Academic Affairs
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Office of Academic Affairs Governance Report

Each month, the Office of the Provost is pleased to provide a summary of our ongoing work, with highlights of accomplishments, notice of forthcoming efforts and events, and reminders about key processes, dates, and deadlines. Please make time to read these notices; if you miss one, or need to refer back, you can find all of our reports along with a variety of other information and messages at the UAA Provost Communications website.

Office of the Provost

I'm writing with some updates about the Academic Portfolio, Program Reviews, and Curriculum. If you saw the recent Board of Regents meeting, you may have seen the results of an Academic Portfolio review the Board had requested. This initial look showed the number of students enrolled, and the number of students graduating from all programs *that had enrolled students and graduates in 2025.* New programs that have not yet graduated any students, for example, were not included. This snapshot is the first of three presentations planned for the Board's review. In planned sessions for September and November, the Board will consider program capacities, and related issues around cost, personnel, and space considerations. As the body that has fiduciary and oversight responsibility for the programs offered by the Universities, our Board takes seriously the need to regularly ensure we are meeting state needs and doing so in both an effective and efficient manner.

Set against the backdrop of the Systemwide Attainment Framework, with its focus on improving recruitment, retention, and graduation, what this means for UAA is that we are increasingly expected to be proactive in the management of our academic programs. How does this shape our work now, and what might change in the near future?

1) While the primary role of Program Review is to ensure quality and promote continuous improvement, a secondary role is evaluating and making appropriate adjustments to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Effective programs are providing clear pathways for completion, and supporting students in their transitions (both into the program and from it into their career or additional education). Efficient programs are fully utilizing their resources (faculty, lab and clinical spaces, student supports) without sacrificing effectiveness. These are important markers for programs to keep in mind as you undergo Program Review, but also as you consider curricular changes, scheduling, and

other plans. Increasingly, Program Reviews have, and will continue to include, recommendations around program design, scheduling, and related issues.

2) As faculty consider curricular changes, I encourage you to think holistically. There is a body of literature that looks at the relationship between “excessive” choice (think: offering large numbers of electives) and student success. Generally, some electives are helpful in programs, giving students opportunities to explore and offering some flexibility, but offering too many choices can actually overwhelm students or cause them to take more credits than needed, potentially slowing down completion. Our institutional accreditor requires that all degrees have an “...appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning” so those should be top of mind in any curricular updates. Also, each time we change the curriculum, we potentially cause problems or delays for students who are already enrolled, so minimizing the frequency with which we change our requirements is a consideration.
3) For many staff, slowing the pace of curricular change and ensuring curriculum and schedules are created with both effectiveness and efficiency in mind should help reduce student confusion, limit the need for waivers and exceptions, and clarify how best they can support students through completion of their programs.

Our next round of Program Reviews is well underway, and I look forward to working with the departments and our Deans through the process.

Please direct questions or comments to the Provost (uaa_provost@alaska.edu)

Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness

Please direct any questions to Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness Susan Kalina (smkalina@alaska.edu)

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional Accreditation Reaffirmed! On February 25 UAA received the decision from NWCCU that UAA’s accreditation has been reaffirmed. The reaffirmation came with 3 commendations, and 1 recommendation.

A huge thank you to the faculty leads, Carrie King and Terry Kelly, members of the Accreditation Advisory Committee, UAA governance groups and leadership at all levels, and all UAA faculty, staff, and students for their active engagement in the seven-year process. UAA’s commitment to putting students first and to continuous improvement shined brightly and were noted by the site visit evaluators and the Commission.

Congratulations on this signature achievement!

Academic Affairs

As outlined in the previous Governance report, and related to the provost's message above, the new textbook affordability law, which moves course materials adoption deadlines to much earlier, has implications for deadlines related to curriculum, scheduling, as well as course materials submissions. These processes are interconnected in ways that might not have been explicit in the past. For example, scheduling occurs well in advance of registration. When the schedule "rolls," initiating the scheduling process across our campuses, it rolls courses as approved at the time of the "roll." Starting with Spring 2027, the schedule production calendar indicates deadlines that ensure approved course changes are integrated into the ongoing process. While exceptions are always possible, in general, these deadlines should contribute to the provost's expressed goals above. A huge thank you to schedulers across all UAA campuses, who are working to coordinate the scheduling process in new ways.

Student Success Report

In many ways, UAA has already been doing much of the groundwork laid out by the Systemwide Attainment Framework, with its focus on improving recruitment, retention, and graduation. One aspect of that has been the standardization of advising to ensure more equitable caseloads (and thus easier access to advisors) and more consistent information and processes. One that many of you are familiar with are the Progress Report Campaigns that run each semester out of the Office of Student Success.

Progress Reports allow faculty to issue alerts on students in their undergraduate courses. These alerts open cases that trigger outreach by advisors or referrals to campus resources like Learning Commons tutoring services and CARE team for non-academic issues. Advisors and other staff are best able to provide intrusive advising to students when there is some level of detail provided by faculty in the comments. For example, if you provide a progress report on a student marking that they have stopped attending class, it helps advisors if you also note for how long and if the student has missed major assignments in your course. Because progress reports that open cases can become a part of a student's history, it's best to stick to the facts. The final PR campaign of the semester will be launching soon. OSS appreciates you taking the time to fill these out for your courses.

The submissions portal for this year's Student Showcase will open on March 16th and remain open until April 5th. Please encourage students who have done excellent work to submit a poster presentation. We are also recruiting judges for both Round 1 (remote) and Round 2 (in person at the event on April 17th). Categories are the same as last year and include arts & humanities, social & and applied sciences, natural sciences, and graduate programs. You can sign up to be a judge here.

Please direct any questions to Vice Provost of Student Success Ray Ball (rball11@alaska.edu)

Faculty Success Report

On April 24, 2024, the Department of Justice published a new rule for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This rule requires ***all*** **digital content at UAA to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level AA by April 24, 2026.** These guidelines include accessibility concepts that UAA has promoted for many years, such as appropriate use of headings, tagged PDFs, captioned videos, color contrast, and alt text for images. Faculty Success has developed a list of Recommended Accessibility Skills to help you understand these guidelines. Below is a collection of resources and trainings Faculty Success has developed to support faculty in their efforts towards this effort.

- The **Faculty Success Accessibility** **&** **Accessibility Tools** **pages** of the Faculty Success website were updated in 2025 to include the most relevant content and provide information about the update to the ADA as a call-out on the initial landing page, under Legal Framework and Definitions, as well as under the Standards and Guidelines tab. We have compiled this extensive list of Existing Materials on Faculty Success' website to Support Accessibility Skill Requirements (by Topic).
- **Accessibility at UAA Video Playlists on Mediaspace** **and** **Accessibility @ UAA Playlist on YouTube** have 65 videos, ranging from short how-tos on UAA core tools to in-depth recordings from Accessibility Afternoons and Teaching Academy workshops.
- **Accessibility Afternoons** are monthly half-hour workshops followed by a Q&A. This series started in March 2025, and there have been 11 sessions. Topics have included color, captioning, headings, hyperlinks, audio description, choosing learning materials, alt-text, PDFs, tables, lists, and identifying solutions and alternatives for inaccessible content.
- **Make Your Content Accessible** is a one-week, asynchronous training that Faculty Success offers monthly (piloted in Sept. 2025). This is an actively facilitated training that includes the four main categories of regular and substantive interaction (RSI) to model best practices asynchronous courses. It covers all of the recommended accessibility skill requirements for UAA faculty, which is under OLC review.

- **PDF Remediation Workshops** are scheduled for March 9 and 11. These will be hands-on workshops, with in-person and virtual options, where faculty are encouraged to bring an inaccessible PDF that they want to improve, and they'll be guided through an accessibility check and remediation in Foxit.

The Faculty Success offices can be reached here. Please direct questions to Vice Provost Colin McGill (cmmcgill@alaska.edu).