

Goal #2

Provide Alaska's skilled workforce



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Historically Alaskans have benefited from high-paying jobs that do not require high levels of educational attainment. But the economy and workforce landscape of Alaska is changing rapidly and we must prepare for a new wave of employment opportunities that will require more than a high school diploma. According to national research, by 2025, 65 percent of jobs will require some form of post-secondary education. If K-12, vocational programs and UA education can prepare Alaskans for these jobs, Alaskans will fill them. Otherwise, Alaska will continue to face a shortage of skilled employees and will have to import labor from outside. In order to increase the number of students enrolling in post-secondary training we have to change the culture of education in the state and increase enrollment throughout the university system, especially in critical areas such as health programs and teacher education.

BENEFITS TO ALASKA

Meeting projected workforce demand (65% by 2025)

- Alaska's goal is for 65 percent of Alaska's working age population to have a postsecondary education credential – a degree or certificate of value – by 2025. We will not get there without the University of Alaska.
- Focusing on youth, or traditional high school graduates alone will not get us to 65 by 2025; we must focus on attracting Alaskans of all ages, high school graduates, and adults with some college and no degree to meet ambitious enrollment goals.
- The education gap is approximately 105,000. Improving enrollment & completion of recent high school graduates yields no more than 35,000, so we will need to attract and credential at least 70,000 adults to meet the goal.

Industry-based training

- The university is working closely with industry sectors to provide the necessary training for in-demand occupations through the utilization of industry advisory councils, Department of Labor projections, Alaska economic trends and other indicators of state employment demands to ensure that we are training students for necessary and viable careers.
- Industry advisory councils guide the university's programs to ensure they meet current employer requirements and assist graduates of both credit and non-credit programs to gain employment upon successful completion.

Special focus on two critical industries - teacher education and health programs

- Currently 70 percent of the teachers hired come from outside Alaska. Annual teacher turnover in rural Alaska school districts is as high as 50 percent.
- Improving teacher education is the first step to increasing student attainment and preparing Alaska students for post-secondary education and the workforce.
- Overall, about 30 percent of educators in Alaska are UA graduates and they tend to stay teaching in Alaska much longer than the teachers prepared outside Alaska.
- Health care is the only sector of the Alaska economy that is expected to grow this year. About 1 in every 12 jobs in Alaska is related to health care.
- Opportunities continue to grow in this field throughout the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care added 357,000 jobs from Feb. 2016 to Feb. 2017.

CHALLENGES

- Need to increase percentage of Alaskans with post-secondary education from 37 to 65 percent
- Nearly 60 percent of high school graduates require some preparatory education
- Rural students are out-performed by urban students, in part due to the impact of high teacher turnover
- There is a large and still-growing need for health care professionals across the state

SOLUTIONS

The University of Alaska is a high quality, affordable choice for those Alaskans who want to change their lives.

- We are recognized as the number one most affordable state university system in the nation.
- We are the number one producer of workforce in Alaska.
- We are the number one research organization in the state providing solutions to real problems.

UA is focusing on the needs of adult students with some college but no degree in order to attract them to workforce training, degree or certificate programs.

Alaska College of Education

- Through a collaborative College of Education, aligned with K-12, focusing on teacher quality, streamlining hiring and placement of UA graduates, enhancing mentoring programs and career development for new teachers and raising the prestige of the industry we can meet the goal to increase Alaska-educated teachers hired in Alaska schools.
- There will be increased consistency in degree programs, increased collaboration among faculty, more support for innovation and increased nimbleness all while increasing productivity and cost-effectiveness.

Industry-driven investment through the Education Tax Credit

- The Alaska Education Tax Credit Program provides a tax credit to businesses that make contributions to Alaska universities for direct instruction, research and educational support.
- Gifts to the university can be designated to industry related programs. These programs in turn produce the workforce that directly benefits the companies that donate and can be directed toward training programs specific to business or industry needs.

Certificate and Occupational Endorsement tuition discount

- The FY19 budget includes a discount of 25 percent for certain certificate and occupational endorsement programs.
- While university tuition is low compared to its peers, UA's tuition for certain career and technical education (CTE) programs is high. This imbalance contributes to the low college going rate in Alaska.
- Adult Alaskans requiring CTE programs are more debt-averse than "traditional" students, this helps incentivize enrollment among this population.

Career Coach

- Career Coach is a web-based tool to help Alaskans explore career and higher education opportunities. Users are able to easily browse current Alaska job postings, learn about workforce training and educational opportunities and access current Alaska labor market and wage data.
- Career Coach uses web-scraping technology to pull current Alaska and national labor market data from over 100 sources, allowing students to size up the potential job market based on a given degree program.