2025 Annual Assessment Retreat:
How do we know, and what do we do about it?

Thursday, May 8, 2025, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
LIB 307 and via ZOOM

Agenda

9:00-9:10 **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement**
Sean Parnell, Chancellor

9:10-9:20 **Quick refresh on where we are in the process**
Susan Kalina, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness

9:20-9:30 **What we learned from the March Open Forum and what's next?**
Denise Runge, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

9:30-9:35 **Advancement case study - "Site Visit Preparation Briefing - Tell us about staff's role in reviewing the effectiveness of your department/service area/unit."**
Tanya Pont, Executive Director, University Advancement

9:35-9:40 **Overview of this year's regular, institutional processes**
Susan Kalina, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness

9:40-10:00 **Break out discussion**
Carrie King, Professor, Dietetics and Nutrition, and Accreditation Co-Chair

- What do your evaluation processes look like?
- How do they provide data and information for decision making, planning, and resource allocation?
- How well is it working?
- What are some examples of improvements made based on what you learned from your evaluation processes?

10:00-10:20 **Report outs**
Carrie King, Professor, Dietetics and Nutrition, and Accreditation Co-Chair

10:20-10:30 **What shared values do we have across colleges, campuses, and functional areas for our evaluation processes? What brings us together?**
Jackie Cason, Outgoing Faculty Senate President

10:30-10:35 **Next steps**
Susan Kalina, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness

Preparing for the Site Visit
1. Leadership Group Briefings (May – August)
2. All-College (Thursday, August 14) and All-Campus Meetings (Friday, August 15)
3. Tentative Accreditation Kickoff (Friday, September 12)
4. NWCCU Site Visit (Wednesday, October 8 – Friday, October 10)
    a. Faculty Forum – Tentatively Wednesday, October 8, 3:00-3:50
    b. Staff Forum – Tentatively Thursday, October 9, 10:00-10:50
    c. Student Forum – Tentatively Thursday, October 9, 11:00-11:50

UAA CORE COMPETENCIES

Effective Communication The knowledge and skills necessary to engage in effective communication in diverse contexts and formats.

Creative and Critical Thinking The knowledge and skills necessary for the critical exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events in order to creatively design, evaluate, and implement a strategy to answer complex questions or achieve a desired goal.

Intercultural Fluency The knowledge and skills necessary to promote effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts, particularly in terms of the diverse populations of Alaska.

Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.

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Break Out Discussion: What do your evaluation processes look like? How do they provide data and information for decision making, planning, and resource allocation? How well is it working?

- Sometimes our data might seem fluid, but it's important that we understand how, when, and where things are being counted, and what the purposes are.
- Colleges use data to inform course scheduling, not only how many sections to offer, but also course caps and that "sweet spot" for enrollment that encourages students to enroll in the courses they need in the right sequence.
- School of Education maps processes such as admissions and graduation for their students in Lucidchart, and gathers data from course evaluation comments and field experience survey. Those inform updates to the charts and practices, such as due dates and curricular changes.
- CAS and CoEng described how data are used to inform academic course and program improvements, such as changing prerequisites to increase student success and retention, and allocating resources for scheduling purposes.
- The Library student surveys are used to understand what students (particularly undergraduate) are seeking, not just in terms of services, but spaces in the library. This informs planning and allocation, such as adding study rooms and shifting service hours.
- IT tracks typical call center data with their tickets such as first call resolution, but also evaluates the *experience* of the person on the phone. This ensures the allocation of IT professionals meet the needs of the UAA community and leaves them feeling happy and well taken care of.
- Staff Council: The Council is trying to rely more on survey data to prepare recommendations they present to Cabinet, rather than anecdotal evidence. Providing more actionable evidence with their recommendations increases the impact of their efforts as volunteers.
- The English department surveys faculty members to help change curriculum and guide its direction.
- Programs discussed different approaches to combining quantitative and qualitative data, because they are not always in agreement. When they are not in agreement, we try to rationalize why so we can make the best decisions moving forward.
- Programs might have similar types of assessments, but use them differently. That's an opportunity to talk about the different ways we might utilize the data, and learn about/expand on the approaches and how they inform program work. (Exit exams, portfolios, validity, what information is obtained, how to rank data in terms of merit when making decisions, etc.)
- Time is sometimes even more important and limited than financial resources. It's also important to recognize the audience, whether it's students or faculty or other community partners, also have limited time resources, and so on some level, we are trying to identify topics or approaches which hold enough value to get them to bring their time to us so we can be effective in accomplishing our goals.

What are some examples of improvements made based on what you learned from your evaluation processes?

- CTC and community campus collaborate on Tier 1 GER scheduling, based on enrollment data.
- School of Education updates process charts and practices, such as due dates and curriculum changes, based on course evaluation comments and field experience survey data.
- CoEng reallocated staff resources for marketing and outreach in response to a program's declining retention and enrollment data, and enrollment is starting to go back up.
- An external accreditor drives many CoEng processes, and a job shadowing program developed in response to ABET.
- Two programs which recently completed program reviews talked about portfolio approaches, with one moving toward using them, and another that has been using them and gave an example of using it to connect to enrollment data and thinking about changes to address student needs.
- Physics and astronomy found that the placement exam could be nudged a bit higher and have a significant impact on student success. Their group also discussed the experience for students who do not place where they expect to, and the importance of communicating about the purpose of the placement exam for their success.
- Writing has invested in Open Educational Resources, so 99% of courses are OER. This was possible to develop because the dean invested in faculty time.
- Political Science talked about diversifying the departments they worked with and collaborating with more faculty to sustain their program.
- The General Education Assessment team lead highlighted collaboration, and their approach to solicit contributions from all faculty, and use a rubric assessment process to evaluate the data.
- The small course format for Teaching Online, No Set Time, was developed to meet federal regulations. There was overwhelmingly positive faculty feedback on that format, so it is being used moving forward with other initiatives in the future, hoping that it has the same positive outcome.
- BA Communications students build portfolios, and outside professionals provide perspective on their growth.
- Social Work helps students see a clear pathway to working in the field, through focus groups and throughout the semester with a fun component to bring in students, and industry surveys, which are both used to shape curriculum.

Other Suggestions and Notes

- As changes are made as a result of assessment, how do we communicate them to affected faculty, advisors, programs, and folks who will need those graduates?
- Continue to think about how we can connect and help learn from each other's processes: general education and other academic programs, financial aid/non-academic programs and academic programs, etc.

Values Discussion: What shared values do we have across colleges, campuses, and functional areas for our evaluation processes? What brings us together?

- We want to hear as many voices as possible. There is real strength as a Community Engaged Campus, an increasing service learning in classes would allow for more of that community voice. We are a community resource.
- Bridge building with students, faculty, outside partners, staff, administrators, to bring those voices together.
- Responsible stewardship to effectively use the resource as effectively as possible for as many community members and students as possible
- Fiscal responsibility
- The best thing about teaching at UAA is the students. It's an open enrollment campus, and we really think about "How do we help students succeed? How can we further their success? What does success mean?"
- There are more stories to be told that the data do not bring forward. Instead of going for how we don't fit in the box, we might make a new one. Our open enrollment allows a breadth of different experiences, so a more personalized approach makes it hard to codify. A student who pops in and out for 20 years isn't a failure. We are consistent and available and present and improving the state. We want a more personalized experience for our students, especially if they have student needs, and one of those could be financial or access.
- Self-Reflection. What's interesting about assessment is that we take this self-reflective value. We think there's something that's important that produces knowledge that makes us better, that makes us flourish as human beings. Then we apply that back upon ourselves. Then we ask ourselves, as programs, let's stop and think about what we're doing. Program assessment forces faculty members to look at their colleagues and look at the classes they don't teach in their program and sort of ask these holistic questions. What is it all adding up to? What is the overall experience that the students are getting, and that we're doing that through self-reflection, in hopes that by kind of challenging our sort of intuitive "Just do it" attitude that we can stop and pull back and challenge and get uncomfortable. And you know, and a little bit, doesn't feel right, and that we kind of then piece it all back together and hopefully improve.
- Reflective practice/reflective practitioners. No matter what corner of the campus you work in, being a reflective practitioner that continues to build capacity to do better and to do more is a through line that I hear from everyone.
- The magic sauce we have is the capacity and desire for individualized, personalized service for students, faculty, staff, or our community. That's where we can make the biggest impact and how we can be special. But personalizing every little thing entails resources in dollar amounts, time, energy, and ability. How can we bring that value without depleting our cups? How do we fill our own cups so we can continue to fill those cups? ("Relationships are a magic sauce.")
- I've seen the value of community, the sense of belonging that comes from showing up day after day and making those connections with people around of you. It's the sense of community that gives the university that sense of a holistic whole.
- The university as a learning rather than teaching institution. We want to think of our students as growing. We also want to think of our colleagues and our staff and our administration, and everybody

having that opportunity to continue to grow and learn. Every situation is a learning situation, no matter how well it goes. There's something to take away from that.

- Academic assessment process values: It has to be meaningful, manageable, and organic. It builds from what you already do, and you learn and use what you're already doing rather than creating a whole superstructure around evaluation.