

3. Introduction to the University of Alaska Fairbanks

MISSION STATEMENT

The University of Alaska Fairbanks, as the nation's northernmost Land, Sea and Space Grant university and international research center, advances and disseminates knowledge through creative teaching, research, and public service with an emphasis on Alaska, the North and their diverse peoples.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SYSTEM

Alaska was still a territory in 1915 when the United States Congress set aside federal lands near Fairbanks for a land-grant college. In 1917, Alaska's Territorial Legislature approved a statute establishing the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, which opened in 1922. In 1935, the institution was renamed the University of Alaska. In 1975, in response to the university's rapid expansion into other parts of the state, the administration was decentralized and the University of Alaska statewide system was created.

An 11-member board of regents, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Legislature, governs the UA system. The board appoints a president who is responsible for the administration of the system and serves as executive officer of the board of regents. There are three regional university centers in the system: the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau. The chancellor for each campus reports to the president. The system office is located in Fairbanks.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

Overview

UAF has unique features not duplicated in other units of the UA system. It is the only institution in the state offering doctoral degrees and the UAF main campus is the state's



Aurora over West Ridge



Constitution Park, looking toward Rasmuson Library



Winter view of Gruening from Wood Center

original residential campus. UAF is widely acknowledged as Alaska's leading research institution, particularly on issues related to the Arctic and has primary responsibility for Alaska Native education. UAF is America's northernmost Land, Sea and Space Grant institution.

UAF is a multi-campus statewide institution. Its main campus—the subject of this report—occupies nearly 2,250 acres approximately three miles west-northwest of the center of the city of Fairbanks. UAF's College of Rural Alaska oversees six community campuses: Bristol Bay Campus in Dillingham, Chukchi Campus in Kotzebue, Kuskokwim Campus in Bethel and the Northwest Campus in Nome. The Tanana Valley Campus, which provides general education at the certificate and associate degree levels and vocational technical training, is located in Fairbanks, as is the Interior-Aleutians Campus, which administers learning centers and distance-delivery education to more than 100 communities throughout the state.

Academic Programs

Accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, UAF's colleges and schools offer degrees or certificates in more than 70 disciplines, including technical and vocational fields. The university offers certificate, associate and baccalaureate and master's degree programs in the arts, sciences and professions, as well as selected doctoral programs. UAF's colleges and schools are:

- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Rural Alaska
- College of Science, Engineering and Mathematics
- Graduate School
- School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management
- School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences
- School of Management
- School of Mineral Engineering

Student Profile

As of fall 2000, 8,463 students were enrolled at UAF. Of these, 4,938—58 percent—were enrolled at the Fairbanks campus with the remaining 42 percent at the branch campuses, although students commonly take courses at multiple campuses. About one-quarter—23 percent—of students enrolled at the Fairbanks campus lived on campus. A significant 46 percent of the student body is 25 or older, with the average age being 28. With only 23 percent of the students residing on campus, UAF can be accurately characterized as a commuter campus.

Of the total UAF enrollment for fall 2000, 91 percent of students were undergraduates and nine percent graduate students; 59 percent were women and 41 percent men. The majority of student—86 percent—came from the state of Alaska, with 11 percent from other states and 3 percent from foreign countries.

Research

UAF is a major comprehensive university classified as a Doctoral II research intensive institution by the Carnegie Foundation. It is ranked in the top 100 research institutions in the United States and among the top 75 public universities in funding from the National Science Foundation. In addition to research conducted by individual faculty members within academic departments, research programs are concentrated in the following institutes and centers, located in Fairbanks, unless otherwise noted:

- Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Stations (Fairbanks and Palmer)
- Agricultural Research Service
- Alaska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
- Alaska Native Language Center
- Alaska Quaternary Center
- Arctic Region Supercomputing Center
- Boreal Ecology Cooperative Research Unit
- Center for Cross-Cultural Studies
- Center for Global Change and Arctic System Research
- Fishery Industrial Technology Center (Kodiak)



UAF graduation



Aerial view of West Ridge



Reindeer at Fairbanks Experimental Farm Fields

- Geophysical Institute, including the Poker Flat Research Range
- Institute of Arctic Biology
- Institute of Marine Science
- Institute of Northern Engineering
- International Arctic Research Center
- Juneau Center for Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (Juneau)
- Mineral Industry Research Laboratory
- Petroleum Development Laboratory

Public Service

UAF provides services to Alaska residents through its Cooperative Extension Service and the Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Native Human Resource Development Program, Alaska Sea Grant College Program, the Georgeson Botanical Garden, KUAC public radio and TV stations, the Rasmuson Library and the University of Alaska Museum.