

Report of the Committee to Chancellor's Cabinet

K-12 Outreach/Bridging Programs Special Program Review

March 31, 2015

The committee discovered that UAF colleges, schools and departments offer a breadth and depth of academic, creative, and athletic K-12 outreach programs, in a variety of funding arrangements, including scheduled, ongoing programs to those offered less frequently and on request or by arrangement with a requesting partner. In some cases, K-12 outreach is also a component of individual faculty workloads. The committee believes that robust K-12 outreach is an important part of UAF's mission and must continue, and UAF must be able to analyze and report its activities, outcomes and return on investment (ROI). To fiscally and strategically assess K-12 outreach, UAF must establish program objectives and standard criteria and expectations for measuring, reporting, and offering programs.

This committee was unable to assess current program offerings due to a lack of standard criteria by which to measure this breadth of offerings. Prior to the initial report deadline in early January, the committee chose to focus its limited work time on compiling the inventory directed in the charge memo, and on making recommendations for creating infrastructure to most effectively manage strategy and investments in this area in the future. After reviewing the initial recommendations of the committee, the Chancellor requested the committee to continue its work and create standard criteria by which to measure K-12 program offerings. The committee has created an online survey tool to do so, but has not yet deployed the survey, wanting to first make sure that the data collected will meet the needs of university leadership.

In January the committee recommended the following:

- All UAF K-12 outreach activities should operate with the overarching goal to increase enrollment at UAF and improve the college-going culture in Alaska. Under these two overarching goals, programs might have more specific objectives, depending on the type of program and the funding source. Objectives should be measurable. Percentage of participants who later matriculate to UAF should be captured but is a challenge in the current state.

The committee stands by this earlier recommendation.

- UAF should establish annual reporting criteria for all programs using criteria which will allow measurement of ROI and the achievement of institutional or overarching goals. To the extent possible, this committee recommends minimizing the reporting burden by using existing data already produced by programs, and existing data collection systems (i.e., Faculty 180, Banner financial reporting).

The committee stands by this earlier recommendation and feels it has created a reporting tool with minimal burden that will answer all the analysis questions for which data are commonly collected included in the original charge memo.

- UAF should convene a standing K-12 Outreach Committee with staggered membership terms to ensure knowledge transfer, similar to the Institutional Research Board (IRB). This committee will provide oversight and coordination of any new programs or activities, other than faculty service assignments, and to ensure the quality and relevancy of existing programs per established reporting criteria.

The committee stands by this earlier recommendation.

- This committee identified a need for an inventory and database of existing programs and contacts for internal (UAF) and external (public) use. The committee believes that a comprehensive central searchable repository is a needed improvement. The committee drafted sample database fields (See draft database attached).

The committee stands by this earlier recommendation. The online survey tool created will collect the data that can be the source for the searchable database. Transferring the data from the survey tool to a searchable database will require a small amount of staff time; the amount of time to be primarily determined by how frequently the database is updated.

- A department or other resource must be allocated or assigned to provide staff support to the standing K-12 Outreach Committee and maintain currency of the inventory/database. This resource would be responsible for analyzing data on K-12 outreach activities, outcomes and ROI, and assisting the standing committee in producing an annual report of program performance.

The committee stands by this earlier recommendation. As part of its work, the committee found four separate, slightly different compilations of K-12

programs. This is not efficient to have multiple people trying to create the same resource. However, the existence of four lists speaks to the need for such a central resource to be created and maintained at UAF.

- UAF should establish avenues or mechanisms for K-12 partners and other constituents to voice their needs and wishes for future programs and review the list of existing programs.

The committee stands by this earlier recommendation. If a K-12 Outreach Committee were created, they could be the venue for such public input.

- There may be opportunities and efficiencies gained by coordinating or combining UA system K-12 outreach activities and UAF outreach activities and further analysis is needed.

Background

The ad hoc committee was convened by Chancellor Rogers via memo dated November 4, 2014. The committee was charged to inventory, analyze and recommend strategic changes to UAF's K-12 Bridging/Outreach activities, and to report back by January 9, 2015. See Charge Memo attached. After review of its initial report, the committee was asked to continue its work and further develop the criteria that should be used to evaluate K-12 programs. This report and the attached online survey tool represent the products of that additional effort.

Committee Members and Methodology/Process

The committee met eight times from November 10 through January 8, 2015 and an additional seven times between January 28 and March 11, 2015. Committee members are:

Deb Jones, Associate Professor, SNRE
John Monahan, Director, Upward Bound, GS
Allan Morotti, Dean, SOE
Saichi Oba, Associate Vice President, UA
Kris Racina, Associate Vice Chancellor, USA
Marsha Sousa, Director, Honors Program
Victor Zinger, Professor, CRC

As part of its work for the report completed in January, the committee prepared an initial information request (*see attached request*) which was sent broadly to

Executive Officers, Deans and Directors and others (*see attached spreadsheet of recipients*). The committee received over 31 responses and from those responses, began compiling an inventory of existing programs and discussing the emerging issues. The committee believes some programs may not have responded due to the short response time and that the inventory is not complete.

Drawing from other inventories created at earlier dates, and its own discovery efforts in the current work, the committee compiled an inventory of existing programs, defunct programs, and programs whose status is currently unknown. (*See attached inventory*).

Through review and analysis of the returned information, anecdotal information available through committee members, various inventories created in earlier efforts across the system and UAF campus, and discussion, the committee reached the following conclusions and confirmed many factual statements contained in the charge memo:

- Activities are funded in several ways: Fund 1, Grant, combination of general funds and grants, or self-support.
- A comprehensive inventory of current K-12 outreach programs or activities does not exist at UAF though such an effort has been undertaken on numerous occasions and therefore the need for such an inventory exists;
- There is no definition of a “K-12 outreach program” and the committee has broadly interpreted the term, however, further definition may be necessary;
- UAF has breadth and depth of activities offered by many distinct departments, colleges and schools;
- It is unclear due to this committee’s short working time to what extent or whether offering departments are conducting their own analyses and assessment of program activities, outcomes, and fiscal state;
- UAF has not yet established an overarching strategy, vision or mission for K-12 outreach programs or activities, although programs themselves may have individual strategies, vision and missions.

The committee created an online survey as a data collection tool (*see attached survey*). The committee conceived of the data collection strategy as a three tiered process occurring in two steps. The first step is to send the survey to all K-12 programs. The first 24 questions, Tier 1, will be asked of all programs. These address most of the analysis questions in the charge memo either directly or the information can be inferred from the answers to several questions. Committee members who run K-12 programs and are familiar with others in addition to their own indicated that many programs do not collect the type of data that would be required to answer a number of the analysis questions.

Tier 2 is comprised of survey questions 25-33. Respondents will be asked these questions based on their answers to question 24 about the source of funds for the program. Any program that reports that any of its funding comes from general funds will be asked the Tier 2 questions. Likewise, any program that reports any portion of funding from user fees will be asked Tier 2 questions. The committee felt that grant funded programs did not need additional scrutiny, but that those using general funds should get a closer look. Those programs with user fees move to Tier 2 because those programs may have the opportunity to generate more revenue if they were expanded. Ideally the committee would have preferred to have an additional criterion that moved a program from Tier 1 to Tier 2; this would be the number of participants served annually. However, the committee did not have access to online survey software with a level of sophistication allowing for skip patterns based on two set of criteria.

Tier 3 is the second step of the process and is an interview. These interviews could be conducted by a staff member from the office housing the K-12 database or by a member of the K-12 Outreach Committee. A program moves from Tier 2 to Tier 3 based on answers given in Tier 2. Initially the committee tried to compose questions to ask in Tier 3 to create a more structure interview, however, the data sought depends on the answers to many different questions taken together. The analysis required is overly complex for a structured interview; a live, thinking person needs to speak with these programs.

Question 25 asked respondents about program capacity and those who report having a wait list, being 100% full or being below 80% of capacity will be interviewed if their answer to the next question about what limits the program capacity is not a factor beyond their control. Those programs that are very popular are of interest since they may be able to be expanded (if supported by user fees). Those programs under 80% capacity need to be reviewed since a lack of demand may indicate that the program is unnecessary or needs better outreach.

Question 29 asks respondents about the cost per participant. A Tier 3 interview will be conducted if the answer to this question is very high or very low. Until some data are collected, it is impossible to specify what qualifies as very high or very low. Programs being offered for a very low cost per participant may be able to help other program operate more efficiently. Programs that are very expensive per participant deserve close examination to ensure they merit continuation.

The other questions that trigger a Tier 3 interview are those around evaluation. The committee felt that any program which was required to submit an evaluation to an external entity was receiving sufficient inspection. However, those programs that indicate in question 31 and question 32 that they conduct no evaluation will be interviewed as part of Tier 3. The obvious primary question is how they know they are effective in the absence of any evaluation measures.

Once the committee's online survey is approved by university leadership, the committee is willing to take the next step and deploy the online survey.

Conclusion

The committee believes that the current budget reductions may eliminate some K-12 programs and activities through reallocation of resources by colleges and schools. Programs that are funded by grants have a natural life cycle based on the length of the grant and may be scheduled for discontinuation at expiration of funding. K-12 outreach is an important activity for UAF and its future students.

K-12 programs, however funded, should be regularly inventoried, analyzed, and assessed, based on developed criteria and performance metrics and how well the program achieves overarching goals and specific program objectives.