



June 15, 2009

Dr. Sandra E. Elman, President  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
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Redmond, WA 98052

Dear Dr. Elman:

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) is pleased to present a draft version of its revised Report 1. This revision is in response to the Commission's recommendations, as put forth in your letter of March 19, 2009. Since receiving feedback from the Commission, including guidance provided during the March visit by Executive Vice President Ron Baker, our institution has worked extensively on this revision. The Accreditation Steering Committee, Core Theme leads, and the Chancellor's Cabinet have all contributed to the discussion. We are pleased to present a draft that incorporates the Commission's recommendations and demonstrates our own refined understanding of the new process.

Since March we have reconfirmed our commitment to the five Core Themes and focused our work on 1) a simplification of the Objective-Outcome-Indicator structure (Recommendation 1) and 2) a review and revision of the indicators for intended outcomes (Recommendation 2). We have also defined mission fulfillment and an interpretation of an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

Recommendation 1: In simplifying the Objective-Outcome-Indicator structure, wherever possible, we have identified indicators of achievement and have removed enabling resources, structures, processes, and other activities.

Recommendation 2: In reviewing and revising indicators, wherever possible, we have selected direct evidence of achievement.

Recommendation 3: In considering benchmarks or acceptable levels of achievement for the indicators, we determined that a first round of collection and analysis of evidence will be necessary.

While this version of Report 1 remains a draft and incomplete, we will appreciate your feedback on the general direction that we are taking with this revision, the final version of which will be submitted on September 1.

We would like to reaffirm our commitment to the pilot process, and to thank the Commission, in particular Ron Baker, for his continued guidance. We continue to see the value of the new process, both in terms of the goals of accreditation, and in terms of aligning our own local self-evaluation and reporting activities.

As with the first version of Report 1, we look forward to a critical review of this revised report and the opportunity to continue to work with the NW Commission as we collectively develop, evaluate, and improve this well-conceived process.

Very truly yours,

Thomas Miller



UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA  
ANCHORAGE

**Chapter One: Mission and Core Themes**

**Submitted by**  
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**Thomas Miller, Accreditation Liaison Officer**

**Submitted to**  
**The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)**  
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## Introduction

### **The University of Alaska System**

The University of Alaska System was established by Article 7 of the state constitution. It is publicly supported and composed of several major units: the system office; three separately accredited universities- University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and University of Alaska Southeast (UAS); and one separately accredited community college, Prince William Sound Community College, which receives administrative support from UAA.

Each of the three major institutions is led by a chancellor who reports to the president of the University System, who in turn reports to the Board of Regents. While the UA System office does not deliver any academic degrees or certificates, direct any research programs, or engage in any public service per se, it plays important internal coordinating (such as academic planning at the system level) and external advocacy roles and provides some services to the campuses.

### **The University of Alaska Anchorage**

UAA is a comprehensive university offering more than 190 occupational endorsement, certificate, and degree programs at developmental, undergraduate, and graduate levels. UAA serves more than 20,000 individual students each year from facilities located in its four widely-separated communities. Approximately 580 regular (tenure track and full time term) faculty at UAA are augmented by about 650 adjunct faculty, and supported by more than 1,000 full time and 280 part time staff members.

The primary service area for UAA, which includes the Southcentral region of Alaska, is large and the enrolled population includes students of diverse backgrounds, cultures, needs, levels of preparation, and reasons for attending. The educational mission of UAA includes college preparation, workforce development, undergraduate and graduate programs, and basic and applied research.

UAA is led by Chancellor Frances Ulmer and her Cabinet, which includes Vice Chancellors of Academic Affairs (Provost), Student Affairs, Administrative Services, and Advancement, and the Senior Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Engagement, and Academic Support. This leadership team brings a common vision to the collection of responsibilities and activities that characterize the institution, ensures collaboration and support among the academic, administrative and service units, and promotes the goals and outcomes of UAA both internally and externally.

Academic units at UAA are organized into 8 colleges and a school. Three of the colleges are community campuses located at some distance from Anchorage. Each community campus has a director with a mission and authority to respond to the particular needs and interests of the community in which the campus is located. The other colleges and school are led by deans, with their administrative and academic duties accomplished primarily from the Anchorage campus.

The university faculty, staff, students, and administration share in the governance of the institution. The faculty, through comprehensive and inclusive processes, control the development and the quality of the curriculum and provide substantive input to the retention, advancement, and tenure of their colleagues. Through formal structures, the staff advises both faculty and administrators on policies and procedures. Administrators implement policies, conduct programs in effective and efficient manners, evaluate and improve operations, and comply with the directives of the Regents, the legislature, and the Department of Education. Student government and student groups advocate for student interests and provide valuable services that supplement and enhance the students' academic experiences. They also provide opportunities for leadership on campus and significant engagement with the community. A single student Regent with voting rights sits on the UA Board of Regents.

## **Institutional Context**

True to the tenets of modern higher education, UAA is dedicated to the personal development of our students, faculty and staff, and to the advancement of communities throughout the areas served. Through example, instruction, interaction, and collaboration, the university strives to help students build intellectual skills and the capacity to learn; advance their social skills; increase their confidence and leadership potential; develop their capacities for varied and productive employment; and prepare themselves to be effective participants in their social and political systems.

The presence of an educated populace in Alaskan communities results in more attractive, tolerant, livable, and productive environments for all citizens. Coupling the academics with the many presentations, productions, debates and other interactions with the community multiplies the positive effects of the university's presence. These effects are meeting with increased recognition and appreciation within the external community as time progresses. While the efforts of the institution focus on achieving its effects within the state, students are also being prepared to participate in a global environment and to work effectively in a wide variety of situations.

Within our communities, UAA adapts the interpretation and implementation of its mission in response to dynamic conditions that include, for example: an aging population, shifts in wages and employment, special circumstances of Alaska Native peoples from rural communities, and increasing populations of immigrants. Developmental education, workforce and professional programs, language and cultural content, and relationships with other schools, employers and government agencies are constantly evolving. A majority of our students are part time with other obligations to work and family.

## **Preface**

### **Brief Update on Institutional Changes Since Last Report**

Due to the brevity of the reporting cycle for the pilot institutions of this new process, there have been no significant changes to the university since the last report, submitted in March 2009 - only minor changes resulting from the addition of a few new programs. Efforts that will support the accreditation reporting and aid the university in determining its overall effectiveness are proceeding. Prominent among these are (1) incorporation into programs and assessment of the institutional learning outcomes adopted by the faculty in the last academic year, (2) continued and advanced assessment of the effectiveness of general education requirements and (3) determination of survey and data collection process to be developed to support continuous improvement in all major divisions of the institution.

### **Address Topics Requested by the Commission**

The Accreditation Steering Committee, together with institutional leadership has incorporated into this revision our response to the recommendations of the Commission on the UAA Accreditation Report #1.

Recommendation 1: In simplifying the Objective-Outcome-Indicator structure, wherever possible, we have identified indicators of achievement and have removed enabling resources, structures, processes, and other activities.

Recommendation 2: In reviewing and revising indicators, wherever possible, we have selected direct evidence of achievement. Where direct evidence of performance or achievement is not obtainable in a timely fashion, we rely on secondary information (such as employment statistics) or perceptions (survey data) from stakeholders.

Recommendation 3: In considering benchmarks or acceptable levels of achievement for the indicators, we determined that a first round of collection and analysis of evidence will be necessary. A rating process for each objective in each core theme will be developed based on that analysis.

# NWCCU Accreditation Report One

## Chapter One – Standard One: Mission and Core Themes

### Section I: Mission

#### UA System Mission

*The University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples.*

#### UA System Goals

The UA Board of Regents and the UA System Office have worked with many constituencies to define the needs and the nature of higher education that would best serve the communities of Alaska. This work resulted in the adoption of the Regents' Strategic Plan 2009 and the goals contained therein.

All institutions within the University of Alaska system focus on these goals which direct each to (1) do the right things (teach, research and respond to state needs), (2) do those well (educational quality, facilities and technology, research excellence, faculty and staff strength), (3) help students to succeed, and (4) accomplish this in a responsible and sustainable fashion.

The Strategic Goals from the Regents' Strategic Plan, UA 2009 have guided UAA operations and expansions and have been incorporated into the UAA Mission and UAA Strategic Plan. They are:

1. Student Success
2. Educational Quality
3. Research Excellence
4. Faculty and Staff Strength
5. Responsiveness to State Needs
6. Technology and Facility Development
7. Diverse Sources of Revenue

See <http://www.alaska.edu/bor/2009Plan/030918plan.doc> for the complete document. The Regents most recently revisited their strategic plan and extended its application for another year in their meeting on February 17 and 18, 2009.

#### UAA Mission

*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.*

#### Mission Core Themes

*Standard 1.B.1: The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.*

## Identification of Core Themes for UAA

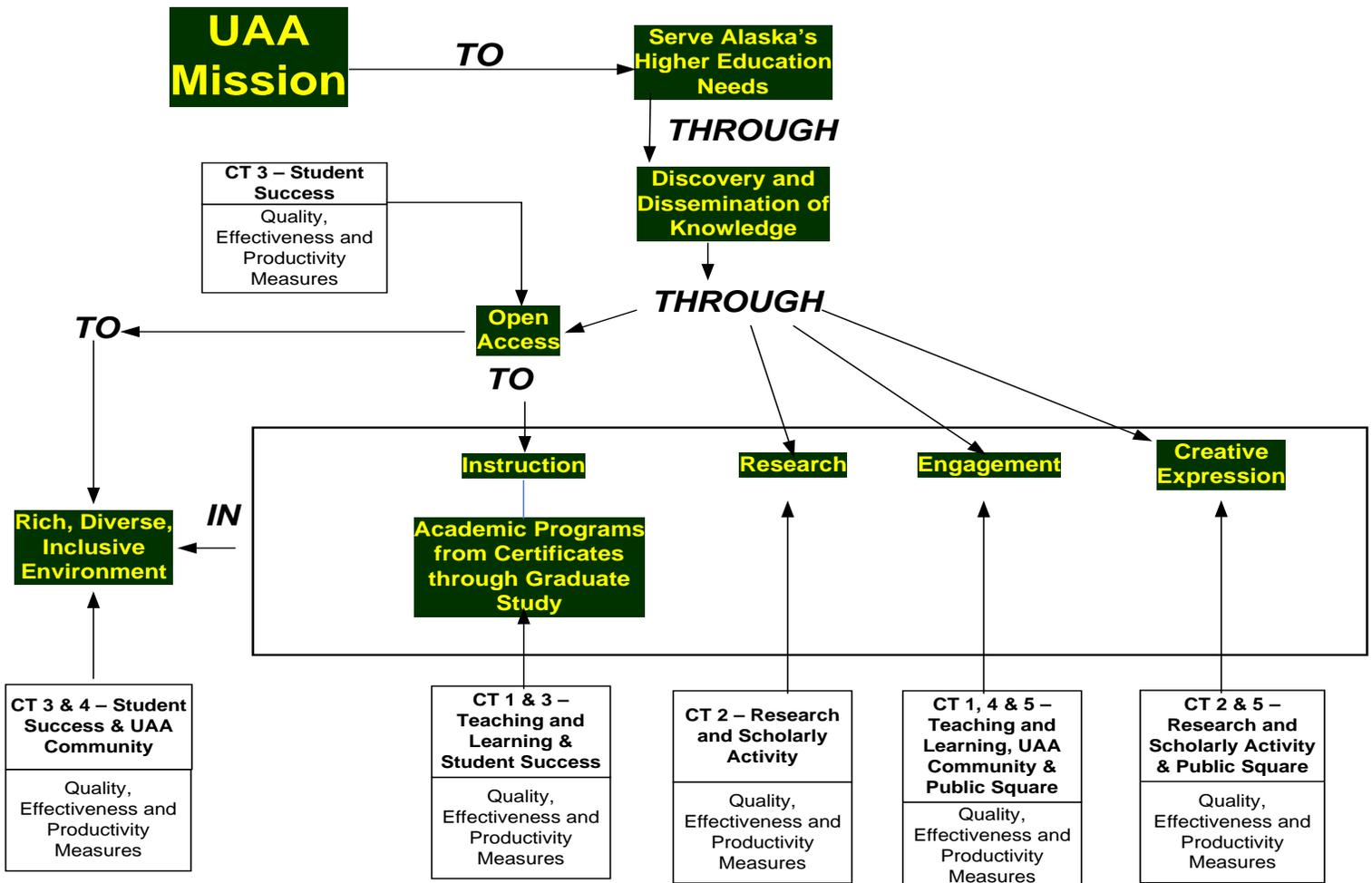
The set of Core Themes for UAA align with the five priorities of the UAA Strategic Plan 2017. Five Core Themes and their objectives collectively encompass the mission. These Core Themes are:

- Teaching and Learning
- Research
- Student Success
- UAA Community
- Public Square

## Definition of Fulfillment of Mission and, Within that Definition, Interpretation of an Acceptable Threshold or Extent of Mission Fulfillment

*Standard 1.A.2: The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, values, and characteristics. Within that definition, it articulates institutional achievements, outcomes, or expectations that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.*

The graphic below demonstrates the relationships between UAA’s mission (purpose), values, and Core Themes. The Core Themes and their Objectives collectively encompass the mission and incorporate the institution’s values.



**Purpose:** The mission recognizes the UAA commitment to instruction at a number of academic levels, success of all students, regardless of their higher education goals, and service to diverse peoples and communities. It honors the community college and the baccalaureate, graduate and research roots of the institution. This purpose is collectively encompassed by the Mission Core Themes and Objectives.

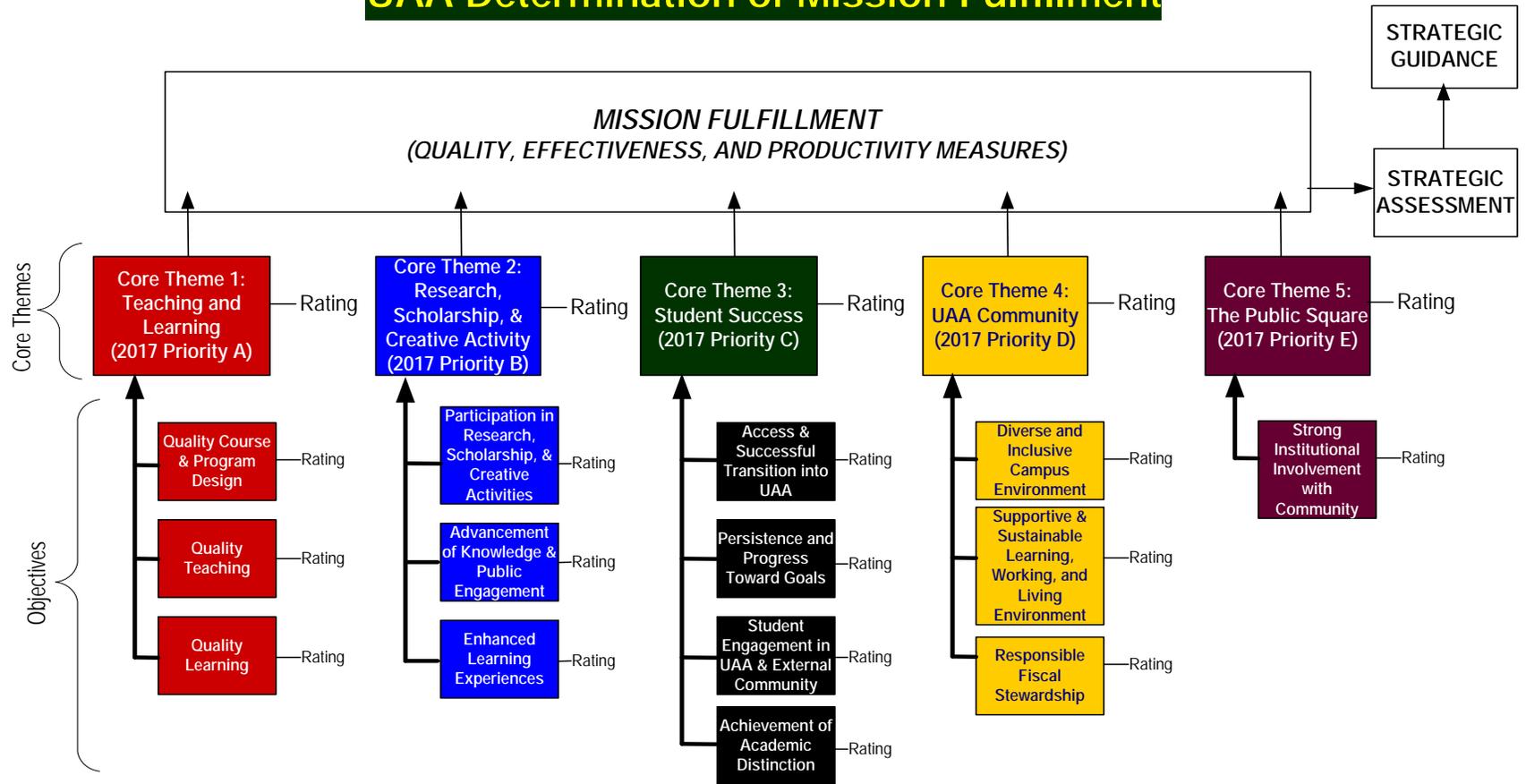
**Values:** As the largest Alaskan university in the state's center of population and commerce that serves multiple constituencies within a multi-faceted mission, UAA has adopted the following principles for all that we do:

- Access: UAA is committed to serve all who can benefit. This is demonstrated by formal connections to secondary schools (tech prep, bridging, teaching locations, testing and placement, etc.), strong programs in developmental education (Mathematics, English, college success skills, and English as a Second Language [ESL]), open admissions policies, multiple program levels, comprehensive advising, and an emphasis on creation of a welcoming and nurturing environment for students.
- Safety and security of the campus environment is paramount if we are to promote learning through the free exchange of ideas and the interpretation, expression and debate of vision and values.
- Sustainability: The university practices responsible use of resources as it strives to promote efficiency and stewardship, reduce consumption and waste, and to reuse and recycle materials. Stabilizing resources by increasing the number and diversity of revenue sources has been a high institutional and system goal for several years.
- Community partnerships: Enduring community connections are established to facilitate the two-way flow of ideas and activities that enrich both the community and the university. Partnerships support the critical inquiry, debate, and creative expression that occur in public forums and encourage the engagement of students and faculty in community issues as we build capabilities and solve problems together.
- Service to our students, to our colleagues and to our constituents is a motivating priority on all levels. The potential for service is a strong consideration in the development and evaluation of our programs, organizational units, and university processes. Service, combined with guided reflection, leads to learning by people and at levels that would not be otherwise achieved.
- Workforce Development: The university has a strong focus on workforce development programs, with priorities in fields that address the health and engineering needs of the state.
- Cultural competence: Promoted through the university's diversity of faculty, staff, student, programs and opportunities for involvement in culturally diverse activities.
- Evidence based management: Evidence of performance of expected outcomes related to the UAA mission is an expected part of evaluation of each academic and administrative unit.
- Productivity remains an important indicator of the impact of the university on its communities and state. Productivity continues to play a major role in the university's accountability to its constituents, including the statewide university system, regents, and state legislature. Within Core Themes productivity measures combine with qualitative outcomes to reach a more complete determination of mission fulfillment.

### **Mission Fulfillment**

These values are incorporated into the core themes, and since the core themes collectively encompass the mission, the evaluation of the objectives of the core themes will be used to assess the fulfillment of the UAA mission.

# UAA Determination of Mission Fulfillment



## Process for Determination of Mission Fulfillment

- \*Each Core Theme Objective will be rated according to the scale: Strength to Retain, Retain and Consider Enhancing, or Needs Attention.
- \*An acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment will be met when every objective is rated Strength to Retain or Retain and Consider Enhancing.
- \*Any objectives rated as Needs Attention must be addressed in Report 3, Standard 4 (*Effectiveness and Improvement*), along with an initial quality improvement plan.

## **Dates and Manner of Most Recent Reviews of UAA Mission and Core Themes**

### Mission

In September 2007, the Board of Regents reviewed and approved the UAA mission, which was updated as part of the development of the UAA Strategic Plan 2017. The Board of Regents provided significant review and endorsement of the strategic plan as part of this discussion.

### Strategic Plan

The UAA Strategic Plan 2017 was developed over a two year period with input from across the institution, the local communities served, the UA System and the State of Alaska. It was developed to provide direction and goals for the university's operations through the decade 2007 to 2017. It was presented to the UA Board of Regents in the fall of 2007 and was discussed and accepted along with minor adjustments to the UAA Mission statement.

### Core Themes

The set of Core Themes for UAA align with the five priorities of the UAA Strategic Plan 2017. This accreditation report, with its greater definition of objectives, outcomes and indicators, was developed with wide participation and review, but over a shorter time frame (November 2008-January 2009) than the Strategic Plan. Each core theme leads to specific objectives for the institution as a whole, and for those units that contribute to its success.

### Review

The university is now designing a process whereby achievement will be evaluated, and where this report and the UAA Strategic Plan will be regularly updated.

## Section II: Core Themes, Objectives, Outcomes, and Indicators

*Standard 1.B.2: For each core theme the institution establishes objectives, each with meaningful, assessable, verifiable indicators of achievement, which form the basis for evaluating achievement of those objectives.*

The objectives that originate from the Core Themes lead to activities that result in outcomes. Indicators reflect the university's performance in each of the outcomes. In order to adequately describe the relationships between core themes, objectives, outcomes and accomplishments, UAA provides the following definitions:

**Objectives** – specific university intentions, defined at the institutional level or at the levels of those functional units that contribute to the theme

**Outcomes** – a purposeful result of planning and activity

**Indicators** – an accomplishment or specific performance that can be demonstrated (e.g. student learning outcomes, enrollment, etc.) Indicators are the strongest when they clearly illustrate the accomplishment of the related objective or outcome. Strong indicators provide timely, direct knowledge and high confidence in determining performance. They are clearly connected to the objective or outcome in question, their results are repeatable at different times and by different people, and their analyses are straightforward and consistent. In many cases the accomplishments of students or the effects of their educational experiences cannot be directly measured. For example, work readiness is ultimately determined by employers, not by the university. In those cases, and in cases where the intended effect is related to attitude or disposition, or occurs after a long time, the university relies on indirect measures such as the perception of individuals involved. The indicators chosen here relate to stated outcomes that support an objective. Following good assessment practices, an attempt was made to provide more than one indicator or type of evidence for each stated outcome.

**Overlap of Core Themes:** The objectives and outcomes of the university and some of the activities devised to achieve them are integrated across several core themes. When that condition exists we address the objectives and outcomes under one core theme, and avoid repetition when it is reasonable to do so. When separation would tend to dismantle the theme itself or diminish its importance, objectives and outcomes were included in both. Examples that are found in the report include:

- **Student achievement** - found in core themes related to Teaching and Learning and Student Success
- **Research** - found in Teaching and Learning and Research; and
- **Engagement** - found in Teaching and Learning, UAA Community and Public Square.

## Core Theme #1: Teaching and Learning

**UAA Mission Alignment:** *Discover and disseminate knowledge; serve the higher education needs of the state; and academic programs leading to occupational endorsements; undergraduate and graduate certificates; and associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees in a rich, diverse, and inclusive environment.*

**Descriptive Title:** Teaching and learning have always been the core pursuits of the university that are stated with the greatest frequency and highest priorities in both the UAA and the UA System goals. The university's inclusive definition of learning embraces courses, programs, and life-long learning; credit and non-credit instruction; levels that include developmental through advanced graduate studies; and learner purposes that range from personal enrichment to career preparation or professional advancement. Because of the broad mission of the institution and the need to serve students with a range of interests, abilities and preparation, it is useful to separate UAA instructional programs by level and purpose. Obvious distinctions can be made among the following, each with a distinctive set of inputs, goals, outcomes and measures. UAA has processes for managing these individually (at the department and college levels) and collectively (at the institution and system levels) to maximize their positive effects on students and their contributions to the university mission. Ultimately, all add to the options available to our students, to the outcomes they achieve and to the variety of situations and careers that they can effectively engage.

- Developmental education
- Applied programs and workforce development [career and technical education]
- Professional education—undergraduate and graduate
- Liberal Arts education—undergraduate and graduate
- Personal enrichment

Successful teaching and learning in each of these categories relies on (1) quality course and program design, (2) quality teaching, and (3) quality learning. These three comprise the objectives of this core theme.

### **Objectives, Intended Outcomes, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale:**

#### **Objective #1 - Quality course and program design**

##### **Outcome**

- Curriculum for academic courses and programs is relevant and current

##### **Institutional Indicators**

- Courses judged acceptable through peer review process
- Percentage of programs that have been judged successful through a process involving external review
- Number and percentage of programs taking actions based on recommendations from assessments of student learning

**Rationale** – The quality of academic offerings begins with course and program design. Content and intended outcomes are chosen by program faculty. The appropriateness of the content, the academic levels of the courses, the duration and credits of each course, and the methods of student evaluation are reviewed and approved by individuals and established peer groups with ever broadening perspectives at course or program initiation and at regular intervals afterward.

Programs are examined further on a regular basis through internal UAA processes of program review which include reviewers from outside of UAA. Separate program accreditation and approvals attest to the quality of programs that have that option available and who choose to pursue that recognition. Approximately 55 academic programs are individually accredited, separately approved by a federal agency, or included in the accreditation of a college at UAA. All of these programs are externally reviewed and are shown to meet national standards.

### **Objective #2 - Quality Teaching**

#### Outcome

- Courses and programs are delivered through effective teaching practices by well qualified faculty

#### Institutional Indicators

- Percentage of faculty (regular and adjunct) who meet standards for their disciplines
- Percentage of faculty who are recognized for teaching effectiveness through an established peer review process

Rationale – Research indicates that learning is impacted more by effective teaching than by any other single factor. Quality of teaching is enhanced by advanced preparation, the study and application of proven practices, and regular reflection and evaluation.

A university-wide task force has been reviewing the process of peer evaluation of faculty for promotion and tenure purposes and has proposed enhanced procedures for assessment of teaching effectiveness. Upon approval for the Faculty Senate and UAA administration these measures will be incorporated into the regular evaluation of all tenure track faculty and used as institutional indicators for this objective.

### **Objective #3 - Quality learning**

#### Outcome

- Students achieve course learning outcomes

#### Institutional Indicator

- Percentage of students who have satisfied learning outcomes as reflected in course grades

#### Outcome

- Students achieve program and institutional learning outcomes

#### Institutional Indicator

- Percentage of students who have satisfied learning outcomes as derived from assessments at the program and institutional levels

Rationale – UAA has identified student learning outcomes on the course, program and institutional levels. The performance of students in achieving the intended outcomes at each of these levels is paramount in evaluating the effectiveness of those offerings. Faculty members regularly assess student performance and use their findings to adjust the content and methods used in their courses and programs. Students are becoming increasingly aware of the intended outcomes of their programs and use this awareness to develop further in their majors and to more efficiently navigate their way toward their goals

### Outcome

- Students apply knowledge and skills successfully through research and engagement

### Institutional Indicator

- Number and percentage of students who participate in recognized research, engagement, and creative activities and the impacts of those experiences

Rationale – Developing enhanced understanding and confidence through the application of knowledge and skills is a goal of UAA academic and co-curricular programs. Records of successful research and engagement at the undergraduate and graduate levels, presentations of that research, performances and expositions of creative works, and records of engagement spotlight this important component of the university’s mission. The impacts on student learning are evaluated regularly. Departments, colleges and centers within the university are dedicated to extending this impact as broadly and as effectively as possible

## Core Theme #2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities

**UAA Mission and Strategic Plan Alignment:** *Mission - Discover and disseminate knowledge. Strategic Plan goal - Increase research activities that meet state and national needs; expand and improve graduate education.*

**Descriptive Title:** Research, scholarship and creative activities play a vital role in the education of university students in the emerging knowledge-based and globally interconnected economy. Scientific research at UAA focuses on expanding the knowledge and understanding of circumpolar biomes, impacts of climate change, and the social, health, and economic conditions of Alaska communities. Research produces new knowledge and understanding of natural and social systems and their interactions and influences. Creative productions and artistic works from faculty, staff and students challenge and entertain those who encounter them, enlightening and expanding each person's view of the world and the human condition. Research and creative activity are promoted and supported for students at all levels from undergraduate to advanced graduate studies.

Institutes, research programs, and centers of research excellence within the university bring organization and context to new knowledge, and provide the vehicle for new directions in interdisciplinary research and translational aspects in medical and health research. These research foci are used to create the environment for undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students to interact and develop expression, methodology, relationships and experiences.

Preparation of proposals, presentation of seminars, and preparation of theses and manuscripts for publication allow critical evaluation of hypotheses, accepted concepts and practices, and evaluation of cause and effect. Works of art and literature help us encounter and define ourselves and others and determine our place in the world. Research in societal, socio-economic, health, engineering and environmental issues provides students with the ability to contribute to matters of immediate importance to the people of the state. Basic and applied research results have importance for policy and management decisions made at the national as well as the arctic, state and regional governmental levels.

Success in research, scholarship, and creative activities relies on (1) broad participation, (2) the advancement of knowledge and engagement of the public, and (3) enhanced student learning experiences. These three then become the objectives of this core theme.

### **Objectives, Intended Outcomes, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale:**

#### **Objective #1 - Faculty, students and staff participate in research and creative activity**

##### Outcome

- Faculty, staff, and students engage in research and scholarly activities

##### Institutional Indicator

- Percentage of faculty and students engaged in organized and independent research, scholarly activities, and creative projects

##### Outcome

- Quality scholarship leads to increased opportunities
- Research and creative activities attract support and resources from external sources

#### Institutional Indicator

- Number of supported activities and productions, restricted expenditures, and funded researchers of all types: graduate students, post docs, research fellows

Rationale – Active and visible participation in scholarship advances knowledge, enhances teaching, motivates learning and provides a measure by which students and faculty can evaluate progress. The skills and competencies that enable effective research and creative activities, such as inquiry, analysis, synthesis and invention, are useful and transferable among disciplines and life situations. The development of these competencies through academic, co-curricular and external engagement is a priority for the institution, and is promoted through participation of faculty, staff and students on the broadest scale possible.

Successful research and creative activity that is recognized and valued by the public and peers in the discipline open the doors to increased support from sources external to the university, and additional opportunities for student, faculty, and staff participation.

### **Objective #2 - Results of scholarly activities are used to advance knowledge in the discipline and impact the public.**

#### Outcome

- Faculty, staff, and students inform, challenge, and entertain through research, scholarly, and creative projects

#### Institutional Indicators

- Numbers of publications, presentations, and performances
- Perceptions of impact from those affected when scholarship is applied, presented or performed.

Rationale – Products of research, scholarship, and creativity improve conditions and impact the lives of members of the community when they are published, presented, and performed. Impressions of those who have experienced the applications of scholarship are useful measures of effectiveness.

### **Objective #3 - Research and creative activities enhance the learning experience**

#### Outcome

- Research experiences, advanced scholarship, and creative projects are integrated into instruction. Students develop their capabilities in inquiry and invention.

#### Institutional Indicators

- Percent of courses involving generation and evaluation of scientific data, independent research, data interpretation, and creative endeavors
- Records of student performance in courses incorporating student research and creativity
- Evidence of development of student skills and competencies.

Rationale – Students who take part in research at any level develop important and transferrable skills in gathering and analyzing data, evaluating information from primary sources, forming judgments and developing recommendations and action plans. Incorporating these capabilities into their lives and scholarly activities leads to self-reflective and critical thinkers who are prepared to make valuable contributions to their professions and society.

## Core Theme #3: Student Success

**UAA Mission Alignment:** *UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities, and its diverse peoples. UAA 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.*

**Descriptive Title:** Student success is a foundation upon which UAA has built, and will continue to expand, educational opportunity for the students served. The university recognizes that the essential components of student success include providing access, promoting persistence and progress in studies until attainment of academic achievement and the completion of educational goals. In the process, we enable and encourage students to challenge themselves and strive toward distinction in their academic, personal, and professional lives.

Student success is a theme that has been embraced by the entire institution. Our broad definition of success compels us to develop policies, programs and capacities that serve both degree seeking students and others who are pursuing certificates and endorsements related to employment, or who are advancing their skills or pursuing personal interests. UAA is prepared to serve students who have inadequate preparation; have short-term, work-related goals; are native speakers of languages other than English; have significant cultural and experiential differences; and who must navigate the complexities of higher education for the first time with little family support. The goals, outcomes, and indicators of this core theme reflect the work of a task force assembled from across the university that continues to evaluate our progress and accomplishments and to recommend adjustments within any part of the institution.

Student success relies on (1) access and successful transition to the university; and it is marked by student (2) student persistence and progress toward goals, (3) engagement in studies and the community, and (4) achievement of academic distinction. These four then become the objectives of this core theme.

### **Objectives, Intended Outcomes, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale:**

#### **Objective #1 - Access and successful transition into UAA**

##### Outcome

- Outreach and recruitment are successful

##### Institutional Indicators

- Number and percent of Alaska students who enroll in UAA
- Variety of students who enroll in UAA

##### Outcome

- Students successfully transition into UAA

##### Institutional Indicators

- Successful course completion rates in the first year
- Retention to second year
- Student satisfaction and participation in entry, transition, and first year experiences

Rationale – In order to meet the higher education needs of the state students must be aware of and choose to attend the university. Once there, their success depends on their ability to meet the demands of college level studies. UAA puts great emphasis on developing early awareness and familiarity with college demands, and with advising students on academic and personal choices that affect their education. While counselors and advisors take personal interest in each student, the overall enrollment, retention and course completion rates – particularly for high-risk and under-represented students - are important indicators of the effectiveness of information and direction that students receive.

## **Objective #2 - Persistence and progress toward educational goals**

### Outcome

- Students achieve their academic goals

#### Institutional Indicators

- Course success rates
- Persistence beyond the second year
- Program completion rates

Rationale – Achievement of faculty-defined course and program goals is addressed in Core Theme #1. This outcome relates to the goals that students define for themselves. With UAA’s broad mission encompassing developmental education through advanced graduate programs, one can expect students’ academic goals to vary widely. Course success (passing grade) is a valid measure for all students and the only measure that includes those enrolled for minimal skill development or personal interest. Persistence beyond the second year gives an overview of the effectiveness of developmental and freshman level courses, and the ability of students to integrate collegiate level studies into their lives. Program completion, for those seeking degrees or certificates, is an important benchmark for both the student and the university. Knowledge of program completion rates affects all aspects of academic planning – from curriculum design to resource allocation.

- Students transition to employment and further education

#### Institutional Indicators

- High demand job awards
- Percentage of UAA graduates employed in the state
- Transfer to other higher education institutions

Rationale – The number of degrees and certificates awarded in employment areas that are designated as ‘high demand’ by the Alaska Department of Labor is a strong indicator of the university’s contribution to workforce development; an important component of the missions and strategic plans of both the UA System and UAA. Periodic reports of employment and wages for UAA graduates from all programs provides useful, long-term follow-up to gauge the value of post-secondary education, at all levels, for Alaskan residents. Those students who enroll in UAA intending to transfer into programs at other institutions may now be tracked as well. UAA considers degree awards, employment and successful transfer to be indicators of student success.

## **Objective #3 - Student engagement in UAA and the external community**

### Outcome

- Students are engaged in the university community

#### Institutional Indicators

- Participation in student life and leadership programs and events
- Satisfaction in and impact from engagement opportunities within the university

Rationale – Recognizing that students develop essential knowledge and life skills outside of their formal course offerings, the university has placed a high priority on learning experiences designed to develop those knowledge and skills along with developing leadership, integrity, healthy lifestyles, the abilities to deal effectively with diverse peoples and situations, and an orientation towards service. The design of these activities is purposeful and includes careful consideration of the intended outcomes. Student participation is a measure of their availability, relevance and attractiveness. Impact is established by surveys and interviews with students and by reports from advisors and activity leaders.

#### Outcome

- Students are engaged in their external communities

#### Institutional Indicator

- Participation rates in co-curricular community engagement activities

Rationale – Opportunities to serve, to experience unscripted and unfamiliar situations, and to apply newly developed knowledge, skills and competencies are most often found in the external community. Those opportunities are purposefully built into the internship, clinical and practicum courses required in many programs. Beyond curricular engagement, students have additional opportunities to engage in areas that are not directly related to their program of studies. That participation leads to the development of social competence and good citizenship – two very important outcomes of higher education.

### **Objective #4 - Achievement of academic distinction**

#### Outcome

- Students demonstrate academic achievement and distinction

#### Institutional Indicator

- Number and percent achieving academic honors, distinctions, scholarships, and/or academic awards

Rationale – High expectations and recognition of high achievement in academics and leadership are both guiding and motivating factors in students' educational experiences. Students' achievements are regularly recognized through departmental or university honors such as Dean's List, Chancellor's List or Leadership Honors. Less frequent, but very notable, are the individual awards attained by students such as prestigious scholarships, fellowships or placement in intercollegiate academic competitions – such as debate, music or theater. These are attained through exceptional talent and effort, but also point to the foundation of learning, support and engagement that the entire university enjoys.

## Core Theme #4: UAA Community

**UAA Mission Alignment:** *UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities, and its diverse peoples.*

**Descriptive Title:** A healthy, vital UAA community provides essential support to students, faculty and staff who are engaged in demanding work; are exploring their interests, capabilities and limits; are often living outside of their comfort zone, where success is not assured; and are often surrounded by people and situations that they have neither experienced nor imagined. The vitality of this community depends on a support structure, through which a trained and competent staff ensures a safe and well-maintained campus and infrastructure; provides for a healthy campus life; manages human resource needs and programs; maintains a strong connection to alumni and the external community; and provides effective management of fiscal resources. The objectives for this core theme reflect the environment, facilities and resources that attract, support, and sustain the people and programs that advance knowledge, skills, and competencies, and that respond in service to the needs and interests of our students and communities - a campus that is (1) diverse and inclusive, (2) supportive and sustainable, and (3) fiscally responsible. The success of the university in creating this community of scholars should then result in students, faculty and staff who are supported in their important work and are successful in their professional endeavors and in their contributions to the mission of the institution.

### **Objectives, Intended Outcomes, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale:**

#### **Objective #1 - Diverse and inclusive campus environment**

##### Outcome

- Students from diverse backgrounds prosper

##### Institutional Indicator

- Number and percent of students from under-represented groups who are successful in their studies

##### Outcome

- Faculty and staff of diverse backgrounds prosper

##### Institutional Indicator

- Number and percent of faculty and staff from under-represented groups who receive successful evaluations or advance in their careers

##### Outcome

- Students, faculty, and staff are aware of and appreciate the importance of diversity

##### Institutional Indicator

- Number and percent of those surveyed who rate diversity as moderately or highly important to the campus environment

**Rationale** – Diversity in background, perspective, interest, and approach to issues brings an essential richness to the inquiry, discovery and learning that occur on the UAA campuses, and helps to build interest, respect, appreciation, fuller analysis and the ability to deal with things unfamiliar. In order to

maintain that diversity, and to promote the appreciation of its benefits UAA attempts to ensure that students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds are recruited and supported at the institution. Students who succeed in their studies and faculty and staff who advance in their careers are strong indications that the appropriate environment and support are present. The perceptions of members of the university community add an indication of the effects of programs that are regularly produced to encourage dialog and engagement with those from dissimilar backgrounds.

## **Objective #2 - Supportive and sustainable learning, working, and living environment**

### Outcome

- All UAA campuses are safe

#### Institutional Indicators

- Rates of crimes and incidents and injuries
- Number and percent of surveyed students and staff who perceive their campus to be safe
- Records indicating a satisfactory level of preparedness for emergencies

Rationale – The university’s commitment to a safe environment is evidenced by a very capable, dedicated police department and numerous programs that raise awareness and provide support for those who are traveling across the campus or participating in activities, and for safe and responsible behavior in residence halls and other locations. Success in achieving this outcome is indicated by the actual numbers and the trends of crimes and injuries as reported to state and federal authorities. Planning and evaluations of performance in emergency drills indicates the level of preparedness for emergency events. Perceptions of campus safety by those in the university community and those visiting the campus are important markers of success in achieving the objective of a welcoming and supportive environment.

### Outcome

- Facilities and services at each campus support the people and activities at their locations

#### Institutional Indicators

- Progress in development of facilities according to campus master plan
- Number of people using facilities and participating in activities
- User satisfaction with the support and activities at their locations
- Percent of respondents who indicate satisfaction with library, information and technology resources and services

Rationale – Appropriate facilities are essential components of a functional institution. The indicators chosen are used to evaluate the planning and design of structures and enabling systems and their contribution to the institutional mission; the progress in following the master plan; the use of installed facilities and systems and the satisfaction levels of those who use them.

### Outcome

- Sustainable practices guide institutional decision making

#### Institutional Indicators

- Number of buildings or square feet that have been evaluated and had adjustments made for LEED compliance in last 24 months

- Number of university sponsored programs promoting sustainable practices

Rationale – With structures that span a 40 year design period it is important that existing buildings be evaluated and retrofitted with efficient systems. At the same time the promotion and participation in sustainable and low-impact practices by all members of university community is accelerating.

Outcome

- Faculty and staff prosper in their professions

Institutional Indicators

- Number and percent of employees indicating satisfaction with professional environment and opportunities
- Number and percent of eligible applicants who receive successful performance reviews or advance in their professions

Rationale – Thriving employees are both contributors to and indicators of supportive and sustainable working environments. Satisfaction with that environment and a record of success through performance reviews and professional advancement are strong indicators that employees are prospering.

Outcome

- The campus is alive with energy and opportunity

Institutional Indicators

- Number and percent of people involved in student life and leadership programs and their reactions to those programs
- Number of alumni and community members engaged in the development of the university
- Number and percent of people involved in wellness programs and health promoting activities

Rationale – Activities arranged and promoted at each UAA campus are often designed with multiple purposes of fun, socialization and personal development. Events and programs that provide opportunities for service, which encourage the development of leadership skills or which engage people in intellectual or cultural discourse, are beneficial for both those who make the arrangements and those who take part. The level of participation on UAA campuses increases when people from the UAA and external communities are aware and invited to take part, are comfortable with the venues, and are committed to the goals and outcomes of the activities. The indicators chosen provide a representative sample of types of activities – student life and leadership, institutional development and wellness – that contribute so much to the university experience.

**Objective #3 - Responsible fiscal stewardship**

Outcome

- Donors and alumni contribute to the success of programs and services

Institutional Indicator

- Donor contributions

Rationale - As a young and state-supported school, UAA is working hard to build its donor base and the totals available to support worthwhile efforts in academic programs, student support and service to the community and professions. Donor giving is connected to the university's goals and successes,

and its welcoming and inclusive environment. This indicator doubles as a gauge of success and a measure of the potential for development of greater support or opportunities.

Outcome

- Effective generation and use of fiscal resources

Institutional Indicators

- University generated revenue sources and amounts
- Dollars and percent of university expenditures in each NCHEMS category

Rationale – Revenue and expenditures are reviewed at every level on a continuous basis. Trends and comparisons with peer institutions will add to our critical reviews of costs, funding and efficiencies and enable clearer evaluations of the alignment of operations with the institutional mission.

## Core Theme #5: Public Square

**UAA Mission Alignment:** *Serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities, and its diverse peoples.*

**Strategic Plan Priority E: Expand and Enhance the Public Square** – The public university is the public square of 21st century America, the meeting ground for higher education and the society it serves. Nowhere in our society is there a greater opportunity to turn the diverse encounters between cultures, classes, interests, and ideas to the discovery of knowledge, to creative expression, and to preparation for work and civic engagement.

**Descriptive Title:** The cornerstone of the Public Square, community engagement, develops linkages between scholarship and action for the mutual benefit of the University and the State, its communities, and its diverse peoples. This is accomplished through curricular engagement, outreach and partnership. Engagement, in some form, is found in the objectives or outcomes of all five core themes because of its enhancement of student learning, opportunities for application of research, contributions to student success and support for the university community. This core theme #5 acknowledges the reciprocal nature of the university's engagement and identifies the benefits that engagement brings to the external community. The university leadership ensures the dedication of university resources to community activities. Programs and events are developed in consultation with community advisors to promote thought and dialog, and to respond to social, political, or economic situations. The university should become the recognized venue for shared information, for vigorous debate, and for stimulating productions about serious issues. Participation rates and perceptions of those involved are used to gauge the impact of these outreach efforts.

Success of the Public Square relies on purposeful institutional involvement with the community. This then becomes the objective of this core theme.

### **Objectives, Intended Outcomes, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale:**

#### **Objective #1 - Strong institutional involvement with the community**

##### **Outcome**

- Development and application of institutional resources for community use and benefit

##### **Institutional Indicator**

- Resources applied and number of university events and programs designed to serve community needs

##### **Outcome**

- Alaskans engage in a variety of university sponsored programs, performances, and events

##### **Institutional Indicator**

- Variety and participation of the public in university sponsored events and programs

##### **Outcome**

- University sponsored engagement has a positive effect on community members

##### **Institutional Indicator**

- Impacts on community from participation in events, programs, and activities sponsored by the university

Outcome

- Regular and effective collaboration with local and regional organizations to produce and promote programs and projects of value to the public

Institutional Indicator

- Contributions of UAA personnel and resources to community projects and programs

Rationale - Development of community based programs, performances and events requires dedicated resources within the institution, systematic evaluation of interest and demand, collaboration with external organizations and participation of the public. Counting the events and attendance is a first step in determining the success of this effort and the achievement of this objective. Polling or surveying those attending allows the institution to sense the impact of this involvement on the community.

## Section III: Chapter Summary

This report provides a summative view of the University of Alaska Anchorage. In defining the intentions, the operations and the accomplishments of UAA, the faculty, staff, and community have identified:

- **5 Core Themes**
- **14 Objectives**
- **30 Outcomes**
- **54 Indicators**

The core themes from the UAA Strategic Plan express the priorities that are currently guiding UAA operations and planning. The objectives provide specific statements of important components of each core theme. A set of outcomes defines what UAA intends to achieve while engaging each core theme. The indicators are chosen to provide a measure of success for our activities.

The number of outcomes illustrates the complexity of UAA and the many intended effects for our students and community. The indicators provide enough information to make reasonable and confident determinations about performance. The majority of the indicators listed in this report are presently being tracked and used for management and assessment purposes. Others will have to be carefully defined along with the means for their collection and analysis. Processes are being developed to efficiently manage the expanded data collection and analysis requirements.

### Next Steps

Portions of this report provide assurance that in many areas continuous improvement and evidence based management are working well and should proceed as they are currently practiced. Other portions remind us that there is work to be done in data collection and analysis, and in application of that analysis to the improvement of operations and outcomes. Where this has been noted, work has already begun in developing and implementing, or reviewing and adjusting, policies and processes to more effectively achieve our goals.

An extensive and ongoing review of institutional outcomes and indicators is proceeding with the intention of defining the underlying data, the source and frequency of collection of each data set, the people charged with analysis of the data and formation of recommendations, and the paths that will lead to implementation of accepted recommendations. The results should encourage coordination of many of the assessment processes within the university.

Managers of major units at UAA have long embraced and practiced evidence-based management of their units. The accreditation process, which has now resulted in the identification of outcomes and indicators for the essential components of the university, will supply additional motivation to those units to evaluate performance and seek guidance based on evidence of accomplishment and effectiveness.

Synthesis of mission attainment will be accomplished when knowledgeable faculty, staff, and administrators across the institution have available sufficient information to make critical judgments about the effectiveness of the institution. Analysis of indicators used in each of the core thematic areas, and the experience and perspectives of the judges themselves, will provide the foundation for their conclusions.

## Appendix I: Core Themes, Objectives, Outcomes, and Indicators

Core Theme #1: Teaching and Learning		
Objective	Outcome	Institutional Indicators
Quality course and program design	Curriculum for academic courses and programs is relevant and current	Courses judged acceptable through peer review process
		Percentage of programs that have been judged successful through a process involving external review
		Number and percentage of programs taking actions based on recommendations from assessments of student learning
Quality teaching	Courses and programs are delivered through effective teaching practices by well qualified faculty	Percentage of faculty (regular and adjunct) who meet standards for their disciplines
		Percentage of faculty who are recognized for teaching effectiveness through an established peer review process
Quality learning	Students achieve course learning outcomes	Percentage of students who have satisfied learning outcomes as reflected in course grades
	Students achieve program and institutional learning outcomes	Percentage of students who have satisfied learning outcomes as derived from assessments at the program and institutional levels
	Students apply knowledge and skills successfully through research and engagement	Number and percentage of students who participate in recognized research, engagement, and creative activities and the impacts of those experiences

Core Theme #2: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity		
Objective	Outcome	Institutional Indicators
Faculty, students and staff participate in research and creative activity	Faculty, staff, and students engage in research and scholarly activities	Percentage of faculty and students engaged in organized and independent research, scholarly activities, and creative projects
	Quality scholarship leads to increased opportunities	Number of supported activities and productions, restricted expenditures, and funded researchers of all types: graduate students, post docs, research fellows
	Research and creative activities attract support and resources from external sources	
Results of scholarly activities are used to advance knowledge in the discipline and impact the public	Faculty, staff, and students inform, challenge, and entertain through research, scholarship, and creative projects	Numbers of publications, presentations, and performances
		Perceptions of impact from those affected when scholarship is applied, presented or performed.
Research and creative activities enhance the learning experience	Research experiences, advanced scholarship, and creative projects are integrated into instruction. Students develop their capabilities in inquiry and invention.	Percent of courses involving generation and evaluation of scientific data, independent research, data interpretation, and creative endeavors
		Records of student performance in courses incorporating student research and creativity
		Evidence of development of student skills and competencies.

Core Theme #3: Student Success		
Objective	Outcome	Institutional Indicators
Access and successful transition into UAA	Outreach and recruitment are successful	Number and percent of Alaska students who enroll in UAA
		Variety of students who enroll in UAA
	Students successfully transition into UAA	Successful course completion rates in the first year
		Retention to second year
	Student satisfaction and participation in entry, transition, and first year experiences	
Persistence and progress toward educational goals	Students achieve their academic goals	Course success rates
		Persistence beyond the second year
		Program completion rates
	Students transition to employment and further education	High demand job awards
		Percentage of UAA graduates employed in the state
	Transfer to other higher education institutions	
Student engagement in UAA and the external community	Students are engaged in the university community	Participation in student life and leadership programs and events
		Satisfaction in and impact from engagement opportunities within the university
	Students are engaged in their external communities	Participation rates in non-curricular community engagement activities
Achievement of academic distinction	Students demonstrate academic achievement and distinction	Number and percent achieving academic honors, distinctions, scholarships, and/or academic awards

Core Theme #4: UAA Community

Objective	Outcome	Institutional Indicators
Diverse and inclusive campus environment	Students from diverse backgrounds prosper	Number and percent of students from under-represented groups who are successful in their studies
	Faculty and staff of diverse backgrounds prosper	Number and percent of faculty and staff from under-represented groups who receive successful evaluations or advance in their careers
	Students, faculty, and staff are aware of and appreciate the importance of diversity	Number and percent of those surveyed who rate diversity as moderately or highly important to the campus environment
Supportive and sustainable learning, working, and living environment	All UAA campuses are safe	Rates of crimes and incidents and injuries
		Number and percent of surveyed students and staff who perceive their campus to be safe
		Records indicating a satisfactory level of preparedness for emergencies
	Facilities and services at each campus support the people and activities at their locations	Progress in development of facilities according to campus master plan
		Number of people using facilities and participating in activities
		User satisfaction with the support and activities at their locations
		Percent of respondents who indicate satisfaction with library, information technology resources and services
	Sustainable practices guide institutional decision making	Number of buildings or square feet that have been evaluated and had adjustments made for LEED compliance in last 24 months
		Number of university sponsored programs promoting sustainable practices
	Faculty and staff prosper in their professions	Number and percent of employees indicating satisfaction with professional environment and opportunities
		Number and percent of eligible applicants who receive successful performance reviews or advance in their professions
	The campus is alive with energy and opportunity	Number and percent of people involved in student life and leadership programs and their reactions to those programs
		Number of alumni and community members engaged in the development of the university
		Number and percent of people involved in wellness programs and health promoting activities

Responsible fiscal stewardship	Donors and alumni contribute to the success of programs and services	Donor contributions
	Effective generation and use of fiscal resources	University generated revenue sources and amounts
		Dollars and percent of university expenditures in each NCHEMS category

Core Theme #5: Public Square		
Objective	Outcome	Institutional Indicators
Strong institutional involvement with the community	Development and application of institutional resources for community use and benefit	Resources applied and number of university events and programs designed to serve community needs
	Alaskans engage in a variety of university sponsored programs, performances, and events	Variety and participation of the public in university sponsored events and programs
	University sponsored engagement has a positive effect on community members	Impacts on community from participation in events, programs, and activities sponsored by the university
	Regular and effective collaboration with local and regional organizations to produce and promote programs and projects of value to the public	Contributions of UAA personnel and resources to community projects and programs