

Date: March 9, 2020

To: Cathy Sandeen, Chancellor

From: John Stalvey, Interim Provost *John RA Stalvey*

Cc: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Daniel Kline, Professor; Director, General Education
Dennis Humphrey, Associate Professor, Prince William Sound College
Talis Colberg, Director, Matanuska-Susitna College
Dan O'Connor, Director, Prince William Sound College
Gary Turner, Director, Kenai Peninsula College
Betty Walters, Interim Director, Kodiak College
Susan Kalina, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Claudia Lampman, Vice Provost for Student Success

Re: **AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings – General Program AA**

I have reviewed the dean's findings and the completed Expedited Program Review Template for the General Program AA. The Provost's Office did not receive an Optional Program Response Form from the program.

Recommendations

My recommendation is to accept the decision and recommendations of the dean. The next Program Review will be included in the regular ongoing program review schedule.

Decision

Recommend Continuation



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.

Submission date: 31 January 2020

Program/s in this review: Associate of Arts General Program

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 T Kline**, Professor of English & GenEd Director, Anchorage
- **Dennis Humphrey**, Associate Professor of English, PWSC

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)

The Associate of Arts (AA) degree produces nearly one-third of all UAA degrees (782/2317 credentials in 2019) and is delivered at all five UAA campuses (ANC, MatSu, KPC, KOD, PWS). The AA alignment with the General Education Requirements (GERs) in 2017 makes the AA inextricable from all undergraduate programs. The AA is central to community campuses' missions, providing the largest single means of UAA's community support, becoming a degree of choice especially at community campuses for students with undecided majors. However, it is under-emphasized at ANC and an under-utilized asset for the UAA 2020 goal to increase student success through excellence, access, and affordability.

A. Structure and Reverse Transfer: The AA degree is 60 credit hours at 100 level or above, including the same GERs as baccalaureate degrees. The UAA GER is 34 credits: written communication (6), oral communication (3), mathematics/quantitative skills (3), fine arts (3), humanities (6), natural sciences (7), social sciences (6). The Alaska Native-Themed requirement can overlap with a GER, and the 23-26 electives that round out the AA can come from any discipline. Having GERs in common, baccalaureate students can earn an AA on the way to their bachelor's degree. With that and reverse transfer, UAA could turn our attrition numbers into completions and make baccalaureate completers into double-completers. The "AA along the way" and reverse transfer could answer the 2018 accreditation recommendation to improve completion rates.

B. Flexible Two-Year Degree The GERs in the AA deliver broad skills and knowledge sought in the workforce: oral and written communications, quantitative literacy, and critical thinking. The 23-26 elective hours can focus on a particular career field, and /or develop well-rounded sets of skills and knowledge. The AA is ideal for students who want to pursue a 4-year degree program but who are forced by circumstances to stop-out. Furthermore, The AA is kept current by ongoing revisions of the Gen Ed curriculum to align it with academic pathways initiatives and the Interstate Passport.

C. AA/AAS Cooperation and Community Engagement: On community campuses, the AA shares Gen Ed courses with AAS degrees and certificates. This overlap provides communities with multiple paths to degree completion without duplicating cost. Furthermore, GenEd faculty in community campuses provide community education and enrichment activities. Mat-Su delivers community

English as a Second Language instruction and memoir writing workshops for senior citizens. PWSC provides enrichment courses throughout their service area and provides targeted workforce training in communication and literacy skills for the Copper River Native Association. The KOD campus actively supports the Kodiak Coast Guard base and is the center of Alutiq studies for UAA. These are just a few examples of the AA's value added to communities throughout the UAA service area.

D. Dual-Credit and Middle College: The AA degree provides a framework for dual-credit and Middle College at every campus. The interdisciplinary GERs integrate well with high school curricula to satisfy secondary and post-secondary graduation requirements simultaneously. It also provides a focused pathway toward college degree completion, minimizing lost credits. Some students complete the AA while in high school. Partnerships with local public-school districts and governments include Mat-Su's Middle College, where Mat-Su Borough School District pays tuition for their students, and ANSEP (the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program) attached to the MatSu campus creates another potential AA cohort. The Valdez city government pays tuition for Valdez high school students in dual-credit courses at PWSC. Both KPC and KOD also have dual-enrollment and Middle College. KPC offers a Kenai Peninsula Borough-funded JumpStart tuition waiver program (67% discount) for high school juniors and seniors taking college classes. These partnerships enable students in our communities to complete degrees in a UAA program with lower student debt. In 2019, the UAA Middle College led to 19 AA degrees.

The AA is fundamental to UAA's mission. No other program has more declared majors or a better mechanism for increasing important completion metrics, especially for First-Gen and Historically Under-represented Groups (HUGs). Likewise, the AA continues to be a core of community campus degree work and a means to transition students to baccalaureate programs.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7-year trend; 1400 words or less)

The Associate of Arts – General Program is the primary degree offered through the community campuses but not a point of focus on the Anchorage campus. We believe the AA can be put to much better use on the Anchorage campus for Exploratory, Undeclared, and Pre-Majors who have not been fully admitted into baccalaureate programs. From 2013-19, UAA awarded an average of 840 associate degrees per year – roughly half are from the Associate of Arts – General Program – and associate degrees are more efficiently delivered than baccalaureate degrees.

Analysis of IR-Reports 2020 Program Review Dashboard Data

In looking at the IR Dashboard data, one of the main issues we have identified in last year's AA Program Review and in this year's Expedited Program Review is that UAA does not track GenEd programmatically, and UAA Institutional Research does not separately track the Associate of Arts; instead the AA and AAS degrees are reported together. This makes it extremely difficult to analyze at the Associate of Arts – General Studies on its own.

Specific IR Data Points (see attached data sheet)

- **Seven-year degree and/or certificate awards trend:** The trend for 2018-19 is up, with 2018-19 showing highest number of graduates in the past seven years.
- **Credits Per Degree (Average Credits Earned):** These numbers show that AA graduates reach graduation with about 101% of the hours needed to graduate (60), showing few extra credits. The baccalaureate credits per degree is 152 for a 120-credit degree. Students complete the AA much more efficiently.
- **Seven-year majors or program enrollment trend:** AA enrollments are trending down but still represent healthy numbers as compared to other programs. **No other program at any level has as many declared majors.** The closest is the Nursing Science pre-major, at 683. Part of the downward trend is attributable to a general downward enrollment trend. These numbers do not include non-degree seeking students taking GER courses that are part of the AA (such as dual credit).
- **Course pass rates:** The AA has no dedicated prefix for identifying all of its courses in the dashboard. These numbers represent the GERs, which make up over half of the AA (and which students can use for the remaining half as well—particularly at community campuses).
- **Internal Demand:** The AA has no dedicated prefix for identifying all of its courses in the dashboard. These numbers represent the GERs, which make up over half of the AA (and which students can use for the remaining half as well—particularly at community campuses).
- **Seven-year Student Credit Hour (SCH) production trend: These data are not readily accessible in the current I/R dashboards because**
 - The program is an interdisciplinary program that relies hundreds of courses,
 - There is no course prefix (e.g., GPAA) for this program, and
 - The Instructional Productivity tab does not have an option to select GER courses (which map onto the AA).

However, the overall UAA trend in SCH production is being driven downward by the decreasing enrollments UAA-wide. Since the AA is comprised of courses from across the curriculum, the AA's numbers are, if anything, having a positive effect on the SCH production within the different disciplines by enrolling hundreds of "non-majors" in their courses.

- **SCH/FTEF: These data are not readily accessible in the current I/R dashboards.** AA students at the 100-299 level cannot be disaggregated from other students in the numbers below via the dashboard. However, the higher numbers in the AA-level courses are indicative of the influx of hundreds of AA students not included in the upper division numbers.
- **Enrollment/Full Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF):** AA students at the 100-299 level cannot be disaggregated from other students in the numbers below via the dashboard. However, the higher numbers in the AA-level courses are indicative of the influx of hundreds of AA students not included in the upper division numbers.
- **FTES/FTEF: These data are not readily accessible in the current I/R dashboards.** AA students at the 100-299 level cannot be disaggregated from other students in the numbers below via the dashboard. However, the higher numbers in the AA-level courses are indicative of the influx of hundreds of AA students not included in the upper division numbers.
- **Class Size (Average Class Size):** AA students at the 100-299 level cannot be disaggregated from other students in the numbers below via the dashboard. However, the higher numbers in the

AA-level courses are indicative of the influx of hundreds of AA students not included in the upper division numbers.

- **Cost/SCH: These data are not readily accessible in the current I/R dashboards.** However, since AA courses are primarily lower division (100-299), the numbers below depicting 100-299 level course cost/SCH show delivery of those courses is less than half the cost per SCH than the upper division undergraduate courses that charge 20% higher tuition per credit hour. This cost savings may be due to many factors, such as lower paid faculty in lower division courses, a lower number of non-majors in upper division courses, and fewer prerequisites at lower division for non-degree-seeking students.
 - Cost per SCH is less than half at the lower division. This shows the impact of the GERs that the AA shares with virtually all undergraduate degrees.
 - For example, this is the breakdown of majors (yellow) and non-majors (green) in English courses. At lower division, non-majors outnumber majors by more than 6 to 1. In the upper division, this trend reverses, and majors outnumber non-majors 2 to 1. This is the GERs at work.
- **Tuition Revenue / SCH:** AA students at the 100-299 level cannot be disaggregated from other students in the numbers below via the dashboard. However, the lower numbers in the AA-level courses are indicative of higher tuition revenues at the upper division level. Upper division tuition is 20% higher than lower division tuition, but it produces only a 15% increase in the revenue per SCH, showing the lower division to be more efficient dollar for dollar. Larger average class size and lower average faculty salary at the lower division are likely reasons for this greater efficiency.
 - In FY 2019, upper-division instructional costs were over \$5.15 million *higher* than its full tuition revenues. By comparison, lower division instructional costs were \$9.9 million *lower* than its full tuition revenues.
 - Simply put, lower division is carrying upper division's \$5.1 million dollar deficit and still producing \$4.47 million more than it costs to deliver its instruction.
- **External demand:** 83% of AA graduates re-enroll, and 30% achieve a second award (which is on par with the UAA average of 31%). In the most recent data year, 84% of AA grads with 2nd enrollments (211 of 250) re-enrolled in Alaska. Of that number, 97% re-enrolled at UAA.

The AA has no unique instructional cost to cover. It consists of GER courses taught by faculty in other programs for the benefit of all programs that use the GERs and the other half of it comes from courses already offered for other programs.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

The Associate of Arts – General Program has no specialized external accreditation status. The AA is jointly delivered at UAA's five campuses (ANCH, Mat-Su, KPC, KOD, and PWSC) as a University of Alaska Anchorage degree. The community campuses are not independently accredited.

As part of aligning the AA and GER, all five UAA campuses now share a common mission statement for the Associate of Arts:

*The **Associate of Arts (AA)** degree provides an academic foundation for student success in multiple pathways including continued study, career preparation, and engaged citizenship for Alaska's diverse peoples.*

Each campus describes distinctive elements available at its campus. After intensive effort, all five campuses now subscribe to a shared and simplified set of AA Program Student Learning Outcomes:

<u>Program Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>GER Course Category</u>
• <i>Communicate Effectively</i>	Written Communication, Oral Communication; All courses
• <i>Think Critically</i>	All courses
• <i>Evaluate Analytically</i>	Humanities, Fine Arts
• <i>Reason Empirically</i>	Quantitative Skills, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences

The GER assessment process has aligned the AA, AAS, and GER programs to be mutually supporting. We draw upon the same set of courses, assessment process, and a shared set of expectations across the UAA system in our approach to the first two years of the college experience.

A. Program Review, Alignment, and Revised Outcomes: The AA strengthened its program quality significantly by aligning its curriculum and assessment with the GER. Significant improvements have helped students understand transfer processes and the value of their degree. The AA offers one streamlined track and has more flexibility in applicable lower-division courses. It is one unified degree across campuses (Anchorage and the community campuses), unifying mission statements. Additionally, students can now meet AA degree electives through any combination of 100- or 200-level courses. Thus, the AA program presently matches national trends, adding flexibility and program cohesion.

(1) Course Revisions: GER course improvements have improved seamless transfer of AA students into baccalaureate programs. This makes the AA stronger as both a terminal degree and a transfer degree with smooth transition to four-year degree programs with little or no loss of credits. The development of MATH A104: Technical Math efficiently meets GER, AA, AAS requirements, eliminating the duplicated costs of resourcing three separate requirements. GER/AA assessment led to quicker pathways to completion, such as a Math option for non-STEM students, without long chains of remedial courses (MATH A115: The Art of Math). In Fall 2017, English departments throughout the UA system realigned composition courses, adding a new prefix (WRTG) and updating course offerings. PRPE English composition courses also now use the same prefix; WRTG courses are now part of the University College in CTC, uniting Tier I courses in one college and creating a clear, direct, and seamless sequence of WRTG courses across the system.

(2) Online & E-Learning: At UAA, lower-division courses usually comprise more eLearning courses than upper-division. In AY2016, 71.8% of all credits were lower-division. Kodiak and Kenai offer the largest percent of eLearning courses, followed by PWSC, Anchorage, and MatSu College. In Spring 2019, 49 lower-division courses meeting GER and AA requirements were available online, many with multiple sections. In particular, many Tier I courses, especially COMM and WRTG, are available online. Supplemented by Academic Innovations & E-Learning's ROLL Title III grant (Robust

Online Learning), focused primarily on high-demand GER courses, UAA is positioned to discuss cooperative (rather than competitive) online AA and GER course scheduling in a period of declining state revenues.

(3) High-Impact Practices (HIPs): The AA is a two-year degree offered across multiple campuses and made up of courses owned by other programs. Presence of the High Impact Practices in the AA depends on the programs that produce the GER courses and the courses that serve as AA electives. However, the diverse communities served by the AA are host to many community-based/place-based learning opportunities. As HIPs are introduced more regularly into the GenEd by the departments that own the GenEd courses, we anticipate an increase in student exposure to HIPs throughout the AA.

B. Academic Advising: AA academic advising differs on each campus, with community campuses offering greater focus and intentionality on the AA. Both MatSu and KPC students meet with an advisor, who helps plot out courses to meet both AA and potential baccalaureate requirements. If students are unaware of the AA, most advisors try to explain the importance of an initial degree plan to guide progress even as a student works toward a baccalaureate. Furthermore, the “AA on the way” initiative would create a direct link between earning a bachelor’s and an associate’s degree; students can obtain the AA as they complete their baccalaureate. Application for the AA could be simplified, and reducing or waiving application fees would encourage students complete the degree. Anchorage students, unfortunately, have largely been on their own or have gotten advising on a drop-in basis through the UAA Advising and Testing Center, but they also require greater integration and a dedicated AA advisor through the new First Year Advising program.

C. Shared AA / AAS / GER Assessment: In AY17, AA PLO assessment joined shared GER assessment, which aligned the AA, AAS, and GenEd in a single process and draws upon faculty from all five UAA campuses and assesses course materials from across the curriculum. As a programmatic assessment, the aligned process complements departmental course-level assessments, while breaking out of disciplinary categories to involve all faculty in a shared set of high-level learning outcomes assessed across the curriculum. In other words, general education is everybody’s business. GenEd courses begin a student’s journey toward competence in each area. By aligning the AA and GER across UAA campuses, we’re better positioned to advocate for wholesale transfer of the AA to baccalaureate campuses without loss of GER credits.

(1) Assessment Process: Each academic year from AY15-19, groups of faculty (including community campuses) met for monthly CAFE workshops and developed three GER rubrics. At the end of the spring term, the GER director called out to UAA faculty to submit student work for assessment. Faculty then met for a two-day workshop (the May GER Soiree) to review student artifacts, norm rubrics, and write up results. The GER director then compiled the final report for the Office of Academic Affairs, analysis by the General Education Requirements Advisory committee, circulation to UAA faculty and campuses, and discussion during the next year’s CAFE workshops. Each May soiree provided faculty teams opportunities to discuss issues related to the GER and to develop shared expectations as they assessed student work. For the first time in UAA history, we had

(1) student work from all five UAA campuses and (2) faculty assessors from four of the five campuses.

(2) Student Artifacts & Rubrics: In AY18, which made up the largest assessment sample, 13 faculty assessed student work from a total of 63 sections, including both online and face-to-face AA-eligible courses for a total of 338 student artifacts (generally student essays) in pre-GER, 100-level, and 200-level courses from 12 different disciplines and all five ANC campuses. In nearly every case, students performed at the expected course-level except for a consistent dip in 200-level achievement, which may be affected by the following concerns:

- student self-advising.
- lack of programmatic articulation of GenEd,
- Inadequate GER advising that sees all GER courses as equivalent, easy, and undifferentiated so students take 200-level courses before 100-level courses meant to prepare students for 200-level, particularly on the ANC campus, and
- increased faculty expectations at the 200-level over 100-level courses.

Highlights: The alignment of the AA/AAS/GER in a single assessment process; shared, high-level PLOs for the AA across all five UAA campuses; greater faculty participation in GER assessment.

Improvements: On the ANC campus, greater visibility, coordination, advising, and support for the AA as a basic educational credential and vital stepping-stone toward student success in the baccalaureate. To improve the AA assessment across all five campuses, we need

- a regular and systematic process for soliciting and receiving appropriate student artifacts from all involved courses and programs;
- greater faculty participation in assessment efforts so that the assessment load is more evenly distributed;
- greater coordination between campuses on assessment findings, assignment scaffolding, and communication of expectations to students;
- greater alignment between curriculum review bodies and actual assessment activities so those who review and approve the curriculum are involved in assessing materials they approve.

We are poised to make fundamental and systematic improvements to the AA based upon insights gleaned from the shared GER/AA/AAS assessment process, which has included faculty from all UAA campuses.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)

When UAA transitioned to a single common set of GERs, it already accomplished effective cost-sharing and reduction of duplication. The AA is a combination of GER courses already required by other programs and of electives that are courses already offered for other programs. It requires nothing else. The AA is distinctive in that it requires no funding unique to itself to produce more degree completions than any other single program. It generates SCHs and revenue, and it serves general education needs throughout the UAA campuses and their supported communities.

5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)

In summary, the Associate of Arts degree has more declared majors than any other program at UAA, it produces more graduates than any other single program at UAA, and it accomplishes both of those distinctions by utilizing GER courses and electives already taught by other programs. In effect, it increases the productivity of courses already needed for and supplied by other programs. Furthermore, it utilizes almost exclusively the lower-division courses that are the least costly per SCH for the university to provide. It benefits from improvements made throughout the GERs and UAA's range of degree programs by using those same courses. The AA is already the single most effective program at UAA in terms of SCH and degree completion. It could more than double that output with greater emphasis on the AA during advising, by running a degree audit on all currently enrolled students to see how close they are to achieving an AA, and by awarding an "AA on the way" to baccalaureate students. It could provide an alternative degree path focus for hundreds of pre-majors who never make it into the majors for which they are pre-majoring. The AA can provide opportunities to award degrees to students we lose to attrition prior to completion of their baccalaureate programs through reverse transfer. All of that could be accomplished without increasing costs.

There is no more efficient degree at UAA. The AA generates SCHs and produces graduates without entailing stand-alone costs. Far from resting on this efficiency, its integration with the GER means it benefits from the GER's focused assessment and improvement processes, refining the GER and the AA with each cycle. Without the AA, UAA would lose all of these benefits and gain no savings in return. In short, the Associate of Arts is essential to achieving the UAA mission across all UAA campuses.