

Preparing for the NWCCU Accreditation Visit – Fall 2014

Fall 2014 Mid-Cycle Evaluation

In September, UAA submitted a Mid-Cycle accreditation report to the NWCCU. As a follow-up, we will host two peer evaluators on October 29th and 30th. This report and visit are intended to help us prepare for our more comprehensive Year Seven Evaluation in 2017. We expect the visit will focus on how UAA uses assessment to adapt and improve in support of student achievement and mission fulfillment.

About the Evaluators

Name	Title and Department	Institution	Areas of Responsibility
Dr. Steven VanderStaay	Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Director of Academic Assessment http://www.wvu.edu/accreditation/index.shtml http://www.wvu.edu/depts/vpue/	Western Washington University	Accreditation, undergraduate education, and assessment; service-learning and civic engagement; fellowships; first-year and honors programs; new faculty and chair orientation; and the university catalog
Dr. Darren Divine	Vice President for Academic Affairs http://www.csn.edu/pages/4151.asp http://www.csn.edu/PDFFiles/Org%20Charts/VPAA%20-%20July%202012-%20June%202013.pdf	College of Southern Nevada	Provost equivalent. Oversees deans and library services; curriculum and assessment; academic initiatives; apprenticeship and workforce/economic development; and institutional research

Resources to Review before the Visit

- Review the attached mission fulfillment diagram which integrates the core themes and objectives with the mission. Think about how your different efforts contribute to those objectives.
- Review the Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/undergraduate-academic-affairs/Accreditation/accreditation-2017-home/2017reports.cfm>.

Questions to Consider before the Visit

- The Commission is particularly interested in how UAA supports student achievement, and how we use assessment to know we are meeting our mission.
- In your leadership or governance role, how do you support student achievement? How are you helping UAA to use data and information to make program improvements, develop new initiatives, and foster a culture of assessment and learning?
- What are some examples you have seen of programs or departments making changes based on assessment findings? How do you support their efforts to make improvements based on these findings?
- How does the mission inform your decisions and resource allocations? How does assessment of meeting the core themes shape how you do that?

Framing the Visit

- Be polite and respectful to the evaluators and approach them openly and honestly. They are here to help, and they are peer volunteers from other institutions like our own.
- This visit will help UAA prepare for the Fall 2017 comprehensive evaluation. We will be focusing on our current assessment and accreditation structures, and the plans we have in place to continue to make evidence-based improvements.

- Focus on linking your work to the mission, student achievement, using assessment, and collaboration across units.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, it is ok to say so. In this case, please share the question with one of the contacts below so we can follow-up with the evaluators.
- It is also ok to acknowledge that things are still in progress.
- Sometimes less is more in responses.

Highlights on Potential Areas of Interest

- **Supporting Accreditation and Data Analysis:** UAA has invested in structures to support accreditation and data/analysis capacities. We are also working on integrating accreditation into ongoing processes, and developing tools to inform decision making such as the new dashboard created by Institutional Research.
- **Core themes, objectives, and indicators:** The Chancellor's Cabinet approved a refined list of objectives and indicators in 2012. UAA has undertaken a first-level review of the indicators to clarify definitions, align tools with national best practices, measurability, and data gathered for other management and improvement purposes.
- **Targets:** The Cabinet has established and regularly monitors numerous targets for management and reporting purposes, including those related to accreditation indicators such as high-demand job graduates, graduation and retention rates, student credit hours, and research expenditures. A more complete conversation about the approach to targets is planned after the visit.
- **Mission Fulfillment:** UAA recently redefined its approach to evaluating mission fulfillment, leading towards a more holistic definition. The new approach better aligns mission fulfillment with the mission and purpose, and integrates the contributions of many units to the mission and core themes. (*See attached graphic.*)
- **Reporting and Monitoring Progress:** The indicators and cross-unit collaborations to support mission fulfillment are regularly reported on in areas such as the annual Performance Report and monthly Case Notes to the university community (retention, degrees and certificates awarded, safety, notable grants and publications, community engagement, cross-unit collaborations, international partnerships).
- **Prioritization:** Prioritization is one example of how UAA aligns its processes with mission fulfillment. The prioritization criteria, such as essentiality to the mission and meeting state needs, were selected from essential documents such as the strategic plan (from which the core themes were taken). The task force recommendations have been published, and UAA is currently examining any major/systematic issues raised by the reports before implementation.
- **Financial Outlook:** The reduction in legislative funding is an experience shared by many universities. The results of prioritization will help UAA make more mission-driven decisions in an environment with fewer financial resources.
- **Assessment:** UAA has shifted its academic program assessment approach, with faculty committees taking a lead in building support and fostering dialogue about student learning, an approach which connects with national best practices. This includes the efforts toward assessing our general education requirements.
- **Other Initiatives:** UAA's spirit of innovation in support of the mission is demonstrated by initiatives such as the exploration of a potential university college, the change in degree-granting status to include doctoral programs, and the Title IX effort.

Accreditation Contacts

Susan Kalina, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs smkalina@uaa.alaska.edu

Renee Carter-Chapman, Senior Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness rmcarterchapman@uaa.alaska.edu

Megan Carlson, Assistant Vice Provost & Accreditation Liaison Officer macarlson@uaa.alaska.edu

Erin Holmes, Associate Vice Provost, Institutional Research ejholmes@uaa.alaska.edu

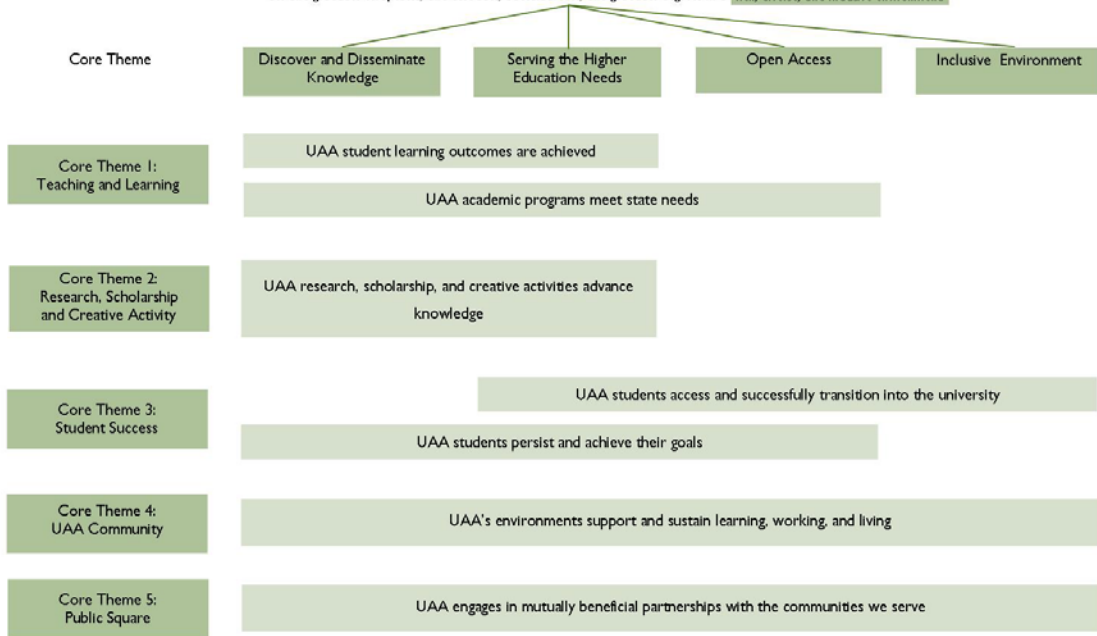


Measures of Mission Fulfillment

The mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage is to **discover and disseminate knowledge** through teaching, research, engagement, and creative expression.

Located in Anchorage and on community campuses in Southcentral Alaska, UAA is committed to **servng the higher education needs** of the state, its communities, and its diverse peoples.

The University of Alaska Anchorage is an **open access** university with academic programs leading to occupational endorsements; undergraduate and graduate certificates; and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees in a **rich, diverse, and inclusive environment**.



UAA Core Theme Objectives and Indicators Approved by Cabinet March 2012

Core Theme #1: Teaching and Learning	
Objective	Institutional Indicators
UAA student learning outcomes are achieved	Student achievement of learning outcomes at course and program levels
UAA academic programs meet state needs	Total degrees and certificates awarded with emphasis on high-demand jobs
	Total student credit hours
Core Theme #2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity	
Objective	Institutional Indicators
UAA research, scholarship, and creative activities advance knowledge	Numbers of publications, citations, presentations, and performances
	Perceived impact of lectures, presentations, and performances on those who attend
	Number and dollar amounts of proposals submitted and awarded grants, contracts, and sponsored activities in research, scholarship, and creative activities
	National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Research Expenditures
Core Theme #3: Student Success	
Objective	Institutional Indicators
UAA students access and successfully transition into the university	The degree to which UAA's students reflect Alaska's racial and ethnic diversity
	First- to second-year first-time undergraduate student retention rate
UAA students persist and achieve their goals	Successful Learning Rate: Proportion of courses successfully completed out of total courses attempted by student sub-cohorts grouped by first year of entry
	Percentage of students who achieve academic distinction
	Completion and graduation rates
	Graduates' employment rates and satisfaction with their degrees
Core Theme #4: UAA Community	
Objective	Institutional Indicators
UAA's environments support and sustain learning, working, and living	Number of crimes, incidents, and injuries reported
	The degree to which UAA's faculty and staff reflect Alaska's racial and ethnic diversity
	The degree to which regular faculty and staff express satisfaction with their professional
	The degree to which students, staff, and faculty are satisfied with administrative, information technology, library, and athletic/recreation services, and student life programs and opportunities
	Rate of annual investments in the maintenance and repair of facilities
	AASHE Sustainability Tracking and Assessment and Rating System evaluation of sustainability
	Development and management of a sustainable budget
Core Theme #5: Public Square	
Objective	Institutional Indicators
UAA engages in mutually beneficial partnerships with the communities we serve	Partners and the public value the university's engagement in the community
	National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Public Service Expenditures
7 Objectives	22 indicators