these industries. However, they lack coordination, planning, and a cohesive identity. Outside of fisheries biology and management, fisheries, seafood or maritime specific courses may be difficult to locate or identify, are generally not organized into career tracks, and in most cases are not comprehensive in content coverage. Without question there are major gaps in the UA system's content offerings needed to meet workforce training demands in these industries. But equally important is the need to elevate these industries to an educational priority that will recognize the needs and opportunities and will provide career education and training tracks to prospective students.

- The UA advisory committees identified in this inventory each address part but not all of the educational and training needs of the fishing, seafood and maritime industries and coastal communities that depend on them.
- Fisheries - Almost the entire faculty capacity in programs focusing on fisheries consists of the Fisheries division faculty members (UAF SFOS), Marine Advisory Program faculty members (UAF SFOS) and two UAS faculty in the Fisheries Technology program. Although some faculty members in other parts of the system are engaged in fisheries education, training and research, it is generally as individuals rather than within a directed program. Formal training in fisheries is primarily focused on biology and management related occupations. Business and technical skills are offered primarily as non-credit, informal classes.
- Seafood - Five seafood faculty members at the UAF SFOS Kodiak Center provide some targeted seafood industry training and public service but in general there is no comprehensive training program to serve the seafood industry other than at the seafood science graduate student level in the UA system.
- Maritime - The University of Alaska Southeast provides training for maritime industries and has growth potential. Other than these programs, the UA system has few courses or programs addressing the employment and training needs of the maritime industries.
- Business and marketing training specific to the fisheries, seafood and maritime industries currently is not directly addressed in the UA system other than through informal education and short courses.
- Depending on industry and community identified needs, there may be room to re-vamp and enhance existing programs; collaborate with non-UA education and training providers; or create new programs. A number of programs are potentially easily adaptable or have the potential to grow—including Rural Development, Fisheries Technology and Marine Transportation and Technology. Some type of formal training program for commercial fishermen should be considered.

Next Steps

Moving forward, the Allied Fisheries Working Group recommends these steps and work products.

- Establish an advisory committee that provides input to the University from the fisheries, seafood, maritime industries and communities.
- Conduct an occupations inventory and workforce assessment.
- Complete an education and training gap analysis and establish priorities.
- Identify unique constraints and opportunities for effective education and training delivery for these occupations.
- Develop an integrated and comprehensive action plan.

For more information: www.marineadvisory.org/initiatives/marinescience/workforceplan/