

Year One Peer-Evaluation Report

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Fairbanks, Alaska

October 17, 2012

*A confidential report of findings prepared for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*

Draft of October 17, 2012

Table of Contents

I.	Evaluators	3
II.	Introduction	4
III.	Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report and Support Materials.....	5
IV.	Eligibility Requirements	5
V.	Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations	5
	Standard 1.A Mission	5
	Standard 1.B Core Themes.....	6
VI.	Summary	7
VII.	Commendations and Recommendations	8

Evaluators

Dr. Jeanne Christiansen

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
University of Idaho
PO Box 443160
Moscow, ID 83844-3160
Telephone: 208-885-7941
Fax: 208-885-5050
Email: jeannec@uidaho.edu

Ms. Shannon Beets

Executive Vice President and Provost
Sierra Nevada College
Telephone 775- 881-7444
Fax: 775-832-1696
sbeets@sierranevada.edu

Dr. Bruce Davis

Vice Provost and Dean of Continuing Education
Weber State University
4001 University Circle
Ogden, UT 84408-4001
Telephone: 801-626-6789
Fax: 801-626-7686
Cell: 801-540-5443
Email: brucedavis@weber.edu

Introduction

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the Evaluation Committee conducted a review of the Year One Report of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The committee reviewed the August 2012 Year One Self-Evaluation Report and the University of Alaska Strategic Plan 2012 (draft of July 13, 2012), which was an Appendix to the self-evaluation report.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks was established in 1917 and is part of the statewide University of Alaska system. Other institutions in the system include the University of Alaska Anchorage and the University of Alaska Southeast. The University of Alaska Fairbanks operates campuses and learning centers throughout Alaska's interior, northwest and southwest regions of the state, and also serves students throughout the state via its eLearning and Distance Education office. The University is the home of the College of Rural and Community Development, which administers community campuses, and the Community and Technical College in Fairbanks, which serves rural and central Alaska and has branch campuses in Dillingham, Kotzebue, Bethel, and Nome, Alaska.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks offers 203 degrees and certificates in 129 disciplines through eight colleges and schools: the colleges of Engineering and Mines, Liberal Arts, Natural Science and Mathematics, and Rural and Community Development; and the schools of Education, Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, Management, and Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences. The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant University and is Alaska's only Carnegie-classified high-research activity (Research I) university.

Total enrollment for UAF in fall 2011 was 11,149, of which 5,936 were enrolled at the Fairbanks campus, and another 3,729 at the Community and Technical College. The majority of students come from Alaska, but all 50 states are represented, as are 48 foreign countries. Undergraduates make up 89 percent of the student body; 59 percent of all students are female. Fifty-four percent of students identify as Caucasian, 21 percent as Alaska Native/American Indian. Another 5.7 percent of the student body is African-American or Asian/Pacific Islander.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks received reaffirmation of accreditation on Feb. 1, 2012, on the basis of the fall 2011 comprehensive peer evaluation. That evaluation resulted in the following three recommendations (the full text of the peer evaluation is available in our accreditation archives online):

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends that UAF coordinate its planning and evaluation processes of core themes in a systematic manner to help ensure that the institution's programs and services align with the accomplishment of the core themes' objectives. (Standard 3.B.1 and 3.B.2 - Core Theme Planning, and Standard 4.A.1 - Assessment)
2. The Evaluation Committee recommends that UAF evaluate its resource allocation processes and institutional capacity relative to its core themes' objectives to help ensure adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of its programs and services. (Standard 5.B.2 - Adaptation and Sustainability)
3. The Evaluation Committee recommends that UAF systematically implement and execute its educational assessment plan to consistently achieve identified program and degree learning outcomes and that assessment results be used to guide program improvement. (Standard 4.A.3 - Assessment)

UAF is required to report progress made on the three above recommendations to the commission in its Year Three Report.

Comment [SMH1]: Under the old classification system UAF was Research II. (Research I corresponds to Very High Research Activity in the new classification.) It seems easiest just to omit the reference to the old classification system.

Assessment of the Institution's Self-Evaluation Report and Support Materials

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Year One Self-Evaluation Report was prepared using the 2010 standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The Self-Evaluation Report addressed Standard One: Mission, Core Themes and Expectations. The report was provided to the evaluation committee members in the timeline identified by the Commission in both paper and electronic forms.

The report was exceptionally well written, clear and concise. The information presented appeared to be accurate and complete, addressed each component of Standard One, and provided the information needed by the evaluation committee to complete its review. The report included a very useful rubric of mission fulfillment by theme, which summarized core themes, indicators, and clearly defined measurements of fulfillment, using a five-point Likert scale for each indicator. Care should be taken in future self-evaluation reports to adhere to the Commission's guideline of three pages maximum for each core theme (see "Guidelines for the Preparation of Year One Self-Evaluation Reports", Revised 3/2/11).

Eligibility Requirements

The University of Alaska Fairbanks provided evidence of meeting Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3. The University of Alaska was established by the constitution of the state of Alaska, Article VII, Section 2. The constitution also provides for a board of regents and establishes its authority over the University of Alaska. The board of regents approved the University of Alaska Fairbanks' mission statement and core themes in June 2012.

Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Standard 1.A Mission

The University of Alaska Board of Regents approved the University of Alaska Fairbanks' latest mission statement in June 2012. The process for revising the mission statement included the following steps: The provost surveyed the Provost's Council about the key elements of the mission statement; the UAF Accreditation Steering Committee proposed revisions to the previous mission statement (approved 2006) during its work in FY12; the Faculty Senate and Staff Council provided feedback and revisions on the proposed new mission statement; and the Chancellor's Cabinet finalized the version considered by the board of regents.

During FY12, the Accreditation Steering Committee proposed core theme revisions. Faculty, staff, students, administrators, and external advisory groups were asked via email and internal newsletters to provide feedback on the revised core themes via a web-based survey. Based on the survey results, the steering committee proposed a new set of themes. The Faculty Senate and Staff Council considered the revised themes and suggested additional revisions. The Chancellor's Cabinet proposed revisions and then the steering committee passed a draft to UAF's governing bodies — Faculty Senate and Staff Council. Based upon this shared governance process, the cabinet finalized the core themes in April 2012, and they were presented to the board of regents and approved on June 8, 2012.

The mission of the University of Alaska Fairbanks is as follows:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and an international center for research, education, and the arts, emphasizing the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. UAF integrates teaching, research, and public service as it educates students for active citizenship and prepares them for lifelong learning and careers.

The mission statement has been approved by the board of regents, articulates a purpose appropriate for the university, provides direction for strategic planning and other institutional efforts, and has been widely communicated to the university community. The mission is guided by and consistent with the following University of Alaska System mission statement (established on Oct. 6, 2000, and contained in regents' policy):

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

Based on the self-evaluation provided, the University of Alaska Fairbanks has developed a focused and integrated approach to identifying, linking and articulating its mission, core themes, objectives, and a wide range of indicators that can be used to assess the institution's effectiveness and extent of mission fulfillment.

Standard 1.B Core Themes

Five core themes reflect the mission of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, which is distinctive in the University of Alaska System for its research-intensive mission and related graduate programs; Land, Sea, and Space Grant status; statewide outreach through the Cooperative Extension Service and Marine Advisory Program; and service to rural and Alaska Native peoples of central, northern, and western Alaska. The core themes are as follows:

1. Educate: Undergraduate and Graduate Students and Lifelong Learners
2. Research: To Create and Disseminate New Knowledge, Insight, Technology, Artistic, and Scholarly Works
3. Prepare: Alaska's Career, Technical, and Professional Workforce
4. Connect: Alaska Native, Rural, and Urban Communities by Sharing Knowledge and Ways of Knowing
5. Engage: Alaskans through Outreach for Continuing Education and Community and Economic Development

Each core theme is further explained below.

1. Educate: Undergraduate and Graduate Students and Lifelong Learners. This core theme aligns with the University's mission to disseminate knowledge and promote educational excellence, student success, and lifelong learning. The University provides an exceptionally wide range of educational offerings, including vocational-technical, arts, sciences, and the professions. Educational programs include occupational endorsements, certificates, and associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. The University offers 169 degrees and 34 certificates in 129 disciplines. Four objectives and eight indicators of achievement support this core theme.
2. Research: To Create and Disseminate New Knowledge, Insight, Technology, Artistic, and Scholarly Works. The University of Alaska Fairbanks is Alaska's only Carnegie-classified high-

Comment [SMH2]: The sentence may have been unfinished, or perhaps just needs the small changes shown.

research activity institution. The University has nationally and internationally recognized programs in a variety of fields. Much of this research is focused on areas of significant interest to Alaska, though it also includes areas where federal funding has been increasing, such as climate, biomedical sciences, and energy. Part of this mission is to educate future researchers, including both graduates and undergraduates. The Educate, Connect and Engage core themes are interrelated, with natural overlap among some of the objectives and indicators. There are four objectives and eight indicators of achievement for this core theme. One indicator is shared with the Educate core theme above.

3. Prepare: Alaska's Career, Technical, and Professional Workforce. This addresses the need to prepare skilled workers, such as farmers, miners, fishermen, teachers, welders, and engineers to meet local employment needs, thereby reducing the historical reliance on out-of-state workers. Guidance for this core theme is provided in part by the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan, which was prepared by state and university representatives. Continuing and professional education is another important aspect of this core theme. The University's Academic Development Plan also addresses economic and workforce development, emphasizing the following areas: resource exploration, development and management; engineering and applied technologies; educator preparation; health careers and pre-professional programs; and business leadership and entrepreneurship. This core theme is supported by two objectives and four indicators of achievement.
4. Connect: Alaska Native, Rural, and Urban Communities by Sharing Knowledge and Ways of Knowing. This theme addresses three key elements of UAF's mission: 1) to connect diverse populations in UAF's commitment to culturally relevant, place-based programming, 2) the acknowledgement of indigenous ways of knowing, and 3) the documentation and sharing of diverse cultural and historical information. This core theme has three objectives and five indicators.
5. Engage: Alaskans through Outreach for Continuing Education and Community and Economic Development. As the state's Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and with the Carnegie classification of high research activity, the University of Alaska Fairbanks has been dedicated to outreach services as an essential part of its mission since 1917 when founded as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. The Cooperative Extension Service and Forest Experiment Station deliver educational programs and services in agriculture and horticulture, forest management, health, home and family development, natural resource and community development, and 4-H youth development. The Marine Advisory Program delivers outreach services to promote coastal community sustainability, wise use, conservation, and enjoyment of Alaska's marine and coastal resources. Finally, as a Space Grant institution, UAF offers educational outreach in aerospace, earth sciences, and other NASA-related science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines throughout Alaska. Four objectives and six indicators of achievement support this core theme.

Summary

The University of Alaska Fairbanks has an approved mission statement from which five core themes have been derived. These core themes are supported by 17 objectives and 31 indicators of achievement. The University has identified outcomes and indicators for each of the core themes and has prepared a

strategic plan, goals, and strategies to achieve its mission, with goals and strategies tied to one or more of each of the five core themes.

The core themes, objectives, and indicators of achievement are very well aligned with the mission and well supported by the draft strategic plan that was included in the Appendix. One area of concern is the preponderance of indicators measuring quantity of activities and the relative paucity of indicators of quality. The assessment process would be strengthened with additional indicators that measure the quality of offerings and outcomes.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

1. The University of Alaska Fairbanks has made very significant improvements in its planning and evaluation processes, addressing recommendation one from the fall 2011 comprehensive peer evaluation. The approach outlined in this self-assessment report appropriately aligns mission, core themes, objectives and indicators. The strategic plan draft provides a detailed goals and strategies to bring these changes to fruition.

Recommendations

None.