

## **A Strategic Guidance Document for University of Alaska Anchorage Decision Makers:**

### **An Operational Academic Decision Guide for AY 2015-2020**

*The purpose of this document is to provide Community Campus Directors, Academic Deans, and UAA other decision makers with a coherent rationale for making the difficult resource allocation decisions required during a time of decreased funding while preserving the core UAA mission.*

#### **A. Preamble & Background**

##### 1. Motivation, Authority, & Process

In response to increasing budget challenges, Provost Gingerich asked the deans in to consider what the academic core of the University would look like after five years of budget reductions. Recognizing that the deans would be primarily responsible for leading the colleges through these fiscally challenging times, the Provost asked that they do so with a coordinated vision. As a result, the deans reviewed ongoing UAA efforts and initiatives, the mission and vision statements of UAA and the various colleges, and included the community campus directors and faculty senate leadership in the conversation. The discussion will be expanded in early fall 2015 to include the greater campus community. This Strategic Guidance Document distills the essence of those conversations into a coherent strategy.

##### 2. External Analysis

This Strategic Guidance Document incorporated national trends in higher education, considered revenue projections for Alaska, and studied local and regional workforce demands, all while recognizing UAA's place in cultural and economic landscape of Southcentral Alaska.

##### 3. Internal Analysis

UAA is currently guided by the UAA 2017 Strategic Plan as well as by a system-wide effort, Shaping Alaska's Future. To guide UAA, a set of Core Accreditation Themes were established in 2012 and reaffirmed by the Chancellor's Cabinet in Feb. 2015. The Program Prioritization effort, whose insights enhance this Strategic Guidance Document's implementation, was also considered in the discussion.

##### 4. Institutional Alignment

This Strategic Guidance Document is not designed to replace the UAA 2017 Strategic Plan, and the recommendations here are aligned with the UAA mission, operational goals, accreditation core themes, institutional priorities, and ongoing institutional efforts.

##### 5. Guiding Assumptions

The UA system will continue to face diminished revenue and will need to continue to advocate for its position among state agencies. Student enrollment will continue to decline and perhaps plateau, but Alaskans will continue to pursue higher education at current rates. The strength of UAA is in its diverse people – its students, faculty, and staff – and in its open enrollment mandate. UAA must continually promote its faculty and staff as the intellectual capital of the state, increase its profile across the state, articulate its mission to stakeholders, and communicate the vital importance of higher education to the state's economic health and cultural vitality.

**Comment [d1]:** This draft incorporates the comments and discussion of John S, Bart Q, Rashmi P, Diane H, and dtk on 2 July 2015.

**Comment [d2]:** The small group advocated for a more full presentation of the work that preceded the development of the document. This section includes material from Bart's earlier drafts, lightly edited and slightly rearranged, with just a couple of dtk additions under 'Guiding Assumptions.'

## A. MISSION / VISION / VALUES

*The mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement, and creative expression. Located in Anchorage and on community campuses in Southcentral Alaska, UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities, and its diverse peoples. The University of Alaska Anchorage is an open access university with academic programs leading to occupational endorsements; undergraduate and graduate certificates; and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees in a rich, diverse, and inclusive environment.*

To implement this mission, the University of Alaska Anchorage:

1. Prepares students to be:
  - Proficient in 21st century skills (literacy, numeracy, collaboration, problem solving/critical thinking, cultural competence),
  - Employees with the technical and employability skills needed by Alaskan industries,
  - Professionals ready for employment, licensure, advancement and leadership in Alaskan business, industry, non-profit, and governmental agencies in Alaska, and
  - Educated, active, and engaged citizens.
2. Strengthens the institution to be a:
  - Center for research, scholarship, and creative activity,
  - Cultural hub of Southcentral Alaska and the state,
  - Leader in Alaska's developing role in the Arctic, and
  - Leader to support the work of the state.

**Comment [d3]:** This section now incorporates the UAA Mission statement and slightly rejiggered the seven bullet points into two basic categories – the student and the institution – each with four points to elaborate the mission/vision/values statement.

**Comment [d4]:** I've rejiggered the seven bullet points into two basic categories – the student and the institution – each with four points to elaborate the mission/vision/values statement. (And added one friendly suggestion on citizenship for discussion)

**Comment [d5]:** The logic of this section moves from skills, to employment, to professionalization, to citizenship.

**Comment [d6]:** Here, I combined the two different statements on being 'professionals' into a single statement.

## B. OPERATIONAL GOALS

To enact these mission priorities, UAA has prioritized the following goals, which are tied to institutional accreditation benchmarks:

1. Teaching and Learning Excellence
2. Student Success
3. Scholarship to Improve Alaska
4. High ROI for Alaskans (Responsible Stewardship of Public Money? Meaningful Return on Investment? Others?)
5. Community Engagement

**Comment [d7]:** This section needs some attention to get exactly what we want to convey. We fiddled with the language just a bit to make it parallel and clearer. It still needs work. But I think we agree that this is 'the Elevator Pitch' of the document.

**Comment [d8]:** We did struggle to find the right phrase to communicate this goal.

**Comment [d9]:** This one too need some more thought.

## C. ACCREDITATION 2017 CORE THEME

To guide the prioritization of offerings and resource allocations, UAA will use the Accreditation 2017 Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators, which are themselves aligned with the UAA mission and institutional priorities). Elements of the Accreditation 2017 Core Themes are mapped onto the five Operational Goals detailed above.

1. Teaching and Learning (Operational Goals 1, 2, 4)
2. Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (Operational Goals 1, 2, 3)
3. Student Success (Operational Goals 1, 2, 5)

**Comment [d10]:** We discussed how to map the five operational goals onto the accreditation core themes, and we decided to keep the main document concise, list the appropriate operational goals onto the core themes (with teaching and learning excellence as the centerpiece), and then defer the detailed accreditation objectives and indicators to an appendix. We also discussed a digital version of the document, which would link to full versions of all the other material we reference in this document.

4. UAA Community (Operational Goals 1, 2, 3, 5)

5. Public Square (Operational Goals 1, 2, 5)

Details of the Accreditation Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators are listed in the Appendix below.

#### **D. INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES**

In order to achieve its mission, UAA must focus resources on core, quality academic programs ~~and must prioritize programs that:~~

1. Provide access to higher education,
2. Support multiple certificate or degree programs,
3. Demonstrate high student demand,
4. Have high enrollment to completion rates,
5. Produce high-levels of research, scholarly and/or creative work,
6. Secure external funding for scholarly activities,
7. ~~Have Attract community and/or industry partners~~ internal and external partners who that enhance the learning experiences offered to students ~~program offerings and student learning,~~
8. Produce graduates in demand for Alaskan enterprises and agencies,
9. Create active and engaged citizens, and
10. Enhance the quality of life for the community.

**Comment [d11]:** I'm not sure that we settled on a title for this section.

**Comment [d12]:** dtk note: I rephrased this one slightly to point both to external partnerships (business, industry, and so on) and internal partnerships (within UAA) as we discussed in the small group. Same with second half of the point: partnerships should benefit students but might also benefit programs (joint hires and so on).

#### **E. HAND OFF & IMPLEMENTATION**

Realizing that tough decisions will soon be made with or without guidance, it is anticipated UAA decision makers will develop strategies and metrics within their individual colleges, departments, and programs that align with the principles articulated in this Strategic Guidance Document. The key is that UAA decision makers remain informed, agile, and proactive in adapting to a changing fiscal environment while maintaining the core UAA mission. (Feedback mechanism here? Plans? Coordination?)

**Comment [d13]:** We discussed how to articulate where the SGD ends and the implementation begins. I tried to get at that here.

**Comment [d14]:** dtk note: we haven't really discussed this, but do we want to build some kind of assessment / feedback look into this process? Ongoing review?

#### **F. TIMELINE**

- August 9 Initial draft available for distribution to faculty and student/staff governance
- August 10 Visit to and conversation with those interested at Kodiak College
- August 20 Visit to and conversation with those interested at Mat-Su College
- August 21 Visit to and conversation with those interested at KPC
- Sept 2 Faculty Senate initial discussion
- Oct 2 Final reading/input by Faculty Senate

**Comment [d15]:** Do we want to keep this section in the document?

#### Additional concerns (dtk):

- Do we want to sign this document? Or does it go out under the Provost's signature?
- Will there be any kind of feedback mechanism or assessment of the decisions made?
- Is there the provision for revisiting these guidelines in the future? Is the 5 year timeline accurate or realistic? Or do we want to revisit the guidelines periodically?

## Appendix: Detailed Accreditation Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators

1. Teaching and Learning
  - UAA Student Learning Outcomes are achieved
    - Student achievement of course and program student learning outcomes
  - UAA academic programs meet state needs
    - Total degrees and certificates awarded with emphasis on high-demand jobs
    - Total student credit hours
2. Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
  - UAA research, scholarship, and creative activities advance knowledge
    - Number and dollar amounts of proposals submitted and awarded grants, contracts, and sponsored activities in research, scholarship, and creative activities
    - National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Research Expenditures
    - *Numbers of publications (peer reviewed, monographs, book reviews, creative writing, digital and other academic publications)\**
    - *Number of academic presentations, public interactions, and community functions\**
    - *Number of performances, exhibitions, and other displays of creative activity\**
3. Student Success
  - UAA students access and successfully transition into the university
    - The degree to which UAA's students reflect Alaska's racial and ethnic diversity
    - First-to second-year first-time, full-time undergraduate student retention rate
  - UAA students persist and achieve their goals
    - Successful Learning Rate: Proportion of courses successfully completed out of total courses attempted by student sub- cohorts grouped by first year of entry
    - Total degrees and certificates awarded with emphasis on high-demand jobs
    - Graduation rates
    - Graduates' employment rates and average earnings
4. UAA Community
  - UAA's environments support and sustain learning, working, and living
    - The degree to which UAA's faculty and staff reflect Alaska's racial and ethnic diversity
    - The degree to which faculty, staff, and students express satisfaction with their professional and learning environments
    - Development and management of a sustainable budget as demonstrated by nationally accepted financial ratios
    - Number of crimes, incidents, and injuries reported
5. Public Square
  - UAA engages in mutually beneficial partnerships with the communities we serve
    - The degree to which a partnership portfolio demonstrates diverse partnerships across public-private sectors, agencies and communities.
    - Number of UAA colleges which have developed engagement guidelines for faculty promotion and tenure
    - Public presentations, workshops, other ways in which scholarship is disseminated

\*Items in italics reflect new initiatives in capturing, documenting, and reporting faculty work.