



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Daniel Kline Professor; Director, General Education
Dennis Humphrey, Associate Professor
Talis Colberg, Director, Mat-Su College
Dan O'Connor, Director, Prince William Sound College
Gary Turner, Director, Kenai Peninsula College
Betty Walters, Interim Director, Kodiak College

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: General Program AA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, Kodiak, Prince William Sound

Members of the program review committee:

Daniel Kline Professor and Program Director
Dennis Humphrey, Associate Professor

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences CAS contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,
2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and
3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriates and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The General Program AA contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by offering students a way to complete a 60-credit program based on (a) 34-credits of UAA's general education requirements and (b) 26-credits of additional courses. Then, just at the GER courses are a stepping-stone to the General Program AA, that General AA is a stepping-stone to a wide range of baccalaureate degrees. The General Program AA is essential to UAA's community campuses. Although it is by no means all the community campuses do, it is arguably what they do best. Moreover, this is the principle program for students in the Alaska Middle College, allowing high-school students to take university courses that apply to their high-school diploma and their college degree (be it the General AA or some other degree).

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

In 2019 there were 815 majors in the General Program AA, and 300 graduates, both numbers being higher than other degree program at UAA. Building from hundreds of lower-division courses, it relies on classes with robust enrollments, high efficiency, and many options for online or face-to-face delivery.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

UAA's GER courses – the core of the AA – are perhaps the most rigorously assessed courses at UAA, both individually and collectively. Updates are made regularly, and students have numerous options for times, locations, and delivery formats of the courses. Of all of CAS's programs, this one is probably the most accommodating to students' unique circumstances.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

The distinctive feature of this program is that it builds on what UAA already offers: 34-credits of GER offerings plus 26-credit that are offered by other programs. It is a degree that on-boards students to the university, allows some to achieve their goal of a two-year AA, and allows other to move on to baccalaureate degrees.

Commendations and Recommendations

I commend the countless faculty who teach the GER courses and other electives, and I commend the faculty who regularly assess the AA program. The faculty should also be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

Decision

Continuation. Even without the prospects of UAA offering fewer baccalaureate programs, the General AA program is one that is underused by students. But, with the prospects for reduction of various programs at UAA, the General Program is increasingly important. It must be retained.