

April 4, 2012

From: Alberta Harder
Student Academic Support and Success (SASS) Committee co-chair

To: UAA Faculty Senate Executive Board

Re: Complete College America

In response to your request last week for the SASS Committee to examine Complete College America, we found the following information at the link <http://www.completecollege.org>. Complete College America is a national nonprofit organization which was established in 2009. Its mission is to work with states to increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.

To join the Complete College America Alliance of States, a state, in partnership with its colleges and universities, pledges to make college completion a top priority and commits to the following three actions.

1. Set Completion Goals

- Establish annual state and campus-specific degree and credential goals through 2020.

2. Develop Action Plans and Move Key Policy Levers

Develop and implement aggressive state and campus-level action plans for meeting the state's college completion goals, including strategies to:

- Ensure all students are ready to start and succeed in freshman credit courses.
- Redesign remediation efforts to substantially improve success.
- Increase the number of students completing on-time.
- Develop new, shorter, and faster pathways to degrees and credentials of value in the labor market.
- Utilize available financial resources to provide incentives to students and colleges for progress and completion.

3. Collect and Report Common Measures of Progress

Use consistent data and progression measures to create a culture that values completion. This includes:

- Using common metrics for measuring and reporting progress.
- Publicly reporting year one benchmark data and annual progress on college completion, progression, transfer, job placement and earnings, and cost and affordability measure.
- Disaggregating data by level and type of degree/credential, age, race, and income.

The Complete College America website provides links to many publications dealing with topics related to increasing college completion rates. It is one way for a public college to find out about current best practices in increasing college completion rates. A concern expressed by members of the SASS Committee was whether UAA has the capability to produce the state baseline completion data required using the Complete College America Common Metrics. We did find out that the UAA office of Institutional Research (IR) and the office of Institutional Effectiveness, Engagement and Academic Support (IEEAS) recently published a six-page UAA Completion Profile that attempts to replicate the data reports from Complete College America. Have the UAA Faculty Alliance representatives received input about the Complete College America initiative from either the IR office or the IEEAS office? Input from those offices might be useful to the Alliance representatives in making their recommendation about the University of Alaska's position on Complete College America. IEEAS office also recently published a report on the success of subsequent college-level work by underprepared students at UAA. This report makes reference to Complete College America's progress metrics related to preparatory education. So the IEEAS office is already producing institutional completion data. It remains unclear to the SASS Committee as to what the benefit to UA will be by collecting additional and perhaps redundant and less precise data, as a prerequisite to participation in Complete College America.