

REGULAR INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

October 4-5, 2006

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**Regular Interim Evaluation
University of Alaska – Fairbanks
Site Visit on October 4-5, 2006**

INTRODUCTION

The two evaluators assigned to conduct the Regular Interim Evaluation of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Gerald A. Fetz, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Montana and Cheryl A. Cameron, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel at the University of Washington, arrived in Fairbanks on the afternoon of October 3. Following a brief but helpful orientation to the campus that afternoon, the evaluators spent the evening discussing with each other the Interim Accreditation Report that they had received in advance of the visit. Communication between the evaluators and the Office of the Provost had resulted in the establishment of a full schedule of appointments, meetings, discussions, and tours of facilities, and that schedule commenced with an opening session with Chancellor Steve Jones and his administrative cabinet, including Provost Paul Reichardt, at 7:45 a.m. on October 4. (See attached schedule for details). The evaluators particularly want to thank Ms. Hild Peters, a member of the Provost's staff, who worked with us to set up the schedule, make appropriate adjustments while the visit was in progress, and who went out of her way to provide an orientation to the campus and the city, transportation support, and in general facilitated a productive review. A warm welcome was extended by all members of the university community with whom we met, including Chancellor Steve Jones, Provost Paul Reichardt, the President of the UA System Mark Hamilton, other members of the UAF central administration, deans, chairs and directors, faculty, staff, and students. The evaluation and the resulting review benefited from their open and candid discussions, their warm hospitality, their willingness to listen to many questions and provide answers and additional materials and documentation, and for allowing the evaluators to carry out their intrusive tasks with patience and substantial assistance.

The evaluators found the Interim Accreditation Report to be well-organized and helpful in preparing for the visit and for the preparation of this report. Once "on the ground" for the visit at UAF, however, it was concluded that this Interim Accreditation Report, for all its merits, could have been more complete. It provided outlines of the actions taken and changes made since 2001 in response to the eight "Recommendations," but it relied too heavily, in our view, on description and anecdotal examples rather than deeper analysis, meaningful data, and clear timelines to demonstrate the extent of those responses and changes. For instance, and this is discussed briefly below under "Recommendation Eight: Assessment," the Interim Accreditation Report left the evaluators with a less positive impression of how much progress UAF has made in addressing assessment requirements than was shown to be the actual case once they had access to the exhibits and discussed the state of assessment with numerous UAF administrators and faculty. Nonetheless, the Interim Report provided a solid, if not always thorough, starting point for beginning the evaluation visit. The organizational structure of that Interim Report has been followed in preparing this one, as this report provides below the evaluators' discussion of the 2001 Recommendations One through Eight, followed by shorter discussions of Standards One

through Nine. The evaluation report concludes with a listing of substantive changes undertaken and approved since 2001.

PART A. Actions taken regarding recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2001:

Recommendation One: Facilities and Space Needs

Expressing concerns about “*insufficient laboratory and office space to support its expanding research and graduate education base,*” the 2001 Evaluation Committee recommended “*that the University of Alaska Fairbanks seek funding and undertake such steps as are necessary to ensure the construction of additional instructional, office and research facilities and acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment at the Fairbanks campus and at the College of Rural Alaska campuses, and at specialized research locations.*”

Update based on October 2006 Interim Site Visit:

During the intervening five years since this recommendation was made, UAF has made substantial progress in its development of new facilities, especially, but not exclusively, in the area of science laboratories and office space for faculty members in several science disciplines and sub-disciplines (WRRB: biotechnology and high-performance computing; BiRD: central animal facility), most notably on the main campus in Fairbanks. It is of significant note that the WRRB was constructed in record time (18 months) and the funding package was put together largely by the University and its science faculty internally. In these efforts to address this recommendation and expand facilities, it is clear that the University has been an active partner with the state. Additionally, UAF has located funding and undertaken numerous major and minor renovation and upgrade projects in other facilities, such as the major Museum expansion, the Rasmuson Library renovation, the O’Neill Building (oceanography), the Fine Arts Complex, the Brooks Building (Alaska Native and rural development), etc. The major Museum expansion provides another example of innovative and culturally sensitive design that highlights Alaska and has created a venue for interdisciplinary expression and interactive exhibits of Alaskan art and sciences. This facility expansion was largely funded with private resources raised by the Director and other UAF officials. The overall Campus Master Plan has been updated (2002) and plans developed for even further expansion to address the needs and issues originally identified in the 2001 decennial evaluation report and related recommendation. Further, a new 100,000 sq. ft. BIOS (Biological Science) Building is being planned and has been selected as the number one capital project for the entire UA system for funding in the next annual legislative session (2007).

In short, the University (UAF) and the System have taken this recommendation and the concerns that led to it very seriously, and they have made the improvement and addition of facilities needed for the continuing expansion of the research and instructional programs in the affected disciplines a very high priority. These disciplines, with much laudable interdisciplinary activity between and among them, are most notably in the areas of research that both the Strategic Plan of the UA System (2009) and UAF (2010) have

clearly identified for growth, resource enhancement, and programmatic support. In the Strategic Plan for UAF (2010) it is explicitly stated, for instance, that it will, among other goals and visions, “offer distinctive opportunities in undergraduate and graduate education that take advantage of our location in the Far North,” and, “spearhead integrated research, emphasizing our complex high latitude physical, biological and social systems.” It also states that it regards itself as “America’s” or “the nation’s arctic university” and is “defined by its location in the circumpolar North...”

Several of the facilities that have been built since 2001 and are planned for construction provide clear indications that UAF intends to support these goals in substantial ways and is giving them highest priority. This focus is articulated in appropriate documents, is well understood, and appears to be largely accepted by the campus community.

The evaluators were able to tour some of these new facilities (the WRRB, for instance) and were impressed both by the imaginative use of space to maximize interdisciplinary activity, but also by the configurations of that space in order to encourage efficient sharing of core equipment and the incorporation of opportunities for students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to be involved in significant research activities with faculty and post-docs. Some complaints from students about the new facilities not being “welcoming” to undergraduate students were heard. That said, there was little opportunity to substantiate those complaints beyond the anecdotal. Not noted in the visit schedule appended to this report was a chance following the exit interview with the Chancellor and Provost to visit the newly expanded Museum and to have a walking tour of the facility, led by the Director. Here, too, as suggested above, the facility is both impressive (both the external and interior architecture are magnificent) and supportive of the University’s priority focus on Alaska and the Polar North. The Museum’s very interdisciplinary exhibits and research collections are attractive, extensive, and serve scholars from many fields and the general public.

Even with this substantial progress in facilities improvements, some units at UAF are still limited in their ability to achieve their potential in the areas of research/scholarship and instruction because they have less than adequate space in which to carry out these activities, including not being able to schedule classrooms in which to teach important courses. This appears to be particularly the case with certain disciplines in the College of Liberal Arts, and at present, at least, there don’t seem to be plans in place to address these needs. UAF is encouraged to address the relatively modest needs of these disciplines in the humanities and social sciences in the near future.

Additionally, the recommendation from 2001 expressed concern about the inadequacy of equipment, and it appears that this remains a concern for many on campus. The evaluation team heard numerous complaints, and the Interim Accreditation Report itself noted continuing concern, about the lack of sufficient resources to provide the equipment and technological infrastructure, despite some progress and some investment, to carry out their research/scholarship and instructional activities. Of particular concern to numerous faculty and staff members was the fact that the University apparently has a limited computer “refreshen” program, meaning that many of them have and use computers that

are essentially obsolete. The search for additional resources to address these needs should be an important part of future planning.

It is significant that Campus Master Plans have also been developed for UAF's community campuses, but the Interim Report lists only three construction projects outside of Fairbanks: a science/nursing laboratory at Chukchi, a new classroom addition at the Bristol Bay campus, and the Lena Point Facility near Juneau for the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. It should be mentioned and applauded, though, that the Tanana Valley Campus Center was created in downtown Fairbanks by renovating and moving into the old state courthouse. This excellent facility is now used to house, via TVC, "most of UAF's certificate and associate degree programs..." It was noted that TVC serves close to 40% of UAF's total of nearly 10,000 students (head count).

In sum, UAF has invested in the planning and construction of new and renovated facilities impressive effort and significant resources (\$194M for construction + \$60M for equipment) during the past five years and has made very significant progress toward addressing some of the concerns about facilities and equipment expressed in the 2001 recommendation. The BIOS building will advance that progress even further, when it is constructed and put into use. Everyone admits that much remains to do, but the activity and continuing commitment in this area deserve major praise.

Recommendation Two: Faculty Compensation

A second concern facing UAF is the growing problem of salary compression and in some cases inversion. UAF salaries are significantly below market levels in many disciplines. This has affected the ability to hire and retain qualified faculty, and has threatened the quality of some academic programs. Where market-based salaries for new hires have been possible, they have created problems of salary scale compression and inversion, whereby faculty who served UAF for many years are compensated less than those recently hired. This has led to retention problems among senior faculty who are critical to UAF's mission of building global distinction in its research and teaching.

Therefore, the Evaluation Committee recommends that UAF immediately address faculty compensation issues to bring salaries to levels adequate to attract and retain an excellent faculty.

Update based on October 2006 Site Visit:

Since the 2001 comprehensive evaluation, UAF has addressed faculty compensation issues. The current UNAC and ACCFT faculty collective bargaining agreements provide for across the board adjustments and market increases. The market increases require a distribution of two percent in each year of the contract to unit members whose salaries are under external market targets or need to be adjusted due to internal misalignments. To address issues of equity, UAF shifted from a process that compared salaries averaged across disciplines, to a process that compares salaries by discipline-specific markets.

While the percentage of faculty with salaries below market has declined and there is acknowledgement that faculty salaries have improved, in FY06, 72% still remained below market. Continued investments in faculty salaries generally will be necessary for UAF to attract and retain an academically diverse faculty.

The UNAC collective bargaining agreement leaves retention offers and equity salary adjustments to the sole discretion of UAF. The criteria that may be considered in determining a *bona fide* retention risk have been communicated to deans and directors and include: active job search, interest expressed by other employers, demand for persons in the field, opportunities for professional growth elsewhere, opportunities for/ties of other family members in this or other communities, the faculty member's sensitivity to salary as an indicator of worth, non-faculty opportunities in the community, impact of financial rewards available in faculty member's field, strength of financial and non-financial ties to this or other communities, strength of relationship with other members of the university community or other potential communities, stature/recognition in field, mobility of field, impact of the loss of the faculty member on the program, and other factors affecting willingness/ability of faculty member to change employers and/or relocate. There was a perception by some that retention offers were made only to faculty members with competitive offers. This perception engendered a concern that UAF was working against itself by requiring faculty members to enter the job market in order to be recognized for their value to the institution. Others acknowledged that they were the beneficiaries of preemptive retention adjustments. It is not entirely clear what is perception and what is local practice with regard to the administration of retention adjustments. UAF would benefit from a clarification of the central and local criteria and guidelines for retention adjustments.

There was interest expressed in a merit salary adjustment based on evaluation of performance. This is an option that should be explored.

In addition to the retention of faculty members, concerns were expressed about the ability to offer hire packages, including competitive salary, start-up funds, space, equipment, and travel support, that result in successful recruitments. In general, the resources available for the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified faculty are too limited. While there are many unique academic and research career opportunities that can be pursued at UAF where recruitment problems are not evident, in other situations the geographic barriers of the region require competitive salaries and start up packages to attract qualified candidates. The evaluators heard numerous concerns voiced by chairs and faculty alike about "too many failed faculty searches," purportedly caused by the University's inability to offer adequate hire packages. The extent to which this has been the case was not substantiated.

In summary, important progress has been made in addressing the faculty compensation issues; however, the work is definitely not completed. UAF needs to remain focused on faculty compensation in order to ensure its success in recruiting and retaining qualified junior and senior faculty members across the disciplines.

Recommendation Three: Faculty and Staff Handbooks

A third concern is the absence of faculty and staff handbooks. The integrity and equity of the faculty evaluative processes are crucial to the institution's ability to fulfill its mission. From the Senate Blue Book and the Provost's web site, it is not clear that the university's evaluation plans include administrative access to all primary data (e.g., copies of publications, student and peer evaluations of teaching) for any review other than tenure review (Standard 4.1c). Nor is it clear that multiple indices are used in the evaluation of teaching (Standard 4.1c). Because there is no single faculty handbook where all policies and procedures are spelled out, and because bargaining agreements, university, college and peer unit relevant policies and procedures all apply, consistent understanding, interpretation and application of policy is difficult. Similar confusion exists regarding staff hiring, classification, and evaluation.

Therefore, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the UAF develop faculty and staff handbooks that collect the policies and procedures governing appointment, evaluation, scholarship, research and artistic creation, for all faculty and staff, full or part-time, on all campuses of UAF, and that evaluative provisions conform to Standard 4.1 on faculty evaluation. We recommend UAF provide a report to the Commission in two years.

Update based on October 2006 Site Visit

Consistent with the recommendation of the 2001 Evaluation Committee, UAF developed a faculty handbook, which is located at http://www.uaf.edu/provost/fac_handbook/index.html. The handbook provides evidence of a program of continuing faculty evaluation that meets the requirements of Policy 4.1c. During the site visit the evaluators were informed that the faculty evaluation protocols and criteria are clearly communicated, readily accessible, and provide comprehensive feedback on performance. The Provost and Faculty Senate are committed to keeping the Faculty Handbook up-to-date.

Information about staff employment is found on the Office of Human Resources web site at <http://www.uaf.edu/uafhr/>. A newly added feature of the web site is an FAQ including employment issues, health care benefits, hiring and recruitment, classification, payroll, personal and work related issues, retirement and termination of employment, training and development, and tuition waiver. The web site should be continually maintained and enhanced in response to information needs of the staff. For example, the dispute and grievance resolution link takes the user to the Regents' Policy, which provides for the establishment of University Regulations. However, the evaluators were unable to locate University Regulations regarding dispute and grievance resolution. The unique needs of staff employed in rural Alaska should be considered as strategies for communication of policies and procedures and general information sharing are reviewed and developed.

These informational resources will lend support to the University's efforts to recruit, develop, retain, and recognize the faculty and staff. As part of its Strategic Plan 2010, UAF strives to:

- Increase the representation and retention of women and minorities in staff and faculty positions
- Increase recognition of staff and faculty excellence
- Increase staff development activities
- Increase assistance to new faculty in areas such as establishing research programs and pedagogy
- Improve measures for evaluating faculty and staff performance.

These goals are consistent with faculty and staff development needs identified during the visit. Staff articulated a need for improved new employee orientations, skills training (e.g., web page design and development), and leadership development. The Staff Council should be encouraged, perhaps through its Advocacy Committee, to consider opportunities and mechanisms for recognizing staff achievements. There is evidence that the Provost's Office and Faculty Senate have partnered or worked in tandem in providing development opportunities for faculty. These efforts should be maintained and adapted to respond to the evolving needs of the faculty.

Recommendation Four: Secure and Fireproof Storage of Student Records

A fourth concern is that of student records. Student records, including transcripts, may be accurate and comprehensive, but they are not entirely secure on the Fairbanks campus or the College of Rural Alaska campuses. Storage of student records including transcripts must be secure and fireproof.

Therefore, the Evaluation Committee recommends that necessary steps be taken promptly to provide secure and fireproof storage of all student records. If records need to be converted from hard copy to another format for storage, that conversion should be accomplished quickly. We recommend UAF provide a report to the Commission in two years.

Update based on October 2006 Site Visit:

The student records at the Fairbanks and the CRCDC campuses have been relocated to secure and fireproof storage facilities. In addition, the UA statewide system has invested in the digitization of student records. A database system has been purchased and digitization will begin in October 2006. The recommendation of the 2001 Evaluation Committee has been fulfilled. UAF should continue in a timely manner with the digitization of student records to ensure the availability of duplicate copies of student records.

Recommendation Five: Integration of UAF Entities, Campuses, and Activities

*“A fifth concern is associated with the future direction of UAF as it relates to its diverse role of serving as a world leader in Arctic research and other research areas as well as being an effective education provider for rural Alaska. Integrating the College of Rural Alaska (now the College of Rural and Community Development) into the dynamic undergraduate and graduate research developments at UAF is crucial for the future of the institution and its role in rural economic development... Therefore, the Evaluation Committee **recommends** that the UAF systematically plan for the integration of its activities, including teaching, research and public service consistent with its graduate, research and undergraduate programs with the role of the College of Rural Alaska in rural Alaskan development.”*

Update based on October 2006 Interim Site Visit:

One can read in the Strategic Plan for UAF (2010) the assertion that “no other single university in the country is as multi-dimensional as UAF,” and this in the context of the statement that “UAF reaches far beyond Fairbanks with a network of more than 30 campuses, learning centers, research stations and outreach offices.” It is genuinely a university for all of Alaska, both geographically and demographically speaking. Regarding the latter, one hears UAF administrators, faculty, and staff refer often to its mission of serving students “from the GED to the Ph.D.” These students are spread primarily among the main UAF campus in Fairbanks, Tanana Valley Campus also in Fairbanks (approximately 9,000 of the UAF total 10,000 students between them) and five community campuses (with approximately 1,000 students among them) located in Dillingham (Bristol Bay), Kotzebue (Chukchi Campus), Fairbanks (Interior-Aleutians Campus), Bethel (Kuskokwim Campus), and Nome (Northwest Campus). The other “learning centers, research stations and outreach offices” are located throughout rural Alaska.

As diverse as the mission of UAF is and as far-flung as its locations are in this vast state, one would expect that the integration of all of this would be a genuine challenge. Despite continuing difficulties in overcoming some aspects of this challenge, the Interim Accreditation Report, campus visit, and study of the exhibits and supporting documentation made available to the Evaluation Team indicate clearly that real progress has been made, and is widely recognized as such, toward improved integration and coordination of the many parts of the university. The evaluators heard that there is less “us vs. them” and more “we” in regards to UA Fairbanks, TVC, and rural campuses: this is a positive sign of enhanced integration and collaboration. The administrative infrastructure has been upgraded so that each of the campuses located away from the main campus in Fairbanks is administered by a Director who reports to the Executive Dean for CRCD (College of Rural and Community Development) of which these five campuses are constituent parts. That Executive Dean (since the visit, her title was changed to: Vice Chancellor for Community, Rural and Native Education), located on the main Fairbanks campus, oversees the coordination of the programs, services, and curricula of those five campuses, and she and her staff ensure that all of the activity at

those campuses is coordinated with the policies and procedures of the UAF in general. Communication between and among the seven campuses, including UAF Fairbanks and Tanana Valley, has improved considerably during the past five years, according to virtually everyone who was interviewed. Employees from the rural campuses are active participants in such UAF governance bodies as Faculty Senate and Staff Council, and the five rural campuses frequently work together to develop, implement, and carry out programs and activities for their diverse and largely non-traditional student clientele as well as for their remote communities. The evaluators experienced first-hand the effective use of audio-conferencing by multi-campus participants.

Nonetheless, repeated suggestions for further improvements in the relationships between and among the campuses were voiced. Some of these had to do with increased personnel exchanges and visits, particularly from faculty on the main campus out to the more remote campuses; others had to do with increasing the research collaborations between the main campus and the others, perhaps by involving more students in basic research activities such as data and sample gathering, monitoring, etc. These kinds of activities do appear to happen, but the desire was heard that they could easily be increased to everyone's benefit. Chancellor Jones's visit to the rural campuses and facilities of the CRCDC was acknowledged as an important indication of the commitment of the University to be an integrated whole.

Regarding another aspect of the broad mission of UAF, that is, providing educational programs "from the GED to the Ph.D.," there is some evidence in the documentation and certainly in the perceptions of some faculty, staff, and students, at least based on what the Evaluation Team saw and heard during the visit, that the more traditional BA and undergraduate Liberal Arts components are not getting the same kind of attention or resources as the graduate, Ph.D., and science research portions of the university, on the one hand, and the GED, work force training, certificate, and community college portions on the other. The evaluators could not really ascertain the extent to which this might be true, but the frequently voiced perceptions (as well as the particular concerns expressed about space deficits and resource challenges of the CLA) do suggest, at a minimum, that these assertions and, if substantiated, the impact on the ability of UAF to support this "middle piece" of its broad mission should be explored and analyzed.

To summarize: much progress has been made since the 2001 accreditation site visit toward addressing the concerns originally articulated in this recommendation. However, the continuing efforts to integrate teaching, research and service across the institution are both desired and desirable.

Recommendation Six: Direct Appointments of Senior Officials

The sixth concern is that of direct appointments of leadership (Standard 6.A.3).

Therefore, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the University of Alaska Board of Regents and the UAF campus review governance provisions for consideration of faculty, student and staff review and judgments in those matters in which these constituencies

have a direct and reasonable interest such as the appointment of senior officials (Standard 6.A.3).

Update based on October 2006 Site Visit:

The selection and appointment process for recent senior administrative officials suggests recognition of the importance of considering faculty, student, and staff views and judgments. UAF is currently conducting an external search for the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The search committee is comprised of administrators, faculty, and staff. It will be important that the search process include an opportunity for faculty, students, and staff to engage in the interview of finalists and to provide comment with regard to their views and judgments. The concern of the 2001 Evaluation Committee with regard to direct appointments has been addressed; however, the role of faculty, students, and staff needs to be considered with each opportunity for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of senior officials.

Recommendation Seven: Consistency and Publicity regarding “Required Related Instruction” in Certificate and Associate Degree Programs

*“The seventh concern is the inconsistency of required related instruction components of applied certificate and associate degree programs of 30 semester credits or more in length... Therefore, the Evaluation Committee **recommends** that the University ensure that all certificate and associate degrees contain recognizable bodies of instruction in program-related areas of communication, computation, and human relations, and that related instruction components be published in the relevant print and electronic catalogs in clear and complete terms...”*

Update based on October 2006 Interim Site Visit:

UAF addressed this recommendation very soon after it was made, as steps were taken to ensure that the required related instruction components of all applied certificate and associate programs involving 30 semester credits or more were made consistent. The required related instruction in “program-related areas of communication, computation, and human relations” is now consistent across these certificate and associate degree programs and articulated and published clearly in all relevant places, including print and electronic catalogs and other information about those programs. It is concluded, therefore, that UAF has fully addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation Eight: Assessment

*“The eighth concern is lack of comprehensive and consistent assessment of student learning... Therefore, the Evaluation Committee **recommends** that the University ensure that an assessment of student learning is conducted in all certificate and degree programs offered by the institution, including new program offerings. The assessment*

model developed for the core curriculum/general education program may serve as a guide for other academic programs...”

Update based on October 2006 Interim Site Visit:

The evaluation team for this Interim visit was unable to determine, based on the Interim Report it received in advance, just how much progress toward addressing Recommendation Eight (assessment) had actually been made during the five years since it was forwarded. That report provided some general statements about progress, appointments of personnel, and some University-wide assessment strategies, as well as a number of examples and anecdotes which suggested that at least some departments or programs had, in fact, made significant progress in developing plans for measuring student learning outcomes. However, the report did not present a clear, overall description and analysis of the assessment of student learning outcomes across the University’s disciplines (“comprehensive and consistent”), nor did it offer more than a few examples of how assessment activities had actually led to closing the “assessment loop,” that is, had resulted in curricular or programmatic changes.

Once the evaluation team had the opportunity to read through the materials related to assessment that were included in the exhibits for the site visit and the chance to talk with numerous people on campus, it became clear that in this area the Interim Report had not done full justice to what had actually been accomplished by UAF in moving assessment activities forward. To be sure, not all departments or programs can show the same progress in implementing the plans that they have developed, but several of them are able to do so. In general, the departments and programs that have external accreditation requirements and are, therefore, more experienced with assessment requirements and strategies, are much more likely to be able to show how they have implemented their plans over time, engaged in substantial student learning outcomes assessments, and used the information gathered and analyzed to make curricular and programmatic changes. This is the case, for instance, with Engineering, Business, and Education (which was recently re-accredited by NCATE, after losing that accreditation in 1997). The Core Assessment Committee is also committed to sustained learning outcomes assessment. Additionally, some other departments and programs with no external accreditation requirements have advanced from the kinds of “indirect” assessment (surveys of alumni, for instance), with which they began a few years ago, to the implementation of more “direct” ways of measuring and/or analyzing student learning outcomes. Such departments and programs (Communication, Psychology, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, for example) are now in the business of using, on a regular basis, what they are learning from those activities to make changes in their curricula and programs as well.

Nonetheless, a few departments and programs, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, not unlike the experience at other colleges and universities, have been slower in moving from assessment planning to implementation, to information gathering and analysis, and ultimately to using that information and analysis to plan changes suggested by that process. Such programs, with the assistance of the Vice Provost and Dean of the

Graduate School with oversight responsibility for assessment, and oversight responsibility of the academic deans, still have base work to do. Other parts of UAF that also appear to be lagging behind in this regard are the community campuses located in more remote sites. Since these are relatively small two-year entities that mostly offer certificate programs, associate degrees, as well as short courses and workshops, many of which are related to short-term workforce training, and since many of these offerings are taught by adjunct faculty, it has been more difficult, understandably, to implement consistent assessment strategies than on the larger main campus or on the Tanana Valley campus, both located in Fairbanks. However, even on those smaller, remote campuses, the “march of assessment” seems to be evident, and particularly as the core curriculum has been adopted at those campuses in the associate degree programs, the assessment strategies in place in the core program on the Fairbanks campuses have been implemented to some extent there as well.

In general, regarding student learning outcomes assessment, much progress since the 2001 site visit is noted. Those departments and programs that have not kept pace or caught up with the assessment activities in units like Engineering, Business, or Education, or in programs like the core curriculum in Fairbanks, need to focus and intensify their efforts to make their assessment plans more sophisticated and more direct, and then use the information gathered to make changes if changes are suggested. It is clear that the university administration is fully committed to seeing that the entire academic program can show a “comprehensive and consistent assessment of student learning,” and is requiring academic units to indicate assessment results as part of the overall budget and planning process. Both carrots and sticks are being used effectively, it seems. The “Annual Outcomes Assessment Report,” required of all academic departments now, and the “Guidelines for Outcomes Assessment” with its “Program Quality Metric,” also provide strong indications that UAF is taking this Accreditation requirement seriously.

In another area of assessment, that is, program assessment, the university has also made great strides forward. According to the Interim Report, 95% of all academic programs have now gone through the mandated Five-Year Program Review Process once, which begins with an extensive self-study, proceeds to internal and external review, and culminates in the feedback of deans and the provost as well as, ultimately, changes that are recommended by the process. The evaluators reviewed a sampling of documentation from this process and found the information gathered to be substantial, the resulting analyses and conclusions intelligent and appropriate, and the recommendations for changes clearly articulated, realistic, and fair. The evaluators were not, however, able to determine the extent to which the recommended changes for programs across the campus have actually been undertaken.

Finally, it appears clear that the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Alaska System have adopted a rather thorough assessment model as the basis for planning and budget allocation. The day before the evaluators arrived for the visit, the entire administrative team of the university engaged in a full-day planning workshop built around the principles of and information gathered as part of broad and sound assessment

activities. It is concluded, therefore, that although improvements are still needed and it is important that UAF continue to nudge or push, as appropriate, all units into full participation in the assessment programs it has now established, the University of Alaska Fairbanks appears to be in compliance with Standard 2.B **Educational Program Planning and Assessment**, Standard Indicators 2.B.1; 2.B.2; 2.B.3; Policy 2.2. Educational Assessment.

Part B: Questions Related to Other Institutional Changes: Standards One to Nine

Standard One: Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness

The University of Alaska System has developed a comprehensive Strategic Plan, aimed at and titled “Strategic Plan 2009,” and the University of Alaska Fairbanks has subsequently developed its own comprehensive Strategic Plan, aimed at and titled “Strategic Plan 2010.” It is clear that the UAF plan is to be understood in the context of the System plan and was built upon it. UAF’s new mission statement, cited at the beginning of the UAF Strategic Plan along with the “Preamble,” together provide a succinct articulation of the University’s role as a Land, Sea and Space Grant institution, as well as its multiple responsibilities as an institution that includes a Carnegie-classified research university, a large community college in Fairbanks, and five community campuses scattered throughout rural Alaska. The mission statement is cited below:

Mission Statement

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.”

This new Strategic Plan includes a Vision Statement, a statement of Core Values, and an articulation of “Strategic Pathways & Goals” that include sections devoted to: Teaching and Learning for Student Success; Research and Scholarship; Enrollment and Retention; Community Engagement and Economic Development; Advancement and Philanthropy; and Faculty and Staff Development.

It is clear, both from the document and from numerous discussions during this site visit, that the Strategic Plan is the product of broad participation by the entire university community, that it is widely known and understood by that community and beyond. Additionally, the implications for similar planning at the sector and unit levels are stated clearly, and the evaluators’ discussions indicated that planning at those levels is being carried out in similar fashion and consistently.

All of this points to the fact that the University of Alaska Fairbanks, with the support and approval of the University of Alaska System, has articulated its mission, its goals, and its several important roles in a more focused fashion since 2001 than was previously the case. The Strategic Plan 2010 not only spells out “Goals and Pathways” for the future, but it reflects changes in procedures and a new inclusiveness regarding planning at UAF that have been in place at least since 2003, that have produced an environment of well-understood and accepted planning and assessment, and that have resulted in many improvements, among them several that were recommended in the 2001 Accreditation Report. For a more extensive discussion of how UAF is now assessing itself, see the section above under “Recommendation Eight: Assessment.”

The evaluators conclude, as suggested here, that UAF is in full compliance with **Standard 1.B – Planning and Effectiveness.**

Standard Two: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness

There have been no major changes during the five years since 2001 in institution-wide graduation requirements for degrees at the bachelor, masters, or Ph.D. levels. Requirements related to certificate programs, as discussed at some length under Recommendation 7 above, were regularized and publicized consistently throughout the UAF campuses in catalogues and in other appropriate places.

Among the new “transcribed educational credential” programs that have been added during this time frame are: (1) Occupational Endorsements (less than 30 credits required); (2) Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (24-60 credits); and (3) a Graduate Certificate (12-29 credits). All of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificates awarded currently are in the School of Education. The Occupational Endorsements are being identified by the CRCD, but none are yet in place.

A complete inventory of the Certificate and A.A.S. programs are included in Appendix 1 of the UAF Interim Accreditation Report. Most of these new programs have been added in response to new employment opportunities, and UAF is attempting to be responsibly responsive to such opportunities and needs, as is appropriate for an institution with a mandate to train employees for the state’s economy. Program deletions were also largely related to changes in employment opportunities, that is, in areas where the need was no longer present.

A complete inventory of new Baccalaureate degrees is also listed in Appendix 1 of the Interim Accreditation Report, but includes a B.A. degree in child development and family studies; a B.A. in elementary education (replacing the deleted B.Ed. degree); new concentrations or options in computational physics, juristic chemistry, language studies, education –art endorsement, petroleum engineering, and gerontology. Most of these were added in order to enhance programs or to respond to student or employer or professional interests.

At the graduate level, several master's level degrees were added as were two Ph.D. degrees, one in engineering and one in clinical-community psychology. Appendix 1 also lists these additions and changes. These include, at the master's level: MA in Cross-Cultural Studies, MA in Rural Development, MA in Applied Linguistics, all in response to needs and opportunities in rural Alaska. Others are: a master's degree in administration of justice, computer science (a 5-year B.S.-M.S. program); computational physics, software engineering, statistics, as well as an M.F.A in art. These additions, and deletions, at the graduate level were all well-planned, with articulated needs or strong interest, and generally enhance the areas in which UAF is concentrating its mission, such as on Alaska and the Circumpolar North.

There was apparently some controversy within the state system and between the system and the Northwest Commission about the proposed Ph.D. program in clinical-community psychology that would be shared equally by UAF and UA Anchorage, but that was ultimately resolved with a re-affirmation of the fact that only UAF is approved to offer Ph.D. degrees. UAF and UAA were approved to collaborate in this program, but UAF is the degree-granting institution.

Several graduate non-degree or credential programs have been approved by the Board of Regents recently, all of them in the School of Education and related to Alaska State licensure for K-12 teachers or counselors.

Finally, in terms of new programs or degrees, it should be noted that the CRCD of UAF now offers the entire associate of arts degree in an online option format, drawing courses from across the UAF campuses. The university has also entered into an agreement to develop a cooperative program in petroleum engineering and business with the Chinese University of Petroleum Beijing, which involves an articulation of curriculum that will allow, when implemented, students from China to complete two years at UPB in China and then transfer to UAF. Finally, again in this context, we note that UAF established a Peace Corps Master's International Program in conjunction with the Peace Corps. A similar arrangement has led to such programs that allow Peace Corps volunteers to combine that experience with substantial course work to fulfill requirements for this Master's degree.

Regarding UAF's progress toward meeting Standard 2.2 – Educational Assessment, please see the section above under the heading “Recommendation Eight: Assessment.” UAF offers its own description of that progress, as well as the work remaining, on pages 40-41 of the Interim Accreditation Report.

Standard Three: Students

UAF has a broad educational mission ranging from “GED to PhD.” With this expansive mission comes a diverse student body with widely varying needs and goals. UAF's Strategic Plan 2010 clearly articulates its mission.

Investments are being made to ensure that Alaska's most academically talented students have an opportunity to receive an undergraduate education in Alaska. UA's president initiated the UA Scholars program, which offers four-year scholarships to the top 10% of graduates from each high school in Alaska. UAF enrolled an average of 36.6% of the UA Scholars enrolled from 2001-2005. Another state-wide initiative to invest in students is the need-based financial aid program supported by 1% of tuition revenue. At UAF in FY06, \$121,000 of need-based financial aid was available as "Horizon Scholarships." Additionally, private funded scholarships, in FY06 included \$482,000 to undergraduate students, \$126,500 to graduate students, and \$93,372 to part-time undergraduate and graduate students.

UA remains committed to the enrollment of an ethnically diverse student body. Its largest minority is Alaska Natives/American Indians comprising an impressive 22.6% of undergraduate enrollment in 2005. UAF's greatest challenge is the enrollment of Alaska Native graduate students in the sciences and engineering.

UAF is also committed to student academic success. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides adequate services consistent with its mission and goals. A new Student Success Initiative was implemented to place first-time college students in appropriate courses so that they will experience academic success, remain at UAF, and achieve their intended goals. Another recent initiative was the adoption of new baccalaureate program admission requirements that will go into effect for Fall 2008. Grading, evaluation, and reporting changes have been implemented to support student success through enhanced communication of academic outcomes and progress. Additionally, investments have been made in student support staff who work to recruit, orient, and retain undergraduate and graduate students.

Standard Four: Faculty

Since the 2001 evaluation, UAF appointed a full-time director for the Office of Faculty Development (OFD). In 2005-06 an external review of OFD was conducted and efforts are underway to respond to the recommendations of the reviewer. Faculty acknowledged that UAF has made important faculty development efforts. Of significant note were repeated concerns that the travel grant program is an important initiative, but under funded.

Consistent with its mission as a research-intensive university, the faculty is engaged in scholarship, research, and artistic creation. Sponsored research and programs funded by grants and contracts has increased in recent years; which has served to support the increase in the number of faculty, post-docs, and graduate students at UAF. The UAF Fairbanks campus and the campuses of the CRCDC are collaborating on initiatives that provide opportunities for applied research.

The UNAC CBA effective January 1, 2004 resulted in a change to sabbatical leave pay. The CBA now provides for 100%, rather than 66.7%, pay for one-semester sabbatical leaves. This change in pay was reported to result in an increased number of faculty

members taking only one semester sabbaticals. There is concern that individuals who would benefit from a two semester sabbatical will be deterred from such a decision due to the financial incentive of taking only one semester. Faculty acknowledged that the differential in pay is influencing their sabbatical decisions. However, in some units, faculty eligible for sabbatical leaves have postponed taking a leave because of the unavailability of replacement faculty. The change in policy has had a detrimental effect on the appointing units because there is no cost recovery for one semester leaves to support replacement costs and no central funding has been made available. The impact of this negotiated change in sabbatical pay should be carefully evaluated.

Standard Five: Library and Information Services

The UAF library and information resources are adequate to support the teaching and research activities of the faculty, students, and staff.

UAF reported significant changes in the organizational structure of Library and Information Resources. The Library and Information Technology departments were separated in December 2004. The Library successfully recruited a new Dean of Libraries. The Office of Information Technology was administratively merged with the University of Alaska Statewide IT support services. The Library is now a major consumer of the IT support services – an arrangement that has yet to be evaluated given the recent the administrative reorganization and appointment.

The Rasmuson Library renovation has improved the organization and accessibility of the collections. UAF has a responsive Inter-Library Loan program and electronic document delivery service. The Library is responsive to the needs of the Schools and Colleges, and continues efforts to enhance services.

The new facilities at UAF have state-of-the-art computing and communication systems and institutional resources have been invested to double the bandwidth of the institution-wide computing system. The older buildings are in need of new cabling and computing equipment. The “tech refresh” program, which provides resources to update the computing equipment of the faculty, is recognized for making important investments but would benefit from increased funding.

UAF recently experienced a security breach. The institution responded aggressively and promptly notified all individuals whose information was subject to the breach. Since the breach efforts have been taken to tighten security to minimize the potential for future breaches. An external security review is pending to ensure that all necessary enhancements have been implemented.

Standard Six: Governance

A number of significant administrative appointments have been made since the 2001 accreditation evaluation. In August 2004, Dr. Steve Jones was appointed as Chancellor.

He is recognized as an available and approachable leader who is committed to the success of UAF.

The position of Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Community Engagement (VCACE) was created to expand the development activities at UAF. Important efforts are underway to improve UAF's development, fundraising, and alumni relation efforts. The appointment of a VCACE is consistent with the Advancement and Philanthropy Pathway of the Strategic Plan 2010, which states that: "It is imperative for the university to gain and expand the public's excitement about, confidence in and support of the university. A strong philanthropic effort will provide the university with a margin of excellence through additional funds from private and corporate giving.

The Vice Provost for Research was changed to the Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR). The Center for Research Services, under the leadership of the VCR, was created by combining the offices of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer, Research Integrity and Compliance, and Sponsored Programs. The directors of the Geophysical Institute, the Institute of Arctic Biology, and the International Arctic Research Center also report to the VCR. A strong and cohesive organizational structure is important to UAF's mission of serving as America's Arctic University.

Several of the Schools and Colleges were reorganized or renamed since the 2001 evaluation, including the College of Engineering and Mines (CEM), the College of Natural Science and Mathematics (CNSM), and the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences (SNRAS). These organizational changes support the teaching and research missions of the institution. The College of Rural Alaska was renamed the College of Rural and Community Development (CRCD). This name change provides important recognition of the educational and community outreach goals of the CRCD.

The President of the University of Alaska system is committed to UAF's mission as America's Arctic University and Rural Alaska's educational resource for workforce development. UAF, as Alaska's premier research and graduate education institution, benefits from recognition of its unique role within the statewide system. The President made a significant investment in 13 Presidential Post-Doctoral appointments; 9 of which were committed to Post-Docs at UAF. The President's Office and the Chancellor's and Provost's Offices share mutual respect for each other and a common vision of UAF's broad educational and research mission.

Standard Seven: Finance

Following a period lasting approximately a decade of very modest budget allocations from the state and resulting financial constraints that limited UAF's ability to add needed facilities, pay competitive salaries, provide important equipment for research and instruction, and support many new initiatives, that situation has turned around in the past five to six years. As noted above, several new facilities have been built for important activities, numerous renovations and expansions of existing buildings have been completed, and at least one new, major building project is on the horizon. Additionally,

as recommended in the 2001 Accreditation Evaluation Report, more resources have been made available for salaries, faculty start up, and faculty and staff development. There is still significant catching up to do, as suggested at various points in this report as well as in UAF's own Interim Accreditation Report, but most of the administrators who were interviewed, including the President, Chancellor, Provost, and the Vice Chancellors, agree that things are looking up financially for the university and the entire university system.

In terms of planning, again as noted above in Part A of this report, the System and University Administrations have been impressively inclusive about seeking broad advice before major budget decisions and priorities are set, and the evaluators heard several especially positive comments along these lines about Chancellor Steve Jones and his administration. Budget decisions and priorities are clearly tied to planning, and both of these are tied to assessment activities and results.

The role of research funding, both directly to support activities, personnel, and facilities, and indirectly through IDCs, is a very important one for UAF. The addition of several of the new facilities, the WRRB and BiRD buildings, has enhanced the university's ability to compete for additional research funds to support additional research projects and initiatives. Once the BIOS (Biological Science) Building is constructed, research activity and the income it generates should increase accordingly.

UAF has just hired a new Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, and everyone is very confident that she will be able to enhance the university's financial management procedures and activity.

Finally, the evaluators were somewhat surprised to find that UAF has a relatively small fundraising capacity and an equally modest track record in securing private gifts. The fact that the Museum was able to raise significant amounts of money for its expansion and renovation would indicate, it seems, that with appropriate organized effort, private fundraising could result in an additional source of support for the university's activities and programs. UAF is encouraged to explore ways to expand its development activity.

Standard Eight: Facilities

Standard Eight is extensively addressed in Section A above in the segment related to Recommendation One: Facilities and Space Needs. As indicated there, significant progress has been made in addressing the facilities needs of UAF, especially in several programmatic areas on the main UAF campus as well as at the Tanana Valley Campus in downtown Fairbanks. Additional facilities expansion and renovation are still desirable, but plans are in place to continue the impressive progress made since 2001.

Standard Nine: Institutional Integrity

UAF continues to uphold the highest ethical standards in its representation to its constituencies and the public; in its teaching, scholarship, and service; and in its

treatment of its students, faculty, and staff. Since the 2001 evaluation, an Office of Research Integrity was established, which offers ethics and compliance training for faculty and graduate students. The institution is actively engaged in the evaluation and revision of policies and procedures that help ensure its continuing integrity.

Part C: Update on New Academic Programs as Requested

Documentation on the following new programs was included in the UAF Interim Accreditation Report 2006 and on-site exhibits:

- Educator: Para-professional, Certificate, A.A.S.
- Healthcare Reimbursement, Certificate
- Software Engineering, M.S.E.
- Child Development and Family Studies, B.A.
- Applied Linguistics, M.A.
- Yup'ik Language Proficiency, Certificate, A.A.S.
- Elementary Licensure, K-12 Art Licensure, School Counselor Licensure, Secondary Licensure, Post-Baccalaureate Certificates
- Computer Engineering, B.S.
- Construction Management, A.A.S.
- Medical Assistant, Certificate
- Instrumentation Technology, Certificate
- Safety, Health and Environmental Awareness, Certificate

These programs appear to be developing in the ways anticipated in the documentation that supported their approval and implementation and should continue to be included under the accreditation status of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.