



Academic Program Review

Program Name: Rural Development - Bachelor of Arts

Academic Year 2025/2026

Recent Recommendations

Using your most recent review, please respond to all feedback and recommendations.

Response:

RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK MOST RECENT REVIEW: 1) Improve time to degree: Graduation informed persistence increased slightly from 71.8% in 2023 to 72.7% in 2024. 2) Increase enrollment: RD BA majors dropped from 38 majors in 2023 to 32 majors in 2024. The department has lost faculty and no new faculty have been hired, which decreases faculty capacity to teach additional courses, which would increase enrollment. 3) Increase enrollment of [REDACTED] students: [REDACTED] student majors increased slightly from 23.7% in 2023 to 25% in 2024. 4) Increase Student Credit Hours: (SCH) increased from 93 in 2023 to 198 in 2024 for RD -Lower, but dropped from 381 to 273 for RD -Upper during the same period. The department has lost two faculty and those positions have not been rehired. The department cannot add more courses when there is no faculty to teach extra courses. 5) Faculty to improve scholarly research/productivity, pursue grants: RD Faculty are all engaged in some type of research/creative activity and increased grant activity/applications have occurred since the last review.

Student Learning Outcomes

Describe the assessment of your student learning outcomes (SLOs). Discuss your findings, changes you are making, and what you hope to see as a result.

Response:

Learning outcomes data was collected for a total of 8 students (4 ANS and 4 RD) from Spring 2023 to Spring 2024. Due to the small numbers of students, RD and ANS students are being reported together for this cycle. The primary direct assessment of learning outcomes is senior projects and theses. A description of the assessment process, analysis, and rubric is in the supporting documents folder. Over 90% of senior projects and theses were rated as outstanding or good in the categories of "understanding" and "application" with many students creating projects that were being implemented at the time of graduation or could be implemented within two years. Faculty noted the high level of interdisciplinary projects and theses. Reviewers noted that student writing was less of a concern this cycle and more students entered the program with higher levels of writing experience and over 80% of written products and presentations were rated as outstanding or good. Graduate exit surveys were not collected. Reviewers compared baseline data for written and oral communication and noted that writing and oral communications were adequate and less of a concern this cycle, as students are entering the program with a decent writing/oral foundation (compared to previous cycles).

Did you make any curricular changes based on your most recent SLOA? If so, discuss what changes were made. If no changes were made, please discuss the strengths of your curriculum based on the assessment of your outcomes.

Response:

No curriculum changes were made to the SLOA. Strengths of RD BA curriculum are that students are fairly well directed regarding what kinds of projects they are interested in. Writing disparities have decreased among RD BA students since the last review. Required courses like ANS/RD F225 Applied Communication Skills and RD F300 Rural Development in a Global Perspective include more academic writing and oral presentations. In addition, RD 340/ANS 341 Community Research Toolbox provides hands-on research experience and knowledge for RD BA students.

As of 2017, all Baccalaureate programs are required to embed communication outcomes within their SLOA Plans. This is optional for non-Baccalaureate programs.

Communication outcomes in the SLOA plan are: **Embedded**

Check the checkbox to certify completion of the following tasks:

- ☒ Upload supporting documents to the Supporting Documents folder. This includes artifacts, rubrics, and other documents related to your SLOA.
- ☒ Upload your most recent SLOA to the Supporting Documents folder, even if no changes have been made since the last review.

Have changes been made to your SLOA document since your last review? **Yes**

If so, please summarize what changes were made.

Response:

The "mission" statement was edited to "vision" statement. The department still needs to work on the creation of a new "mission" statement, ongoing.

High Impact Practices

Please indicate which high impact practices are currently being implemented in relation to the program's student learning outcomes.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Capstone Courses & Projects | ☐ Graduate Level Research |
| ☐ Collaborative Assignments & Projects | ☒ Writing-Intensive Courses |
| ☒ Diversity/Global Learning | ☐ Publications |
| ☐ ePortfolios | ☐ Communications |
| ☒ First-Year Seminars and Experiences | ☐ Scholarly Activities |
| ☐ Internships | ☐ Studios |
| ☒ Service or Community-Based Learning | ☐ Practicum |
| ☒ Undergraduate Research | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Labs | ☐ None of these |

Discuss how the HIPs in the program are reflected in the SLOA. If you have identified HIPs that are not included in the SLOA, please consider an update.

Response:

Capstone courses and projects from RD 475 are evaluated using a prepared rubric. 70% of senior projects will score Good/outstanding. The department needs to update the RD BA SLOA to include "circumpolar north" and "global learning" under Intended Objectives/Outcomes column (we do teach this in RD 300). First year seminar RD 100 is the University Experience course taught by RSS. Students are conducting undergraduate research, which was reflected in senior project reviews. Communications course RD/ANS 225 creates a foundation in writing and oral presentation with a rural perspective. ANS 300 Alaska Native Writer's Workshop includes student writing/publishing. ANS 401 Cultural Knowledge of Alaska Native Elders includes community based learning.

Student Success

Please reference the [Resources tab](#) for information on accessing the Student Success Data Dashboard and contacting your designated data liaisons.

Student Success Data Trends

Persistence: **Increase**

Pass Rates: **Increase**

Student Credit Hours: **Increase**

Majors: **Decrease**

Degrees Awarded: **No Change**

Other Trends (if applicable):

CIS AK Native Studies & Rural Development majors have stayed constant around 88/89 from 2023-24; RD BA went down from 38 to 32 from 23-24 (we believe Covid-19 enrollment decreases from 2021 are still affecting this group of students). SCH for RD BA students went down from 13.8-12.9 (23-24). Degrees by program stayed constant at 6 for RD BA program. RD BA Graduation-Informed Persistence went up slightly from 71.8% in 22/23 to 72.7% in 23/24. Students in our programs are overwhelmingly aged 25 and older at over 80% for both 2023/24.

Achievement Disparities

Discuss any achievement disparities identified in your disaggregated student success data and explain how you plan to address them.

Response:

Demographic characteristics show that [REDACTED] students in our program are still being outpaced by their [REDACTED] peers; 64% of our degrees were obtained by [REDACTED] students in 2023 and 84% in 2024. DANSRD still has a high percentage of [REDACTED] students, 63% in 2023 and 52% in 2024. We plan to increase marketing/social media around [REDACTED] graduates of our program going forward to hopefully increase [REDACTED] participation.

Closing the Loop

Please discuss how your student learning outcomes are reflected in high impact practices and student success data.

Response:

Capstone courses and projects, global learning, writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research, first-year seminars and experiences, "Service Learning, Community-based Learning" are all high impact practices that apply to the RD BA program. Students in our programs graduate with business plans, research frameworks, community planning frameworks, project management knowledge, funding/grant proposals and leadership skills which are implemented during and after graduation. Graduation informed persistence among our students increased from 69.6% in 2023 to 73.1% in 2024. Degrees increased from 11 (2023) to 19 in 2024. Average course pass rate increased from 78.1% in 2023 to 81.4% in 2024.

Academic Program Profile

The following questions help show how your program supports the university's mission, connects with other UA programs, engages with the community, contributes through service courses, and supports student success after graduation. Please use this section to highlight the value your program brings to students, the university, and beyond.

UAF's Mission:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and an international center for research, education, and the arts, emphasizing the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. UAF integrates teaching, research, and public service as it educates students for active citizenship and prepares them for lifelong learning and careers.

In what ways does your program advance UAF's mission?

Response:

DANSRD's RD BA degree program includes research, education, the arts, circumpolar/global learning and focuses on the people/communities in the circumpolar North. RD BA degree students are often RD practitioners in their own right, serving as Tribal Administrators, directors, managers and employees of service organizations (many in Alaska Native organizations). Many RD BA students return to earn their RD MA degree and many graduates of our programs come back to UAF as adjunct instructors.

How is your program related to others in the UA system?

Response:

The RD BA program is related to the RD MA program and the RD ANS program, as many courses are cross-listed. The political science, education, history, and arts departments are also related to the RD BA program as many courses are cross-listed with those departments. RD BA students in RD 430 serve as judges for the Arctic Innovation Competition each year.

Who are your key community or external partners?

Response:

Fairbanks North Star Borough (professional development, teachers, counseling); Tanana Chiefs Conference (Education projects); Doyon, Limited; Doyon Foundation (over █████ in scholarships to UAF each year); Iditarod Area School District (career/tech Ed support/design); Alaska Native Tribes (infrastructure projects); Alaska Native nonprofits including Alaska Native health organizations; and Alaska Native social service organizations are key community and external partners of our department. One of DANSRD's faculty has a joint appointment with IARC (International Arctic Research Center), another faculty is doing work with █████ people in Finland and has research partners in Germany, Greenland and other countries; another faculty is working on a solar/microgrid project with a rural community. DANSRD faculty members work extensively with various community members and organizations, providing expertise and knowledge on relevant rural development issues.

What role do your services courses play, if any?

Response:

One service course RD/ANS160/360 hosts the Festival of Native Arts event each spring which showcases Alaska Native dance and students learn how to organize a three-day community event that is free to the public. The Festival is a cornerstone of the community and positively shines a spotlight on the University and our department. Members of our RD faculty are involved with Doyon, Limited, the Doyon Foundation, Fairbanks Native Association, and multiple Alaska Native Tribes. DANSRD has a faculty member with a joint appointment at International Arctic Research Center. Finally, faculty members work extensively with various community members and organizations providing expertise and knowledge on relevant rural development issues.

How do your graduates succeed after leaving the program?

Response:

Rural development graduates serve as leaders and employees in Alaska Native, government, and private organizations throughout the State of Alaska. Many RD BA graduates are doing circumpolar north / global work. We are witnessing an increase in small business ownership among our graduates. There is a continuing need for graduates who understand the unique development needs and challenges of rural Alaska.

Submitter and Collaborator Names:

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Committee Review

Program Name: Rural Development - Bachelor of Arts

Academic Year 2025/2026

Overall Recommendations

The college or school committees set the tone for helping each program feel seen during this process. We have provided you with feedback tags to attach to this program review. Please select as many as applicable.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Insufficient Narratives | ☐ Report Incomplete |
| ☐ Address Achievement Gap | ☐ Consider Curricular Revisions |
| ☐ Develop Online Offerings/Options | ☒ Improve Time to Degree |
| ☒ Increase Enrollment | ☐ Increase Graduates |
| ☐ Increase Retention/Persistence | ☐ Strengthen Advising Practices |
| ☒ May be asked to share Effective Practices | ☐ Recommendation to University-Wide Committee |

Explanation of Overall Recommendations

Response:

Comments for the BA in RD are identical to the BA in ANS because the reviews were largely the same. For the 2027 full-program review, there will be a need to differentiate the review.

The program responded to the recommendations from the 2023 full-program review. Time to degree completion was not addressed (cited persistence rates, which did increase – great!) and noted that enrollment remained flat. Noted that there was a loss in faculty which limits the ability to teach courses which would attract students to the program. Did demonstrate that there was an increase in the enrollment of [REDACTED] students, student credit hour production, and grantsmanship and research. Provided some data to support these positive trends, more detail would better support the noted outcomes. For the SLOA, it would be best not to pool data with other academic programs. We recognize the concern with small sample sizes (low number of students). With program maturity over time, this concern should be alleviated. For the full-program review in 2027, should include additional evidence to document this outcome specifically for all SLOs to support the narrative overviews. Additional evidence will also strengthen the section on continuous improvement and closing the loop.

Student Learning Outcomes Feedback

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Strong | ☐ Developing |
| ☒ Requires Minor Revision | ☐ Requires Major Revision |

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Strong Alignment with SLOA Plan | ☐ Clear, Concise Presentation of Findings |
| ☐ Compelling Learning Story | ☐ Missing a Direct Measure |
| ☐ Missing Active Verbs | ☐ Missing Curricular Connection |
| ☐ Missing Collaboration within Department | |

SLOA Feedback Narrative:

Provided 4 SLOs, all of which have clear and well-defined procedures for assessment and implementation plan (that includes where in the program the SLO must be completed and assessed in the program). The assessment plan and implementation processes for each SLO were strong; the artifact/rubric used for assessment was included in the supplementary documents folder. Evidence (data) on how the SLOs is being met was provided in primarily narrative form for some of the SLOs but was combined with ANS data (another program) due to small sample sizes. For the full-program review in 2027, please provide evidence for all SLOs as a narrative with data and/or as a supplementary document(s). Hopefully by then there will be more data collected which should minimize the need to pool data with another program. There were no changes to the SLOA since the last program review in 2023.

The program provided an overview of the curricular changes, their rationale, and the realized or potential impacts/improvements of those changes.

The program provided a discussion on how SLOs are reflected in the HIPs and student success data. Documenting continuous improvement and the closing of the loop are important components of the program review process, not just as an exercise, but to demonstrate that assessment results are used to make meaningful, evidence-based changes that enhance program quality and student learning. This process ensures accountability, fosters a culture of ongoing improvement, and provides clear evidence to accreditors and stakeholders that actions lead to measurable outcomes. For the full-program review in 2027, should include additional evidence to document this outcome specifically for each SLO to support the narrative overviews.

Student Success and Equity Feedback**Narrative:**

The program took a close look at the Student Success Dashboard and thoughtfully addressed feedback from the 2023 review. The data shows steady enrollment and a consistent student population, with most students aged 25 or older. The program continues to attract a high number of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] students and plans to use social media outreach to increase [REDACTED] participation. Moving forward, setting clear recruitment goals and implementing these strategies soon will help demonstrate progress and strengthen outcomes ahead of the 2027 full review.

Both the ANS BA and RD BA programs include writing-focused classes and first-year seminars, reflecting a strong commitment to student engagement and academic success. Graduation rates have remained steady, suggesting these efforts are effective. Despite challenges related to limited faculty, the program continues to show dedication to student support and improvement.

By acknowledging the [REDACTED] imbalance and outlining plans to address it, the program shows awareness of equity and inclusion. Continuing to track and share data on these efforts will further highlight its commitment to student success and ongoing improvement; in agreement with broader recommendations, again, it may be beneficial to separate the ANS and RD programs for the next full review to ensure each program's distinct trends and strategies can be evaluated more clearly.

High Impact Practices Feedback**Narrative:**

High impact practices were noted throughout the experience of the student in the program from 100 level to 400 level capstone projects. Bringing together HIPs and student learning outcomes is a key part of the SLOA process, and how these HIPs are designed and assessed is key in overall program and student success.

Reviewer Names: