Strategic Communication Plan
July 2017-June 2018
Introduction

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Integrated Communications Plan supports UAF University Relations’ efforts and advances the university’s mission and strategic objectives.

This plan serves the following purpose:

- Aligns university messaging with institutional priorities
- Serves as a guide for broad communications and marketing activities and messaging
- Outlines UAF’s public relations priorities

This plan was developed by University Relations with guidance from the following stakeholders:

- Public Information Officers Council (PIOC)
- Research Working Group (academic deans and research directors)
- Student Services directors
- Advancement directors
- College of Rural and Community Development deans and directors
- Administrative Services directors
- Chancellor’s core cabinet
- UA Statewide Office of Public Affairs

University of Alaska 2025 goals

- Increase degree attainment
- Provide Alaska’s skilled workforce
- Grow our world-class research
- Contribute to Alaska’s economic development
- Operate more cost-effectively
Target Audiences

The audiences listed below do not represent all of UAF’s target audiences. Each unit may have additional unique target audiences defined in a different priority order.

**Primary:** Prospective students and their parents, current students, university employees and leaders, alumni, donors and funding agencies, legislators/policymakers, Alaska citizens

**Secondary:** Student influencers (teachers, counselors), military/veterans, employers, business and community leaders, Alaska Native tribes/corporations, K-12 school districts, key influencers, Interior Alaska, rural Alaska and Pacific Rim communities, Anchorage bowl, Lower 48 markets, international markets

Long-term Communication Goal

To position the University of Alaska Fairbanks as a premier student-centered teaching and research university, strengthen UAF’s reputation, and gain support from stakeholders.

**2017 - 2018 Communication Goals:** what we aspire to achieve with our communication efforts.

1. To strengthen UAF’s reputation as a world-class student-centered Arctic research university.
2. To increase public understanding of UAF’s positive impact on the social and economic development of Alaska and the value of higher education.
3. To increase enrollment and retention of current and prospective students.
4. To strengthen alumni and donor giving and engagement.
5. To increase confidence in UAF.
6. To strengthen UAF’s reputation as a safe, welcoming and inclusive campus free from discrimination.
2017-2018 Communication Goals

Goal 1: To strengthen UAF’s reputation as a world-class student-centered Arctic research university.

Strategies:

- Leverage national and international interest in the Arctic to position UAF as a leader in Arctic research and policy
- Share stories about how UAF’s research makes a difference in everyday lives of Alaskans
- Highlight UAF’s research enterprise in strategically developed internal and external communications and marketing publications, campaigns and electronic platforms
- Highlight and position notable research experts and faculty
- Leverage social media to feature notable researchers and promote research, meetings and conferences
- Capitalize on opportunities to highlight donor support of research
- Promote and grow undergraduate research opportunities
- Make research stories easy to understand and relevant to the average person

Goal 2: To increase public understanding of UAF’s positive impact on the social and economic development of Alaska and the value of higher education.

Strategies:

- Share stories about how the university is making a difference in the lives of Alaskans and people living in the North
- Include economic impact messaging in outreach publications, presentations, events and campaigns
- Develop a legislative strategy team that meets regularly throughout the year and engages advocates
- Leverage the UAF Alumni Association, advisory councils and community groups to become university advocates
- Convey impacts in terms the average person can understand and relate to
- Develop new and capitalize on existing opportunities to demonstrate the value of UAF’s research to Alaska business and industry
- Highlight how UAF’s research impacts Alaska Native language, culture and identity
- Share practical and relevant examples of why a degree from UAF matters—from certificate to PhD
- Engage stakeholders in identifying high-demand workforce needs
Goal 3: To increase enrollment and retention of current and prospective students.

Strategies:

- Invest in strategic recruitment and retention activities at both the central and unit levels
- Use the new CRM to inform communication and recruitment strategies
- Strengthen collaborations with Admissions, University Relations, schools and colleges to refine recruitment strategies and target markets
- Align campaigns with admissions counselor travel in target markets
- Refine student communication plans and marketing activities based on data from analytics and PAIR
- Leverage reputable university rankings as appropriate
- Implement a mix of paid, earned and owned marketing based on university and unit recruitment goals
- Further refine UAF’s student segment model and student personas
- Invest in admissions counselors, marketing personnel and support staff
- Align and coordinate messaging with UA campaigns and outreach efforts
- Promote certificate, associate degrees and workforce development programs
- Continue to promote online degree programs and degree completion opportunities

Goal 4: To strengthen alumni and donor giving and engagement.

Strategies:

- Cultivate and invest in relationship building with current and prospective donors
- Share the impacts made possible by donor support
- Create opportunities for donors to engage with faculty, staff and students
- Leverage alumni influencers to publicly support UAF priorities
- Continue enhancing Development and Alumni Relations activities and communications
- Engage alumni in university priority setting, committees and campus initiatives
- Feature notable alumni stories and accomplishments
- Integrate and strengthen annual awards and donor recognition events
- Ensure alumni and donor events are developed with goals and engagement in mind
- Promote local businesses and vendors owned and operated by alums
- Connect alumni to current students
Goal 5: To increase confidence in UAF.

Strategies:

- Develop and place positive stories in internal and external communications — share what we do well
- Coordinate messaging about budget cuts and impacts
- Invest in reputational branding and positioning within Alaska and the Lower 48
- Articulate a clear and compelling strategic plan for moving the institution forward
- Develop and communicate a shared set of values and decision-making principles
- Increase use of social media to highlight UAF people, programs and accomplishments
- Attend meetings and conferences that highlight UAF’s people, programs and research
- Increase UAF representation on local and statewide boards and committees
- Provide timely, relevant and transparent communications to students and employees on university priorities, initiatives and structural changes
- Develop an “elevator pitch” for employees to talk to the public about high-priority initiatives and issues

Goal 6: To strengthen UAF’s reputation as a safe, welcoming and inclusive campus free from discrimination.

Strategies:

- Provide frequent communication to students and employees on safety-related policies and initiatives
- Keep Title IX and nondiscrimination messaging relevant and highly visible to students and employees
- Work with the Employee Engagement Committee to assess the campus climate and make recommendations to leadership for improvements
- Establish two-way communication channels for students and employees to discuss safety-related issues with leadership
- Engage student groups to be visible supporters of a safe campus
- Update websites with relevant safety-related information and campus resources
- Incorporate talking points on UAF’s efforts to create safe, welcoming and inclusive campuses into presentations
- Identify opportunities for safety-related campus committees to coordinate and working collaboratively on messaging and or campaigns
Institutional Key Messages

1. **We are Alaska’s research university and America’s Arctic university.**
   - UAF is America’s Arctic university and a national and world leader in Arctic research.
   - UAF researchers are world-renowned in their fields, and the work they do is important and notable.
   - UAF maintains many partnerships and collaborations throughout Alaska and the world, which drives innovation and creates meaningful discoveries.
   - UAF's research helps sustain Alaska's economic growth and enhance Alaska communities.

2. **We deliver a high-quality education at an affordable price.**
   - We are Alaska’s only Land, Sea and Space Grant University, and offer everything from workforce development and vocational programs to master’s degrees and doctorates.
   - At UAF, students find a wide variety of academic programs to inspire them.
   - An education at UAF provides a hands-on learning experience in the vast dynamic laboratory that is Alaska.
   - Students at the Fairbanks campus have a traditional college experience, including a robust campus life, opportunities for research and creative work, small class sizes and accessible instructors.
   - Community campuses and outreach and learning centers throughout Alaska provide enriching education and programs that reflect the cultural, social and economic values of the communities they serve.

3. **We enrich the lives of Alaskans and engage our communities, state, nation and world through our teaching, research and service work.**
   - UAF is a catalyst for innovation and economic development for communities and the state.
   - UAF is a good investment for our partners, donors and funding agencies.
   - UAF is an asset to Alaska, the nation and the world, making our communities a better place to live.
   - UAF serves Alaska Native and other Indigenous peoples and celebrates their cultures, languages and identities.

4. **Our location defines us and provides transformational experiences from the personal to the global.**
   - The Alaska lifestyle is woven into the UAF experience.
   - At UAF, our location offers the opportunity for global significance, just outside the front door.
   - In work and play, we embrace our unique lifestyle and inspiring surroundings.
   - Our Arctic location shapes our research.
5. **We are a welcoming and supportive community.**

- Your success matters to us. We will help you find what you need to succeed here, as a student or professional.
- At UAF, everyone fits in. We are diverse, attracting people of all ages and backgrounds and from around the world.
- UAF alumni have great affinity and fondness for their university, and show it through their donations, volunteerism and support.
- UAF is a family — once a Nanook, always a Nanook.

6. **UAF continues to be strong despite our budget challenges.**

- We are currently facing headwinds due to budget cuts, but we remain strong.
- We are making the necessary decisions to proactively position UAF for its second century.
- We are reshaping our university to continue to meet the needs of our students and the communities we serve.