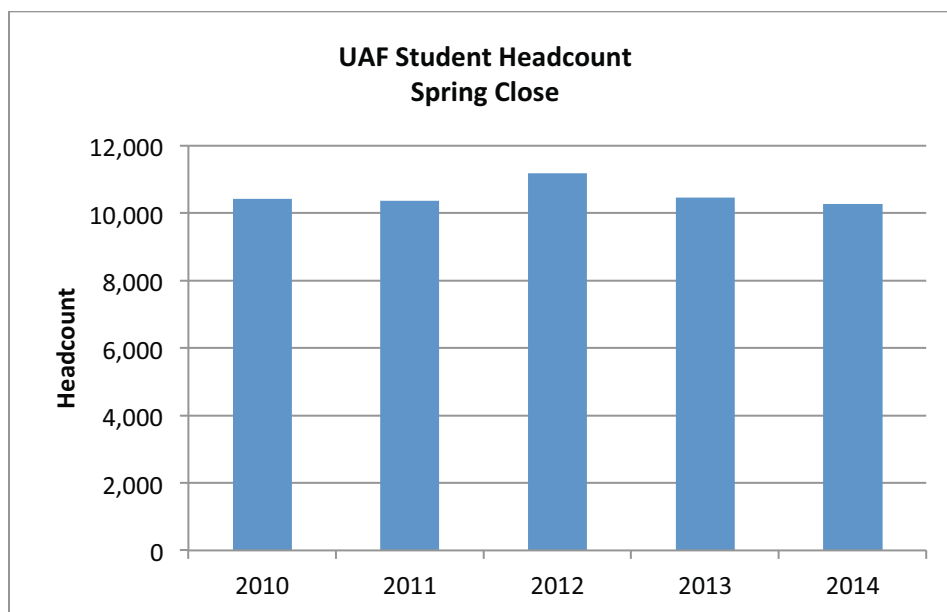




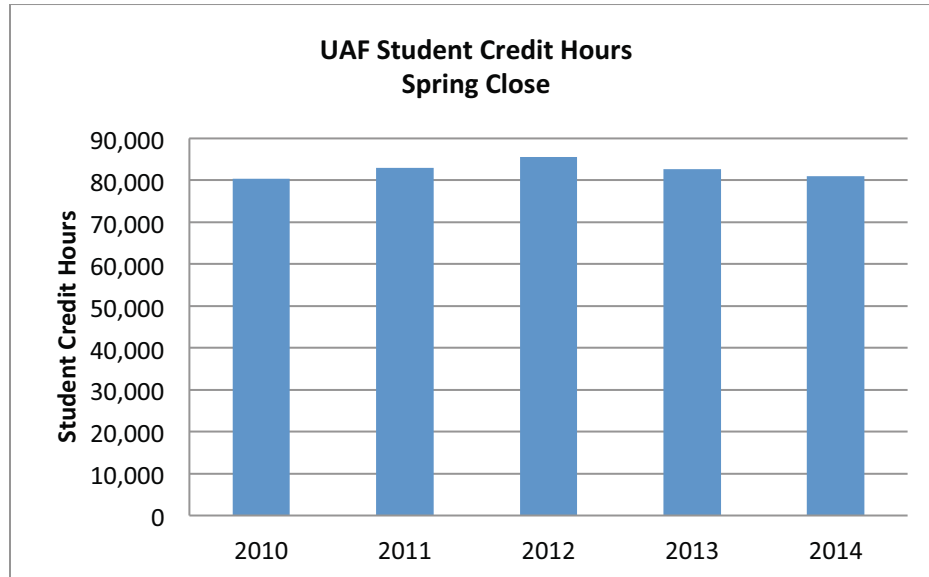
University of Alaska Fairbanks Analysis of Spring 2013 to Spring 2014 Enrollment Trends: Close Freeze

Over the past decade, UAF spring semester enrollment has correlated very strongly with fall enrollment ($r^2 = 0.98$ for SCH), and that trend is continuing. Much of the correlation is simply because 90% of degree-seeking students enrolled in a fall semester enroll again in spring (excluding those who graduate in December), and the rest is due to external conditions affecting fall enrollment still applying in the spring semester. The student headcount for the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) as a whole decreased 1.7% (179 students) from spring 2013 to spring 2014. The headcount decrease since spring 2010 was similar, 1.4% or 149 students. The student credit hour (SCH) change was slightly greater (-2.1% since 2013). This was similar to but less than the SCH decrease from fall 2012 to fall 2013 close (-2.7%). The spring to fall SCH ratio (0.963) was the highest of the last five years.



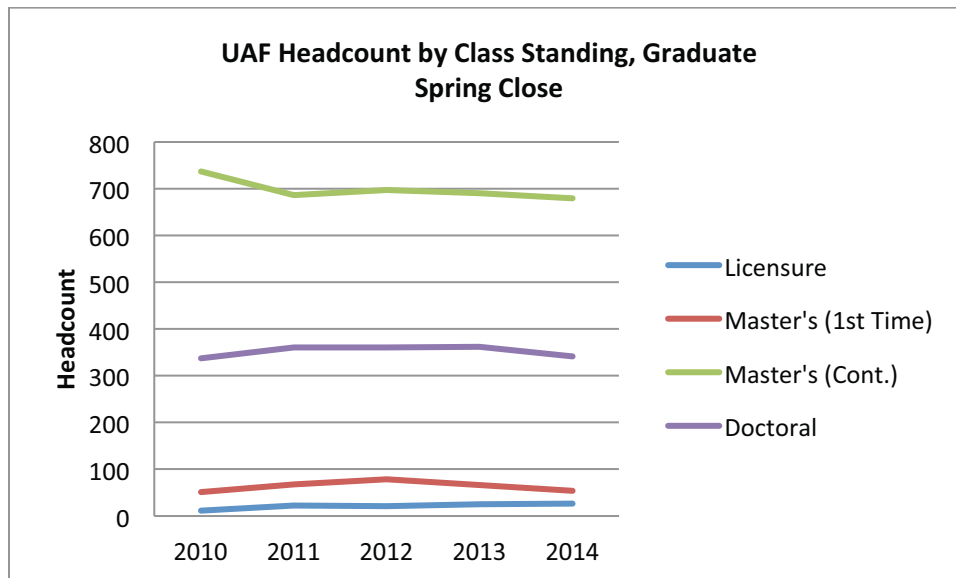
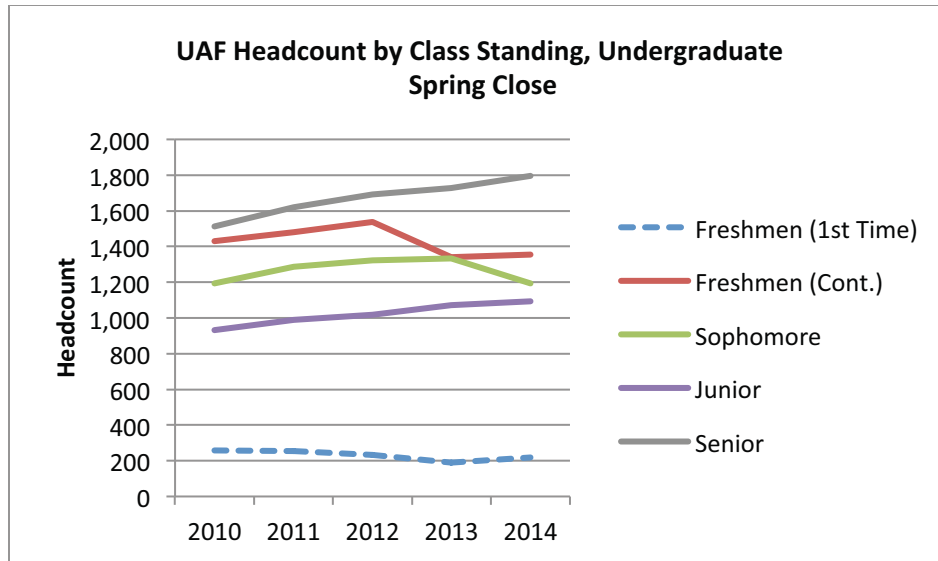
Enrollment trends differed by class standing. First-time freshman enrollment was up sharply (+15.3%), but this was mainly rebound from a very low number of entering freshmen in spring 2013. The spring 2014 number (218) was still well below that in spring 2010 (259), a 15.8% decrease over the 5-year period. Only a minority of first-time freshmen (FTF), about one-fifth of the number enrolling in fall, enrolled in the spring semester, consistent with the usual pattern. Continuing freshman enrollment was up (+1.2%), a favorable trend attributable to good retention of fall-entering freshmen to spring. Sophomore enrollment was down (-10.7%) reflecting enrollment declines for freshmen last year, while junior and senior enrollment was up due to the higher freshmen enrollments for those cohorts.

Enrollment in eLearning courses continues to grow at a steady pace. In response to student demand, UAF continues to develop or convert additional course content for online delivery. Eighteen courses were offered online for the first time this spring.



First-time master's student enrollment was down 18.2% from spring 2013 to 2014, although the number was still 5.9% greater than that in spring 2010. Total graduate enrollment was down 3.7% from 2013 to 2014 and 3.1% from 2010 to 2014; this traces directly to increasing challenges in securing the federal research grants that support many of UAF's graduate students as research assistants. The fact that state funding increments have been less than fixed costs increases, and the significant reductions in state support to the University in FY15, have caused departments to decrease the number of teaching assistantships offered to prospective graduate students as well.

Decreased fall enrollments of baccalaureate-seeking freshmen for the past several years have been largely due to the decreased number of high school graduates in Alaska; graduates peaked in 2010 and have been declining since. The statewide decrease was 1.6% from 2012 to 2013 (<http://education.alaska.gov/stats/>). Another reason for decreased enrollments in recent years is economic conditions. Both nationally and for UAF CTC, postsecondary enrollment tends to decrease with decreasing unemployment. CTC first-time freshman enrollment correlates best with the unemployment rate the previous year. Fairbanks annual average 2012 unemployment (6.2%) was the lowest rate since 2008 and was significantly less than that in 2011 (6.7%). Fairbanks unemployment peaked in the period from December 2008 to April 2010 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).



Changes in enrollment by campus in from spring 2010 to spring 2014 were mainly due to the administrative shift of eLearning and Distance Education enrollments from the Rural College to the other campuses. Now the Rural College delivers synchronous distance courses and programs statewide, particularly Rural Development, Alaska Native Studies, and Child Development and Family Studies. From spring 2013 to spring 2014, SCH decreased 2.8% at Fairbanks Campus and 0.5% at the Community and Technical College. Among the other units, only Kuskokwim Campus (+19.3%) and the Rural College (+2.1%) had increases in SCH. Rural campuses other than Kuskokwim had decreases in SCH, ranging from -14% at Chukchi and -13.4% at Northwest to -7.1% at Interior-Aleutians and -6.5% at Bristol Bay.

Partnerships with K-12 schools, including Tech Prep and dual credit courses for students and professional development for teachers, constitute a substantial part of enrollment at rural campuses.

Professional development course offerings are decided by school districts this year were near the lowest number in the past five years. Rural campus directors are concerned that the campus selection menus offered to registering students at UA Online and the UAF Coursefinder are confusing and tend to direct students away from the synchronous distance courses available through the rural campuses; this could also account for some of the enrollment decreases. Interior-Aleutians Campus enrollments have been negatively affected by the end of several programs, including Rural Nutrition Services, Veterinary Science, and Education Paraprofessional. A 90-day hold on refilling vacated staff positions, imposed UAF-wide as a cost-saving measure, affected recruiting at some campuses. Many rural students are funded through their tribe or Alaska Native Corporation. The amount of Federal funding for education allocated to these organizations has decreased, and in turn less aid can be distributed to members and shareholders. Increasing travel costs are reducing the ability of campuses to offer face-to-face or blended courses.

The Kuskokwim campus enrollment increase was due to part-time students; full-time enrollment has decreased, especially for full-time freshmen. "Summer melt" students—those who applied for fall admission and then do not enroll—have increased since 2011 due to insufficient financial packages to attend as a full-time, on-campus residential students. This also explains the lack of first-time freshmen in spring 2014. The addition of asynchronous distance Allied Health courses contributed significantly to an increase in overall student enrollment at Kuskokwim, counteracting the steady downward trend in on-campus and residential students.

UAF as a whole aims to increase enrollments by investing additional effort in recruiting and by improving retention. New or augmented recruiting efforts include: updated admissions materials (e-mails, flyers, brochures, letters, postcards, website) that consistently reflect UAF's brand; repeated contacts with UA Scholars and Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) recipients, beginning as soon as the award recipients are announced; work with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) on earlier announcement of APS recipients and outreach to high school counselors about the APS program; systematic communication with high school counselors, including invitations to tour UAF and participate in information sessions; UAF recruiter visits to Alaska high schools and building trust and interest among school personnel and counselors; an improved communication process with potential transfer students and transfer applicants; data-driven, strategic outreach and travel to the Lower 48 and Alaska in partnership with academic departments; contracting with WES (World Education Services) for an analysis of markets for international student recruitment, to find countries or regions where UAF recruiting is more likely to be successful; and a thorough analysis of applicant data to determine which recruiting efforts have been most effective. UAF partners with minority community groups to encourage a college-going culture in minority populations and arranges for community groups to mentor and support existing students of color.

In summary, there are several factors responsible for negative UAF enrollment trends from spring 2013 to spring 2014, including declines in the population of recent high school graduates, increasing employment opportunities in Fairbanks, and continuing economic stress and uncertainty in rural areas. In order to increase future enrollment despite these unfavorable conditions, UAF has been increasing student retention via the intensive advising initiative. Recruiting of transfer students from western states is a focus, as is expanding online degree programs to serve both in-state and out-of-state students. There is continued strong effort to recruit Alaskans, through direct marketing including targeted efforts with UA Scholars and APS recipients; dual credit and Tech Prep partnerships with high schools; and outreach to high school counselors, among other efforts.