A committee of Alaska Native Language Program faculty met on February 6, 2014 to review four student papers from ESK 488 Documenting Yup’ik Traditions/Caliarkaq, which is the capstone class of the YLC program in which students do a senior project. Student work was reviewed by Lawrence Kaplan, program head, Assistant Professor Oscar Alexie, Instructor Sophie Alexie, and Assistant Professor Walkie Charles. The assignment given the class was to do research on a topic of their choosing. The class met twice weekly during the semester to talk about topics and prepare students to write a 30 page paper based on their research, with co-instructors Oscar and Sophie Alexie walking them through the writing process. Research with Yup’ik elders and in the library was done by students on their own.

Exit surveys filled out by YLC graduates were reviewed by faculty committee in meetings on April 1 and 8, 2014. The delay was due to the slowness of students in returning the surveys. Finally, we received surveys from the first two program graduates in March-April.

In its discussion the committee considered each intended objective/outcome of the degree program as listed below:

1. **Ability to speak Yup’ik at a high proficiency level:**

This group of students is fluent in Yup’ik having come to the program with a very good knowledge of the spoken language.

2. **Knowledge of written Yup’ik:**

The quality of writing is overall very good, and faculty are very satisfied with student papers, some of which stand out as especially good: one student wrote on Tapernat (basket grass) and how it’s prepared and used; another wrote on Yagyiarat (rules of proper conduct in certain situations). Both of these papers were mentioned as very well-written.

3. **Familiarity with Yup’ik literature:**

Literature is covered primarily in ESK 208 Yup’ik Composition, ESK 240 Intro. to Reading and Writing Yup’ik, ESK 330 Yup’ik Literature, ESK 375 Yup’ik Philosophy, where students read literature and write essays about what they read, including stories told by Yup’ik elders. In ESK 488 Documenting Yup’ik Traditions, students do a senior project and critique each other’s work.
4. Understanding of Yup’ik grammar:

Students learn grammar in several classes, beginning in 208. Faculty are satisfied overall with the quality of grammar demonstrated in the student papers that were reviewed. The good grammar is due in part to students’ fluency in the language as well as the grammar instruction they have received. Minor spelling problems are evidenced by older students, who faculty say have forgotten what they’ve learned about spelling earlier in the program, e.g. in ESK 109. Younger students appear better at retaining their knowledge of spelling. One student reports that she would have benefited from more grammar in the curriculum. Another student passed out of early courses that teach vocabulary and grammar being proficient in the language and would have benefited from some of the material in these courses.

Surveys responses indicate that more grammar and orthography (spelling) study would be desirable in this program.

5. Satisfy student expectations of program:

Students report that they are very satisfied with the program, first because the final project in the capstone class (ESK 488) was relevant and useful. Additionally, a student commented: “The B.A. in Yuktun is very beneficial to my job. I just needed to attend a teacher certification program to get my teaching degree in Elementary Ed.”

CURRICULAR IMPROVEMENTS BASED ON SLOA PROCESS:

Faculty focused on the student request for more grammar and spelling instruction and have developed a new course, ESK 131 Beginning Yup’ik Grammar II which will be introduced into the degree program, through a program revision that is in progress. This will give two semesters of grammar, ESK 130-131 and should satisfy the student request, provided that students are not permitted to bypass the courses. Students must be evaluated for their knowledge of grammar, if there is a possibility that they would be moved to a higher level and miss the grammar courses.

In addition a program revision is underway that will have the YLC B.A. offered on the Fairbanks campus, as well as at KUC, taught by three faculty instead of two. This should improve the program by maximizing faculty resources and offering classes with more students. There are currently two B.A.’s, YLC and Yup’ik Eskimo. Once the revision is approved, there would be only one, Yup’ik Language and Culture.