

## ***WE PUT STUDENTS FIRST!***

August 18, 2025

Dear UAA Faculty,

I'm excited to welcome each of you back to our UAA campuses for Fall 2025, and I look forward to working together to transform the lives of our students, our communities, and our larger world through teaching, research, and public service. As you make your preparations for the fall semester, please refer to the following reminders and general guidance; keep in mind that you can always reach out to your dean or campus director if you have questions or need support.

### **DATES AND DEADLINES**

**Student-Facing Deadlines:** UAA utilizes a set of regular policies, processes, dates and deadlines for withdrawal, CR/NC, and incompletes. See the Fall 2025 Dates and Deadlines on the [Registrar's website](#). Note that Add/Drop, Credit/No Credit, and Credit-to-Audit deadlines come quickly, on September 5.

If your course has a prerequisite, students may have registered for your course while enrolled in the prerequisite course. It's important to know there is no automatic withdrawal process if the student did not pass the prerequisite. For this reason, you will want to include in your syllabus and communicate as early as possible your policy on withdrawing any students who have not passed the prerequisite course(s). This allows students to register for appropriate alternatives during Add/Drop and continue making progress towards their goals.

**Faculty-Facing Deadlines:** Deadlines for things like bookstore orders, syllabi collection, curriculum changes, assessment reporting, etc. are posted on the [Academic Calendar and Other Academic Deadlines](#) site.

### **CORE COMPETENCIES**

If your course intentionally contributes to student learning in one of UAA's four [core competencies](#), please include that in your syllabus, assignments, and in your conversations with your students.

### **SYLLABI**

Every course must have a syllabus, and syllabi must include the course student learning outcomes as well as how the final grade will be determined. They must also list a description of the course content, policies within the course, and procedures that govern the delivery of the course. This practice supports student learning and meets the [syllabus and course procedures](#) in the catalog. For further guidance, see [Syllabus Guidance](#) posted on the OAA website.

**Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI):** If you are teaching an Online - No Set Time course (fully asynchronous) per UAA's [Regular and Substantive Interaction](#) policy in compliance with federal regulation, your syllabus must also contain a clear description of how your course meets

the requirements of [RSI](#). Instructors who need recent training to meet UAA's [Teaching Online](#) policy should register for [Teaching Online - No Set Time training](#) this week.

**Course Fees:** Please especially be mindful that, if the course includes a fee, you must include the statement, as outlined in the Syllabus Guidance. This keeps UAA in compliance with Board of Regents' Policy.

## LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: BLACKBOARD AND ULTRA

Blackboard Learn is UAA's only approved and fully supported online course space. Blackboard is the classroom that the university provides for instruction in fully online courses; faculty should use it as the primary place where online instruction occurs. **All workload courses for academic credit must have a Blackboard course open to students during the term.** The course shell should at a minimum include the syllabus and contact information for the faculty member. Other/alternative Learning Management Systems (LMS) are not approved for UAA courses, and could potentially pose security risks. If you use course-level systems or enhanced e-texts such as McGraw-Hill or Pearson, you can set these up to run from inside of the Blackboard system. To learn more about Blackboard, start with the Faculty Success [Learning Technologies](#) page. For help copying and organizing a course, please reach out to the Instructional Design Team ([uaa\\_design@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_design@alaska.edu)) or review the suggestions in the [Start Of Semester Checklist](#).

UAA is transitioning to Blackboard Ultra during this academic year. Ultra is a cleaner, more user-friendly course format based on student success research. **All Fall 2026 courses will be in Ultra.** The vendor is discontinuing Blackboard Original and the Original shells will convert to read-only on December 31, 2026. This includes continuing education courses that use Blackboard. Some colleges are setting a Spring 2026 Ultra deadline to help UAA complete a timely transition.

For Fall 2025 through Summer 2026, instructors have the option to change their Blackboard courses from Original to Ultra course view before opening them to students. **Once a Blackboard course is fully converted to Ultra, it cannot be undone.** Please follow your college guidelines and use the [Faculty Success Ultra resources and trainings](#) to make an informed decision about when to transition your courses to Ultra. There will be regular workshops and asynchronous trainings throughout this year to help faculty master Ultra and convert their courses. The [Blackboard Ultra at UAA](#) page connects faculty and students to Ultra resources.

## CONSTRUCTION IN THE CONSORTIUM LIBRARY

Construction of the Alaska Leaders Archive at the UAA/APU Consortium Library has begun. The Northeast Library Parking Lot and North Entrance is expected to remain closed through summer 2026.

**Throughout construction, the Library and Learning Commons will remain open with resources and services available.** The building is accessible through the Main Entrance at the south side of the building (facing Providence Drive) and through the Social Sciences Building (SSB). The outside Book Drop has been moved to the north side of the SSB to ensure easy return of materials.

## **PRACTICAL TRAINING COURSES (INTERNSHIPS, PRACTICA, FIELD STUDY, CLINICALS, ETC.)**

**Institutional Level Affiliation Agreement:** In order to place a student in an external organization, whether here in Alaska, or in another state, an institutional-level agreement is required. Once an agreement is in place, individual students may be placed for the duration of the agreement. Contact your dean or director's office for the approved templates. If you have additional questions, the Academic Compliance office can help at [uaa\\_acad\\_compliance@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_acad_compliance@alaska.edu).

**Weekly Communication with Students:** In compliance with updated VA requirements for Practical Training Courses, there must be weekly communication between the instructor and the student. This communication can be by way of a meeting, but it can also be asynchronous, as long as it is initiated by the instructor and invites some form of two-way communication between the instructor and student. The policy on Practical Training Courses is on the [Course Information](#) page of the Catalog.

**Out-of-State Student Placements:** Federal regulations require UAA to monitor all out-of-state student placements. If you plan to place a student out of state this fall, UAA must first determine that we are in compliance with that state's requirements. Please contact the academic compliance coordinator at [uaa\\_acad\\_compliance@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_acad_compliance@alaska.edu) to determine compliance and for help getting an agreement in place.

## **END OF SEMESTER NEED TO KNOW**

**Last Day of Class/Final Examinations:** All classes that have scheduled meeting days/times, except for some hybrid courses, must meet on the designated last day during final exam week to fulfill the UAA Credit Hour policy contact time requirements. The fall [final exam week schedule](#) is available starting week 4 of the semester via the Registrar's website. Inform your students about the date, time, and expectations of the last day of class as part of your overall course schedule. If you are not using the designated time for a final examination, please plan to use that time for a regular class meeting. Consider using this time to debrief, discuss students' future plans on this topic/area, or encourage other types of student reflections. Any exceptions to the meeting day/time of a final examination must be approved by the provost, through your dean.

**Tracking Last Date of Attendance for Grades of "NB" or "F":** Due to federal regulations, when submitting final grades, faculty are required to report a last date of attendance for all grades of NB or F. If the student never attended or never participated (virtually) in the class, please enter the first day of the semester (MM/DD/YYYY, e.g., 08/25/2025) and enter a "0" in the hours attended column to show zero participation. If the student attended, please enter the date of the student's last known attendance. UAA can be required to provide supplemental documentation on the last date of attendance. This could include things like a submitted assignment, discussion board post, an attendance log, an emailed assignment or test, or a quick check in with the instructor. Merely logging in to an online platform is not proof of attendance. If the documentation is in Blackboard, faculty do not need to worry about retaining it. If the documentation is outside Blackboard, save it for one year.

## **EXCEPTIONS**

**Exceptions to Policy:** Please keep in mind that for many policies, exceptions for students are possible. There is a policy petition for this on the Registrar's Office forms website. However, for time-sensitive issues, it is possible in many cases to expedite this process. Please consult with

your dean or community campus director's office if a situation arises where you want to help a student, but are not sure how to go about it.

**Incomplete Extensions:** Students may request an extension to an incomplete contract deadline, even if a year has passed. It is an academic decision that the faculty can make with the student and recommend to their dean, who may request an exception through OAA.

**Process:** The faculty member sends an email to the dean/designee. The email includes the basic information about the course (semester, year, CRN, prefix, number, title), the end date of the extension requested and a brief rationale. The dean will review. If they agree, the dean will forward the request along with their support to Academic Affairs at [uaa\\_oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_oaa@alaska.edu).

## STUDENT SUCCESS

**Engagement:** Whether you are teaching in person or via distance or both, I want to thank you for your ongoing efforts to engage our students as learners and as people. Meaningful engagement is essential to learning, to feeling connected to the institution, and for successful course completion.

**Progress Reports in Navigate for Student Success:** In addition to effective teaching, you can contribute to student success by encouraging students to take the start-of-term 1-question quick poll survey during the first two weeks of the semester and by submitting progress reports (early alerts) through [Navigate](#). The survey will be sent to students directly. This change is to help lift the burden on faculty, and reduce the amount of time we are asking you to fill out early alerts throughout the semester. This approach however, will still allow us the ability to continue to collect information about our students and provide appropriate intervention for those who need it most by connecting them to their [Academic Advisors](#) and other resources, such as Financial Aid, IT, and Counseling. **We are still asking all faculty to submit progress reports Weeks 4-6 focusing on academic performance, as well as progress reports Weeks 7-9** for students who are at risk of failing. Progress Reports for first year students, GER, and “gateway” courses that are required for progress in students’ degrees are especially important. Progress reports/early alerts can be entered by clicking the URL in each invitation email for progress report submissions addressed to the faculty member. The invitation email will be sent from a member of the Student Success team and will contain instructions for submitting reports. The Office of Student Success also has a number of [faculty resources for using Navigate](#).

**Learning Commons:** The Learning Commons is located on the first floor of the Consortium Library on the Anchorage campus. It is open and offering its full suite of services despite the ongoing construction in the Consortium Library. The Learning Commons manages the Writing Center, Math Lab, Nursing Tutoring, Science Tutoring, Engineering Tutoring, Department of Languages Tutoring, Communication & Presentation Coaching, English Language Learning support, Learning Assistant Program, and Academic Coaching. All of its services are free, and most are available in person and remotely. Our staff look forward to supporting you and your students! If you would like, you can add the following statement to your syllabus:

*Syllabus Statement: The UAA Learning Commons offers academic coaching and tutoring support services in a range of subjects including writing, STEM, nursing, presentations, languages, and more. Students can use our tutoring/coaching services, ask questions as they arise, and use our open seating in our location on the first floor of the Consortium Library to study or work together in groups. Peer tutors who excel in their subjects are*

available both in-person and online at a variety of times. Learn more about individual services and schedules at: [uaa.alaska.edu/lc](http://uaa.alaska.edu/lc)

## ASSESSING LEARNING THROUGH QUIZZES AND EXAMINATIONS

### Planning Assessments

Faculty can assess student performance in a variety of ways; please remember that scaffolded low-stakes assessments can demonstrate student achievement more effectively than high-stakes exams for many courses, with lower student anxiety. Please work with Disability Support Services to ensure students receive appropriate academic accommodations. Beyond that, focus on [assessments](#) that fit your program requirements, instructional needs, and your learners. The Faculty Success [Testing Resources](#) may be useful in implementing your strategy. You can also reach out to an instructional designer at [uaa\\_design@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_design@alaska.edu) for an individualized consultation.

Your syllabus should cover all requirements for quizzes and exams, no matter the assessment method or proctoring approach.

**Courses with a Set Meeting Time:** If your course meets at a set time, you may require scheduled quizzes, exams, and other assessments. These scheduled assessments must be held during a regularly scheduled class session<sup>1</sup>, as published in the official class schedule, and instructors should administer them. Students build their schedules around their class meeting times and may not be able to take proctored exams outside of class.

**Courses That are Online - No Set Time:** If you are teaching an Online - No Set Time (asynchronous) course, you must allow for asynchronous quizzes, exams, and other assessments. Students select this course format in part due to the flexibility offered by asynchronous delivery. You can set a time window for completing an exam (usually several days). You can also include instructor or small group meetings as an assessment option, so long as you have an asynchronous alternative available.

**In-Person Proctoring:** Courses scheduled for in-person or synchronous delivery should not require proctored exams outside of the regular meeting time and place. In-person exam proctoring is available in special circumstances through the [UAA Testing Center](#) (LIB 215) and at community campus locations. Please remember that requiring in-person proctoring may create unnecessary barriers to your students and their success. In-person proctoring policies must be outlined on your course syllabus. Students using the Anchorage location should [sign up for a Testing Center time in advance](#). Sign-up approaches may vary at community campus locations.

**Remote Proctoring:** Remote proctoring is available for online courses or to meet academic accommodations, but is not mandated. If you plan to use remote proctoring, you must [register for Honorlock exam proctoring](#) and include information about Honorlock on your syllabus. Make sure students are aware of the technology requirements for your proctored exams. Students in the Anchorage area can check out an Honorlock-capable laptop through the [Consortium Library](#) and book a study room for testing.

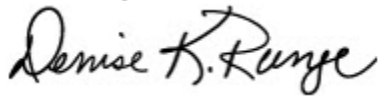
**Thank you** all for your attention to these items, and your dedication to our students. UAA is committed to supporting you, just as you are committed to the students. If you have questions

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions have been granted for certain developmental mathematics courses. Faculty seeking exceptions should work through your dean.

about courses, grading, or need additional information, your dean can provide assistance. You can always reach out to me directly as well ([drunge@alaska.edu](mailto:drunge@alaska.edu)) with specific questions or for clarification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise K. Runge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise Runge, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs