

**MULTI-SOURCE OBSERVATIONS AND
OPINIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION
GATHERED THROUGH THE STRATEGIC
DIRECTION INITIATIVE**

1) National Higher Education Viewpoints

- a) Secretary of Education “Need transformational change...”
 - “Too little accountability for improving attainment and achievement.”
- b) College
 - Too expensive.
 - Completion rates too low.
 - More associate degrees needed.
 - Time to completion too long.
- c) Grants and loans will shift toward performance-based and outcomes-based universities.
- d) President Obama: Race to the Top will have \$1 billion for openness, completion, affordability and good employment linkages.
- e) Use technology, personalize learning, expand access, bolster productivity.
- f) Consider earnings-based student loan repayment.
- g) Become true partners with K-12 schools and work to ensure high school graduation standards are aligned with college readiness for admission at a four-year or two-year level program.
- h) Partner with business leaders and community colleges to ensure the right workforce skills for the future labor market are being taught.
- i) Seamless credit transfer essential if schools want to partner.
- j) Can’t increase costs to students as the principal bill paying source for employee salaries and contracts.
- k) Exploit promising innovations.
- l) President Obama says:
 - i) Create affordability OR risk losing federal aid.
 - ii) Provide good value, including to those with academic deficiencies who need help.
 - iii) Make it hassle-free to pursue a college degree (service, efficiency).
 - iv) Expect to see the government hard sell its new College Scorecard.
 - v) Align standards for entry/exit throughout ... vertical (high school) and horizontal (universities).
 - vi) Be First in World competition. College Scorecard could help.
 - vii) Financial aid shopping list is needed.
- m) Understand the national higher education agenda. Take it seriously. Get caught up and stay caught up with developments.

- n) Two-thirds of future jobs will require postsecondary education.

2) State Higher Education Environment

- a) Expect flat operating funding despite excellent legislative support.
- b) Overwhelming deferred maintenance problem ... last year of Governor's dollars.
- c) Difficult to get research/equipment funding, or funding for research support structure.
- d) Working on common student database ... State of Alaska's P-20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).
- e) Great support from Department of Education & Early Development. Opportunity.
- f) UA capital budget consumed by Engineering, UAF Heat and Power Plant; creative approaches to fund needed capital investment will be necessary.
- g) Lowest college-going rate in the nation and lowest postsecondary participation rate by low income families.
- h) A majority of UA students are part-time and nontraditional.
- i) Alaska exports way too high a portion of college-going students to other states.

3) High School Testing

- a) State should pay for early high school testing: Accuplacer, PSAT, ACT/SAT.
- b) Use testing as way points, not just end points.
- c) Align with college and career prep.

4) Admissions

- a) Open admissions ... with reservations. Careful advising. Mandatory placement in appropriate track.
- b) Colorado: Guaranteed four-year admission with 30 community college credits, 2.7 GPA minimum.
- c) One-third of all students will transfer at least once.

- d) All UA schools in the state system K-20 need to be on board with these admission/enrollment initiatives ... no county options.
- e) Model innovative growth ideas. Not talking growth in number of buildings, or natural demographic growth. Start “UA growth” in high school. Create, capture more Alaska high school graduates, then retain them ... it’s growth by another name.
- f) Create a common, system-wide new student placement standard.
- g) Student in-processing and service support needs an overhaul using a university “best practices” template. Service should be effective as well as student centered. Don’t just explain problems to students ... fix problems for students. Empower staff employees to do that whenever they can. Make it a condition of employment ... pass/fail graded.
- h) Revise student admissions policy ... first timers, transfers, returning students, etc.
- i) Enrollment standards for baccalaureate.
- j) Make transferred credits count ... certificate, associate, baccalaureate.

5) Remediation

- a) Go after the root causes. MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) UA’s general education requirements (GERs) to grades 6-12. Flipped classes. Encourage individual progress and team learning.
- b) Don’t waste money/time in building remedial classes that provide no credit, have high failure rates, and eat up student dollars and morale.
- c) Test in high school early, often ... “waypoints.” Replace the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam with a test that truly measures college and career readiness.
- d) Create widely available tutoring. Extended class hours if necessary.
- e) Align “college ready” with “graduation qualified” to mean the same thing state-wide.
- f) Opportunity: use summer, online. Start “gateway” courses right away where/when possible.
- g) Mandate use of the community campus system for appropriate placement.
- h) Fully use 12th grade, based on tests, placement. No opt-outs.
- i) Compete to Complete ... Complete College America (CCA; 33 states). It’s not “bad.” It’s just federal.
- j) Administer college ready assessments in high school.
- k) Give credit for “the right math” for the path, such as the Carnegie Foundation Quantway or Statway ... it may not be Algebra → Calculus is so sacred.
- l) Declare a major study area right away, (then) do the gateway courses first.
- m) Remediation is not working.

- n) Remediation: Don't just look to mitigate it ... re-connect the high school-to-college education continuum in a way that can actually obviate the need for most categories of remediation altogether.
- o) Eliminate the need for remediation by eliminating the cause of remediation.
- p) Establish specific academic applications for MOOCs so state high schools can use them to reduce the need for developmental and remedial placement.

6) Academics

- a) Student Learning is the Gold Standard: Receiving basic and balanced critical-thinking and technical skills through application of modern learning techniques, ready to enter the job market or a higher education institution academically prepared and motivated.
- b) Create smooth, clear, predictable pathways: high school → two-year → four-year, and communicate them clearly in major/degree maps.
- c) Curriculum alignment ... starts with GERs and work back through high school courses.
- d) Understand that workforce requirements for graduates ... their skill needs must influence UA production planning.
- e) Accommodate choices by students ... or they will make their own choice to go elsewhere.
- f) eLearning taking over – it's here to stay. It touches everything -- fundamentally changes the teaching/learning game, including who gets the revenue.
- g) Classic lecture to a cohort is facing growing competition everywhere.
- h) Putting up with high course attrition is bad education. Take it on.
- i) Faculty/staff evaluations and tenure criteria should reflect whole person ... service committed, a willingness to step up and lead, manage, or support changes in teaching and research as required.
- j) The balance of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences has to be maintained, but filtered through the financial viability of workforce demand as opposed to just student demand. Interdisciplinary study is the way ahead ... need to get out front.
- k) THE GIFT WE GIVE: Critical thinking skills, regardless of academic degree. Ability to analyze and to express results ... ideas, written and oral.
- l) Enhance UA student speaking and writing skills in all our courses.
- m) We want to create civil, ethical, community minded leader-citizens. Has to be part of the UA overall curriculum plan in some formal way.
- n) Classroom space utilization: turf protection vs. efficiency and cost.

7) Streamlining

- a) Two years of credit opportunity possible in high school ... make it available.
- b) Grow articulation agreements from two-year → four-year throughout UA schools.
- c) Confer appropriate associate degree for previously enrolled community college students who have accumulated 70 hours.
- d) It must be college level work ... cannot compromise academic excellence.
- e) Credit for prior learning, prior experience.
- f) General Education Core transfer (23 states) made simple ... let's see if we can be No. 24.
- g) Working students must be accommodated (recent high school graduates attending full-time comprise only a small portion of the student population).
- h) We must be willing to assist a student who wants to “get in, get through, get out, and get working.” List all the typical student delay scenarios and look at how many we routinely put up with for less than compelling reasons. Standardize 120 hours/60 hours as UA degree attainment goals, with exceptions being rare.
- i) Fully eliminate persistent, unnecessary chronic credit transfer roadblocks across the UA system, whatever they may consist of.
- j) Block scheduling (sequential courses) – predictability. Math courses taken early, and in sequence until completion.
- k) Hold campuses accountable for making improvements in time to completion.
- l) Take regular attendance. Withdraw students not attending class or doing the work, especially in the first 60 hours.
- m) Create a world-class culture of student service that anchors our overall reputation goal of becoming well known as an excellent educational institution.
- n) Competency-based GER progression?
- o) Look at the case for 6-12 week semesters for certain classes of students.
- p) Hold campuses accountable for space utilization; hours per week and occupancy capacity.

8) Attainment

- a) Metrics need to measure success of under-prepared, under-privileged, under-resourced, non-standard students.
- b) Better recruitment and retention goes straight to the bottom line.

- c) Transfer student and remedial student metrics need to be interpreted carefully for effectiveness.
- d) Work to get college credit in high school ... dual enrollment. Shorten completion time with intensity ... i.e. “Stay on Track.” Block scheduling.
- e) Degree = 120 hours (15 x 8) for baccalaureate ... or 60 hours (15 x 4) for associate.
- f) Encourage competency exam credit. College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and others.
- g) Declare a major early, take no more courses than required. UA builds the pathways from community campuses onward.
- h) Common course numbering, fast and clean transfer process.
- i) Can’t be full value if it doesn’t also apply to improving adult students’ success.
- j) Reverse transfer (15 states): student dropped, but could have attained a two-year AA degree with 20 more credits → then goes on toward 4-year degree later. As they add 20 credits → award associate degree along the way (credit goes to community campus).
- k) In student eyes, hassle-free credit transfer is an entitlement, not a bonus.
- l) “Graduate in 4” is a partnership (15 hours: student ... + 120 hours: faculty).
 - Earning more hours than necessary does not equate to better education.
 - Nor does adding more hours (minors) for a routine degree.
- m) Students drop out, in debt, with no degree to show for it ... a university’s worst failure.
- n) Seek out, find, and remove administrative student roadblocks through formal analytical program assessment (process measuring). Techniques, possible consultant help.
- o) Seek out and employ the opportunities resident within our system that will allow students to complete, attain faster.
- p) Reach back as far as practical in order to help guarantee that high school students are ready at graduation to:
 - Immediately enter the workforce hiring process; or
 - Enter higher education without remediation.
 (Who scores this if it were to become a metric ... UA or the K-12 world?)
- q) Build a world-class student mandatory comprehensive advising system all across UA. Then link it with Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to the high schools.
- r) Make permission be required to change majors ... engage mandatory high-impact advising that can restructure a new degree path to on-time graduation.

9) Student Schedules

- a) Revise “crunch” courses, washout courses with an attitude toward creating success.

- b) Fill up the days, nights, weekends if necessary. The majority of our students are part-time.
- c) Use technology to improve class scheduling flow options.
- d) Students want options or they will select the one option we don't want them to ... to go elsewhere.
- e) First –time freshmen should require mandatory orientation regarding UAOnline, comprehensive advising, finance, food service, housing service, Blackboard, healthcare, security, safety, university rules, tutors scholarship availability, conduct.
- f) Classroom course and lab schedules need to step up and meet student throughput demands, when necessary using a full week for scheduling opportunity, including optimum use of any available classroom.
- g) Space utilization and consolidation needs to be analyzed, evaluated, and if necessary regulations established that recognize student progression as a top priority in the determination process.
- h) Look at a University College concept.
- i) Waiting lists for courses at any level need to be worked down very aggressively. Goal = 0.
- j) Examine block scheduling ... i.e. 5 days/week, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

10) Students Have a Role

- a) Declare a general area major early. Declare goals. All baccalaureate students have a declared major and degree plan at no less than 60 hours.
- b) No late registrations.
- c) Avoid debt; when in debt avoid default. Use advisors.
- d) Take 15+ credits.
- e) Early dual enrollment/dual credit is good if you are ready.
- f) High school senior year can make all the difference in college readiness – don't waste it.
- g) No unclassified students allowed. Must have a major area, or a major declared, from day one.
- h) Go to class, do the work.

11) Rewards/Incentives

- a) Reward performance and potential, not promises.

- b) Address scholarships in a way that demands more of entering students and then builds more reward as they progress.
 - Can we do this with mini-grants?
- c) Re-align scholarships ... place more emphasis on rewarding student college-level performance, particularly during the “three critical years.” Consider covering first year full costs with performance based funding for later years.
- d) Can we buy down tuition in any way? Offset with scholarship dollars? Legislative action?

12) Articulation

- a) UA Associate degree guarantees acceptance into UA four-year program.
- b) 2 + 2 “guarantee” agreements could guarantee UA community college graduates admitted to four-year programs as juniors (23 states).
- c) Transfers are good ... need to make them simple. Go from two-year → four-year. Package deals.
- d) Create a first-class community campus articulation system-wide plan.
- e) Align basic math curriculum, all the way back to junior high school if necessary, to arrive at the UA freshman math standard.
- f) Transfer Student Bill of Rights (Florida).
- g) UA has upper division course capacity. Let’s fill it ... transfer student recruiting, “Ready Adults.”

13) Community Campus

- a) Redesign community campus system integration. Look at them differently as to what they can add:
 - Access → access + success.
 - Fragmented → clear pathways to completion.
 - Low throughput rate → high rate → articulation.
 - Tolerance → rigor → achievement.
 - Local prerogative → collective responsibility.
 - Isolation → collaboration.
 - Boutique → general education path to a degree.

Teaching focus → learning focus.

IT as support → IT as support and analytics.

- b) Funding from enrollment → enrollment leads to student success.
- c) “Ready adults” – have earned significant college credits without earning a degree. Find them.
- d) Teaching and scheduling flexibility is paramount for all the different student lifestyles ... CCs do it best.
- e) Recognize fully our essential commitment to building Alaska’s workforce and citizenry.
- f) Do not compete with Department of Labor for workforce development teaching. Capitalize on what we do best for the workforce.
- g) Create a common role/mission for community campuses that enhances student two-year degree attainment as well as a corresponding articulation to a four-year baccalaureate degree.

14) Teachers

- a) Quality control is essential to get program entry of high quality candidates.
- b) Lots of clinical preparation ... lots of high quality mentoring.
- c) Knowing and teaching – have to have both.
- d) Evaluate UA teacher prep thoroughly and support with research.
- e) Big focus on STEM teachers/STEM students, but balance too. Interdisciplinary rounding.
- f) New learning advances depend on new teaching methods.
- g) New teaching methods depend largely on new technology, new subject matter presentations, broadband ... coupled with new, innovative ways to motivate students. ANSEP does it well. Why? Use it elsewhere.
- h) Significantly improve math background and fundamentals.
- i) UA needs a set of Core Values that can be used to capture our students’ loyalty to their university, and their place in it. Our teacher graduates then take that loyalty example with them to K-12 across Alaska and promote the concept.
- j) Produce teachers academically prepared to take advantage of technology, and can use it to elevate high school students academically to the minimum level of learning required to meet the rigor of APS selection. Three levels.
- k) Teacher mentoring ... essential! What’s our overall program grade? Why? What can we do better? Must be scaled up to a full state program.
- l) Young K-12 students who want to be teachers need to teach ... get their feet wet. Motivation early on. Motivation is so fundamentally important at that age.

15) Finance

- a) Scholarship review – reward vs. entitlement.
- b) Reverse cost of upper/lower classes. Halve community campus AA degree tuition rates.
- c) Package rates for associate degrees.
- d) Alaska has the highest proportion of adults with some college but no degree. Reach out to “forever students” who did not graduate.
- e) Preparation, retention, persistence, graduation = good business model.
- f) UA Student Financial Service needs a basic process management review. Rules are outdated, mistake prone, not student friendly. Personnel become needlessly bureaucratic because of these rules. Empower them! The percentage of “situations” coming out of student finance is way too high. Work problems, don’t just listen to them.
- g) We desperately need a UA system tuition scheme that incentivizes intra-university collaboration, cooperation. Let’s enhance the natural attractiveness of our community campuses for students needing that level by making them very affordable. Let’s cut tuition for certificate, AA degrees.
- h) Expand unrestricted funding sources.
- i) UA and the three universities must diversify sources of revenue.
- j) Expect little to no capital maintenance (R&R) or new construction planning dollars over the next three years.
- k) Deferred maintenance okay, renovation to achieve mission maybe, but not new capital construction unless an equal amount of space is demolished within the system until student or research growth demands otherwise.
- l) Tuition is a political issue, as well as a financial one; re-examine tuition models including consolidated tuition
- m) Legislative ratio guidance flawed. Substitute?
- n) Work to get governor’s deferred maintenance appropriation back for five more years.
- o) Establish a University Building Fund.

16) IT

- a) For our students what do we need to track inbounds, outbounds, transfers, attrition, “ready adults,” and job availability? Let’s build it.
- b) Disaggregate personnel data to be able to track, and advise individual students.
- c) Simplify high school early learning enrollments.

- d) Financial transaction services must be made simple, online.
- e) Single point contacts wherever possible – advisors.
- f) Transfer website (29 states).
- g) Technology is an entitlement, not a student optional add-on.
- h) Bring expanded broadband to all of UA.
- i) IT now underpins everything we do ... it is revolutionizing higher ed.
- j) Cannot fully reach potential without IT excellence.

17) Metrics

- a) Measure disaggregated demographic data i.e. Alaska Native, non-traditional students, etc.
- b) Course, degree completion.
- c) Time to start, time to completion from high school graduation.
- d) Cost/student ... cost/degree. Production costs to UA broken down.
- e) Outputs.
- f) Measure high level – achievement of mission, outcomes, goals.
- g) Measure performance.
- h) Measure what you can control and set targets for.
- i) High school students need to graduate satisfied about their readiness and their opportunity to get work and/or go to school in Alaska.
- j) Our metrics should track effects: accomplishment trends, ratios, behaviors.
- k) Exit polls.
- l) Track accreditation write-ups.
- m) Include space utilization metrics.

18) Collaboration

- a) Forcing unwanted “cooperation” among our universities and system office burns up too much institutional energy ... but our reputation goal depends on it. Too personality dependent.
- b) Showcase “special” programs to the public: Consolidated Alaska Mining Initiative, Fisheries, Seafood and Maritime Initiative, Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), centers, research, among others. Put them up front on our websites.
- c) Tell our story to Alaska and to the nation.

- d) Build community, state trust in us as an institution.
- e) Keep tuition objective, realistic, affordable.
- f) Collaboration among the three universities has to be accorded a top priority or “Effects” will never reach their potential. Has to withstand the impacts of personalities changing at the top echelons.
- g) One for all, all for one is presently raising the institutional reputation for overall excellence. The only way is up.
- h) Unless it functions exceedingly well at every campus level, the UA system will never reach its rich potential as a higher education institution in the eyes of our supporters and our peer universities ... and neither will UA’s reputation for excellence.

19) Process Improvement

- a) Books – reduce cost.
- b) Financial services ... scholarship money, veteran benefit checks.
- c) Class scheduling ... block registration.
- d) Classroom scheduling.
- e) Training for service providers.
- f) Freshmen orientation.
- g) Staff development.
- h) Faculty development.
- i) Leadership development.

Sample of Sources

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