



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Jeff Jessee, Dean of the College of Health and Vice Provost of Health Programs

Cc: Connor Kantrowitz, Committee Chair & Term Assistant Professor of Fire and Emergency Services
LeeAnne Carrothers, Director, School of Allied Health

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Fire & Emergency Services Technology AAS

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): N/A

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role:

The mission of the Fire and Emergency Services Technology program at UAA is to provide entry-level knowledge and skills for students planning a career in emergency services as well as providing for career advancement and professional development of current firefighters. The Fire and Emergency Services AAS has a technical core that consists of courses in principles of emergency services, building construction, fire prevention, safety and survival, protection systems, and fire behavior and combustion. Students often get jobs with fire departments, but also pursue degrees in paramedicine, nursing, physician assistant, medicine, and other allied health fields. Employment growth for firefighters in Alaska is projected to be low (+1.5%), but the average number of annual openings is high (+97). The Fire and Emergency Services Technology AAS is central to the College of Health efforts to safeguard and advance the wellbeing of people and communities. Firefighters control and extinguish fires, and they respond to emergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk. Duties may include fire prevention, emergency medical service, hazardous material response, search and rescue, and disaster assistance.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity:

Program demand has been stable. During the review period, the Fire and Emergency Services Technology AAS had an average of 55 majors, and awarded an average of 11 degrees per year. Class sizes were moderate, but the program demonstrated an excellent return on investment. On average, tuition revenues were 67% higher than instructional costs. Stated differently, every dollar invested in instruction generated an average of \$1.67 in tuition revenue (this does not include the revenue from EMT courses). The tuition revenue justifies a program enhancement to hire faculty.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success:

The program was developed following the National Fire Academy's Fire and Emergency Service Higher Education (FESHE) model core curriculum for two-year degree programs. The Fire and Emergency Services AAS is the only FESHE-recognized program in Alaska. Courses were recently updated. Students have opportunities to participate in service/community based learning and in internship/field placements. Students also complete a capstone project. During their required practicum, students have the opportunity to observe, participate and apply firefighting, emergency medical or emergency management skills in a structured and supervised organizational setting. Pass rates on the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exams are high (above 90%, well above the national average).

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) offers an AAS in Fire Science. It also holds a Summer Firefighter Academy. The programs at UAA and UAF both have significant and unique strengths. Students at UAF are advantaged with the availability of an on-campus firehouse. At UAA, students benefit from an exceptionally strong relationship with the Anchorage Fire Department. The programs serve different student populations (and combined, the programs still do not fully address the need for firefighters in Alaska).

Commendations and Recommendations:

The Fire and Emergency Services AAS provides a unique opportunity for students at UAA interested in jobs with fire departments and education in paramedicine, nursing, physician assistant, medicine, and other allied health fields. The program demonstrates an excellent return on investment. This return on investment justifies a program enhancement to hire faculty. The program should also consider opportunities for growth. The program has at least three important opportunities – developing a baccalaureate degree in partnership with the Anchorage Fire Department, partnering with the Matanuska-Susitna College to further develop paramedical technology education in the Anchorage bowl, and offering additional continuing education options (including the National Registry Advanced-EMT course).

Decision:

Enhancement.