

**2022 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM**  
**(Due October 15 to the dean)**

The Faculty Senate Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) is committed to a vision of assessment that leads to continuous program improvements and benefits students. Annual assessment reporting informs decision making and resource allocation aimed at improving student learning and success. It also enables the AAC to analyze assessment across the institution and to respond to UA System, Board of Regents, legislative, and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requests. We thank you for your continued support of and participation in this annual activity.

Starting in Spring 2021, UAA moved to one academic assessment reporting mechanism. The below form merges and streamlines the former Annual Academic Assessment Survey and the Annual Academic Assessment Report. It also incorporates questions about how academic programs contribute to student achievement of institutional core competencies and to student success.

**This annual report will be due to the dean on October 15. Programs with suspended admissions and new programs in the first year of implementation are not required to complete this form.**

These reports are public documents and will be posted on the assessment website. Responses are to be narrative only, and must be ADA- and FERPA-compliant. Do not embed any links, including to webpages or other documents. To be FERPA-compliant, do not include the names of any current or former students. Rather, use statements such as, "In AY22 four program graduates were accepted to graduate programs in the field." Programs with specialized accreditation or other external recognitions must comply with restrictions regarding what can be published, as per the accreditor or external organization. Do not include appendices. Appendices to this form will not be accepted.

The form uses narrative, text, and drop-down boxes. Narrative boxes have a character limit, which includes spaces. When using text and drop-down boxes, if you want to undo an answer, press "Control-Z" or "Command-Z."

*Note:* To ensure the fillable fields function correctly, the form must be completed in Microsoft Word. It will not function properly in Google Docs. Programs that wish to record collaborative discussion of the report might consider creating a separate document to take notes, before entering final responses in the official fillable form.

For technical assistance with this form, email Academic Affairs ([uaa.oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.oaa@alaska.edu)).

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### PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)

*After completing the Program Section, the program should email this form to the dean, with a copy to the appropriate community campus director(s) if the program is delivered on a community campus.*

**Submission date:** 10/16/2022

**Submitted by:** Forrest Nabors, Associate Professor & Chair, Dept. of Political Science, fanabors@alaska.edu

**Program(s) covered in this report:** Political Science BA

*(Programs with suspended admissions and new programs in the first year of implementation are not required to complete this form.)*

If you selected "Other" above, please identify. (100 characters or less)

**College:** College of Arts and Sciences

**Campuses where the program(s) is delivered:**  Anchorage  KOD  KPC  MSC  PWSC

**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** N/A

**If explanation is necessary, such as only some of the certificates and degrees are covered by the specialized accreditation, briefly describe:**

### INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING CORE COMPETENCIES

In 2020, UAA launched a consensus-based, deliberative process to identify the key skillsets that help students achieve academic and post-graduation success. After a year-long process that included students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers, the UAA community identified four core competencies at the heart of a quality UAA education. Students develop mastery of these competencies through curricular (e.g., courses), co-curricular (e.g., internships, conferences), and extra-curricular (e.g., student clubs) learning experiences.

After the stakeholder-based process in AY20, UAA is phasing in the integration of the core competencies into ongoing processes, including program student learning outcomes assessment. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR) was integrated into the AY21 Annual Academic Assessment Report. The AY22 Annual Academic Assessment Report now also integrates Effective Communication.

Question #1 below is designed to engage program faculty in thinking about how they can or already do promote student learning in these two core competencies.

1. **A. *Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility: The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.***
  - **If last year you provided your program's current or planned example of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that develops and showcases the student learning in this core competency, please discuss that implementation and any observations you have regarding how well it is working. (500 characters or less)**

Legislative Internship. Students are placed in legislative and executive branches of state government, where they learn that good policy outcomes and personal success reward effective professional conduct. The program is being restarted after a pause during the pandemic. During this academic year we expect the most UAA students ever to participate.

Virtual Model UN, hosted by the Dept. of Political Science. Teachers voted unanimously to offer this program to their high school students each year.
  - **If last year you *did not* identify a current or planned example of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that provides students the opportunity to develop and showcase this core competency, please identify one now. (500 characters or less)**

The Madison Cup, testing students' knowledge of the Constitution. Students learn to collaborate and compete in teams, and demonstrate their knowledge of American citizenship based on the Constitution of the United States. This year the most students competed since 2018.
- B. *Effective Communication: The knowledge and skills necessary to engage in effective communication in diverse contexts and formats.***
  - **What would you hope a student would say if asked where in your program or support service they had the opportunity to develop proficiency in this core competency? (500 characters or less)**

Most of our courses are taught according to the traditional liberal arts, emphasizing critical thinking, writing and speaking well, especially courses in Political Philosophy. Other courses require collaboration, diplomacy and constructive dialogue (Model UN). Others emphasize good citizenship (PS 101 & PS 102).
  - **Provide your program's current or planned example(s) of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency. (500 characters or less)**

Our Little Platoon seminars are a new co-curricular activity that requires students to read one book and come prepared to discuss it for most of one day with their peers and a content expert, sometimes the author, flown to Alaska for that purpose. All students must participate, speaking about the text. The program is popular and attracts majors in Political Science as well as other majors.

## PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY22. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.

*Example: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.*

Demonstrate the ability to write clear and precise English prose. - Met faculty expectations

Demonstrate the ability to understand basic principles of American Government. - Met faculty expectations.

Demonstrate the ability to understand the relationship between the United States and the larger world. - Met faculty expectations

Demonstrate the ability to identify and criticize competing political science arguments. - Met faculty expectations.

Demonstrate the ability to identify and interpret important political texts. - Met faculty expectations

Demonstrate the ability to write a satisfactory senior-level research paper. - Met faculty expectations

Demonstrate a knowledge of each recognized field within political science. - Met faculty expectations.

3. Describe your assessment process in AY22 for these Program Student Learning Outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (750 characters or less)

The source of our data is the capstone course to the major program, PS A492 Senior Seminar. By the time students take the senior seminar, they will have successfully completed a required course for each subfield of political science. During the term, each faculty expert in a subfield of political science presents a review of that subfield to the class. By the end of the term, students will have completed a comprehensive exam, co-authored by all faculty, and a major research paper. Faculty jointly assess the exams and papers against our program's seven outcomes. These scores are then compiled and analyzed.

4. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (750 characters or less)

For the last ten years the department has not been permitted to replace departing faculty, with the result that the quality of our program has been sacrificed. Remaining faculty are award-winning, demonstrably competent and have many years of experience, but have been conscripted into teaching courses outside that faculty member's expertise. Our program continues to suffer from a lack of faculty in two subfields of our discipline, but we are "holding the line," with the faculty that we have, as our quantitative assessments have demonstrated in recent years. However, the subjective view of our faculty is generally, that students are not learning as much or as well as they might otherwise, due to the depletion of our faculty.

5. **Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Please describe the recommended action, what improvement in student learning the program hopes to see with this change, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (750 Characters or less)**

We reviewed our curriculum, looking for opportunities to reduce the number of courses that qualify for fulfillment of required courses in each subfield of political science, so that our currently available faculty are not spread too thin. Our conclusion was instead, to offer our required courses in a one-year rotation, to facilitate students' course planning and to offer all of our courses F2F and online simultaneously for better access to all of our courses. We cannot cut our required courses without sacrificing our programs' integrity. We expect to continue to use our assessment instruments to measure the success of our reforms. Our assessment regime has effectively supported key decisions by our department.

### PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSESSING IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

6. **In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Please check all that apply.**

- Course curriculum changes
- Course prerequisite changes
- Changes in teaching methods
- Changes in advising
- Degree requirement changes
- Degree course sequencing
- Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- Changes in program policies/procedures
- Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- College-wide initiatives (e.g., High-Impact Practices)
- Faculty, staff, student development
- Other
- No changes were implemented in AY22.

**If you checked "Other" above, please describe. (100 characters or less)**

Course planning: All F2F courses offered every semester must also be available online.

7. **Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (750 characters or less)**

One student graduated summa cum laude with a degree in Political Science in Spring 2022, and

never set foot on campus. All of her courses were online. This convinced the department that we can facilitate both access and student learning by committing to online delivery of our major.

## STUDENT SUCCESS AND THE CLOSING OF EQUITY GAPS

Student success depends on many aspects of a student's experience. On the academic program level, it can relate to correct placement, course sequencing, standardized pre-requisites across sets of courses, the intentional use of high-impact practices, proactive advising, course scheduling practices, etc.

UAA has selected the below metrics as student success metrics for accreditation.

In response to faculty questions and concerns about reporting on these data without more discussion and training, we will spend AY23 exploring together what equity data are and are not, how they can be used responsibly, and what programs can do to close equity gaps in student achievement on the below metrics, as well as to improve overall student achievement on them. UAA has a team participating in the NWCCU Data Equity Fellowship, and that team will help to guide these conversations.

- 8. PROGRAMS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO QUESTION #8 FOR THEIR REPORT DUE ON OCTOBER 15, 2022. IT IS HERE JUST FOR THEIR REFERENCE. Describe the actions your program is taking to improve student achievement on one or more of the following metrics. Also, describe any resulting improvements in student learning.**

Metric	Definition	Rationale
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE PASS RATES BY COURSE LEVEL (Undergraduate lower-division, undergraduate upper-division).	The percentage of students who receive a passing grade (A, B, C, P) for all undergraduate students in a course offered by a program compared to the same rate calculated for all courses at that level. Based on a 5-year trend. Included in the denominator for undergraduate courses are the grades D, F, W, I, NP, NB. <i>Data source: RPTP end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation.</i>	Low pass rates are one critical way to identify courses that are barriers to student success and degree completion. Failing key courses correlates with low retention and more major switching. Mitigation strategies can be internal or external to the course itself, including, among other things, the use of high-impact pedagogical practices, appropriate placement, course sequencing, tutoring, and other means to ensure student success within a particular course. This metric and the disaggregation of the data can inform planning, decision making, and the allocation of resources to programs and services designed to mitigate gaps in achievement and equity.

Metric	Definition	Rationale
ANNUAL RETENTION 1 <sup>ST</sup> TO 2 <sup>ND</sup> FALL	Traditional measure of the % of first-time, full-time associate and baccalaureate degree-seeking freshmen who enter in a given fall term and return the following fall. <i>Data source: UA System Warehouse RPTP/DEDMGR end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation on an annual basis.</i>	Following the student from the 1 <sup>st</sup> fall to 2 <sup>nd</sup> fall can indicate ongoing connections and support inside and outside of the classroom are motivating students to return to continue their studies at the institution. Continuing enrollment is a key factor in completion.
SEMESTERS TO DEGREE – GRADUATE PROGRAMS	The average number of semesters taken by students to complete any graduate degree or graduate certificate program. Determined by students who have graduated from a graduate program as their primary degree. 5-year trend. <i>Data source: UA System Warehouse RPTP/DEDMGR end-of-term freeze files. Disaggregate as per accreditation on an annual basis.</i>	Looking at the number of semesters graduate students take to complete their degrees illustrates how students progress through their degree programs (full-time, part-time, stop-out). This information on student behavior and completion can inform program structure and help the institution support students in a way that honors the time needed for rigorous intellectual engagement and growth and also ensures that students can complete in a timely manner.

**9. Do you have any examples of post-graduate success you want to highlight? For example, major scholarships, the percent of students who pass licensure examinations, the percent of students accepted to graduate programs, the percent in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field. (750 characters or less)**

2022 graduate – Advocacy Manager, ACLU of Alaska

2022 graduate – Advocacy Coordinator, Identity, Inc.

2021 graduate – Koniag, Inc. Policy Analyst for Regional and Legislative Affairs.

2021 graduate - Gender-Based Violence Training Coordinator at Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, Albuquerque, NM

2020 graduate - Communications Director and Office Manager at Alaska AFL-CIO

2018 graduate - Member, Alaska House of Representatives

2006 graduate - Assistant Dean (as of Spring 2022); Chair, History and Global Studies; Assistant Professor of History

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**DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)**

*After completing the Dean Section and signing it, the dean should email this form to the program, and copy [uaa\\_ooo@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_ooo@alaska.edu) for posting. If the program is delivered on one or more community campus, the dean should consult with the appropriate community campus director(s) on the response and copy the appropriate community campus director(s) when emailing the response to the program.*

**1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? (750 characters or less)**

The program is encouraged to continue to evaluate its curriculum to better engage students as well as to broaden the assessment process to include entry and mid level courses in order to obtain assessment data throughout the degree.

**2. What is the program doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, for example, the achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes, the closing of equity gaps, or addressing the core competencies? (750 characters or less)**

The program is congratulated for its flexibility in the modality of offerings as well as the co-curricular opportunities (Legislative Internships, Model UN, the little Platoon seminars, and the Madison Cup) it provided for students. These high impact practices are both high profile and of high value to current and future students.

Dean's signature:

Jenny McNulty

Date: 1/9/2023