

UAA Administrative Review Questionnaire – Spring 2020

1) What are the core functions of your unit that are funded in Fund 1 (i.e. Fund 104110)?

Under the direction of the provost, the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs is responsible for the effective administration of academic and administrative matters related to curriculum development and implementation and assessment of program and institutional quality. The VP is the provost's designee in issues involving academic policies, as well as regulatory and accreditation policies. The area coordinates with schools, colleges, departments, and faculty on the development and implementation of academic policy and procedures, new academic programs, and systematic outcomes assessment plans for academic programs and accreditation processes to support effective programming and improvement; and collaborates with the Office of the Registrar on academic policy and its enforcement, including the following:

- Institutional & specialized accreditation; regulatory and accreditation policies compliance
- Academic assessment, including program student learning outcomes assessment general education assessment
- Institution-wide forums devoted to curriculum and assessment, beginning with the Annual Academic Assessment Seminar in the fall and concluding with the Assessment Retreat in May
- Cyclical program review
- Academic policies and procedures development, implementation, compliance, and revision
- Curriculum development and implementation
- Prior Learning Assessment/nontraditional credit, Learning Recognition Collaborative (NILOA)
- Dual Enrollment/Concurrent Enrollment/Career and Technical Education Articulation
- Catalog review and editing
- New and revised academic programs
- Institutional-level oversight and management of teach-outs
- Course fees
- Syllabi archiving and review
- Posthumous degrees
- Student petitions related to institutional-level curriculum and/or policy
- Academic student appeals and issues and Academic Dispute Resolution Procedure
- Academic Program Tracking and Archiving (comprehensive institutional database on programs, e.g., BOR actions, program assessment, program review, program accreditation, distance delivery, teach-out status)
- Curriculum articulation: K-12, academic, and international partnership agreement development and review & some implementation
- Related reporting (UA System, BOR, NWCCU)

- VP is Ex Officio on Undergraduate & Graduate Academic Boards, FS Academic Assessment Committee, Planning & Budget Advisory Committee/Campus Planning Advisory Board
- The Director of General Education and the Education Abroad Coordinator report to the VP
- Additional functions as needed, such as: Tri-Chair, AY20 Academic Student Response Team; Chair, AY20 Ad Hoc Academic Continuity Working Group; Co-Chair, AY19 Strategic Planning Exploratory Group

2) If one or more of these functions was reduced or discontinued, what would be the impact on:

- a. More students persisting and completing educational goals?

Much of the area's work is focused on developing consistent policy across all units, facilitating shared understandings of UAA and BOR policy across all units, and focusing upon consistent application across affected units, all of which contribute to student success.

Persistence and Completion

Student persistence and completion in part depends on providing a common student experience that removes unnecessary barriers to completion. This area works with the colleges and campuses to develop common approaches to the implementation of policy, procedures and practices, so the student experience of an academic process in one college is not completely different than their experience of that process in another college. An example in the last five years is working with faculty to revise the Academic Dispute Resolution Procedures policy in the catalog. The faculty revised the policy with the support of Academic Affairs, and Academic Affairs developed a common student form, common templates for the committees to use, a spreadsheet listing trained faculty and students to draw from for committee membership, and annual trainings for faculty, administrators, and students. Academic Affairs keeps these current, offers the annual trainings, and compiles the annual Record of Student Complaints, required by the federal government and NWCCU. The Record of Student Complaints shows that the process is implemented in a fair and timely manner.

Credit by Certification / Credit for Prior Learning

Another example from the last five years is the standardization of credit by certification recognition. Each college, and sometimes each program, had its own form, set its own fee, and worked individually with the Registrar's office. Academic Affairs developed a common process for approving how a credential will be recognized, a common fee structure, and, in partnership with the Registrar's office, a common student form for applying for the nontraditional credit. The recognition of prior learning reduces the overall cost to a student. By standardizing this practice across the institution and making it more transparent to the students, UAA is helping students move more effectively through their degrees and certificates and decreasing their overall cost.

Syllabus Consistency

This academic year Academic Affairs has charged a faculty syllabus working group to develop a check list for all syllabi, as well as an optional syllabus template. Having some commonality across syllabi is a best practice in student success.

Catalog Revisions

These are just some of the process and procedures that Academic Affairs has revised over the past five years. There are many more areas that require this kind of attention to common practices across units.

The budget reductions over the past several years in Academic Affairs have already limited its ability to continue to make these kinds of improvements. Further reductions risk a return to each unit interpreting and implementing policies and procedures in its own way, recreating unintended barriers to student success.

- b. Supporting overall student, faculty and staff success in meeting UAA's mission?

Many, if not all, the functions of Academic Affairs are essential either to supporting UAA's educational mission or to demonstrating that UAA is meeting its educational mission. Regional accreditation is all about demonstrating that UAA is meeting its mission, particularly as it relates to student learning and student success.

Recent examples of new program proposals that support the mission include the AA Alaska Native Studies and MPP in Public Policy which were recently approved by the UA Board of Regents.

- c. Impacts to UAA's reputation, and ability to attract and retain students and/or external support?

NWCCU Core Competencies for Accreditation 2025

Academic Affairs is supporting the accreditation effort to identify Core Competencies. Once identified, these will help the institution cohere around a set of shared goals for our students. In turn, this will help UAA articulate the student experience for recruitment.

Regional and National Reputation

UAA is building its reputation with its accreditors and related organizations. UAA teams were selected by NWCCU through competitive processes for the AY20 NWCCU Mission Fulfillment Fellows; the NWCCU Retention, Persistence, and Student Success Academy; and the AY21 NWCCU Mission Fulfillment Fellows. All three will lead to opportunities to present at NWCCU meetings and to serve as institutional mentors, following participation. Recently, the National Institute on Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) requested to feature UAA's broad and inclusive process to identify core competencies for its 2025 accreditation cycle. UAA's Director of General Education, who reports to Academic Affairs, is leading UAA and Alaska's participation in

the Interstate Passport and recently presented with national leaders at the AASCU Annual Meeting.

K-12 Partners

UAA's reputation in part depends on the experience of our students and partners. An example is working with our K-12 partners. UAA's K-12 partners used to have to seek out different individuals on each campus and in each college to explore opportunities for articulating career and technical education into the university. UAA's campuses and colleges often had their own forms and approach. K-12 partners didn't understand the process or how to find the correct folks to work with at UAA. Academic Affairs has been working to establish an institutional approach, streamlining and standardizing the process for our partners, reducing the frustration of working with a complex bureaucracy.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer Pathways

One way to attract and retain students is through the recognition of prior learning (particularly for older and working students) and through articulation agreements with community colleges. Students shop universities to see where their previous achievements in college-level learning will count the most. This allows students to build off their previous education, rather than repeat it, and it reduces the student's overall cost to degree. UAA already recognizes a variety of national exams and other forms of nontraditional credit, but there is still work to be done in this area. For example, Academic Affairs is working with faculty on the recognition of the International Baccalaureate and supporting the colleges in work on articulation agreements that can serve as models moving forward for creating pipelines into our degrees and certificates.

Supporting Student Success Initiatives

Academic Affairs works closely to support student success initiatives by assisting with policy revision, curriculum development and alignment, student-friendly policies and academic procedures.

Programmatic and Policy Consistency

As stated in 2.a above, Academic Affairs works with the faculty, deans, and directors to develop common frameworks and approaches to the many academic processes on our campuses. A student's experience of a process is critical to student success and also to UAA's reputation. Inconsistent practices can damage an institution's reputation and providing common framework across all colleges and campuses is critical.

3) Identify measures and targets used to monitor the impact of functions on each of the above (not all elements may be relevant for your unit, only address relevant items).

Institutional Accreditation

UAA's last comprehensive review culminated in January 2019, when the NWCCU Board of Commissioners reaffirmed UAA's accreditation for seven years, the maximum period granted by NWCCU. Academic Affairs led, guided, and supported the self-study

and reaccreditation effort. As one measure of engaging the UAA community in this institutional reflection, 288 faculty, staff, and students attended at least one of the 11 core theme open forums in AY17. In the new 2025 cycle, 141 faculty, staff, and students have attended at least one forum this academic year; the tri-chairs have also visited 13 stakeholder groups and conducted 8 preliminary core competency surveys this year.

This area wrote the major substantive change report and implemented the merger of the accreditation of Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC) into UAA's accreditation. The three-year plan was accomplished in one year.

Programmatic and GER Assessment

Academic Affairs provides support, guidance, and resources for academic assessment, ultimately resulting in the NWCCU commendation to UAA for "Its extensive assessment efforts related to student learning. Faculty exhibit robust ownership and leadership in assessing academic programs, and also engage proactively in the multifaceted assessment of General Education."

This area has worked to ensure that all academic programs complete the Annual Academic Assessment Survey. All programs (100%) completed the survey in 2017, 2018, and 2019, up from 86% in 2014. The Survey provides high-level data demonstrating that UAA faculty use assessment to make informed decisions to improve the teaching and learning in their programs.

Specialized Accreditation

Sixty-one UAA programs hold specialized accreditations. The revocation of accreditation for initial licensure programs in the School of Education demonstrated the importance of provost-level management to ensure colleges are supporting their programs in meeting their specialized accreditations. In addition to oversight, this area reviews the self-studies and regular reports that go out to the specialized accreditors, and it helps organize and support the provost and chancellor's meetings with external evaluators.

Curricular Review and Programmatic Support

While the provost is the final authority on all academic matters, Academic Affairs reviews and approves curricular actions, assessment plans, course fee changes, and institutional-level petitions, including General Education. One small example of what this means in terms of workload, in AY19 Academic Affairs reviewed 533 courses and 99 programs from the Undergraduate Academic Board alone. It supported the review and processing of 65 assessment plans in AY19. It prepares UAA program proposals and actions that go to the UA Academic Council and then to the Board of Regents Academic and Student Affairs Committee and the full Board of Regents. In AY19, it submitted 14 BOR program action proposals and 16 program notifications.

4) What improvements have been achieved over the last five years?

Academic Affairs oversees institution-wide processes across all colleges and campuses. It is in a continual process-improvement mode. Some of these are already mentioned above. The following are additional examples.

- Partnered with Student Success and Enrollment Services to establish the Academic Student Response Team that includes key stakeholders from across the institution and campuses.
- Supported the FS Academic Assessment Committee to cultivate a culture of teaching and learning, shifting from a compliance model for assessment, and build a conversation about assessment and student learning that connects to co-curricular areas.
- Established an Annual Assessment Retreat each spring that brings academic deans and campus directors together with reporting faculty to talk about program assessment.
- Partnered with the Office of the Registrar to move from five separate catalogs to one central electronic catalog. While the Office of the Registrar handled the technical side, the academic decisions were handled by the provost.
- Developed associates and baccalaureate templates for program copy in the catalog. In AY19 all associates degrees revised their program copy to implement the new template, resulting in a more consistent and predictable presentation to the students. This was monumental task and required the collaboration of programs, colleges, academic boards, governance, the Registrar's office, Faculty Senate, and Academic Affairs.
- Worked with the faculty to align the general education requirements for the AAS and AA with the general education requirements for baccalaureate programs. Historically, these did not align, causing the students to lose time to degree, because the courses they selected for "related instruction" in the associates degrees did not always count toward the general education requirements for baccalaureate degrees.
- Supported the faculty and the General Education director to move from five separate assessment plans and processes (individual approaches on each campus) for the AA to a single shared plan and assessment process. Then aligned the AA, AAS and baccalaureate general education component.
- Expanded the use of *IR-Reports* as a repository for academic materials across an array of purposes, such as accreditation, program review, syllabi, academic assessment.

- Created an assessment repository on *IR-Reports* so all faculty, deans, etc. have access to assessment plans and assessment reports, which is a resource for other purposes, such as specialized accreditation self-studies.
- Developed the accreditation document room in *IR Reports*. This serves as a major repository and archive of policy and regulations that meet NWCCU Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Policies.
- Revised the Academic Dispute Resolution Procedure policy and implemented a common process across all colleges and campuses.
- Improved relationship with K-12 partners, identifying main contacts and articulating on institutional to district level, rather than with each high school.
- Facilitated the comprehensive review of course fees for every college and campus, to ensure colleges are evaluating whether or not the fee is appropriate, at the right level, and being used for the approved purposes.
- Oversaw the revisions of the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs websites to ensure accessibility as part of the institutional compliance effort.

5) What efforts have your unit made to improve efficiencies and reduce costs? What was the result?

- Reduced the budget by \$150K since FY15.
- Reduced staff positions from three to one, limiting the capacity in Academic Affairs, including the ability to support committees, such as the FS Academic Assessment Committee.
- OAA has shifted to a shared services model over the past year; not recruiting as shared positions have become vacant has further strained capacity.
- Replaced conference travel funding with bringing national leaders to UAA to facilitate conversations about best practices, which has had the benefit of expanding opportunities for participation.
- Replaced community campus travel to forums in Anchorage with video conferencing. Academic Affairs extends assistance to engage the participants, has received positive feedback on the approach used, and shared this with other units.
- Developed an assessment repository on *IR Reports*, which has improved transparency, encouraged greater communication between programs and deans, and simplified transition between faculty responsible for assessment reporting.

- Shifted assessment reporting to the regular academic year, rather than funding the faculty work with special summer assignments.
- Reduced the number of third-party providers and direct exchange partners for study abroad, maintaining partners that students regularly choose.

6) List and briefly describe any current or proposed Board of Regents Policy, State or Federal mandates, or laws that require the continuation of your core function(s).

R05.10.070. Student Fees. Course Fees UAA is delegated the authority to establish and collect course fees. Academic Affairs manages the course fee process, including the review and approval of course fees.

BOR Policy P09.03.024 Review of Academic Decisions or Actions. This policy provides the framework for the UAA Academic Resolution Procedure for students to dispute final grades, denial of admission to an academic program, or removal from an academic program. This office manages that process, providing training, guidance, and templates.

BOR Policy P10.02.070 Accreditation. This policy requires the University of Alaska Anchorage “based on its own merits and the quality of its programs, (to) seek and maintain accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.”

BOR Policy P10.04. Academic Programs. Academic Affairs represents the provost on matters in this policy. While the Registrar’s office enforces some of the policies at UAA, the provost’s office has final authority over interpretation, as well as over UAA policies that fall under these areas.

BOR Policy P10.04.040. General Education Requirements. Academic Affairs supports the General Education Director and the faculty in evaluating, aligning, and assessing the UAA GER across programs and campuses, including the implementation of the Alaska Native Themed general education requirement, and the development of the Diversity and Inclusion general education requirement. (For example, Academic Affairs support includes communication, scheduling, facilitation, coordination.)

BOR Policy 10.05. Admission and Graduation Requirements. Academic Affairs represents the provost on matters in this policy. While the Registrar’s office enforces some of the policies at UAA, the provost’s office has final authority over interpretation, as well as over UAA policies that fall under these areas.

BOR Policy P10.06.010. Academic Program Review. Academic Affairs facilitates cyclical program review, which evaluates academic programs for centrality, quality, demand, productivity and efficiency.

P10.06.020. Educational Effectiveness. Academic Affairs supports and partners with the Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee to guide the processes of program student learning outcomes assessment, including the assessment of general education.

NWCCU Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Policies: In addition ensuring compliance with the NWCCU Standards and Eligibility Requirements, Academic Affairs disseminates requirements for, and in some cases oversees the implementation of, relevant NWCCU policies. The following policies are particularly relevant: Annual Report Policy; Credit Hour Policy; Record of Student Complaints Policy; Substantive Change Policy; Teach-Out Plans and Teach-Out Agreements Policy; Distance Education Policy; and Transfer and Award of Academic Credit Policy.

State of Alaska: Accreditation recognized by the US Department of Education is required to maintain eligibility for authorization in Alaska.

US Department of Education: Various regulations related to accreditation and teach out. Also, Federal requirements for Title IV financial aid requiring notification related to programs leading to licensure.

7) Potential cuts: Please describe any function reductions or eliminations that are significantly feasible without affecting UAA's mission fulfillment or its compliance mandates? Are any functions within your unit are duplicated elsewhere at UAA? Is there an opportunity for efficiency to be created by partnering or combining functions? Please describe the opportunities you identify within your unit and include the approximate dollar values and savings that would result.

This area's functions are critical to both fulfilling UAA's mission and meeting compliance mandates.

There are two remaining positions in the Vice Provost's Office that are funded on Fund One: the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Director of Accreditation Functions. Reducing either of these positions will adversely impact all of the functions above.

The General Education Director reporting to the Vice Provost is funded on Fund One by the Provost's Office, not the Vice Provost's area. This function is critical to institutional accreditation, general education development and assessment across all associate and baccalaureate degrees. The Director has and will play a role in integrating curricular innovations, such as the Alaska Native Themed requirement and the proposed Diversity and Inclusion requirement and developing programmatic coherence within general education at UAA.

The Education Abroad Coordinator is funded by a Fund Two grant.

Because the Office of the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs is central in accreditation, assessment, curriculum, policy, and governance, it is essential to all functions of the University of Alaska Anchorage, its campuses, its faculty, staff, and students.