

UAA ALUMNISPIRIT

Spring 2018 • ISSUE 09



MODEL UNITED NATIONS | ALASKA'S LEADERS TURN TO UAA | ALUTIIQ LANGUAGE



**AMAZING
STORIES**
BEING WRITTEN EVERY DAY.



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UAA guitar professor Armin Abdihodžić and recent UAA music alumnus, percussionist Eric Bleicher, B.M. '17 (pictured), are using a faculty development grant to record Mundus Canis, a collection of classical guitar and percussion works which they performed in concert last November. For the full story, visit bit.ly/2FD0kNa.

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FROM AN ALUMNUS

One of the greatest returns on investment I have made was completing a bachelor's degree at the University of Alaska Anchorage. At a critical juncture in my life, I was prohibited from being a qualified candidate for executive-level positions without a degree. However, I chose to do the work and not be held back.

I make that statement to encourage those who have graduated from our university to stay involved as alumni and give back to the institution. As graduates, we understand the value UAA brings to our city and state and the personal gain from our education. Now, it's our turn to ensure others recognize the same gratification and life-changing enhancement provided by a college education.

I am proud to say that my daughter Kari also graduated from UAA and her degree has opened a door to an enviable career in broadcasting.

Giving back comes in many forms — it could be personal contributions of time and money, mentoring, or representing the needs and value of the university back to your respective employers. Communicate with pride and conviction what UAA has brought to your lives and our community.

Bruce Bustamante

Bruce Bustamante, B.B.A. Marketing '99
President, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
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FROM THE EDITOR

Campus is abuzz with energy as we finish the spring semester and prepare to welcome the newest graduating class into the ranks of alumni. We're also celebrating the return of daylight and look forward to the long Alaska summer days ahead.

In this issue of *Alumni Spirit*, you'll read about ways in which UAA serves as a resource of expertise to our state's leaders. You'll also hear from a handful of alumni as they reflect on their experiences with the Model United Nations of Alaska program, now in its 25th year on campus. We highlight the stories of four of your fellow alumni, and share how UAA's Kodiak College is helping revitalize the endangered Alutiiq language.

In the photo below, I'd like to introduce some of the staff that put this publication together. Now is also a great opportunity to acknowledge our alumni editorial advisory board, listed on page 4. This group's collective expertise helps guide us as we decide what Amazing Stories to share with you.

Throughout the magazine, you'll notice opportunities highlighted to Go. Help. Connect. or Give. to your alma mater. We look forward to seeing you or hearing from you!

With Green & Gold spirit,

Jessica Hamlin
Jessica Hamlin
Editor



A rare photo of the notoriously camera-shy magazine staff! Here's James, Jessica, Brett and Joey after a particularly messy meeting.



GO.



HELP.



CONNECT.



GIVE.

“At the time, I didn’t put a lot of value on what skiing was going to teach me,” said Robert Brewster, B.B.A. Marketing ’83. Turns out four years of frigid workouts trained him as a businessman, too. A former Seawolf skier, Brewster has worked for The Alaska Club since 1986, and served as CEO since 2007. “I think [skiing] had a tremendous impact on making me more competitive and driven,” he added.

Brewster launched his career almost by accident. Nearing graduation, he represented UAA at the World Universities Games in Bulgaria, then joined the U.S. Biathlon team. While focused on the 1984 Olympic trials, he found a job at an Anchorage health club. That led to further fitness roles, first at Hotel Captain Cook and then The Alaska Club.

“Somewhat by coincidence, my interest and knowledge of physical fitness dovetailed with the education I received in marketing to make me kind of perfectly positioned for this industry,” he said.

At The Alaska Club, he’s built a portfolio of fitness brands, expanded from one to 14 locations and received international recognition for his efforts.

Diverse representation is a point of pride (and an envy of the industry), but it hasn’t been easy. As CEO, Brewster navigates both changing fitness trends and advertising platforms, marketing to various age groups of Alaska’s exceptionally transient population.

In addition, he said, “Marketing is more than just advertising and strategy. It’s about putting the products together so people have what they need when they get here.” The Alaska Club operates separate trampoline parks, weight loss centers, yoga studios and home fitness stores, too.

Brewster has given talks in Europe, Asia and across North America and served as chairman of the International Trade Association for Health Clubs. He’s been internationally successful, leading one of the 25 largest companies in the industry, all without leaving Alaska.

“I think there was tremendous benefit to be here all those years and to build connections,” he said of UAA. “When I got out, I was already ready to go into the workplace, and those interactions really helped me a lot.” His son, Brandon, also skied for UAA, graduating in 2015.

CEO’S CAREER IS WORKING OUT WELL

“We were really on the leading edge of multipurpose fitness centers,” he said. With options like basketball courts and hot yoga, The Alaska Club has always prioritized inclusivity. Twenty-year-old powerlifters share space with grandparents on treadmills. Indoor water parks bring in families, and parents stay members as the kids grow up. “I think what we’re doing here is very positive and unique,” he added. “We’ve been pioneers.”

“For any business to be successful for 32 years, you have to feel pretty good about that,” he said. But he also feels good about the mission. The company receives several million visits per year, and each one represents an Alaskan staying fit, losing weight, clearing their mind and keeping active.

As a business, success at The Alaska Club simply means more Alaskans stay healthy. “It’s a really rewarding thing to do.”

On a Saturday night in November 2017, 24-year-old Samantha Mack '16, received a phone call that changed her life. She had received the prestigious U.S. Rhodes Scholarship and would be joining an elite group of 32 students to study at Oxford University in October 2018.

In 2016, Mack graduated with B.A. degrees in political science and English and a minor in Alaska Native studies. Currently at UAA, Mack is pursuing her master's degree in English with an emphasis in literary theory and will graduate in May.

Originally from King Cove, Alaska, Mack moved to Anchorage with her parents so she could pursue more educational opportunities. But for Mack, who is Aleut, her Alaska Native roots have remained an important part of her identity and academic pursuits while attending UAA. Now, as a Rhodes Scholar, she has the opportunity to share her Alaska Native heritage on a larger, more global platform.

"I think what I am most excited about in regards to being named a Rhodes Scholar is the fact that I get to share this with the Indigenous community in Alaska," said Mack. "Maintaining a focus on Indigenous policy and peoples in my research is a priority of mine, and to know that I will be given the opportunity to have important conversations with important people about the things I care about most is just incredible to me."

Although Mack is heading to Oxford this fall to pursue a master of philosophy degree in political theory, Alaska and UAA will always be her home. She plans to spend a few years living Outside, but says she is passionate about Arctic issues and would like to return home to help shape policy and, perhaps, pursue a teaching position at her alma mater.

"For me, it is important to stay connected to UAA because UAA gave me the chance to really, really succeed as a student, and I want to be able to give other students like me those opportunities in the future," Mack said.

MEET UAA'S FIRST U.S. RHODES SCHOLAR

THE BUSINESS OF ANTHROPOLOGY

"I thought I'd be in Alaska somewhere doing archaeology in the tundra," said Carlos Arias '11.

Instead, he's in New York and Chicago, Shanghai and Beijing. That's what happens when you work on global marketing for Nike. An anthropology graduate, Arias is now a strategist at AKQA, a multinational marketing and design agency. He's currently based in Portland, Oregon, just an eight-mile run from Nike's world headquarters.

Anthropology sounds like an unlikely lead-in to marketing and business, but Arias says otherwise. Anthropologists, after all, study what shapes societies. "It's such an expansive point of view on the world," he noted. "At the [American Anthropological Association] conference, I gave a talk about anthropologists and how we need to be more involved in shaping brands and companies — how they behave, what they do and why they do it."

For example, consider the Nike "Trial Zones," which Arias helped develop. Launched at Nike stores in Beijing, Paris, Miami and New York, these environments let customers test shoes on a sensor-monitored half-court. The spaces are designed to create a mood, a memory, a mindset. It's all part of Nike culture.

"The world is so diverse, and these kinds of interesting environments exist everywhere," he said. "I think people in the discipline need to understand their value and what they can bring [to business]."

UAA professor Kerry Feldman recognized Arias' talents early and, through notes in the margins of exams, encouraged him to consider grad school. Carlos earned a master's in applied anthropology from California State University, Long Beach in 2014. In grad school, he worked for a national Latino ad agency and wrote a graduate thesis on the dollarization of El Salvador's economy, focusing on its effects on those who worked in advertising. Throughout the process, he sent drafts and questions to Dr. Feldman for regular feedback.

"I haven't seen Kerry in person since I graduated in 2011, but that guy has been such a useful resource and such a good friend," Arias said. "I think most

Alaskan kids tend to take UAA for granted ... I don't think people truly know the capacity and the quality of the professors at UAA until they leave."

The two still talk today — about research, social spaces and even Scandinavian prison design — and Dr. Feldman predicts a long and successful career for his former student. "I now learn from Carlos," he said.





SUN, SURF AND ENDANGERED MONK SEALS

Meet Norman the Narwhal, Leialoha the Mermaid and Makana the Monk Seal, a handful of the colorful creations by Trenton Millar, B.A. '10, M.A.T. '14; and Sarah Millar, A.A. '14. The husband-and-wife team, along with Trenton's twin brother and his wife, co-created Elly Lu Organics, a line of ethically and sustainably made plush toys for children, inspired by the sea.

The Alaska born-and-raised duo knew they'd start their own business after attending UAA. When they moved to Hawaii for Trenton's job, their new tropical home provided the inspiration for their business venture.

While living on the Big Island, the Millars realized the significance of protecting the beautiful but fragile ecosystem where they lived. But their conservation desires really hit home when they were hiking and witnessed a critically endangered Hawaiian monk seal in the wild.

Sarah says this experience was the launching point for Elly Lu Organics. "Our whole mission is to create ethically made, organic toys designed to make the world a brighter place," she said.

What sets Elly Lu Organics apart is educating their tiny consumers on the importance of caring for the environment and also giving back. A portion of the company's profits goes to nonprofits that benefit children or endangered animals.

"This is relatively new and we're growing pretty quickly," said Trenton. Currently, their toys are sold online and in boutique shops in Hawaii, California and a handful of other states, including Alaska.

Despite the challenges of starting a business, they say it's been worth it and are proud of their success. They credit their business savvy to their educational experience at UAA.

Of UAA's history and education programs, Trenton said, "You learn how to get out of your comfort zone, talk to and meet new people. I was able to use those skills when explaining the business to potential buyers."

The Millars plan on expanding this year, including launching an Arctic line since they've moved back to Alaska. They're excited to grow their business in their home state and continue Elly Lu Organics' mission.

Teri Cothren, B.A. Psychology '98, played for the UAA women's basketball team, spending her last two seasons as a starter and her senior year as a co-captain. She credits her success in part to Harry Larrabee, a former UAA men's basketball coach who took over the head coaching job halfway through her junior year.

"[Larrabee] created a positive environment for the team; we started winning and having fun," she said.

Wanting to "pay forward" her positive experience by giving back to her alma mater, in 2014 Cothren helped launch the UAA Seawolf Athlete Alumni chapter that now includes nearly 300 members. With a strong and active membership, the group strives to make a positive impact in the lives of current student-athletes that is integral to the success of Seawolf Nation.

"We're increasing awareness of the needs of student-athletes and keeping alumni connected with Athletics after they've graduated," Cothren explained.

Whether it's books and tuition, uniforms and shoes, funds to travel, or mentorship and networking after graduation, there are many

opportunities for alumni with the capacity to give back to make a difference for athletic programs and student-athletes.

The support Cothren received from her coach, teammates, Athletic department and loyal fans during her student-athlete years propelled her to convey that same positive energy to current student-athletes.

Now, she and fellow members of the UAA Seawolf Athlete Alumni chapter are challenging former student-athletes to get involved with a "Still in the Game" giving campaign to help build upon a proud tradition of athletes that are part of the Green and Gold family — "Once a Seawolf, Always a Seawolf!"



LEARN HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED, MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR A STUDENT, OR SUPPORT EXCELLENCE IN ANOTHER AREA OF PERSONAL MEANING TO YOU:
UAA.ALASKA.EDU/GIVING
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GIVING A HAND UP

MOTIVATING ATHLETICS ALUMNI IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

ALASKA'S LEADERS TURN TO UAA

A glimpse inside a faculty member's office in the UAA ConocoPhillips Integrated Science Building.

among a group of contractors who put together private funding to develop the curriculum for the degree. Construction managers need to create a more complex skill set than they did in the past, said Swalling.

“There are a few that come up through the ranks, but that’s hard,” he said. “It really helps to have that degree because of the technical requirements. It’s harder to get hired without it because employers use that degree as a screening device. They want to make sure you have what it takes to get a four-year degree.”

BRINGING A VISION TO LIFE, IN EDUCATION

Dr. Deena Bishop occupies a unique position in Alaska education. She earned her Master of Public Administration degree at UAA, then worked as an adjunct professor before

UAA has long been a critical resource in Bishop’s vision for education in Alaska.

“As the leader of the MSBSD, I leapt at the chance to partner with the university to enhance the education of high school students,” Bishop said. “That endeavor established the Mat-Su Middle College School as a collaboration between MSBSD, UAA and the Eagle River campus — the school has since moved to [UAA’s] Mat-Su campus.”

Bishop later launched a similar effort in Anchorage. “I knew its students were also ripe for a middle college, and am proud to say that ASD’s Alaska Middle College School opened last August [at the UAA Chugiak-Eagle River campus],” she said.

“Qualifying high school juniors and seniors can also earn a UAA Associate

OFFERING EXPERTISE, ANSWERS FOR ALASKA'S LEADERS

Click on an Alaska media site and it’s highly likely you’ll see UAA professors and researchers quoted in stories these days. At a time when Alaska is feeling the mounting pressures of a critical budget shortfall and upswell of crime, the university’s experts are providing stability and knowledge — helping state leaders navigate toward economic and legal solutions.

“Entities like UAA’s Institute of Social and Economic Research and the Alaska Justice Information Center have been resources for my administration,” Alaska Governor Bill Walker said. “We continue to look for ways to use the talent at the university to build a safer, stronger and smarter Alaska.”

While UAA’s ISER and AJiC have been spotlighted most in these turbulent times, UAA has long served as a resource for Alaska’s leaders in politics, industry, business, education and philanthropy.

- UAA’s WWAMI, nursing and allied health programs are best known on the state’s health campus, providing opportunities for individuals and a highly skilled workforce for Alaska’s most dynamic economic sector.
- UAA also grows partnerships outside Alaska as a way of educating occupational therapists (with Creighton University) and pharmacists (with Idaho State University).

- The Business Enterprise Institute (BEI) links economic development programs across the UA system and bolsters business and entrepreneurial capacity across the state. BEI is a liaison between industry and UAA, providing a bounty of technical assistance, economics-grounded research, small business incubation and other services.

INDUSTRY TURNS TO UAA FOR A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM

In the early 2000s, Alaska’s construction industry found itself in a predicament: its skilled workers were growing older and retiring, with too few workers rising through the ranks to take their places. Industry leaders looked to UAA for a solution — and found it.

The construction industry’s trade association, Associated General Contractors of Alaska, joined forces with the university to devise a new degree program — construction management — to train Alaskans to manage a project both in a highly technical construction office and on a job site requiring broad knowledge of construction processes and techniques.

Between 2006 and 2017, 33 students have received CM Associate of Applied Science degrees. UAA awarded its first CM Bachelor of Science degree in 2009. Since then, the bachelor’s program has graduated 134 students.

Michael Swalling, owner of Swalling Construction Co., was

“The community’s leaders turn to UAA and the university gives back value.”

- JUDITH OWENS-MANLEY

rising to the helm of the Mat-Su Borough School District. Bishop now leads the Anchorage School District, the state’s largest (47,279 students) and most diverse (100 languages spoken).

She occupies a key position in postsecondary education as well. In 2015, the governor appointed Bishop to serve on the UA Board of Regents.

of Arts degree at no cost,” Bishop said, “giving them a jump-start on college or career unparalleled to none — with the support of both ASD and UAA!”

ASD is looking to open a second middle school campus this fall. Bishop has a vision for more collaborative work with UAA. “As I steer [ASD], I’m looking for ways to widen horizons for public

education not only in Anchorage but in our great state as a whole,” she said. “Whether it be partnerships with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, the local school district, or college campuses, we’re working all the angles: to bring preschool to a greater portion of the population, improve outcomes for K-12, and increase and enhance learning opportunities for students in high school, college and beyond.”

‘WE CAN BE A WAY OF BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER’

A vital intersection of UAA’s resources and the needs of local communities lies within the Center for Community Engagement and Learning.

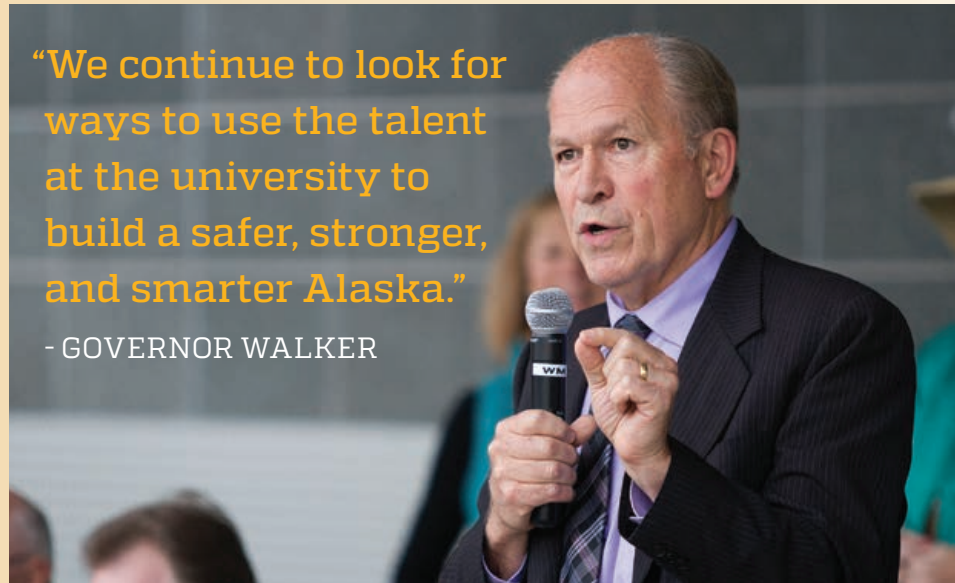
There, Judith Owens-Manley facilitates faculty-community partnerships addressing health and wellness, positive child and youth development, access to justice, food security, arts, language and culture, and Alaska’s environment.

“We’re trying to build something,” Owens-Manley said.

UAA’s Rhonda Johnson and Gabriel Garcia, for example, worked with

“We continue to look for ways to use the talent at the university to build a safer, stronger, and smarter Alaska.”

- GOVERNOR WALKER



the Alaska Resilience Initiative this year, examining mental health equity issues. Assistant Professor Hattie Harvey’s collaboration with Cook Inlet Native Head Start enhanced a Yup’ik immersion program. Dr. Shelly Burdette-Taylor provides nursing students with experience helping homeless people needing foot and wound care.

At think tanks, nonprofits present a community challenge to brainstorm with attendees about addiction,

refugee resettlement, computer literacy, education about sexual assault and other issues.

Michele Brown, president of United Way of Anchorage, used a UAA Think Tank in 2014 to discuss remedies for the shortage of affordable housing in Anchorage.

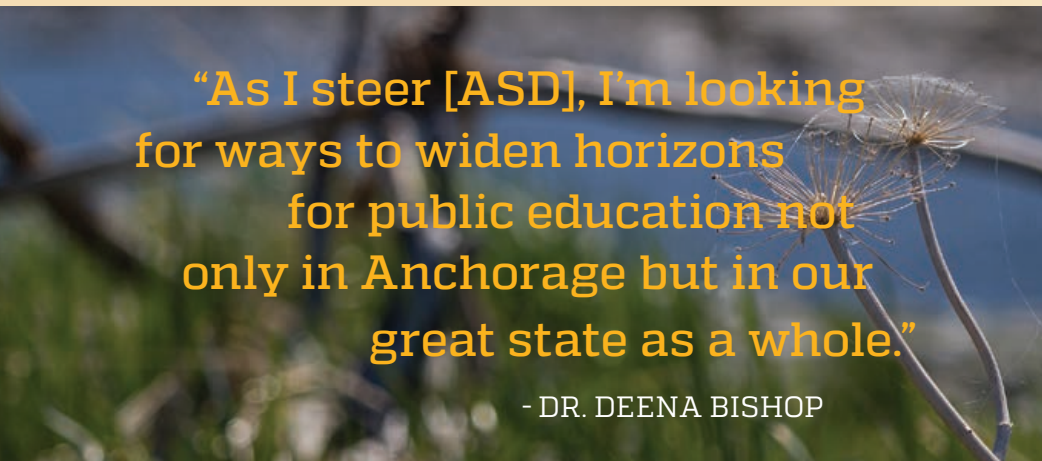
“Nonprofits frequently provide services that help alleviate a problem or advocate for change,” she said. “But lasting solutions only happen when the nonprofit, public and private sectors join to systematically address the multiple forces that contribute to the problem.”

The community’s leaders turn to UAA and the university gives back value with faculty and students with deep relationships for what they care about, Owens-Manley says.

“That’s the potential — people who keep working together, asking questions together and moving in a direction we can feel good about,” she said.

“As I steer [ASD], I’m looking for ways to widen horizons for public education not only in Anchorage but in our great state as a whole.”

- DR. DEENA BISHOP



STUDENT SUCCESS TAKES GRIT. JUST ASK AN ALUM.

Psychology professor Claudia Lampman took on a new project at UAA in November. She accepted the role of Interim Vice Provost for Student Success, heading an initiative to improve retention and graduation rates at UAA. Her work is closely tied to the university’s new strategic plan, UAA 2020, which has student success as a core value.

Give us a feel for UAA’s retention and graduation rates today. In 2012, roughly 30 percent of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen disappeared from the university after their first year. Only about a quarter of the starting cohort graduated six years later.

The numbers are even more staggering for associate degree seekers. Their drop off after the first year is the same; two years later, almost none of them (about one in 10) graduate. Because graduation rates are tied to accreditation, we need to move those numbers.

What tools or strategies do you plan to use?

My biggest initiative is a comprehensive first-year advising program where once you are admitted, someone contacts you — “Hey, I am your first-year advisor.” This person will help you with financial aid, introduce you to campus resources, and help with academic counseling through your first 30 credits. We need to welcome students to UAA and let them know that we care about their success.

I also think it would be a good idea to ask students to declare an area of interest — what are often called “meta majors.” Business, science, health, education. This helps solve that problem of picking something without being well-informed, and then taking courses that might not count if you switch majors. If you start your first year taking courses that pretty much count no matter where you end up in that meta major, that is going to help a lot. This isn’t a new idea. It has been successful at many schools across the nation.

We are also creating a “front door” for students. All the GER classes have been moved out of the College of Arts and Sciences and into the Community and Technical College. They’ll be taught in two classroom buildings on the west side of campus, near the Learning Commons. Students will take classes in blocks and enhance their opportunities to form community. We know a sense of belongingness is very important to student success.

What do you want alumni to think about?

What I would say to alumni is they are the ones who made it. They are models of student success. They know what grit is. Anything they can do to give that knowledge and guidance back to current students would be awesome. They are our success stories.



'MUN GAVE ME THE TOOLS I NEEDED TO DO WHAT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN ME TO DO'

MODEL UNITED NATIONS OFFERS INSIGHTS THAT SHAPE LIVES

The moment that transformed Nithya Thiru's life happened in her freshman year of high school, at lunch. "A friend of mine dragged me to an informational session about Model United Nations," said Nithya, B.A. History '14. "I was terrified, because it involved so much public speaking, but I did it anyway to appease my friend."

The pair then attended the MUN conference at UAA: "Shy 15-year-old me didn't say a word the entire conference; I just observed, but what I witnessed amazed and astounded me."

The Model United Nations of Alaska convenes every year at UAA; high school and university students participate in a simulation focusing on one issue. This year, that event happened Feb. 22–24. Its focus? "Global Cooperation Under Siege."

UAA's Department of Political Science coordinates MUN, with UAA's "Secretariat" organizing and participating. MUN is also a college course allowing students to earn credit for helping coordinate and participate in the annual event.

Nithya immersed herself in MUN throughout high school and UAA. "What drew me in was the theater of it all," she said. "Everyone had a role to play. Russia was constantly making shady deals under the table; Venezuela was forever waxing poetic about socialism; and never did a conference go by in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea didn't cause a ruckus."

Nithya's sister, Meneka Thiru, B.A. International Studies and Spanish '12, also engaged in MUN. "The

experience of putting yourself in the shoes of another country and working with other students/countries to find mutually beneficial solutions to the world's problems was thrilling," she said.

Nithya says MUN forces students to explore other perspectives. "Now more than ever we need that — empathy for people who may not look like us, who may live across borders, but who have aspirations, dreams and goals just like anyone else," she said.

The Thirus deeply understand the need because their parents fled civil war in Sri Lanka. "Those experiences shaped how my parents see the world and how I see it," Nithya said. "I've always been a global citizen. MUN gave me tools I needed to do what it has always been in me to do — to do the necessary work of creating a better, more just world."

MOLDING SKILLS FOR REAL-LIFE ADVOCACY

Anna Marquez signed up for MUN after enrolling at UAA in 2010.

"I had heard this course was particularly interesting and fun," said Marquez, B.A. Political Science and International Studies '14, who is currently a Seattle University law student.

"I was excited when I found out the course also satisfied my requirement credits toward my degree," she said. "Professor Pace's personality and drive for student engagement throughout the semester forced students to strengthen their oral advocacy skills and self-confidence."

The most memorable part of MUN, Marquez said, was traveling to the U.N. in New York with Dr. Dalee Sambo

Dorough, a professor and former chairperson and expert member with the United Nations' Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Dorough brought UAA students with her for each year she served as an expert member of the forum.

"Model United Nations encourages students to strategize, dispute in a professional manner and seek to resolve conflict through discussion," Marquez said. "It was wonderful to see these same tools being implemented in real life while shadowing Dr. Dorough at the U.N."

VIEWING THE WORLD THROUGH ANOTHER CULTURE'S LENS

Now in its 25th year on campus, MUN has shaped generations of UAA students, including the Thiru sisters.

Meneka is pursuing a master's in library and information sciences at the University of Washington. "[I'm] fueled by the desire to help patrons see the world through different perspectives by accessing new and valuable information," she said. "MUN helped pave that path for me, showing me the value of viewing the world through another culture's lens."

Nithya found a mentor in Professor Kimberly Pace, who runs MUN. "It was Kimberly who encouraged me to apply to graduate schools," Nithya said. Now, she studies human rights and humanitarian policy at Columbia University. "My interest in human rights policy work began with MUN," she said. "It's a privilege to be where I am, and I owe much of that to UAA's Model United Nations program."

The Alutiiq region extends from the Alaska Peninsula through Prince William Sound, but by 2017, according to Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation, only two percent of this area's Alaska Native population grew up speaking its native language. The number of first-language Alutiiq speakers dropped by nearly half in just the last six years.

Like many Alaska Native languages, the Alutiiq language — traditionally known as Sugt'stun — is endangered. But the community of Kodiak is mounting an integrated effort to reverse that trend. The high school offers Alutiiq language courses, while the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak provides an immersion preschool and family language nights. Kodiak College, a community campus of UAA, plays a part too, offering an occupational endorsement certificate (OEC) that endorses Alutiiq-language speakers across the area.

“There's been a lot of cultural revitalization and language revitalization here in Kodiak. We're one part of the puzzle,” explained Libby Eufemio, assistant professor of Alaska Native studies, who oversees the OEC program.

The program offers education and, importantly, access. Certificate students take nearly every class online, aside from a capstone fluency intensive and an in-person fluency exam. Students can

log in from across the Alutiiq/Suqpiq nation, and even across the country.

“That's the beauty of distance education,” Libby noted. “You can participate from your home community.”

Peggy Azuyak, a rural school principal for Kodiak Island Borough School District, and Candace Branson, the Sun'aq Tribe's Alutiiq heritage coordinator, teach online and in-person at Kodiak College. Elders are frequently involved to advise on differing dialects,

which include Koniag Alutiiq — spoken on the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Island — and Chugach Alutiiq, historically spoken across the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound.

Candace also teaches at Kodiak High School, where students can select Alutiiq as their language option. It's a vital connection between the college and community.

“If they want to, [students] can apply to get dual credit with the college at the same time,” Libby explained. “They could finish all the classes for the certificate while they're in high school.”

That integrated education is helping the OEC increase its enrollment. Former professors Alisha Drabeck and April Laktonen Counciller built the 16-credit certificate program in 2010, through a Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Currently, the certificate program has eight graduates, and 18 enrolled students. Four more expect to finish their degrees this spring.

Support from Chugachmiut has also boosted the program; the Alaska Native nonprofit enrolls several employees

to serve as village educators. The program's two most recent graduates — Brandon Moonin in Tatitlek and Ephimia Moonin-Wilson in Port Graham — are both Chugachmiut-employed language educators.

In Tatitlek, on the edge of Valdez Arm, Brandon teaches preschool through 12th grade and offers adult classes after hours. Originally from Port Graham, his father was a fluent speaker. “I've been immersed in it, but I never took any steps to learn it until this past year,” he said.

The OEC program helped him with educator essentials like spelling, pronunciation and stem words. He teaches through action, giving hands-on commands as students gradually acquire Alutiiq words.

“Speaking with the teachers here locally, they said they've never seen the kids so excited for learning the Sugt'stun language,” he said. Though his classes are required, he believes most students in Tatitlek would choose to enroll.

“It's a good way to connect to the Sugpiq culture or the Alutiiq culture,” said Brandon, who is continuing to pursue his A.A. degree. “[The OEC] is just a good way to connect to the community, to provide yourself as a resource and get a better understanding of what your ancestors have been through and keep this language alive.”

In Port Graham, on the southwest tip of the Kenai Peninsula, Ephimia also teaches in the village school. She grew up immersed in the language in



Kodiak College recognized the two most recent recipients of the OEC in Alutiiq language in a ceremony at Chugachmiut Inc. in September. From left to right, Sugt'stun master teacher Rhoda Moonin, Brandon Moonin, Libby Eufemio and Mia Moonin-Wilson.

“I am really thankful for getting the OEC and being given the opportunity to learn more of my language.”

Last September, Brandon and Ephimia participated in a small graduation event at Chugachmiut's Anchorage office. This May, Kodiak College commencement will include a special recognition of all past and present graduates, with a lamp lighting and elder address.

“I really want this program to succeed,” Libby said from Kodiak. “It seems like

we're getting a lot of interest and I'm very happy about that.”

Thanks to the community's homegrown efforts, Kodiak College now offers the last link in the area's preschool-to-college Alutiiq education.

“It's almost like ‘if you build it they will come.’ That's what it feels like,” she said.

Nanwalek, but says the OEC program boosted her understanding.

“I appreciated that it really helped me with creating sentences,” she said. “It really expanded my language learning so I was able to hold conversations instead of nodding and shaking my head.”

With the certification, she added, “I can teach in the school without any problem.” One of her high school students now plans to enroll in the program, too.

ALUMNI LIFE

FIND THEM PURSUING THEIR DREAMS ALL OVER ALASKA, THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD.

PAGE 20: Toby Carrillo '15, an elementary education grad, teaches youth hip-hop at Underground Dance Company in Anchorage. ■ Schatzie Schaefer '96, left, with Tony-nominated Broadway actor John Ciani at the Last Frontier Theatre Conference. The annual event, held at Prince William Sound College, is coordinated by Dawson Moore '97. ■ This March, Culinary Arts graduate Shawn Dinkins '13 won a top soup prize for the fourth straight year at the Empty Bowl Project, Beans Café's fundraising event. She is the kitchen coordinator at Covenant House Alaska youth shelter.



PAGE 21: Dressed as a wintry Wonder Woman, volunteer Event Director Jenny Di Grappa '14 helmed the 22nd Annual Alaska Ski for Women fundraiser — North America's largest women-only cross-country ski event — on Feb. 4 at Kincaid Park. ■ Kurt Haider '94 calls a Seawolf hockey game at Sullivan Arena. Now in his 20th season, he broadcasted his 700th UAA Hockey game this year.



PAGE 22: Stephen Trimble '08, founder and CEO of Arctic Solar Ventures, helps his crew install a solar array at UAA this winter. ■ Journalism grad Wesley Early '16 is a web editor and producer for Alaska Public Media, where he interned as a student. ■ Kelsey Appleton '12 with Baby Iceworm, mascot of the Cordova Iceworm Festival. Kelsey is vice president of the Iceworm Board.



Have pics of your life after UAA? Send them to seawolf.forever@alaska.edu.



PAGE 23: Dr. Mark Peterson, M.P.H. '12, volunteered several months with Mercy Ships onboard the Africa Mercy, which docked in Cameroon to provide free surgeries for patients. ■ Journalism grad and former Seawolf gymnast Lauren Magiera '09 covering a Cubs game at Wrigley Field. Magiera is a sports reporter and anchor at WGN-TV in Chicago.



ALUMNI LIFE



Alumni mushers in The Last Great Race

Two UAA alumni raced the Iditarod this year. Aviation alumnus Richie Diehl '08 of Aniak finished sixth, his best result in six years of running the race. Theater alumna Meredith Mapes '16, of Willow, above, marshaled last year's Junior Iditarod and made her rookie run to Nome this March.

Five years of Nine in the Spine

The fifth annual Winterfest tradition teed off on Feb. 28, 2018. Teams of alumni putted across campus in a fundraiser event for the UAA Alumni Scholarship endowment fund. Take a look at this year's creative course, designed by 18 student clubs and organizations, at uaa.alaska.edu/alumni.

Meet Alaska's Teacher of the Year

Ben Walker, M.A.T. '06, is Alaska's 2018 Teacher of the Year. A seventh grade science teacher at Romig Middle School in Anchorage, Ben attended an on-field recognition at the College Football Championship in Atlanta in January. He will meet with Department of Education staff in Washington, D.C. and speak frequently to the Alaska Commissioner of Education in Juneau throughout the year. Ben received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 2013. His wife, Catherine Walker, M.A.T. '06, received the award in 2015.



From the Sullivan Arena to Pyeongchang

Two former hockey teammates competed at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Mat Robinson '09 represented Canada at the Games, while Luka Vidmar '11, above, made his Olympic debut with Team Slovenia in an overtime win against the USA. Both have played professionally since graduation. Luka is currently a defenseman in the Austrian Hockey League; Mat has played in Russia's KHL since 2014.

Spring Commencement

Sunday, May 6, 1 p.m. | Alaska Airlines Center

Join UAA in welcoming a new class of alumni. Years of hard work and dedication culminate in this timeless academic tradition and celebration of student achievement. Commencement could not happen without volunteers who contribute their time and energy to make this day a success. Volunteer to be a part of the celebration at uaa.alaska.edu/commencement. RSVP required to attend.

Anchorage Mayor's Marathon & Half-Marathon

Saturday, June 23, 7:30 a.m.–3 p.m. Bartlett High School / Delaney Park Strip

A summer solstice tradition, the Mayor's Marathon returns for its 45th year. The course runs from Muldoon to the Delaney Park Strip downtown — offering sweeping views of the city and the Chugach Mountains along the way. Race fees benefit UAA Athletics. Details and registration: goseawolves.com. Volunteers are needed to help with setup, aid stations and more.

UAA Music Performances

The UAA Department of Music is winding down for the semester with a series of performances featuring students, faculty and alumni. All events will take place in the UAA Fine Arts Building Recital Hall. Tickets: artsuaa.com, 907-786-4849

**JAZZ WEEK BENEFIT CONCERT V
Wednesday, April 25, 7:30 p.m.**

Featuring UAA student instrumentalists and vocalists from the jazz combos.

**GUITAR ENSEMBLE
Sunday, April 29, 4 p.m.**

University Guitar Ensemble performs works encompassing the last four centuries of music history, ranging from Renaissance and Baroque to contemporary guitar literature, blues and jazz.

**PIANIST SCOTT HOLDEN IN CONCERT
Friday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.**

Acclaimed concert pianist and recording artist Scott Holden makes his Alaska debut with a bold and demanding program.

Theater Performance: Rain and Zoe Save the World

April 20–29, Friday & Saturday 8 p.m.; Sunday 5 p.m.

UAA Fine Arts Mainstage Theater

In *Rain and Zoe Save the World*, two Seattle teenagers embark on an impulsive motorcycle journey to join a group of oil protesters on the East Coast. But as they follow a major pipeline across the country, what began as two young activists' longing to belong to something greater than themselves gives way to Rain and Zoe discovering that the true danger of this world might just be growing up. Tickets: artsuaa.com, 907-786-4849

Kachemak Bay Writers' Conference

June 8–12 | Land's End Resort, Homer

This nationally recognized writing conference features 16 visiting and Alaskan essayists, novelists and poets conducting workshops, readings and panel presentations in fiction, poetry, nonfiction and the business of writing. Registration required: writersconference.homer.alaska.edu



CLASS NOTES

1972

Jesse Arrington III, M.Ed., formerly taught in Anchorage and Kodiak, served as special assistant to the commissioner of education in Juneau, researched education at UAF, and retired as superintendent of the Alaska Public Lands Information Center in 2008. Now living in San Antonio, he recently published his first educational children's book, "The Villains of Splazat," which recently won the Mom's Choice

Award — Silver Medallion honoring excellence in a children's book. "Alaska has really been good to me. I had so many incredible jobs there," he said. "All my experiences seeped through, ending in this book for kids."

1989

Lori Carrell, M.Ed. Guidance and Counseling, was recently named chancellor of University of Minnesota Rochester. She joined the health-focused university in 2014, having previously

directed faculty and curriculum development at University of Wisconsin Oshkosh for 23 years.

1990

Patricia Manhire, B.S. Nursing Science, M.S. Nursing Science '95, is now an emergency medicine specialist at Terrebonne General Medical Center in Houma, Louisiana. After working as a family nurse practitioner in Alaska, she went on to earn her doctorate of osteopathic medicine from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences and completed an emergency medicine internship and emergency medicine residency in Lansing, Michigan.

1998

Tim Popp, B.S. Technology, is an equipment specialist for Boeing in Pleasant View, Utah. He received a master's in information

technology from Florida Institute of Technology in March of 2012 and a doctorate of management degree in homeland security from Colorado Technical University last year.

2004

Charlie Spaulding, B.B.A. Management Information Systems, is a major in the U.S. Air Force. He focuses on cyber forces and strategy and is currently stationed at the Pentagon working with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2004

Andy Rupert, B.S. Natural Science, is a major and a career air battle manager in the U.S. Air Force with assignment in the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), the Control and Reporting Center (CRC) and the U.S. Air Force Weapons School. He is currently attending Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in

Montgomery, Alabama, and will graduate in June with a master's of military operational art and science with an emphasis in multidomain operational strategy. After graduation, Andy and his family — wife Mindy Rupert, B.S. Mathematics '04, and their two children — will relocate to the 606th Air Control Squadron at Aviano Air Base, Italy, for a three-year assignment.

2009

Valerie Baalerud, B.A. History, M.A.T. Education '11, received Alaska's Milken Educator Award at a surprise all-school assembly at Eagle River High School. An AP History teacher and chair of the history department, she is one of 44 teachers nationwide selected to receive the award and its \$25,000 prize this school year.



U.S. Air Force Majors, from L to R, Gerrit Dalman '03, Charlie Spaulding '03, and Andy Rupert '04, at a conference at the Pentagon in December. All were members of Air Force ROTC Detachment 001 while at UAA.



LENS ON CAMPUS

Lauren Stanford works on a clay sculpture during the Intermediate/Advanced Handbuilt Ceramics course in the Fine Arts Building.



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Brad Watts, B.S. Geomatics '05, is a land surveyor at CRW Engineering Group in Anchorage, where he works on mapping projects across the region with the help of a mighty six-rotor Aibot X6 V2 drone. Half the technical staff at CRW — 33 employees total — are UAA graduates and many started as college interns. "We would not be able to run our business here without UAA," said Managing Partner Michael Rabe, B.S. Civil Engineering '84.

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