

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences

Strategic Plan



Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Strengths	3
Vision and Mission	4
Core Purpose & Values	5
Strategic Goals	6
Achieving the Goals	7
Goal 1	7
Goal 2	8
Goal 3	9
Goal 4	10
Goal 5	11

Introduction

The School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is a world-class marine research and teaching organization focusing on marine and freshwater fisheries, oceanography, marine biology, seafood technology and community outreach.

As Alaska's university marine science institution, we are uniquely positioned to help the citizens of Alaska understand our varied and changing marine and freshwater ecosystems and coastal resources on which so many depend.

We seek and share knowledge of local and global aquatic systems, through pioneering scientific research and discovery and increasingly through the exchange and preservation of existing knowledge.

We search for knowledge throughout the world's oceans, but focus in and around Alaska, on our oceans, bays and estuaries, and on our freshwater systems, from the Gulf of Alaska to the Arctic Ocean. Our pursuit of knowledge includes the study of our coastal communities, our living and non-living resources and the ecosystems within which they occur.

Alaska's people are uniquely dependent on our coasts and rivers. At the UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, we are charged with creating and exchanging knowledge that serves Alaskans' needs as they face an increasingly uncertain and changeable future.



Strengths

In working together to develop this plan, we recognize and build on our existing strengths:

- We are part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks – America’s Arctic University; Alaska’s Sea Grant, Land Grant, Space Grant campus; and Alaska’s only research university.
- We are diverse, with people, research programs and facilities located across Alaska.
- We have broad and varied expertise in oceanography, marine biology, freshwater and marine fisheries, seafood technology and community outreach.
- We are home to the Alaska Sea Grant College Program, whose statewide mission, education services and extension faculty are our primary connection for sharing and exchanging knowledge with Alaska’s coastal communities.
- We are growing, principally through the expansion of our undergraduate fisheries program, which is providing new educational opportunities for the next generation of Alaska’s fisheries professionals.
- We have robust facilities and research programs, including our coastal laboratories, the Alaska Ocean Observing System and the new Alaska Region Research Vessel.



Vision and Mission

VISION

The School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences at the University of Alaska Fairbanks will be a primary source of knowledge about marine and freshwater environments, enabling Alaskans to better understand, conserve and use these abundant resources for the benefit of all.

UAF SFOS MISSION

The School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences creates and shares knowledge about marine and freshwater ecosystems, and their responses to global change, by training leaders in Alaska to understand, protect and sustainably manage our resources.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS MISSION

The University of Alaska Fairbanks, the nation's northernmost Land, Sea and Space Grant university and international research center, advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research and public service with an emphasis on Alaska, the circumpolar North and their diverse peoples. UAF--America's arctic university--promotes academic excellence, student success and lifelong learning.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA MISSION

The University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples.



Core Purpose & Values

CORE PURPOSE

- To increase understanding of the interactions between Alaska's marine and freshwater ecosystems and the global ocean and atmosphere through multi-disciplinary research
- To support sustainable use and stewardship of Alaska's arctic and sub-arctic marine and freshwater ecosystems, through scientific discovery and by sharing knowledge with Alaska's communities
- To educate present and future citizens to become informed users and managers of Alaska's marine and freshwater resources
- To provide scientific advice and service to Alaska, the nation and the world by gathering and disseminating information on Alaska's arctic and sub-arctic marine and freshwater ecosystems



CORE VALUES

- Maintaining and encouraging scientific excellence and integrity
- Pursuing knowledge through collaboration, openness and sharing
- Exchanging knowledge with and for the benefit of Alaska's communities
- Supporting responsible stewardship of marine and freshwater resources



Strategic Goals

GOAL 1

SFOS will be a focal center for North Pacific and circum-Arctic collaboration and the nation's premier institution for high latitude marine and freshwater ecosystem research and teaching.



GOAL 2

SFOS will support sustainable resource management and utilization as a leading provider of accurate information and unbiased interpretation concerning marine and freshwater resources and ecosystems of Alaska and the Arctic.

GOAL 3

SFOS will develop strength in areas of critical need with sufficient faculty, technical expertise and resources to conduct major research programs and educate the next generation of scientists, managers and teachers.

GOAL 4

SFOS will be the school of choice for fisheries undergraduates, particularly from within Alaska, and will attract and retain the highest-quality graduate students in oceanography, marine biology, fisheries and seafood science.

GOAL 5

SFOS research, teaching and service will proactively serve and respond to the needs of our Alaskan stakeholders.

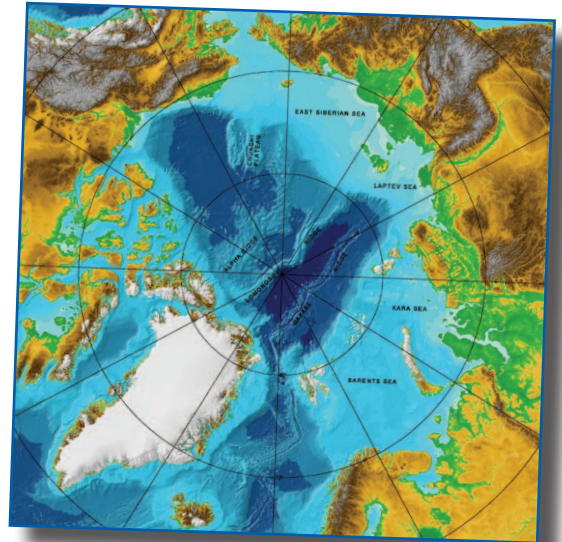
Achieving the Goals

GOAL 1

SFOS will be a focal center for North Pacific and circum-arctic collaboration and the nation's premier institution for high latitude marine and freshwater ecosystem research and teaching.

ACTIONS

- Increase our strength in areas of critical need, such as climate change and ocean acidification, and provide adequate resources to attract and manage major programs
- Attract top graduate students and young scientists to develop and maintain a dynamic mix of research experience and expertise
- Encourage and support interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge-sharing within SFOS, within UAF and with partners across Alaska and around the world
- Improve the amount and quality of interaction and collaboration between SFOS and Alaska's communities
- Increase support for state-of-the-art facilities including the Alaska Region Research Vessel
- Improve internal support for grantsmanship, including support for activities that translate scientific discovery to community needs



Goal 2

GOAL 2

SFOS will support sustainable resource management and utilization as a leading provider of accurate information and unbiased interpretation concerning marine and freshwater resources and ecosystems of Alaska and the Arctic.

ACTIONS

- Develop a catalog of SFOS expertise
- Integrate geographically-dispersed and Fairbanks units into a unified school structure
- Establish and maintain long-term data series
- Develop information partnerships with decision-makers and other stakeholders in government and the private sector
 - Develop world-class, locally relevant research programs
 - Provide for two-way communication with stakeholders to define research needs and priorities
 - Establish a clear and responsive pathway for inquiries
 - Develop capacity for state-of-the-art oceanographic and environmental data access
 - Develop a strong capability for modeling and prediction
- Strengthen partnerships with communities, focusing on information sharing and support for community needs
 - Maintain Alaska Sea Grant extension faculty positions in coastal communities
 - Develop and maintain reliable, responsive communication pathways
 - Create strong connections with campuses throughout Alaska to create accessible career pathways for students across the state
 - Develop expertise in incorporating local knowledge and local involvement in collaborative research activities
 - Enhance, strengthen and support creative outlets for faculty commitment to public service

Goal 3

GOAL 3

SFOS will develop strength in areas of critical need with sufficient faculty, technical expertise and resources to conduct major research programs and educate the next generation of scientists, managers and teachers.

ACTIONS

- Think creatively across disciplines and without regard to current administrative boundaries
- Identify current and future trends, such as climate change and ocean acidification, that resonate with our Alaska-centered mission
 - Identify and build from current strengths
 - Develop the ability to predict future ecosystem states and evaluate consequences
 - Sustain and enhance *in situ* and field observations of ecosystems
 - Perform process-oriented research to understand system dynamics
 - Construct and refine fishery and ecosystem models
 - Develop, maintain and enhance community information systems
- Include students in multi-disciplinary research
- Consider alternative approaches to developing areas of excellence
 - Develop areas of strength through interdisciplinary initiatives focused on defined themes or problems
 - Focus areas of strength around or in support of fisheries theme(s)



Goal 4

GOAL 4

SFOS will be the school of choice for fisheries undergraduates, particularly from within Alaska, and will attract and retain the highest-quality graduate students in oceanography, marine biology, fisheries and seafood science.

ACTIONS

- Implement a broad slate of curricular needs that respond to a wide range of community needs
- Continually assess and adapt degree programs to meet current and future community needs
- Involve students at all levels in research, teaching and other work experiences
- Incorporate K-12 and community education into SFOS research, teaching and outreach activities
- Develop fiscal and other resources for support of students and student-focused activities
- Enable faculty to teach in, and become involved with, rural campuses
- Involve Alaska Sea Grant extension faculty as community liaisons for mentoring and recruiting students from coastal communities
- Develop clear career pathways in the marine and fisheries-oriented industries via articulation agreements with certificate and associate degree programs



Goal 5

GOAL 5

SFOS research, teaching and service will proactively serve and respond to the needs of our Alaskan stakeholders.

ACTIONS

- Develop and expand partnerships with stakeholders in marine and fisheries oriented industries, agencies, non-profit and community organizations
- Establish ourselves as a problem-solving resource for Alaska's coastal and fisheries-dependent communities
- Think creatively outside of our traditional disciplinary and administrative boundaries
 - Review and improve all aspects of our internal structure
 - Assess and revise curriculum
 - Improve connections and communication among SFOS units
 - Increase integration of geographically separated units
 - Develop and strengthen collaborations and synergies with other UAF and UA entities
- Improve the integration of our Alaska Sea Grant extension faculty with our academic and research faculty
- Identify and engage our stakeholders in planning, outreach, fund-raising and communication with policy-makers
 - Encourage faculty service on relevant state and federal advisory boards and similar bodies
- Collaborate with agencies, community groups, and industry groups in research
- Increase the visibility and relevance of our school in communities across the state
 - Develop and use a visible and recognizable brand
 - Continue to enhance the website as our marquee and front door
- Encourage connections between researchers and integrate K-12 and community education into research planning

