



Statewide Taskforce
to Assure Readiness of Students

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V Report from Dave Caverly on Status of UA Developmental Ed

As described in this report, an exemplary group of faculty met through the Spring of 2006 to evaluate developmental education success in the University of Alaska (UA) system. Though the work was difficult and agreement was not always reached, the committee did define a goal and strategy to improve developmental education at UA under a broad vision of building a world-class system of education for the state of Alaska and its people. The goal of the group is to *prepare students entering the University of Alaska for college and work readiness.*

For those impatient with regard to verbosity, an outline of the strategy can be found on page 25 and a description of initiatives on page 27. The co-chair of this committee would like to thank the faculty for their candor, persistence and most particularly, their passion and vision to meet student needs for both individual benefit and that of the state of Alaska. This work could not have been accomplished without their dedication. UA is certainly fortunate to have such faculty and I am both grateful and inspired by their example.

Dave Veazey

June 1, 2006

I Rationale for STARS Committee

A – National Context

A significant amount of work has been done across the nation looking at the issue of remediation in higher education. Higher education has been challenged by the increasing number of students not only enrolling, but enrolling unprepared for the rigors of college level academic work. In addition, workforce trends in the country demand more citizens successfully complete some form of post-secondary training to realize economic prosperity. In an environment of increasing post-secondary education participation and an economic imperative to successfully complete such education, dealing with the need to provide remediation upon entry is a high priority.

Nationally, over 75% of high school graduates attend a post-secondary institution within two years of graduation (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Callan, Maeroff, & Usdan, 2001) and half of those students will require some remedial education (Haycock & Huang, 2001), indicating many students are ill-prepared for the rigors of formal learning beyond high school. In addition, those requiring remedial education are 2.5 times less likely to graduate (Achieve1, 2004). This data is not welcome given the educational background that workers need in this country to advance economically. Nationally, research has shown that the literacy level of individuals is directly related to gainful employment, higher salaries and less reliance on the public welfare system (Sum, Kirsch, & Yamamot, 2004); these positive links to increased literacy are found for all ethnic groups. Somewhat problematic, the study also found that individuals with low proficiency in literacy did not recognize this limitation as

a barrier to future success. Given this environment, systems will need to be created to successfully educate students, not only in the basics of math and English, but with regard to the need to obtain that education in the first place.

Workers with a baccalaureate degree earn an annual salary twice that of those not graduating from high school while those with professional degrees are paid an average of four times as much (Baum & Payea, 2004; Policy, 2005). When comparing individuals with a high school diploma to those with college degrees the disparity is lessened but still remains. College graduates make an average of 1.5 times the salary of those with only a high school diploma. It is triple for those with professional degrees.

These reports also show that citizens attaining higher degrees are more likely to be employed, stay in better health, be imprisoned at a lower rate, volunteer more, vote more frequently and have healthier children who are better prepared for school. In 1997 over 70% of the prisoners in the United States were high school drop-outs. Baum and Payea also argue that citizens with increased education reduce per capita annual social service expenditures by between \$3,500 and \$10,000 depending on ethnicity. These data clearly show significant private and public benefits of an education beyond high school – a clear incentive to create policies and programs that successfully educate students to the level of college and work readiness.

Part of the rub with regard to ill-prepared students for the workplace can be attributed to the change in skills required in many jobs that previously did not require postsecondary training or even a high school diploma (Trust-West, 2004; Tucker). Sheet metal workers need to complete a 4-5 year apprenticeship to include geometry, trigonometry and technical literacy; automotive technicians require advanced knowledge

of electrical systems along with reading and skills for on-going learning. Auto mechanic training was previously the purview of high school which can no longer afford the equipment or keep up with the specialized needs for instruction, shifting this training enterprise to the community college. Tool and die makers must complete a 4-5 year apprenticeship with postsecondary education in algebra, geometry, trigonometry and statistics.

Before setting out on a course to correct deficiencies in the Alaskan educational system it is important to realize the problems are not unique to our state. School districts, community colleges and universities across the nation are struggling to better understand how to push and pull the currently disconnected educational systems from the policy to the programmatic level to improve educational opportunity for students. As described above, the payoff to the individual and to society is well worth the effort.

In comparison to other states, there are some unique characteristics in Alaska that provide interesting challenges and opportunities. Challenges include the geographic spread of the population and cultural disconnects in which the education provided may not have relevant content or may not be delivered in a manner that fits the norms or the local community. Alaska is at a unique advantage, however, given its small population, isolation from lower 48 and relative infancy as a state. Given that UA is a major source of post-secondary training in the state, it is in an enviable and unique position to radically change systems and structures to meet needs; flexibility no other state enjoys.

B – Alaskan Context

In the Fall of 1999 there were 2,200 degree seeking first time freshman in the University of Alaska system. Of the 2,200, 1,788 had reported data on college readiness, either through SAT, ACT or placement scores. The data below uses the 1,788 students as a base of comparison to examine success rates. The cohort of students was tracked to determine the graduation rate after six years. Table 1 shows that 2/3 of incoming degree seeking freshmen come to UA unprepared for college level work in math and English (1187 vs. 601). A prepared student is twice as likely to graduate after 6 years compared to one unprepared (35.9% vs. 18.1%)

	Student Number	% of Incoming Students	Students Graduating in 6 Years	% Students Graduating in 6 Years
Students without Need (with Tests Results)	601	33.6%	216	35.9%
Students with Need	1187	66.4%	215	18.1%
Total	1788	100.0%	431	24.1%

Table 1. Fall 1999 students preparation for college level work and resulting graduation rates.

Based on this analysis, over 66% of first time freshmen that attend the UA system with the initial goal of obtaining a degree are unprepared for college-level work based on SAT/ACT or placement test scores in either English or math¹. For this analysis, graduation was the attainment of a baccalaureate degree, associates degree or certificate six years after initial enrollment.

¹ Students were determined to be unprepared if they failed to meet the standard in math or English. If a student took more than one and passed they were not counted as being in need.

The success rate of all UA first time degree seeking freshmen is displayed in Figure 1. Students with no developmental need graduate at a rate of 36.1%, well above the average student population of 23%.

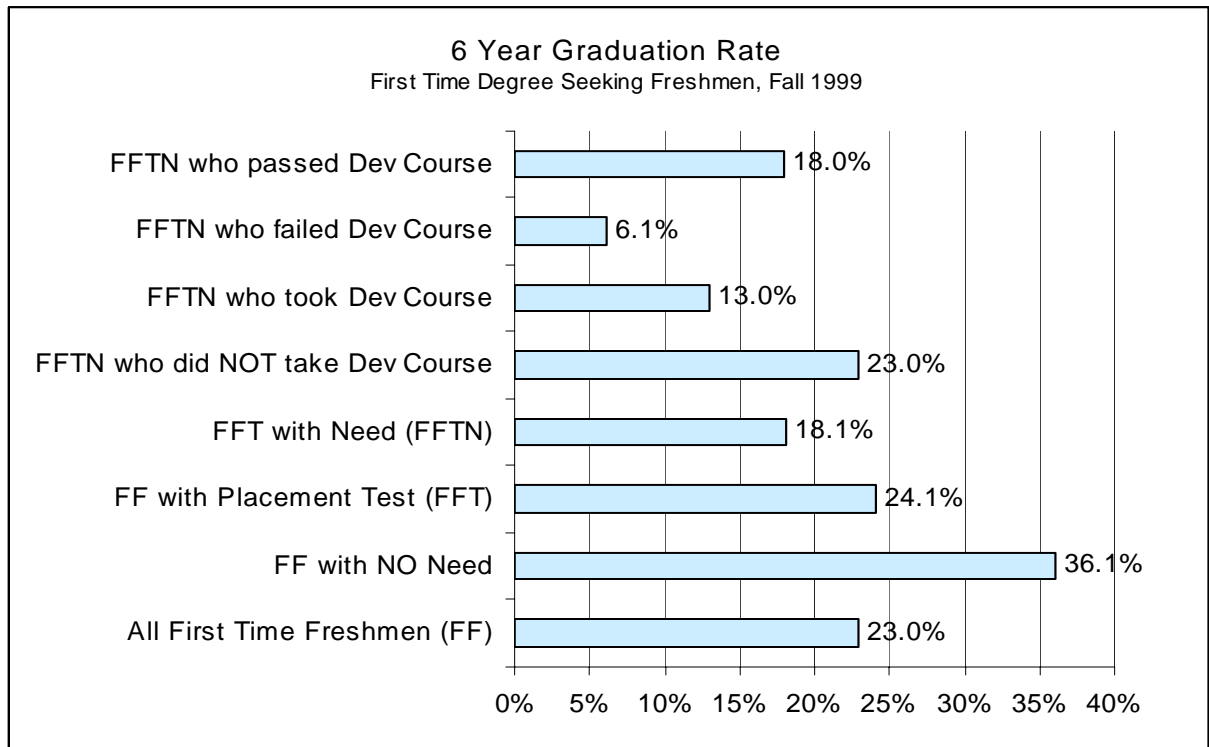


Figure 1. Success rates of degree seeking first time freshmen – Fall 1999.

If a student had a developmental need, the graduation rate declined (18.1%). Students labeled developmental who DID NOT take a course had a graduation rate similar to the average student population. However, those that were labeled deficient and DID take a course had a markedly lower graduation rate of 13%. It is not clear why this is the case but one might presume that many students on the border of being developmental might ignore the warning and succeed. Those with skills well below college level needs may be more likely to actually take a course; these students have a

bigger gap in skills to remediate and might have difficulty reaching competency. It does, however, point to a glaring problem; students needing developmental courses who take those courses have a significantly lower success rate than those that choose to bypass remediation.

On the positive side, students who do take and pass a developmental course graduate at triple the rate of students who fail these courses (18% vs. 6.1%). Table 1 and Figure 2 below provide the actual number of students in the cohort analyzed.

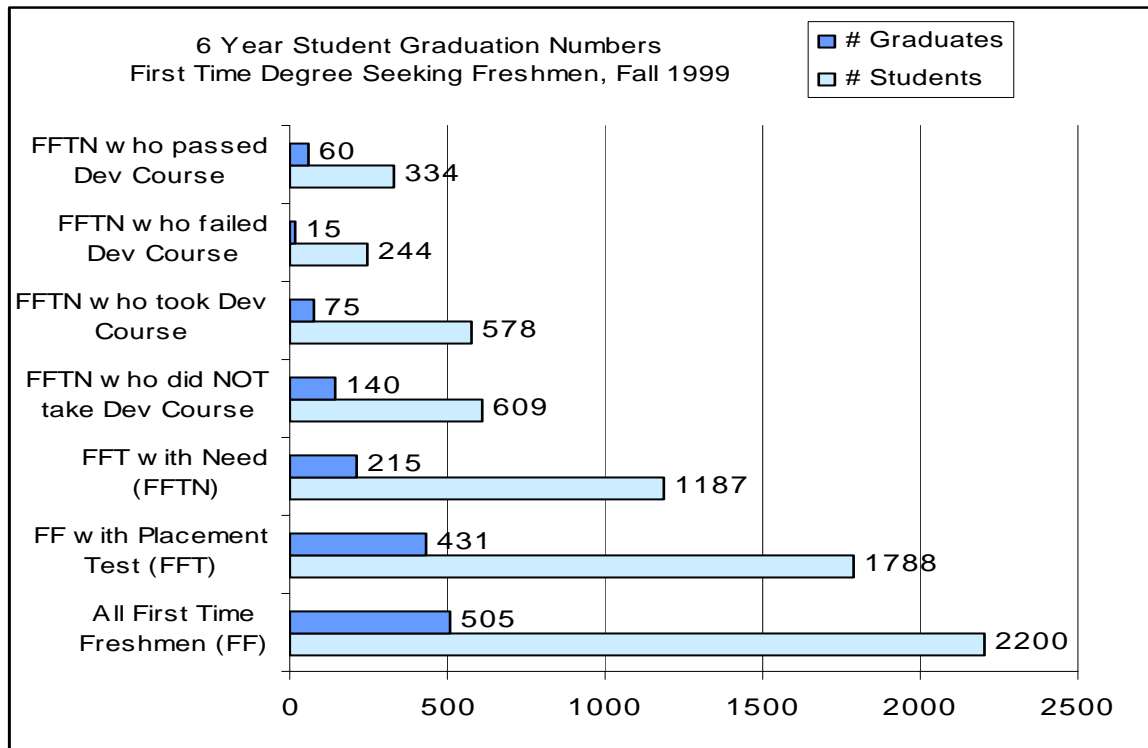


Figure 2. Number of degree seeking first time freshmen and 6 year graduates, Fall 1999.

Student Category	% grad 6 yrs	# Students	# Graduates
All First Time Freshmen (FF)	23.0%	2200	505
FF with NO Need	36.1%	601	217
FF with Placement Test (FFT)	24.1%	1788	431
FFT with Need (FFTN)	18.1%	1187	215
FFTN who did NOT take Dev Course	23.0%	609	140
FFTN who took Dev Course	13.0%	578	75
FFTN who failed Dev Course	6.1%	244	15
FFTN who passed Dev Course	18.0%	334	60

Table 1. Number of students, graduates and graduation rate of UA degree seeking first time freshmen.

The analysis in Figure 1 and 2 take into account only degree seeking first time freshmen.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the success rate of first time non-degree seeking students.

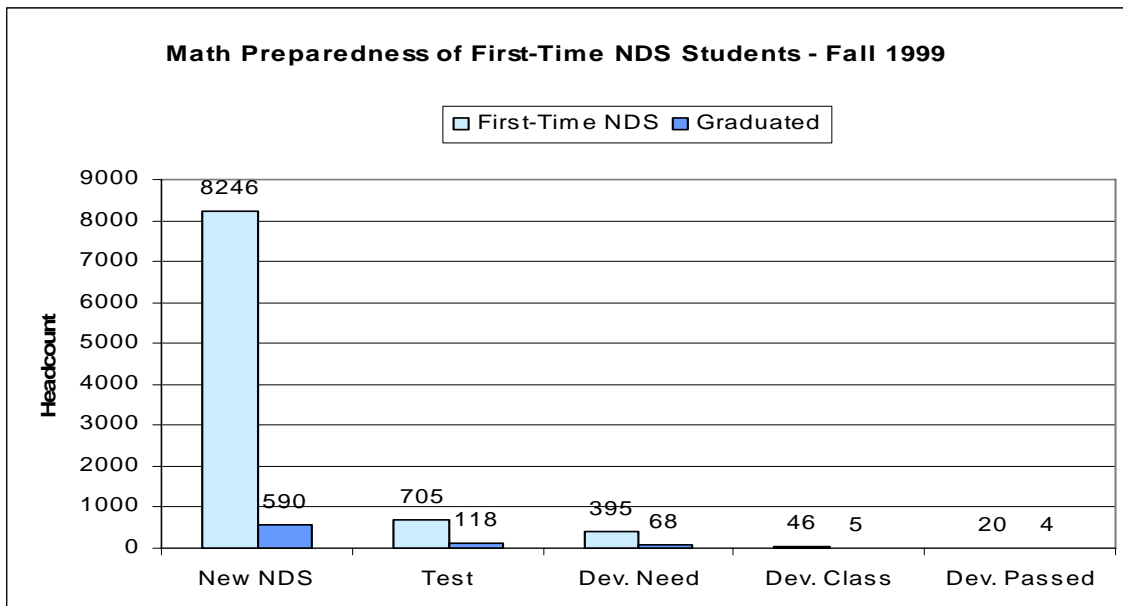


Figure 3. Success rate of non-degree seeking first time freshmen, Fall 1999

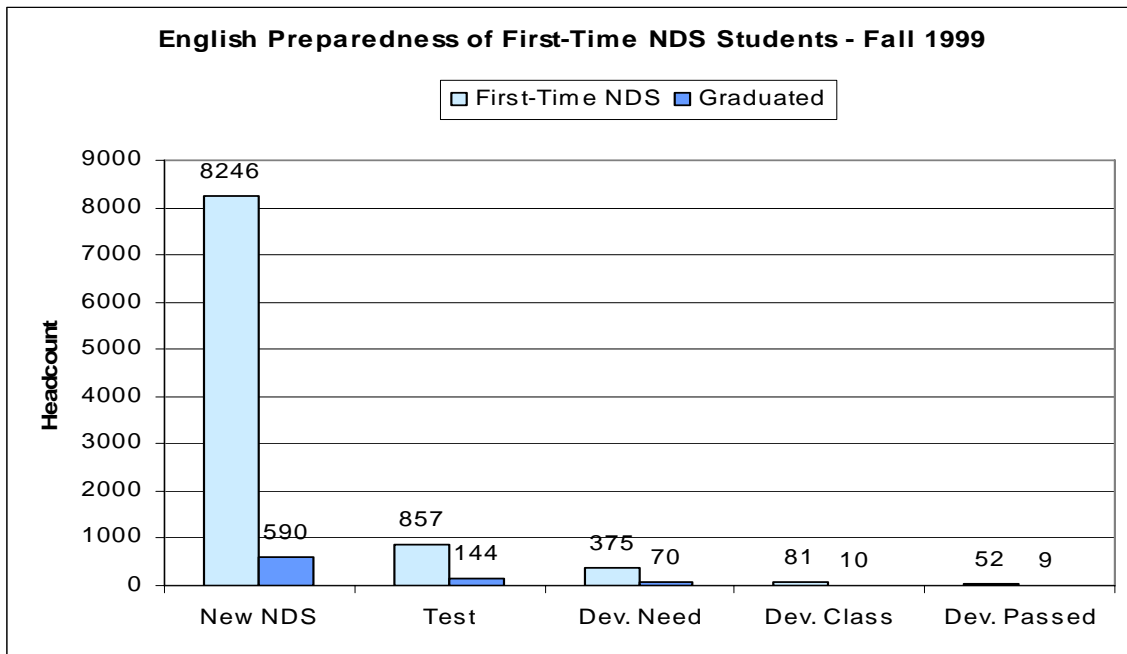


Figure 4. Success rate of non-degree seeking first time freshmen, Fall 1999

As an open admissions university serving a diverse student population, a large number of students attend UA without the explicit purpose of seeking a degree. Indeed, four times as many non-degree seeking first time freshmen as there are degree seekers. Some students attend for continuing education purposes, professional development or personal enjoyment. In other cases students may be simply testing the waters and not be prepared to make a commitment to degree seeking status. This report does not attempt to address this student population. Rather, the remainder of this report focuses on the degree seeking student population; these are the students that have at least made a concerted effort to declare a measurable goal in the educational pursuits.

While the above analysis is only a cohort analysis of a subset of students (first time freshmen) for a single year, the data indicate several areas of note (see Table 1).

1. 36% of students entering UA prepared for college level work graduate in 6 years.
2. 18.1% of students entering UA unprepared for college level work graduate in 6 years.
3. Students are not properly advised and/or mandated to take the necessary coursework to become academically prepared and are permitted to take courses for which they have not academically prepared to succeed (578 of 1187, or 48% of unprepared students actually take a remedial course).
4. Programs and services are not successfully being delivered to students to predict a successful educational experience that leads to graduation (students with need are less likely to graduate if they take a developmental course – those that do take a course and pass still graduate at a lower rate than both the average student population AND students with need who do not take developmental coursework).

It is unlikely UA will experience a significant change in the preparation of incoming students. With this reality as a backdrop, Table 2 outlines potential outcomes of an enhanced system of testing, placement, advising and programming for students unprepared for college level work.

To examine the benefits to different approaches to increasing the number of graduates at UA, a simplified model is quantified below in Table 2. The model assumes a cohort of first time degree seeking freshmen that matches the Fall of 1999 students.

	Prepared Students	Graduates 6 years later that entered prepared	Change	Unprepared Students Taking Dev Ed Courses	Graduates 6 years later that entered unprepared	Change	Total # Graduates 6 years later
Current UA 6 year Graduation Rate	36.1%	217	0	13.0%	154	0	371
13% Increase in Grad Rate of Unprepared	36.1%	217	0	26.0%	309	155	526
13% Increase in Grad Rate of Prepared	49.1%	295	78	13.0%	154	0	449
Match Grad Rate	36.1%	217	0	36.1%	429	275	645

Table 2. Graduation numbers based on strategies to increase graduation rate for unprepared students, college ready students or both.

If UA were to invest in a strategy to increase the graduation rate of developmental students by 13%, 155 new graduates would complete their work at UA. The same percentage increase for prepared students would yield an increase of 78 students. In addition, it could be argued that the developmental student population is the “low hanging fruit” for UA if it wishes to increase graduation rates. So few graduate at present

it is likely that innovative programs would more easily lead to an increase in the rate of success compared to efforts to increase the college ready population by the same amount. Because the “normal” UA student is one that has not been properly prepared to succeed academically in college, improvements in programs and services that lead to enhanced graduation rates for these students has a greater impact on the number of graduates from UA compared to improvements to the traditional higher education pathway.

This analysis provides rationale for a strategic initiative at the UA system-wide level to enhance the delivery of assessments, advising, support services and programs for students requiring additional academic work to become prepared for college. Such an effort, if successful, will significantly improve the graduation rate of the university to a far greater degree than efforts focusing on the college ready student.

Such an effort also begs the question, “who is responsible?” Clearly, there is a belief that it is the job of the K12 system to properly prepare students for the academic rigors of college. In reality, this is not the case. The current systems of accountability, governance and funding do not lend themselves to collaborative efforts to address such issues. But it is just such an effort that is needed to ultimately benefit UA and the state of Alaska through improved graduation rates. As an initial step towards a more sensible system in which K12 and higher education are provided the proper incentives to support students in the transition to post secondary education, UA will need to address this problem as the student enters the UA system. The following section describes this predicament – one that exists not only in Alaska but across the nation.

C – Who is Responsible...and What Works?

One approach to decreasing remediation in higher education is to give this responsibility where it seems it belongs: K12. K12 systems should provide the actual coursework and/or prepare students to be work ready and better able to succeed in college level math, reading, writing and communications. Unfortunately, accountability measures for defining success in K12 have caused the creation of high school exit exams at the 8th and 9th grade levels (Achieve1, 2004). As a result, school districts can report success by graduating students from high school that are clearly unprepared for college and work. Higher education can claim these students are unprepared and therefore, not their responsibility. The current dilemma places the burden of creating the competent and prepared workforce of the future neither fully in the hands of K12 nor higher education. As a result, the individual, and ultimately the public as a whole, suffers.

The Northwest Commission for the Accreditation of Colleges and Universities addresses developmental education under Standard 2, Educational Program and its Effectiveness.

Standard 2.C – Undergraduate Program

- 2.C.6 Whenever developmental or remedial work is required for admission to the institution or any of its programs, clear policies govern the procedures that are followed, including such matters as ability to benefit, permissible student load, and granting of credit. When such courses are granted credit, students are informed of the institution's policy of whether or not the credits apply toward a degree. (See Glossary, [Ability to benefit](#))

Ability to benefit

The use of a standardized test approved by U.S. Department of Education to determine the ability of a student to benefit from the instruction available from an institution. The test must be independently administered in accordance with U.S. Department of Education regulations.

The language in the NWCCU standards only addresses the need to verify the ability to benefit when an institution has standards for admission and to specify the student credit load and granting of credit and is silent regarding the systems or success rates of remedial programs.

The problem is that the economy and educational needs of workers have changed faster than the current educational structure can accommodate. In 1973, 32% of workers age 30-59 were high school drop-outs, 40% had only a high school diploma and 9% held a baccalaureate degree. Today, only 9% are high school drop-outs, 32% have just a high school diploma and 20% hold baccalaureate degrees. In this time period, the percentage of workers with some postsecondary education has grown from 28% to 59%. (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2002, 2002; Center for State Scholars, 2004).

Almost 75% of this increased postsecondary demand comes from workers requiring enhanced skills to be successful in jobs that previously did not require such training. The other 25% of demand comes from economic shifts in the workforce landscape – new jobs that require postsecondary education (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2002). This growth is driven by skilled workforce needs in white-collar offices, education, health care, and the new technology sector. Today, these jobs do not always require a college degree but are demanding higher level skills in communication and problem-solving, skill one can only attain through post-secondary education.

Given economic changes and the associated educational needs, there is now a compelling case for the creation of a more seamless system of education – one that adjusts to economic and educational changes and does not cling to a model that no longer applies. Driven by individual and public economic and social benefits, forecasts for a more highly trained workforce for the knowledge economy, the changing landscape of jobs and the de-facto role that public education plays in resolving inequities, investment in the creation and implementation of successful programs that enhance the pool of college and work ready citizens is required. The needs of students and the changes to the economy have outpaced the historically defined roles of K12 and higher education. An educational system is needed in which the predominant mass of students can comfortably transition from high school to post-secondary education and the workplace.

Unfortunately this system does not exist, and until it does, UA will need to implement new strategies to serve unprepared students and give them the opportunity to be a part of the future economic growth of the state.

A recent study (Muraskin, Lee, Wilner, & Swail, 2004) defined several characteristics of universities that do a superior job of graduating low-income students. These students tend to be minority and less prepared for college level work. The findings of this study highlight some areas UA might consider in addressing the needs of developmental students. The characteristics of institutions with higher graduation rates were as follows:

1. **Intentional Academic Planning** – “Intrusive” advising, orientation and academic reviews for students in trouble resulting in well structure academic plans.

UA might consider placing special emphasis on connecting unprepared students with content faculty in addition to creating clear academic pathways leading to student goals that align with the real constraints life might cast before them.

2. **Small classes** – Creation of learning communities and networks of support.

Students at UA needing developmental education require more individualized support to ensure they are on task and on track. Peer support groups and innovative program approaches that meet student needs can be devised to increase preparation and the rate of degree completion.

3. **Special Programs** - Tutoring, group study, advising and networking.

Learning support services at UA could be enhanced to ensure students have access to the tools, content and support needed to be successful.

4. **Dedicated Faculty Focused on Instruction** – Faculty work is defined and rewarded for extensive teaching, directed student learning and advising.

Developmental faculty at UA must focus on teaching, advising and academic support for students. It must be made clear that faculty promotion and tenure rests on these criteria in addition to the success of getting students in and out of the program to college and work readiness.

5. **Modest Selectivity** – Admissions requirements are critical to improve graduation rates for degree seeking students.

UA, in general, may not desire selectivity but rather enforcement of clear minimal criteria students must meet before enrolling in college level courses that would predict failure and frustration for students.

6. **Retention Goals** – Institutional retention and graduation goals and measures are set beyond current level; data is gathered to measure program performance.

Rather than measuring the retention of students in developmental education, UA might create measures and incentives for educating students to the college and work readiness level.

Another approach to improving the college and work readiness of students is to align the curricular expectations across the two systems – K12 and UA. The alignment of curriculum lies at the heart of the difficulty of building an educational system that meets the majority of student needs across the nation and in Alaska. On the whole, neither K12 nor higher education across the country has taken a great deal of interest in this alignment. Unfortunately, it is the single most important step needed to create a sensible pathway for student success (Hart, 2005; Haycock, 1999; Hughes, Karp, Fermin, & Bailey, 2005; Rosenbaum, 2002; Somerville & Yi, 2002; Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst, & Usdan, 2005; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio). These authors point to the chasm that has been created by high school exit exams benchmarked at the 9th grade level and the high remediation rates of students entering higher education.

K12 has exerted a great deal of effort creating standards and curriculum defining student expectations for graduation from high school. Much of this work was not done

with the presence or direct contribution of higher education faculty, including here in Alaska. To define success for any developmental education experience, an outcome must be defined. There is no better measure than “college and work ready” – a measure that connects K12 curriculum to University of Alaska freshman level work.

D – Committee Creation, Composition and Charge

Given the low success rate of developmental students in the UA system and the lack of structural support for providing guidance to these students, UA Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research Craig Dorman created and financially supported the formation of the Statewide Taskforce to Assure Readiness of Students (STARS).

Committee members were appointed by Provosts and included the following individuals:

UAF:

Jane Weber	Assoc. Prof. – Math, Developmental Education
Joe Mason	Assoc. Prof of General Studies, Northwest Campus
Rich Carr	Assoc. Prof. English
Rick Caulfield	Director, Tanana Valley Campus

UAA:

Toni Croft	Assoc. Prof. Developmental Education, Math
Trish Grega,	Assoc. Prof. Developmental Education, English
Sarah Kirk	Assoc. Prof. Developmental Education, English
Letitia Fickel	Assoc. Prof. College of Education

UAS:

Ron Seater	Prof. – Math, School of Arts and Sciences
Jo Devine-Acres	Assoc. Prof. – English, School of Arts and Sciences
Jeffrey Johnston	Campus Director, Sitka
Vicki Orazem	Vice Provost for Student Success

Co-Chairs:

Dave Veazey	Asst. Vice President, SW Academic Affairs
Cindy Hardy	Asst. Prof – English, Developmental Education

The charge provided to the group by VP Dorman was as follows:

December 20, 2005

To: Systemwide Academic Council
Jan Gehler, UAA Interim Provost
Paul Reichardt, UAF Provost
Roberta Stell, UAS Provost

From: Craig Dorman, Vice President, Academic Affairs and Research

Subject: STARS Nominations – Statewide Taskforce to Assure Readiness of Students

As an open enrollment institution and the major access point for post-secondary education in the state, the University of Alaska enrolls a diverse student population, many of whom require developmental education. It is not clear we are being as successful as we might desire in this important area.

While the notion of student success is a broad topic, I would like to create a more focused statewide approach of understanding, measuring and implementing strategies for enhancing our ability to serve students requiring developmental education. These students are represented in all geographic and demographic categories and the strategies studied and employed by MAUs will reflect this diversity, making this task complex.

K12 continues to be held under the microscope of public accountability, a trend that may reach higher education in the near future. With a large number of students unprepared for college level work, the University must better understand the needs of these learners, the outcomes of current developmental education efforts, best practice across the UA system and the nation and invest in strategies for student success.

I am requesting nominations for a Statewide Taskforce to Assure Readiness of Students to be led by Dave Veazey. The committee should be comprised of appropriate administrators and faculty representatives both within and outside the developmental education area. Please forward to Dave Veazey four nominations from your MAU by January 17, 2006. The committee will begin meeting in February of 2006.

The committee charge is as follows:

- Collect and compile developmental education student data in a consistent fashion across the system
- Compare UA and national data
- Identify student readiness characteristics and issues

- Discuss and describe existing programs and support services across the system
- Investigate innovative programs and best practice in Alaska and across the nation
- Identify gaps in services across the system
- Identify potential partnerships to address gaps
- Develop criteria to measure student success for different student populations
- Create recommendations to enhance programs and services for developmental education students

The committee should begin its work in February 2006 and conclude in May of 2006 with the submission of a report to SAC. My office will provide \$15,000 to support this effort for travel and contractual services.

II STARS Goal & Strategy for Future Work

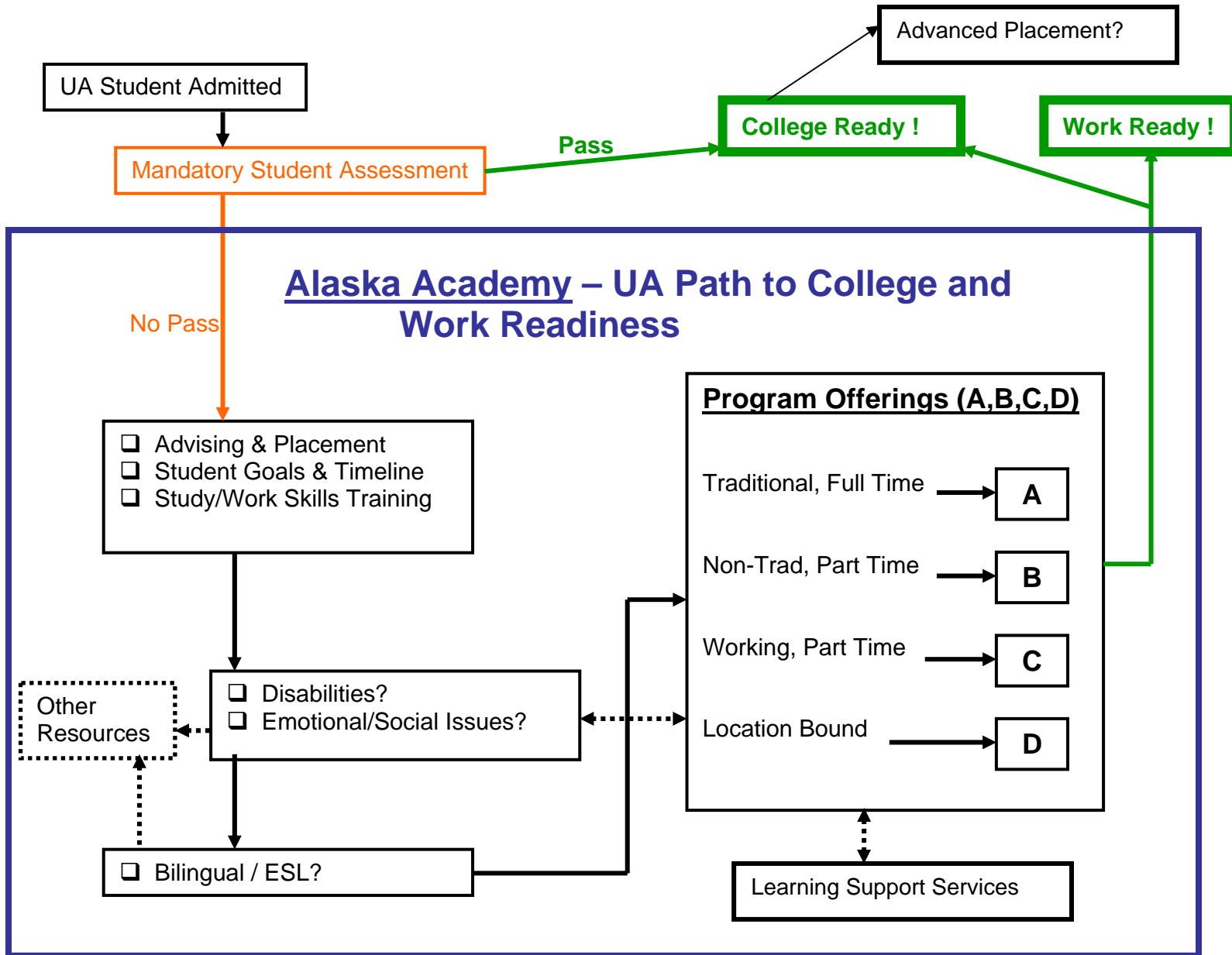
A – Creation of a Plan

The STARS' committee met by audio-conference through the Spring of 2006 to formulate questions and analyze data regarding student success in developmental education in the UA system. The task proved more difficult than originally anticipated and little progress was made. Defining success was not an easy task and data generated by SW Institutional Research did not appear to be consistent with faculty experiences.

A face-to-face meeting was planned for April 28-29 in Anchorage. The original plan was to have a vast amount of developmental student information with which to reflect upon during the two day meeting. Despite the lack of progress in understanding, agreeing with and analyzing data, the meeting went forward. University of Texas Professor Dave Caverly was invited to assist in facilitating the meeting. Dr. Caverly brings a great deal of expertise in developmental education in work he has been involved in for 30 years across the nation. The meeting provided an opportunity for developmental education faculty from across the system to engage in conversation about their work, their challenges and their vision for the students they teach. Through this conversation over 2 days a consensus vision and program plan was created to guide future work of STARS and is outlined graphically on the following page.

B – The STARS Goal & Strategy

Goal: Prepare students entering the University of Alaska for college and work readiness.



III Program Gaps

Under a broad vision of creating a world-class system of education in Alaska - K16 - the STARS committee agreed upon the goal of preparing all degree seeking students to become college and work ready. The strategy to enhance college and work readiness is illustrated in the diagram outlining key areas the committee believes the UA system must address to increase the success of students requiring developmental education. Students entering the UA system under a degree seeking status would be required to demonstrate college readiness in English and math. If a student is not properly prepared, he or she would enter the Alaska Academy – UA Path to College and Work Readiness. For some, this might be a single course to brush up on math skills while pursuing content based courses in parallel. For others, it might mean a series of remedial courses that might take a year or more to complete.

No matter the learning plan and timeline created, each student would have mandatory testing followed by placement and advising on an individual basis that incorporates study skills training, the development of an individual learning plan and the identification of any disabilities or hardships. Programs would be designed to meet student needs, including those of the working parent, the stay-at-home parent, or the student with disabilities or social adjustment issues. Such programs might include intensives, weekend courses, summer courses or evening classes; in almost all cases, the creation of learning communities is needed to provide the peer support and motivation to succeed. Completion of the individual learning plan would equate to “college and work ready” and the student would be free to pursue a degree or a productive position in the workplace.

Full implementation of such a plan would demand new structures and systems at UA.

7. Mandatory Assessment and Placement

Processes and support for mandatory assessment and placement of incoming degree seeking students.

8. Enhanced Advising for Developmental Students

Enhanced personnel and training to provide meaningful individual assistance to students in devising goals and timelines in addition to connecting students with content faculty within the university.

9. Enhanced Learning Support Services

Resources such as learning labs staffed for extended hours with staff and tools to assist students.

10. Innovative Program Offering Modalities and Pedagogy

New program offerings for students such as intensives, short courses, cohort-based learning communities and delivery of content meeting the needs of students.

11. Faculty Incentive

Recognition and incentive systems that recognizes the need for developmental education faculty to engage in a heavy teaching and advising load. In addition, department level incentives should be created that encourage the transition of students into and out of developmental education programs.

12. Alignment of College Ready Standards with K12

UA could convene a statewide group to define college ready standards and competencies by discussing student work in math and English with K12 teachers.

Under these broad initiatives the committee endeavors to engage in work to enhance student success at UA. Below is a list of the tasks the committee hopes to investigate to provide concrete recommendations

Mandatory Student Assessment

The first step to assist students is identification. While an assessment is done in most cases to determine readiness of students, the data is not used to mandate placement into academic courses the student might need to be successful. Systems and structures are required that either enhance or utilize the existing assessment processes at each MAU to ensure students are identified and given a clear path to success.

Advising and Placement

Once students are properly identified, appropriate and meaningful advising and placement services need to be provided for students to help guide students in the development of a realistic plan for graduation. Substantial enhancements are required across UA if this aspect of the vision is to be realized.

Student Goals and Timeline

As part of the advising and placement process, an individualized plan must be developed that takes into account limitations and needs of the students. Part-time attendance, work requirements, parental demands and other issues need to be taken into account as the advisor and student create a realistic plan and timeline for graduation.

Study/Work Skills Training

Whether a part of the program or as a stand-alone training session, students require some form of training to ensure they possess the skills to succeed. Education in this area would incorporate study methods, note-taking and other social and academic expectations of a college student.

Other Resources

It is not uncommon for students requiring developmental education to have other issues that make success in coursework a significant burden. These include family, work, social and other emotional problems in addition to English language competency. It is important that these be identified as early as possible and the faculty be given the information regarding resources to make referrals to appropriate services, either internal or external to the university.

Program Offerings

Many developmental students have significant demands on their time outside of their academic coursework. UA must identify the common characteristics of these

students to better design the intensity, timing, method and modality of delivery of instruction to meet these variables. Students may work on/off cycles on the North Slope, have full-time jobs during the weekdays, or be place-bound in remote locations. Programmatic offerings should be re-designed to meet these needs.

Learning Support Services

Research indicates that developmental students are more successful when they have support structures surrounding them to guide their work and help them succeed through problem areas. While not earth-shattering, the tutoring and individualized support needed for developmental students is much greater than the college student who comes academically prepared. Enhancements such as English and Math labs, tutoring services and the structures to create student learning communities are needed to guide developmental students to college and work readiness.

Alignment of Current Developmental Course Offering across the UA System

Faculty would create similar course content and numbering to provide better articulation across the system and a clear path for students to attain success. The byproduct of this work would be the real value as faculty would engage in conversations about best practice and innovative ideas for student success.

Alignment of UA Readiness Standards with K12 Curriculum

Probably the most difficult but most important aspect of the work involves engagement with K12 teachers to discuss student work and define a clear continuum of

competencies along with clear expectations of what is expected for success in higher education in Alaska.

IV Recommendations: Proposed STARS Activities & Budget

A – Summer 2006

Request: \$30,000 Academic Affairs

Travel and associated costs to convene faculty to discuss agreed upon initiatives from report.

B – AY 2007

Request: \$500,000 BP/Conoco

Placeholder to support implementation of plans to improve developmental education across the system.

C – AY 2008

Request: \$500,000 UA GF Request

Formulate a strategy to obtain additional funding through the legislature in order to prepare and train the workers for Alaska and sustain successful initiatives in AY 2007 from BP/Conoco funding.

V Report from Dave Caverly on Status of UA Developmental Ed

Texas State University, San Marcos

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

September 6, 2006

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Dear Dr. Veazey,

Thank you for this opportunity to work with the Statewide Taskforce to Assure Readiness of Students (STARS) committee. This report will summarize my thoughts on the people, programs, and process of this committee as well as make specific recommendations for future committee work.

Clearly, this is committee of dedicated professionals who are student centered with a strong belief in the quality of their developmental education program while being open to innovations in their coursework. Much of this openness comes from the diversity of the committee members allowing for disciplined-based, developmental education faculty and administrators representing each MAU, representative from institutional research, as well as a non-developmental education faculty member who adds the voice of both the K-12 and regular faculty. This diversity helps balance the parochialism of each MAU.

As I joined this process, there were negative forces limiting this committee. Posturing was palpable as I listened into the conference calls and the engagement of prior knowledge at the beginning of the meeting. Individual needs of students and resources to support those students were interfering with the needs of the state-wide system. Likely this was an artifact of end-of-semester stress with the need to finish grading. This could have been due to the committee's general lack of understanding in the role of data-supported decisions, how resources are allocated within an institution, and only an altruistic desire to help developmental students. Additionally, this could have been due to the breath of experience but the lack of depth of knowledge of current, best practice in developmental education. Professional development is sorely needed.

At the end of the two days, I saw the committee moving in the right direction. Allowing "venting" at the beginning of the meeting helped them see the commonality of their needs and the similarity of their efforts. It allowed these faculty to get to know each other professionally while starting to cohere as a group moving toward common goals. Toni Craft's insight into developmental education as a "feeder" galvanized the committee into their role in the university. They began to see the essential need for developmental education in the university's mission.

Comparing their developmental education efforts against the national data allowed this committee to put into perspective the social and economic cost-benefits to the university specifically and Alaska's society in general as they develop students for both post-secondary schooling and the workforce. What emerged was an understanding for multi-dimensional evaluation criteria as this faculty accepts accountability. Generating a definition of developmental students in their individual programs validated the complexity of the need, the variety of scaffolds needed to help these students, and the various progressions necessary in an effective program. What became apparent to all was the flowchart you illustrated depicting the path through developmental education with advising points guiding students and providing formative evaluation benchmarks for improving effectiveness.

This illustration became a common mission for developmental education within the University of Alaska. A mission that identifies needy students through a common assessment system, logically mandates placement into a developmental education curriculum, allows for developmental students to take required developmental coursework while enrolled in identified core curriculum coursework, and corroborates the unique instructional responsibilities of developmental education faculty both inside and outside the classroom where individual contacts allows for mentoring relationships to be built between a struggling student and a caring faculty member. This mission sets the stage for a continued dialogue to establish goal, objectives, and a timeline to move the developmental education program forward at the state level and on each MAU.

While a productive meeting, both short- and long-term recommendations are warranted.

Short-range recommendations -- AY 2007

- ✓ Continue to gather baseline quantitative data from both the AY 1996 cohort as well as a AY 2006 cohort. Specifically, this data should answer these questions:
 - how many developmental students took how many developmental courses by discipline;
 - how does this description of developmental students in AY 1996 compare to AY 2006;
 - how many developmental students from AY 1996 were retained a second semester, achieved a certificate, a two-year degree, or a four-year degree;
 - how this retention data breaks out demographically by traditional vs. non-traditional aged students as well as by gender and ethnic groupings
 - how does this retention data compare using benchmarks of four years, eight years, and ten years from 1996
- ✓ Gather baseline qualitative data from a focus group of core curriculum faculty reflecting on the quality of students in their classes who have passed through a MAU's developmental education program. This not only becomes another formative evaluation benchmark but informs the faculty at large of the efforts of the developmental education faculty.
- ✓ Continue evaluating individual developmental education programs against best practices. We started this process with the Best Practices for Dev Ed Rating Scale where dyads compared their programs in discipline groups. This discussion needs to continue with both discipline dyads comparing their evaluations, then MAU based groups comparing the discipline-based evaluations, then each MAU sharing and evaluating their MAU evaluation against each other. This will provide grist for establishing goals, objectives, and activities to improve those weaknesses building on the strengths at both

the state and MAU levels.

- ✓ Establish professional development opportunities:
 - The committee members need to disseminate this initiative at the state College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) conference soliciting feedback.
 - A subset of committee members need to regularly attend CRLA or the NADE national conferences disseminating this initiative at the national conference and soliciting feedback; then they should return to MAU and teach others what they learned;
 - A subset from each MAU should attend the Technology Institute for Developmental Education (TIDE) and the Kellogg Institute for Training and Certification of Developmental Educators (Kellogg) returning to teach others what they learned
 - Alternatively, consider bringing TIDE or Kellogg to Alaska during summer where greater numbers of developmental educators could get educated.

- ✓ Authenticate the common mission elements:
 - establish common cut points across the various assessment instruments so they have equal predictive validity;
 - establish a mandatory placement program using the cut points allowing students to receive the developmental coursework or support services they need to successfully advance through the program;
 - establish horizontal and vertical alignment of the developmental education curriculum in the reading, English, math, and study skill disciplines across the three MAUs;
 - identify specific core curriculum courses that would allow developmental students at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels to fill out their schedules and satisfy financial aid requirements;
 - document the unique instructional responsibilities of developmental education faculty where the mentoring relationships takes time away from that faculty member's traditional tripartite responsibilities suggesting a bipartite responsibility might be a better policy.

- ✓ Create formative evaluation procedures for continuous development of the developmental education program using the objectives as benchmarks. Only through regular formative evaluation will the individual programs grow.

Long-range recommendations -- AY 2008-2009

- ✓ Begin a PK-16 College/Workforce Readiness Plan to reduce the numbers of developmental students attending higher education and increase the employable workforce leaving secondary school:
 - Follow successful plans in California, Missouri, Maryland, Georgia, and Texas;
 - Administer college entrance tests at 8th and 10th grades followed by advising and developmental education coursework in the public school system;
 - Create feedback mechanisms where high schools can follow their graduates into post-secondary education to evaluate their readiness;
 - Require a study skills course in high school;
 - Establish college readiness courses in high school;
 - Inform high school teachers of the college readiness curriculum;
 - Incorporate the "teaching of college readiness" for all middle school and secondary teachers in pre-service teacher education courses;

- Provide mentors from university students who matriculate from K-12 systems;
 - Teach parents how to navigate through college preparation, entrance tests, and FAFSA;
 - Create an accelerated (6 week) bridge program between senior year high school and freshmen year college;
 - Resist "one-size, fits all" mentality for any school or program.
- ✓ Create a similar college readiness program for Adult Basic Education and GED programs to serve the non-traditional age population; establish ABE and GED programs on each MAU where programs don't exist to foster vertical alignment of college/workforce readiness.
- ✓ Move toward certification
- Have UAF and UAS apply for NADE program certification following lead of UAA;
 - Have all three MAUs apply for CRLA tutoring certification if not already certified;
 - Have all three MAUs apply for National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) certification for student support services if not already certified;
 - Have all tenured and tenure-track faculty apply for CRLA certification of faculty;
 - Align these certifications with Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation.

From my national perspective, this STARS committee is breaking new ground creating a plan to prepare Alaskan students to be ready for college, ready for work, and ready for life. I am optimistic that the fine talent you have gathered can accomplish this mission. I look forward to following the movement of this committee as a national model as well as perhaps joining in the effort if resources allow.

Sincerely,

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