

at a glance

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- 6 Revitalize key academic programs, from occupational endorsements to Ph.D.s

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Who do we want to be?

Our vision for UAF:

- All of UAF's academic programs are connected to community, educational, and industry partners and are responsive to workforce development demands and needs across the state of Alaska and to national and international economic climates.
- A culture of belonging, integration, and access exists, from Occupational Endorsements to Doctoral degree programs, that spans UAF CTC, the rural campuses, and the Troth Yeddha' campus.
- Students in all degree levels engage in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and creative scholarship to generate new knowledge and outputs throughout UAFs' campuses.
- UAF is known for its professional investment in and support of faculty and staff; as a result, there is a sense of belonging, community, and a high level of morale amongst those employed at UAF.
- UAF students at all campuses have easy access to advising, mentoring, support services, and research and creative scholarship opportunities through engagement with faculty, staff, and their fellow students.
- The university provides robust outreach, engagement, and promotion for all programs both within and outside of UAF.

Who are we now?

The above elements of our vision are each restated below, followed by our descriptions of the status quo.

- VISION: All of UAF's academic programs are connected to community, educational, and industry partners and are responsive to workforce development demands and needs across the state of Alaska and to national and international economic climates.
 - Many programs at UAF, on community and rural campuses in particular, are responsive to workforce development needs across the state, but not all programs are proactive with regard to engaging industry in anticipation of what their future workforce development needs might be.

- One example of a proactive response to workforce development needs is the Behavioral Health Pathway. The pathway encompasses a strong working relationship between the Rural Human Services, Human Services and Social Work programs. It graduates academically prepared and culturally responsive students across rural Alaska.
- UAF Career Services could be better integrated into all UAF programs. Budget cuts resulted in the closure of Career Services on the Fairbanks campus several years ago; recently, Career Services on the Fairbanks campus has been revived and can be helpful for students who seek out their services. Students in workforce development occupational endorsement and certification programs may learn about the job market in their field and connect with industry early in their academic careers, but many students may have little or no exposure to Career Services during their time at UAF.
- VISION: A culture of belonging, integration, and access exists, from Occupational Endorsements to Doctoral degree programs, that spans UAF CTC, the rural campuses, and the Troth Yeddha' campus.
 - UAF is a “full-service provider” of education, training and research for the state of Alaska, yet UAF struggles to manage, prioritize and communicate the breadth and depth of education, training and research opportunities. UAF provides all of these components (education, training and research) but they are managed separately by individual programs and departments. There is a lack of overall integration or oversight of how all these components feed (or could feed) into each other.
- VISION: Students in all degree levels engage in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and creative scholarship to generate new knowledge and outputs throughout UAFs' campuses.
 - Students at all degree levels have access to student-focused research and creative scholarship opportunities and experiential learning, regardless of discipline or UAF location.
 - URSA, the UAF Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity, is the hub of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary experiential learning at all degree levels and UAF campuses by providing opportunities for the generation of new knowledge and ways of knowing and through mentoring.
 - Additional discipline-specific and interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate opportunities to generate new knowledge exist with programs such as BLaST (Biomedical Learning and Student Training), Alaska INBRE (IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence), Alaska EPSCoR's (Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) Fire and Ice Program, and Tamata (All of Us: Transforming Western and Indigenous Fisheries and Marine Sciences Together).
- VISION: UAF is known for its professional investment in and support of faculty and staff; as a result, there is a sense of belonging, community, and a high level of morale amongst those employed at UAF.
 - UAF leadership communicates the importance of faculty and staff but lacks available resources to adequately invest in programs and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
 - UAF provides some non-monetary support for faculty and staff (e.g., wellness programs, staff appreciation day, free online training, etc.) but has not fully explored all the non monetary ways in which faculty and staff can be supported.
 - For several years, there was no active professional development office on campus. Rural campuses have had little to no interaction with this office in the past, and most do not have an equivalent office within their campus.
- VISION: UAF students at all campuses have easy access to advising, mentoring, support services, and research and creative scholarship opportunities through engagement with faculty, staff, and their fellow students.
 - UAF provides many opportunities for student support; however, communication about student progress related to advising and well-being is lacking between the faculty, advisors and staff who are supporting the student.

- VISION: The university provides robust outreach, engagement, and promotion for all programs both within and outside of UAF.
 - UAF provides sufficient outreach, engagement and promotion for some but not all programs.
 - Program and department websites often contain outdated information and inconsistent formatting.

How do we get there?

To achieve the vision of academic programs that are responsive to workforce development needs across the state of Alaska and to national and international economic climates, our university must develop processes that are innovative and adaptable. Examples of such processes that can either help or hinder our ability to respond to workforce needs include the course and new program approval process. The current process is time consuming and inflexible, with proposals passing through several individuals and Faculty Senate committees before approval. Easier course and program approvals will result in more new courses and programs and more enrollments. In addition to our internal procedures, programs can foster and maintain strong connections with industry, community and educational partners via external advisory committees for different program areas that inform future degree and partnership development as well as capstone project, internship opportunities. Currently, engagement of advisory committees with partners varies significantly from program to program. Many programs meet with committees only rarely or do not have active advisory committees. Leveraging these advisory committees to a greater extent across all programs and degree levels will strengthen our ties to the community, garner community support when needed and keep us in tune with workforce and economic trends.

To achieve a culture of integration and access from occupational endorsements to Ph.D.s at UAF, a task force could be developed to determine viable pathways between programs. Some pathways are evident, with strong communication between program advisors, but this seems to be more the exception than the norm. Often this knowledge exists only internally, as well. Once a task force determines additional pathways, articulation agreements between programs can be created and shared widely. UAF can also promote these academic career paths to current and potential students and our community. Crucial to true occupational endorsement through Ph.D. integration is ensuring that multiple access points to programs are facilitated and communicated (i.e., bachelor's or master's degree students might be encouraged to add occupational endorsements or certificates to their academic plans, as appropriate). To best achieve this vision of integration, UAF must ensure that different modalities of course delivery address diverse student needs and communities.

To achieve the vision of engaging all students in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and creative scholarship, it is essential that students at all degree levels have access to student-focused research and creative scholarship opportunities and experiential learning, regardless of discipline or UAF location. Experiential learning and student engagement opportunities which are known to be high-impact practices and are essential for providing students with practical, applied experiences. As a result a goal of programs that provide these opportunities is to promote diversity and access to experiential learning by increasing the inclusion and engagement of all student populations at UAF. Tech-prep programs as well as inter- and multidisciplinary initiatives through URSA (Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity), BLaST (Biomedical Learning and Student Training), One Health Research, and Tamamta (an NSF-funded graduate traineeship which means “All of Us” and will focus on transforming Western and Indigenous Fisheries and Marine Sciences together), among others, are key to revitalizing the student's educational experience.

To achieve the vision of UAF as an institution renowned for its investment in and support of faculty and staff and with high morale, it is essential that the university supports an active professional development office with ties to all campuses. Recent budget cuts and the reality of declining state funding have made budget cuts inevitable, yet it is crucial that departments have and retain sufficient faculty and staff in order to offer healthy and thriving programs. All faculty, adjuncts and staff should be paid a competitive salary in order to attract the best. A compensation review for adjunct faculty should be conducted to ensure that adjuncts, on whom the university increasingly relies upon, receive a living wage. Adjunct faculty should receive financial

incentives to regularly partake in professional development, thus ensuring that all faculty are encouraged to participate in cutting-edge training in areas such as online course development and delivery, etc.

To achieve the vision that UAF students at all campuses will have easy access to advising, support and research opportunities through faculty and staff, the university should encourage/incentivize advising training for all faculty. Faculty workloads and staff positions could be more adaptable and better tied to individual employee strengths. A model of faculty advising developed by the Student Success working group, as a part of the Strategic Enrollment Planning initiative, outlines in detail how such a model might function. Additionally, Nanook Navigator should be leveraged to better track student progress, facilitate communication between advisors and help facilitate students moving across programs/degree types.

To achieve the vision that UAF provides robust outreach, engagement and promotion for all programs, the university must competitively market its programs. The culture of our university should be one where all students, staff and faculty are ambassadors of UAF. Programs and departments should be supported to develop marketing plans and outreach plans. Nanook Navigator's capacity for creating campaigns (enrollment, student success, identifying students who might be interested in certain tracks) could be a considerable asset to productive communication with current students. Moving forward with two new action plans, Academic Program Marketing and Website Marketing Development, designed as part of the Strategic Enrollment Planning process, is an ideal step toward achieving this vision.