First-Year Seminar Request for Proposals

To all faculty:

Please consider preparing and submitting a proposal for a baccalaureate first-year seminar for summer or fall 2011 and earn a supplement to your salary for course preparation prior to offering the course and for offering the seminar! This is a golden opportunity for you to share your enthusiasm and passion for a topic in your discipline, or an interdisciplinary connection between your discipline and another scholarly area that interests you, with first-year students.

Proposal due date: Please send proposals in Word format to fygen@uaf.edu and your Dean/Director by November 29, 2010. Please put “First-year Seminar” in the subject line. Proposals will be ranked by Deans/Directors and their recommendations sent to the Vice Provost (dlthomas@alaska.edu) by December 3, 2010.

First-year experience seminars (FYE F100) are 1 credit (1+0) courses.

Faculty bonuses will be paid for seminar development ($1000) and each semester the class is delivered ($2000). Enrollment is limited to 25 students and the class will not be offered if fewer than 12 enroll. These seminars are tuition and fee free for first-year baccalaureate students and Residence Life offered a $100 discount for spring semester 2011 for students completing the seminar during fall semester. The intent is to build a first-year seminar process over a period of two to three years so we can learn from experience and refines the selection, delivery and required elements of the seminars to meet the needs of our students. Faculty members Barbara Taylor, Pia Kohler, Vince Cee and Michael Harris offered first-year seminars during 2010-11; copies of their syllabi are posted at www.uaf.edu/gs/fye. The Vice Provost will convene a group of faculty, staff and students to review seminar proposals and recommend the set of new seminars to fund. The committee will assess the proposals based on their perception of student interest, quality of proposal content and Dean/Director recommendation. Faculty will be informed of seminar selections by the end of fall semester.

As a research university UAF should communicate how research, scholarship and creative expression is conducted and do so early in a student’s academic experience. The intended student learning outcomes for the seminars are as follows:

- Learn how scholarship is conducted in a specific discipline
- Provide an introduction to current areas of scholarly pursuit
- Introduce students to unfamiliar academic areas (e.g., outside the secondary experience and topics not addressed in current UAF courses)
- Improve student understanding of academic planning, program requirements, and the student code of conduct

First-year seminars are also intended to improve student persistence by connecting students to one another and to a faculty member in a small (15-25) instructional group setting. National research (e.g., Pascarella and Terenzini 2005) has clearly identified first-year seminars as a way to improve student 4-year graduation rates by 5 to 15 percentage points and college grade performance regardless of student pre-college differences. UAF’s six year graduation rate is about half the national average. Our intent is to create a first-year seminar series modeled after the freshman seminar series offered at The Ohio
State University (see http://freshmanseminars.osu.edu/). Currently, UAF does not require that first-
time baccalaureate students take these seminars; however, this may change in the future as Core
revision work is currently underway.

Seminar proposals must include the following:
   a) Describe the content of the proposed course in half a page or less – what learning outcomes do
you intend and what is your pedagogy to achieve these outcomes? Please note whether this
content is included in an existing course and, if so, why it should also be the content for a first-
year seminar. A full-page draft syllabus is encouraged but not required. You may have a great
idea you are developing but it needs preparation time to flesh out.
   b) A brief (half page or less) biographical sketch of the faculty member or emeritus faculty involved
describing their research, scholarly and/or creative activities (one faculty member per proposal)
   c) A brief summary of the faculty member’s instructional assessment system (IAS) information and
   d) Any teaching or scholarly awards or recognitions.
   e) A statement indicating the faculty member’s agreement to use Blackboard courseware for the
seminar, include the student retention objectives given below and to require students to take
the ETS Proficiency Profile examination (described below).

Seminars will be content based on a topic selected by the faculty member (see The Ohio State University
web site given above for examples). However, the seminars will be required to include the following
student retention specific objectives:

1) Completing a four-year academic plan

2) Purpose of the Core Curriculum and requirements for different degrees (BS vs BA) and majors

3) Familiarity using UAOnline including how to register, add/drop, check freshman progress reports
   check financial aid, and change contact information

4) Learning to use DegreeWorks, available on UAOnline, to determine requirements remaining to
   graduate

5) A clear understanding of UA Board of Regent Policy on the student code of conduct including
   plagiarism

6) Seminar students must complete the ETS Proficiency Profile test, a 40-minute multiple choice
   omnibus test that is being used to satisfy UAF’s participation in the Association of Public and Land-Grant
   Universities’ Voluntary System of Accountability. This test does not have to be proctored; instructors
   may have students take this test outside of class.

These retention objectives are largely handled outside the seminar setting through assignments and
quizzes and using Blackboard courseware (use of UAF’s courseware is a requirement). Instructors are
welcome and encouraged to discuss them in class as well. The Vice Provost and the Academic Advising
Center staff have developed common materials for these retention objectives and will load them onto
the course Blackboard site.

Please contact Vice Provost Dana Thomas at dlthomas@alaska.edu or 474-6253 if you have any
questions.