



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

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

Cc: Simon Kattenhorn, Professor; Director, Department of Biological Sciences
LeeAnn Munk, Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Geological Sciences BS

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Members of the program review committee:

Simon Kattenhorn, Professor and Department Director
LeeAnn Munk, 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 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 appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

CAS's Department of Geological Sciences contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by offering three general education courses in the Natural Sciences category, provides undergraduates with the chance to earn a BS in geology and work with faculty who are engaged in applied geosciences research.

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

In terms of demand, the Geological Sciences Department is typical of other CAS departments. It is close to the CAS median in the number of incoming students (9.4) who declare Geology as their initial major, the number of current majors (72), the number of student credit hours produced (about 3,500), and the percent of credit hours from students outside of the major (56%). In terms of efficiency, the Department's undergraduate offerings are also typical in one important way: they generate enough tuition revenue to cover the instructional costs. But, in a different way, the Department's offerings are better than average: Geology's faculty are above average in student credits per faculty. Finally, its productivity is on par with the norm for CAS undergraduate programs. For instance, the number of award per faculty member in Geology is very similar to the number of awards per faculty in other CAS programs.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The program has strong faculty with professional experiences, and the faculty recently modified the program based on findings from their annual assessment, all aimed at making sure students had the foundational knowledge before they moved on to higher-level classes. The program also has a strong relationship with its Community Advisory Board, helping make sure that graduates from the program have the knowledge that employers want.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

Although UAF offers a BS in Geological Sciences with some similarities to UAA's program, UAA's has considerably more majors and produces graduates, serves the larger population center in Southcentral Alaska, and, most distinctively, works closely with a local Community Advisory Board to address workforce needs in Southcentral Alaska.

Commendations and Recommendations

The faculty are commended for working so effectively with its Community Advisory Board, for serving enough students to cover instructional costs, and for being among CAS's leaders in credit hours per faculty member. The faculty also should be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

Decision

Continuation.