

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR ALASKA NATIVE STUDIES & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS:

- The programs are central to UAF's mission and strategic goals.
- They have a positive impact on Alaska Native communities as graduates fill leadership positions in tribal administration, politics, education, and more.
- The ANS BA, RD BA, and RD MA are unique in the UA system (and the nation).
- Flexible design (face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous distance delivery) to meet the needs of students.

WEAKNESSES:

- A high cost per student ratio, especially in the undergraduate programs. This is related to the small number of students in the majors (average of 23 per year in the ANS BA and 51 in the RD BA).
- Low graduation rate: an average of 2 per year for ANS BA, 6 per year in the RD BA, and 3 per year in the RD MA.
- Difficulty hiring and retaining a student success coordinator has led to a decrease in enrollment and retention.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- UAF strategic goal to be a world leader in Alaska Native and Indigenous Studies should lead to increased focus on the programs.
- Global interest in climate change and the circumpolar north should lead to increased demand.
- The department is working to identify partners and expand partnerships with organizations such as the Native Village of Unalakleet, the National Parks Service, and First Alaskans Institute.
- The new Alaska Native Themed requirement is already leading to increased enrollments in introductory courses.

THREATS:

- There is a high demand for university and public service on the faculty.
- Students often have limited financial resources and may stop out frequently.
- Out-of-state programs are being developed and targeted to Alaskan students.
- Traumatic events, such as suicide, assaults, and racism have negative effects on students.

CENTRALITY TO MISSION:

- These programs are clearly central to the UAF mission to serve "the circumpolar north and its diverse peoples."

INDICATORS OF QUALITY:

- A supportive, innovative and positive environment for students that offers high impact learning experiences.

- Strong connections and partnerships with Alaskan communities.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS:

- As stated above, the department has a low student to faculty ratio.
- The faculty acquire some external funding, but not enough to offset costs.

	MAJORS	DEGREES
Alaska Native Studies BA	FY15: 26/ FY19: 23	FY15: 5/ FY19: 1
Rural Development BA	FY15: 54/ FY19: 36	FY15: 8/ FY19: 7
Rural Development MA	FY15: 36/ FY19: 28	FY15: 3/ FY19: 2

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Alaska Native Studies BA:

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation (6 votes, 1 abstention)	program is developing improvement plan for efficiencies as well as recruitment, retention, and graduation	

Rural Development BA:

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation (6 votes, 1 abstention)	program is developing improvement plan for efficiencies as well as recruitment, retention, and graduation	

Rural Development MA:

RECOMMENDATION:	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP:
Continuation (6 votes, 1 abstention)	program is developing improvement plan for efficiencies as well as recruitment, retention, and graduation	