

*UAF College of Rural and Community Development
Rural College Impact Study*

Prepared for:
**UAF College of Rural and
Community Development**



Research-Based Consulting

Juneau
Anchorage

February 2009

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Table of Contents

- Summary of Findings..... 1**
- Introduction and Methodology..... 5**
 - Introduction..... 5
 - Methodology..... 6
- Combined Rural College Profile 7**
 - Combined Rural College Enrollment and Student Credit Hours 7
 - Student Enrollment Characteristics and Demographics..... 8
- Center for Distance Education and Independent Learning..... 10**
 - Program Description 10
 - CDE Enrollment and Student Credit Hours 11
- Other Rural College Programs 15**
 - ORC Academic Programs 15
 - Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development (DANRD) 15
 - Early Childhood Development..... 15
 - Rural College Health Programs 16
 - Department of Developmental Education..... 17
 - Rural Student Services 18
 - Rural Alaska Honors Institute 18
- Other Rural College Student Characteristics and Demographics..... 20**
- Rural College Revenue and Expenditures 23**
 - Revenue..... 23
 - Expenditures 25
- Economic Impacts of Rural College 29**
 - Rural College Spending Impacts..... 29

Summary of Findings

A component of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the College of Rural and Community Development (CRCD) is a complex mix of campuses, statewide academic programs, and student and administrative support. The Rural College, a component of CRCD, is made up the Center for Distance Education and Independent Learning, statewide academic programs such as the Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development (DANRD), Rural Student Services, Rural Alaska Honors Institute, Developmental Education, Rural Health Programs, Developmental Education, Early Childhood Education and the administrative functions of CRCD. The Vice Chancellor/Executive Dean for Rural, Community and Native Education has oversight and provides strategic direction and budget development and management. The Vice Chancellor's office also provides support with Human Resources functions, faculty development, course scheduling, bookstore functions and facility management coordination.

UA contracted with McDowell Group to profile the Rural College and highlight its role in higher education in Alaska, and to assess its economic impact on the Fairbanks area and statewide. Economic impacts include spending by the Rural College and its employees, as well as the circulation of those dollars throughout the regional and statewide economies. Qualitative benefits are difficult to measure in dollar terms but are equally important. They include the production of educated individuals who will enhance Alaska's workforce and the positive effect on residents' quality of life in terms of convenience, greater self-confidence, increased earnings potential, and the sense of satisfaction that results from their learning experience.

Following are key findings from this study.

Rural College Enrollment

The Rural College is an important component of the University of Alaska (UA) system, with substantial enrollment. In FY 2008, the Rural College had combined unduplicated enrollment of 4,900 students. Three-quarters of Rural College enrollment is comprised of Center for Distance Education (CDE) students.

Place-Based Education

An important component of the Rural College is place-based delivery of education. Place-based education means delivering education to where the students are, and at a time they need it. The ability of residents to engage in higher education while maintaining their lifestyle, families, and livelihood is a significant benefit of the Rural College. According to one interviewee, "One of our Rural College health care students is a mother with ten kids. She can't move out of the village to go to school. She takes a full-time class load, sits on community councils and has a job. We are there for students like this, the ones who cannot leave their life because their life is too important."

Leaving their home community to further their education would be a hardship for many Alaskans. The prospect of leaving behind family, jobs, and other responsibilities can be a deterrent to pursuing higher education. Many enrollees, especially in the rural areas, would not have even considered taking college courses if not for the availability of local or distance delivery. In this respect, place-based education actually increases the number of students engaging in higher education in the state.

Nearly three-quarters of Rural College courses are distance-delivered, offering students statewide the opportunity to take courses at a time and place of their convenience. In addition to providing educational opportunities for a sizeable number of rural Alaska students, Rural College courses are popular with students enrolled at the main University of Fairbanks campus and the Tanana Valley Campus because of the convenience of distance delivery and the ability to take courses when they need them.

Distance education course offerings are becoming the preferred choice, even for students situated on the Fairbanks campus. Many athletes take advantage of distance delivered courses primarily because of their travel schedules that result in them missing traditional classrooms sessions. Also many students who have become accustomed to distance learning through alternative high schools are early distance adopters. More and more students are shopping for a choice of course delivery methods.

The Rural College is also unique in the UA community campus system in that it offers Bachelor's and Master's degrees. This allows graduates in Rural Development, Education, and Child Development and Family Studies to pursue even higher levels of education without leaving their community.

Faculty and Staff

Rural College faculty and staff take their mission seriously and go to great lengths to keep students in school and focused on their goals. Staff and faculty interviewed for this study had the following comments concerning their efforts to keep students engaged and ultimately successful.

We encourage people so much. People start and stop, and sometimes it is the voice of the faculty and staff helping them to continue. We tell students, 'Well, how about just one class next semester. There is funding, we just need you to take it.' Students then take the class, and then they continue. We just don't let them get away.

Our faculty is very supportive. They know the students and know when they should be pushed or need encouragement. A lot of times all these students need is mentoring to show them what they can do.

We just had a faculty retirement. We had many past students come to this instructor's retirement. Many of them had become very successful and said 'I wouldn't have made it without you to encourage me in the beginning.' That is what we do; we let them know they can succeed.

Workforce Development

Three Rural College programs in particular (Health Programs, Early Childhood Development, and Alaska Native and Rural Development) offer rural Alaska students academic opportunities for workforce and career development in jobs that are important to rural Alaska (see bullets below). These programs allow students to learn the skills needed for jobs in their home community in health care, education, Tribal management, construction, and child development. Filling these types of rural community jobs with local residents is economically beneficial and increases the quality of life for Alaska's rural communities. Nearly 70 percent of Rural College FY 2008 graduates completed programs that qualified them to work in High Demand Job Area careers in Alaska.

Rural College Employment

Employment during the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters averaged about 160 to 170 jobs (this includes the Fairbanks office, six rural campus centers, and adjunct faculty). In Fall 2008, Rural College employed 27 regular faculty and 60 regular staff, as well as 66 adjunct faculty and 10 temporary staff. When the full academic year is considered (winter break and summer staffing employment is lower), annual average employment at the Rural College was about 155 people.

Rural College Expenditures

PAYROLL

Almost all of Rural College FY 2008 payroll and benefits (\$7.1 million of \$7.6 million) was paid to Alaska residents. About two-thirds of Rural College staff lived in the Fairbanks area and received \$5.5 million in payroll and benefits.

GOODS AND SERVICES EXPENDITURES

A detailed analysis of Rural College expenditures revealed that nonpersonnel (goods and services) expenditures totaled \$3.8 million in FY 2008, with more than two-thirds of Rural College spending occurring within the state. Half of all spending on goods and services occurred in Fairbanks (\$1.9 million) and 10 percent in Anchorage. In total, spending occurred with 175 vendors in 50 communities around the state.

Table 18
Rural College Goods and Services Expenditures, FY 2008

	Amount	% of Total
Fairbanks	\$1,908,000	50%
Anchorage	376,000	10
Other Alaska communities	362,000	9
Total in-state expenditures	\$2,646,000	69%
Out-of-state expenditures	1,196,000	31
Total expenditures	\$3,842,000	100%

Source: UAF College of Rural and Community Development, McDowell Group analysis.

Economic Impacts

Indirect and induced economic impacts, often described as multiplier effects, are important components of the overall economic impact of the Rural College. The table below presents Rural College direct spending as well as the indirect and induced impacts. (see page 28 for a more detailed description of indirect and induced impacts).

Based on Rural College annual average direct employment of 110 full-time/part-time individuals in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the campus had an indirect and induced impact of about 45 additional jobs within the Borough. Rural College's total in-state, annual average employment (including Fairbanks) was 150 people and resulted in about 80 additional (indirect and induced) jobs statewide. The additional payroll associated with this indirect and induced employment totaled about \$1.9 million within the region and about \$3.2 million statewide.

Rural College FY 2008 total direct spending of \$7.4 million within the Fairbanks North Star Borough resulted in an indirect and induced impact of \$2.7 million for an estimated \$10 million in total economic activity in the Borough. Rural College's total statewide spending (including Fairbanks) of just under \$10 million resulted in estimated total economic activity of \$14.5 million statewide in FY 2008.

Table 21
Economic Impacts of Rural College Spending, FY 2008

	Direct	Indirect & Induced	Total
Fairbanks North Star Borough			
Employment	110	45	155
Labor income (payroll & benefits)	\$5,472,000	\$1,915,000	\$7,388,000
Campus spending	1,908,000	763,000	2,671,000
Total spending impact	\$7,380,000	\$2,679,000	\$10,059,000
Statewide (including Fairbanks North Star Borough)			
Employment	150	80	230
Labor income (payroll & benefits)	\$7,199,000	\$3,240,000	\$10,439,000
Campus spending	2,646,000	1,429,000	4,075,000
Total spending impact	\$9,845,000	\$4,669,000	\$14,513,000

Source: UA Statewide Planning and Budget and McDowell Group. Note: Figures have been rounded.

Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

This report looks at the Rural College in several ways. First there is a review of enrollment and student characteristics for all Rural College components combined. Then, to better understand the uniqueness and complexity of the Rural College, the next section separates the College into two major categories. One is the Center for Distance Education and Independent Learning (CDE) – the largest component of rural programming for the UA system. The second category consists of all other rural college programs and services grouped together. This group, referred to as “other Rural College” programs or ORC, is primarily comprised of four academic programs: Department of Developmental Education, Rural College Health Programs, Early Childhood Development, and DANRD.

These ORC programs were grouped together because they are relatively similar in that they are semester-based and rural-focused, and nearly all course delivery is synchronous, meaning instructor and student interaction takes place at the same time (though locations may be different). All CDE course delivery is asynchronous, meaning that the communication between the instructor and the student takes place at a different time and place. CDE courses are paper-based or online with no direct interaction between student and instructor. Program descriptions, enrollment data, and demographic data and will be presented for CDE and the other ORC programs.

In addition to these programs, the Rural College also manages Rural Student Services, which assists students in acclimating to college life, and by providing advisement and academic support through their academic careers, and the Rural Alaska Honors Institute program for rural high school students.

The final sections of the report reviews combined Rural College revenues, expenditures, and economic impacts.

Distance Education

It is important to understand the major role that distance delivery plays in Rural College programs. The Rural College is the central provider of development and delivery of distance education for UAF and has one of the highest rates of Distance and Technology Delivered (DTD) courses of all UA community campuses. In Fall 2008, nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of combined Rural College student credit hours (SCH) were DTD. All CDE courses, and about one-third of ORC programs’ SCH, were DTD.

Rural College DTD course delivery is accomplished by either print-based course materials or through Internet-based methods. Print-based courses are delivered by printed course guide with course materials sent by mail for independent study courses. Students may submit coursework by mail, fax, or email. Web-based courses are predominantly delivered through UAF’s Blackboard, Elluminate Live (E-Live) or a hybrid combination of audio and internet distance delivery. E-Live classes are delivered in real-time so that students and the course instructor are able to interact simultaneously from different physical locations. Students submit course work via Blackboard or email.

Other delivery methods include audio conferences scheduled through Event Builder. Students are provided with a toll-free number, meeting access codes and instructions on how to connect to the conferences. Books and materials are mailed. Some courses in DANRD and Health Care programs also require intensive in-person seminars at the beginning and end of each semester.

Methodology

The report presents a series of campus metrics including enrollment, demographics and other student characteristics, as well as revenue, expenditures and overall economic impact.

The Economic Impact section of this study examines the cumulative effects of Rural College-related expenditures within the Alaska economy. Economic multipliers were applied to campus-related expenditures and employment to measure indirect and induced impacts. Multipliers are derived from a widely used and customizable input/output model, IMPLAN.¹ IMPLAN is a tool that helps analyze relationships within an economy – how much a certain amount of spending in one sector generates in a different sector, for example – so that the total effect of changes (inputs and outputs) in an economy can be measured. When necessary, McDowell Group modifies IMPLAN multipliers to create the most accurate estimates possible, based on extensive project experience and measuring Alaska’s rural and urban economies.

To assist the research team with this study, UAF College of Rural and Community Development, UAF Planning Analysis and Institutional Research, UAF Financial Services, and UA Statewide Budget and Planning provided information on revenue, expenditures (including detailed campus spending and employee payroll and benefits), student enrollment, and demographics.

Qualitative information was gathered through interviews with program managers and administrators to capture their opinions of Rural College impacts.

¹ Minnesota IMPLAN Group Inc., IMPLAN Professional version 2.0

Combined Rural College Profile

Combined Rural College Enrollment and Student Credit Hours

Student enrollment is measured in two ways: headcount and SCH (Student Credit Hours). Headcount measures the number of students enrolled in any number of classes, while SCH accounts for the number of course credits each student is taking. For example, 10 students taking one three-credit course each is reflected by a headcount of 10 and total SCH of 30. Ten students taking 12 credits each (full-time) is reflected by a headcount of 10 and total SCH of 120. Within the higher education arena, SCH is considered the more accurate measure of a school's production and is more closely associated with its revenue stream. Nevertheless, headcount is an important and effective measure of educational impact on regions and populations.

Enrollment includes all students receiving instruction from the Rural College, regardless of their degree program location. For example, many students are enrolled in degree programs based in Fairbanks, but complete general requirements through the Rural College. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of Rural College Fall 2008 students were enrolled in programs at the UAF MAU level. One out of ten students were enrolled at the Tanana Valley Campus.

Combined Enrollment

From FY 2000 to FY 2008, Rural College enrollment (CDE and ORC programs combined) increased by 75 percent from 2,780 to 4,871, while SCH increased by 136 percent from 11,046 to 26,106. In recent years enrollment has ranged from approximately 4,700 to 4,900 students (roughly 10 percent of enrollment system-wide) taking 22,000 to 26,000 SCH. Fiscal Year 2008 SCH reached a record high for the college (26,106), while FY 2008 enrollment of 4,871 was only 1 percent below the FY 2006 peak of 4,921.

Table 1
Combined* Rural College Enrollment and SCH, Fiscal Years 2000 - 2008

	Enrollment		Student Credit Hours	
	Total Rural College (including CDE year-long courses)	% Change	Total Rural College (including CDE year-long courses)	% Change
2000	2,780		11,064	
2001	2,830	+2%	11,360	+3%
2002	3,267	+15	13,563	+19
2003	3,610	+10	15,748	+16
2004	3,812	+6	17,754	+13
2005	4,675	+23	22,440	+26
2006	4,921	+5	24,989	+11
2007	4,717	-4	24,438	-2
2008	4,871	+3	26,106	+7

*Note: This table includes unduplicated enrollment for all Rural College components including CDE semester and year-long courses, and semester-based courses for all other programs.

Student Enrollment Characteristics and Demographics

Attendance and Degree-Seeking Status

More than half (58 percent) of semester-based Rural College enrollment (CDE and ORC programs combined) was by full-time students in Fall 2008. The majority of Rural College students (85 percent) were degree-seeking.

Table 2
Combined Rural College Enrollment Characteristics, Fall 2008

	Count	% of Total
For-credit enrollment		
Full-time	1,337	58%
Part-time	978	42
Degree-seeking*	1,974	85%
Non-degree seeking	341	15
Total enrollment in for-credit classes	2,315	

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research and UA in Review, 2009.

Note: This table includes semester-based enrollment for CDE and other Rural College programs but excludes CDE year-long enrollment.

*Degree-seeking status is determined at the UA statewide level; the students counted as degree-seeking are enrolled at Rural College but may be degree-seeking at any of the three MAUs (UAF, UAA, UAS).

Age, Gender, and Ethnicity

Roughly two-thirds of combined Rural College students were female in Fall 2008. Slightly less than two-thirds were White, and one out of five were Alaska Native. The average age of Rural College students was 28, two years younger than the FY 2008 UA system-wide average age of 30.

Table 3
Combined Rural College Student Demographics, Fall 2008

	Count	% of Total
Gender		
Female	1,566	68%
Male	749	32
Ethnicity		
White	1,439	62%
Alaska Native	500	22
Other	232	10
Not reported	144	6
Average age		28 years old

Source: UA Statewide Planning and Budget.

Note: This table includes semester-based enrollment for CDE and other Rural College programs but excludes CDE year-long enrollment.

Student Origin

Nearly nine out of ten (87 percent) of combined Rural College students originated from within Alaska in Fall 2008.

Table 4
Rural College Student Origin, Fall 2008

	Combined Rural College	% of Combined Rural College
Alaska	2,019	87%
Other U.S. states	238	10
Foreign	44	2
Unknown	14	<1
Total	2,315	100%

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research

Notes: Origin is the location of a student when first enrolling at the university and may differ from a student's current citizenship, visa, or state residency status. For Alaskan students entering UA, the origin is recorded as a city or village. For students of other states, the origin is recorded as the state from which the student comes. In the case of international students, the origin at entry is recorded as the student's home country.

This table includes semester-based enrollment for CDE but excludes CDE year-long enrollment.

Center for Distance Education and Independent Learning

Program Description

CDE is the largest program component of the Rural College, with 74 percent of Rural College enrollment in FY 2008. The program began in 1963 as the Department of Evening Classes and Correspondence Study. The goal of CDE is to provide quality educational opportunities to students delivered wherever they are and whenever they need the course. CDE courses are designed especially for those who have no physical access to a college campus, such as military personnel. According to one interviewee, "We have a lot of single parents who are students. We are a tremendous value to them, and other students, by allowing them to take classes anytime and anywhere. We also have military personnel taking courses because they can be in Iraq or Afghanistan and still take courses." Another said, "One student we had was disabled and unable to travel to face-to-face courses. He took courses through us to get his higher education started, and he is now looking at graduate-level engineering programs. The program provided him another way to get an education."

All CDE course delivery is asynchronous, meaning that the communication between the instructor and the student takes place at a different time and place. Currently CDE offers over 150 courses, either web-based, delivered through UAF's Blackboard, Elluminate-Live system or other online resource, or paper-based by mail, fax or e-mail. Historically, CDE delivery was via paper but that has changed with the availability of the online delivery. The majority of CDE delivery is now online (76 percent online versus 34 percent paper). CDE plans to continue increasing its online delivery options in the future.

Classes may be taken on a traditional semester-based schedule or on a year-long basis, offering students a high degree of flexibility. CDE staff closely monitor and support students. According to one staff member, "We track all of our students so everyone is in the loop. We have meticulous notes on each student so with the click of a button, a staff member can know what each student is doing and if they are having any problems. This way when students call, anyone can help them right away, making it easier for the student. We treat them all like sons and daughters because you never know who they are or who they will become." And, "We are like the Verizon commercial, always standing behind every student."

CDE courses are attractive to students who do not have access to a campus or cannot commit to an in-person or online class schedule because of work, military or other commitments. Distance delivery offers students more flexibility and the ability to take courses at more convenient times. As a result, a growing number of students are simultaneously enrolled in traditional face-to-face and distance delivered courses (many of the Rural College students taking distance courses are Fairbanks-based and enrolled at UAF or Tanana Valley campus). They may need a course that is required for their degree program but is not available on campus at a time (year/semester or day/time) that is convenient for them.

Currently, CDE does not award certificates or degrees but plans to begin offering Occupational Endorsements and degrees online in Fall 2010. Many courses can be applied to UA certificate and degree programs from other campuses.

CDE Enrollment and Student Credit Hours

Semester-Based Course Enrollment and Student Credit Hours

CDE semester-based enrollment increased 122 percent from FY 2000 to FY 2008. From FY 2007 to FY 2008, CDE enrollment increased by 9 percent, from 2,496 to 2,724 students. CDE year-long course enrollment declined significantly (22 percent) from FY 2000 to FY 2008. Combined, unduplicated CDE enrollment increased by 46 percent from FY 2000 to FY 2008, from 2,475 to 3,612 students. The FY 2008 unduplicated count of 3,612 CDE students represented 74 percent of all unduplicated Rural College enrollment.

Table 5
CDE Enrollment, Fiscal Years 2000 - 2008

	Semester-Based Enrollment	% Change	Year-Long Course Enrollment	% Change	Total CDE Enrollment	% Change
2000	1,229		1,312		2,475	
2001	1,415	+15%	1,177	-10%	2,515	+2%
2002	1,668	+18	1,364	+16	2,932	+17
2003	1,890	+13	1,336	-2	3,097	+6
2004	2,174	+15	1,202	-10	3,245	+5
2005	2,300	+6	1,187	-1	3,363	+4
2006	2,472	+7	1,162	-2	3,504	+4
2007	2,496	+1	1,064	-8	3,406	-3
2008	2,724	+9	1,022	-4	3,612	+6

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research.

While CDE courses can be paper-based or delivered via the Internet, the recent trend is towards online delivery, with three-quarters of semester-based students choosing courses that are delivered over the web.

Table 6
Semester-Based CDE Enrollment by Course Type, Fall 2008

Course Delivery Type	Enrollment	% by Delivery Type
Internet delivery	1,090	76%
Paper-based delivery	491	34
Total	1,426	100%

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research.

Note: Total enrollment is unduplicated and smaller than the sum of paper-based and internet enrollment because students may be simultaneously enrolled in paper-based and internet courses.

Year-Long Course Enrollment and Student Credit Hours

Yearlong CDE course enrollment and SCH has steadily declined over the last five years but remains significant. In 2008, about 1,000 students were enrolled, taking a total of 4,300 credit hours.

Table 7
CDE Yearlong Course Enrollment and SCH, Fiscal Years 2000 - 2008

	Year-long Enrollment		Year-long Student Credit Hours	
	Enrollment	% Change	SCH	% Change
2000	1,312		4,741	
2001	1,177	-10%	4,222	-11%
2002	1,364	+16	4,853	+15
2003	1,336	-2	5,029	+4
2004	1,202	-10	4,672	-7
2005	1,187	-1	4,523	-3
2006	1,162	-2	4,654	+3
2007	1,064	-8	4,305	-7
2008	1,022	-4	4,307	0

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research.
Note: Student credit hours do not include audits.

CDE Enrollment by Subject

The following table of CDE semester-based enrollment by subject is ranked by SCH. While the program offered a wide variety of courses the most popular were English, Psychology, and History.

Table 8
CDE Enrollment and Student Credit Hours by Subject, Fall 2008

Subject	Headcount	SCH
English	239	735
Psychology	185	633
History	184	570
Mathematics	123	453
Sociology	126	414
Economics	108	361
Business Administration	88	306
Computer Info Office Systems	71	213
Justice	62	198
Computer Science	62	189
Applied Business	54	180
Health	57	171
Political Science	52	159
Anthropology	49	147
Art	49	147
Library Science	143	143
Geography	34	105
Marine Science & Limnology	24	96
Biology	28	90
Developmental Studies Math	26	78
Journalism	24	78
Spanish	24	72
Music	24	68
Women's Studies	21	66
Communication	21	63
Latin	19	60
Statistics	17	51
Education	10	48
Accounting & Info Systems	15	45
Film	15	45
Early Childhood Education	14	42
Social Work	12	39
Linguistics	11	33
Aviation Technology	6	24
Theater	5	15
Alaska Native Studies	4	12
Cross-Cultural Studies	4	12
Drafting Technology	4	12
Trades And Technology	2	6
Counseling	1	3
Software Engineering	1	3

Source: UA Information Systems, Banner SI, Closing Extracts, Fall 2008.

Notes: Enrollments by subject sum to greater than the CDE enrollment total. Each student is counted once for each subject in which they are enrolled. Student credit hours are without audits.

CDE Alaska Student Origins

Students from 105 Alaska communities were enrolled in a CDE semester-based course in Fall 2008. Nearly half of enrolled students originated from the Fairbanks area (including North Pole, Fort Wainwright, and Eielson Air Force Base).

Table 9
CDE Top 15 In-state Locations of Student Origin, Fall 2008

Community	# of Students	% of CDE Semester-Based Enrollment
Fairbanks	470	33%
North Pole	135	10
Anchorage	91	6
Fort Wainwright	40	3
Juneau	39	3
Eielson AFB	33	2
Wasilla	28	2
Eagle River	21	2
Sitka	21	2
Soldotna	20	1
Delta Junction	19	1
Dillingham	19	1
Palmer	17	1
Homer	16	1
Kodiak	16	1

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research.

Note: Origin is the location of a student when first enrolling at UA and may differ from a student's current citizenship, visa, or state residency status. For Alaskan students entering UA, the origin is recorded as a city or village. For students from other states, the origin is recorded as the state from which the student comes. In the case of foreign students, the origin at entry is recorded as the student's home country.

CDE Student Ethnicity

More than two-thirds (70 percent) of CDE Fall 2008 semester-based students were White. Slightly more than one out of ten were Alaska Native. The remainder of students reporting ethnicity were Asian, Black, and Hispanic, each accounting for 4 percent of enrollment.

Table 10
CDE Student Ethnicity, Fall 2008

	Enrollment	% of CDE Enrollment
White	994	70%
Alaska Native	191	13
Asian	50	4
Black	54	4
Hispanic	50	4
Unknown	87	6
Total	1,426	100%

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Other Rural College Programs

ORC Academic Programs

Following is a list of academic programs available through the following programs: Rural College Health Programs, Early Childhood Development, and DANRD.

- **Developmental Studies**
- **Occupational Endorsements** – Rural Human Services, Construction Trades Technology, Rural Nutrition, and Roads Scholar.
- **Associate of Arts** – General Studies.
- **Associate of Science** – General Studies.
- **Bachelor's** – Rural Development, Education, Child Development and Family Studies.
- **Master's** – Rural Development.

Two majors are available from the Rural College, Childhood Development and Family Studies and Rural Development. Rural College students can also earn baccalaureate and graduate degrees in cross-cultural studies, education, and social work in conjunction with UAF College of Liberal Arts and the School of Education. In FY 2008 the Rural College awarded nine Bachelor's degrees and five Master's degrees.

Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development (DANRD)

Rural Development (RD) is a distance delivery program offered through UAF's Rural College with faculty and staff based in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Bethel, and Dillingham. The program focuses on developing community leaders whose work will improve the lives of people living in rural Alaska. DANRD originated at UAF in 1984, and expanded its reach to rural students in 1994 through the Applied Field-Based Program. The program offers classes through audio conference, Elluminate-Live, Blackboard and intensive face-to-face seminars held at least once per semester in many locations around the state.

The program allows students to advance beyond a two-year associate degree by offering both baccalaureate and master's degrees in Rural Development. The master's degree was first offered in 2000 based on demand from many of the DANRD BA graduates. Many of the RD graduates are in leadership positions statewide where they focus on rural issues and community development. Some graduates work in or with ANCSA regional and village corporations, village tribal administration, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Many of the students and graduates have strong ties to rural Alaska. While taking classes, about half of the students reside in rural Alaska.

Early Childhood Development

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) program provides educational opportunities leading to certificates, Associate degrees or Bachelor of Arts degrees in Child Development and Family Studies. The program focuses on educating students in the skills needed to work with children from birth to age eight, the families of these

children, and the communities they live in. The program is distance delivered through audio conference, Blackboard, and Elluminate-Live.

Many graduates of the program pursue careers with their local Head Start program, child care centers, child welfare agencies, or as teacher aides in public schools. Head Start is a federal program provided at no cost to families that promotes school readiness for pre-school age children (ages three to four) from low-income families. This is achieved by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families. Head Start programs are located in approximately 127 villages throughout the state of Alaska. Each Head Start location requires three to ten qualified staff members. The ECD program focuses on graduating students who meet the federal requirements for teaching assistants and teacher preparedness for the Head Start program. ECD staff commented that “Our graduates are successful. Many now work for Head Start programs. Others have gone on to receive their Master’s degrees and become faculty. Some do social work or work in pediatrics, not in medicine, but in child behavioral aspects.”

ECD is helping to meet local workforce demand in Alaska’s rural communities while increasing the quality of life for residents. One faculty member commented, “Before villages had Head Start, the kids weren’t ready for school. They didn’t have the basic skills to complete kindergarten, first, or second grade. Once Head Start was established, the programs in the villages were having problems meeting the requirements for their teacher’s assistants and the preparedness of teachers. This was leading to loss of their funding. ECD ensures that their personnel meet the requirements, and allows them to focus on the kids.”

Rural College Health Programs

CRCD Rural Health Program supports several behavioral and allied health programs. The training and education allow students to receive nationally recognized credentials as healthcare professionals. There is a current shortage of health care professionals in Alaska, and growth in this industry is expected to continue. According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the healthcare industry is expected to be one of the top industries for job growth between 2006 and 2016.² Some jobs with the highest projected growth rate are Registered Nurses (2,310 positions), orderlies and attendants (860 positions), and nursing, personal, and home care aides (830 positions). Healthcare professionals are especially needed to fill these types of jobs in rural Alaska. The Rural College Health Program focuses on providing students with education appropriate for the unique needs and environment of healthcare in Alaska.

Partnerships are essential for the programs to succeed. One of the partnerships, the Allied Health Program, is delivered in conjunction with UAF’s CRCD Tanana Valley Campus. This partnership allows rural students the opportunity to take classes through distance education and includes intensive, in-person seminars at the beginning and end of each semester. These partnerships help students gain valuable hands-on experience by providing clinical rotations in hospitals and clinics throughout the state. The majority of partners allow students time and resources to complete their course work by allowing them time-off for study and providing computer access at work. Some employers have even helped pay travel expenses and tuition.

² Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, *Alaska Economic Trends*, January 2009. <http://labor.alaska.gov/trends/jan09.pdf>

One of the focuses of the Health Program is to engage students in healthcare early in their studies. Many new students entering the program have developmental needs in areas such as math and writing. Many students take developmental courses early on in their academic program. The Rural College has developed several healthcare-specific preparatory courses such as Math for Healthcare or Math for Human Behavior. These courses help to prepare students for more advanced studies and lead to increased self-confidence. A program staff member said, "We are the beginning of the healthcare pipeline. We start them off slow. We are dealing with students who were not likely to go to college or complete college because they didn't know they could do it. We raise their confidence levels, and they are successful beyond their dreams. These courses help students develop their skills and learn how to be students, and reward them with occupational endorsements as they work towards their associate's degree. This programming has been successful in reducing the rate of student drop-outs."

Many of the graduates have gone on to work in their local communities at clinics in allied healthcare positions; others have gone on to become registered nurses or licensed practical nurses. An interviewee commented, "The goal of our partnerships is to educate local nurses. If we fill jobs with nurses we fly in, they almost always leave, if we raise local nurses they are more likely to stay." These homegrown health care workers are a valuable asset to rural Alaska communities.

Department of Developmental Education

The Department of Developmental Education became part of the Rural College in 2004. The goal of Developmental education is to make educational opportunities and success possible for all students by focusing on developing the skills and the mental attitude needed for success in a higher educational setting. Preparatory courses are offered in math, writing, and reading.

The Department offers programs and services addressing academic preparedness, including proper assessment and placement in courses. Many first-year students fresh out of high school are not prepared for the rigors of college-level courses. Additionally, many developmental studies classes are made up of nontraditional students. Many developmental students have been out of school for some time, requiring them to refresh previous skills such as math and writing. Additionally, the use of placement tests to assess a student's current abilities allows for more accurate student placement upon entering the system. Many students fail if they begin academic programs at a level they are not prepared for. An interviewee made the following comment concerning developmental courses: "We have a fairly significant number of students taking developmental courses. Some don't have the math skills or writing skills to be successful, so they flounder. We ensure they are placed appropriately so they don't get overwhelmed and leave." Students who self-place may end up in courses for which they are under-prepared and beyond their current capabilities. This can lead to frustration, failure and the potential for dropping out of school. Mandatory placement assessments began in academic year 2008-2009. Program Administrators report that anecdotally, there has been an increase in student retention as a result of better initial student placement.

Students are also provided opportunities to learn proper study techniques and how to handle the demands of a multiple course-load. Instructors provide individual attention, encouraging students to be successful. Many times Developmental Education is a student's first experience in the higher education system. Proper placement in preparatory courses, combined with close monitoring and counseling, can lead to early student

success. This boosts student self-confidence and can result in students pursuing even higher levels of academic achievement. The following comments show the level of concern that Developmental Education staff and faculty have towards student success.

Our faculty is very supportive. They know the students and know when they should be pushed or need encouragement. A lot of times all these students need is mentoring to show them what they can do.

Without Developmental Education, we would have a much lower retention and success rate for our students. They would give up. We are the extra bit of cement for them to keep it together and realize that this is important.

Sometimes school is the first thing these students give up when the going gets tough. Many of them have jobs and families along with school, and without the proper preparation, school is the first thing they drop when it gets hard because it's the easiest thing to do. Our department focuses on making sure they know that they can do it all. They can work, have a family and go to school, and they will be better off for it in the end.

The Department has eight faculty and one staff members located in Fairbanks, as well as additional faculty (teaching onsite or providing course delivery statewide via distance delivery). The program serves student's both at the UAF campus and via distance.

Rural Student Services

Rural Student Services (RSS) has a long history at UAF. It began in 1969 and was known as Student Orientation Services (SOS). RSS offers extensive student services and serves as a bridging program for students coming from rural communities. RSS reaches out to high schools across the state in an effort to prepare students for college success. They offer courses in financial aid, time management, course scheduling, and study skills. Last year RSS partnered with key stakeholders, the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) and the Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) to house liaisons at RSS to engage and promote student success.

The goal of Rural Student Services (RSS) is to provide rural students with culturally relevant guidance and assistance to help them meet their academic goals. RSS provides assistance to help ease the culture shock that many village residents experience when they venture outside their home community. The culture shock that occurs when someone leaves their community for the first time to attend the urban campuses of UAA, UAF, or a college outside Alaska can be traumatic, resulting in the student leaving the educational system altogether, perhaps never to return. In addition to orientation and academic services, RSS provides students with cultural opportunities while at UAF. RSS is based in Fairbanks with a staff of six.

Rural Alaska Honors Institute

The Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) was started in 1982, by a group of Alaska Native leaders who saw a need to create a pathway for academic and social transition between high school and college. The program brings honors level students from rural communities, as well as Alaska Native honors students from semi-urban areas, to the UAF campus for six weeks each year.

This rigorous academic program provides students with a realistic introduction to a college environment. The focus is on composition and college level study skills, with additional specialty classes including: math,

petroleum engineering, business management, education, biochemistry, and geoscience. Students who graduate earn between seven and eleven college credits.

RAHI has proven its success. In 2006 the American Institutes for Research conducted a study on the RAHI program, finding that “When just comparing minority students, RAHI rural Alaska Natives were nearly twice as likely to complete a Bachelor’s degree program as other rural Alaska Natives (19 percent versus 10 percent).” There are over 1,250 RAHI graduates, many of whom went on to receive advanced degrees.

RAHI II, Next Step started in 2007. These students are introduced to hands-on laboratory techniques, and they participate in genetics research under the guidance of UAF scientists. Students earn nine college credits for their work.

Other Rural College Student Characteristics and Demographics

Following are selected characteristics of ORC programs (Rural College Health Programs, Early Childhood Development, Rural Development, and Developmental Education).

ORC Enrollment

Enrollment in ORC programs increased 360 percent from Fall 2000 to Fall 2008, from 354 to 1,629 students. ORC semester SCH enrollment increased by nearly 400 percent over the same period.

According to Rural College administration, the large increase in FY 2005 enrollment and SCH was related to the transfer of the Developmental Education department from the Tanana Valley Campus to the Rural College and substantial tuition subsidies related to a grant from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) that provided tuition support for many students.

Table 11
Other Rural College Program Enrollment and Student Credit Hours, Fall 2000 - 2008

	Semester Enrollment	% Change	SCH	% Change
2000	354		1,520	
2001	375	+6%	1,689	+11%
2002	393	+5	1,815	+7
2003	581	+48	2,313	+27
2004	710	+22	2,720	+18
2005	1,629	+129	7,036	+159
2006	1,780	+9	8,019	+14
2007	1,663	-7	7,643	-5
2008	1,629	-2	7,886	+3

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research.

ORC Ethnicity

Half of Fall 2008 ORC program students were White, and more than one-third (35 percent) were Alaska Native.

Table 12
ORC Student Demographics, Ethnicity, Fall 2008

	ORC	% of ORC
White	500	51%
Alaska Native	342	35
Asian	33	3
Hispanic	31	3
Black	22	2
Unknown	59	6
Total	987	100%

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research.

ORC Enrollment by Subject

In all, other Rural College program students were enrolled in 30 different subjects in FY 2008. Developmental Math had by far the highest enrollment with 787 students. Seven other courses had enrollments of more than 100 students for the year: Developmental English, Mathematics, Library Science, Education, Rural Development, and Developmental Studies.

Table 13
ORC Programs Enrollment by Subject, FY 2008

Subject	Count
Developmental Math	787
Developmental English	159
Mathematics	113
Library Science	111
Education	109
Rural Development	108
Early Childhood Education	101
Developmental Studies	100
Social Work	64
Alaska Native Studies	46
Community Health Practitioner	35
Linguistics	34
Human Services	28
Cross-Cultural Studies	26
Anthropology	24
Computer Info Office Systems	19
Counseling	19
Secondary Education	18
Chemistry	15
Special Education	15
English	13
Health	12
Business Administration	11
Communication	11
Geosciences	10
Petroleum Engineering	10
Sociology	10
Applied Business	7
Psychology	7
Alaska Native Languages	6
Emergency Medical Services	1

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research.

Note: A student is counted once for each subject he/she is enrolled in. Because of this, the total count by subject will be larger than unduplicated total enrollment for Rural College courses.

Other Rural College Student Origins

The Fairbanks area (including North Pole, Fort Wainwright, and Delta Junction) had the highest number of student origins for other Rural College enrollment in Fall 2008.

Table 14
Other Rural College Programs, Top 20
In-state Locations of Student Origin, Fall 2008

Community	Enrollment
Fairbanks	270
North Pole	74
Anchorage	48
Bethel	32
Kodiak	23
Kotzebue	18
Wasilla	18
Delta Junction	17
Barrow	15
Dillingham	14
Juneau	13
Ketchikan	11
Sitka	11
Fort Wainwright	10
Hooper Bay	10
Nome	10
Tok	10
Eagle River	9
Fort Yukon	9
Nenana	9

Source: UAF Planning, Analysis, and Institutional Research

Note: Origin is the location of a student when first enrolling at UA and may differ from a student's current residency. For Alaskan students entering UA, the origin is recorded as a city or village.

Rural College Revenue and Expenditures

Direct impacts of Rural College include spending related to college activities: payroll, goods and services, student aid, and the purchase of equipment among others. This section presents revenues and expenditures for combined Rural College operation (CDE, ORC, Rural Student Services, RAHI and the Rural College Bookstore).

The analysis of Rural College economic impacts is premised with a presentation of its revenue and revenue sources.

Revenue

Funding for Rural College comes from a number of sources, including State of Alaska general funds, student tuition, federal receipts, and auxiliary receipts. The following table details Rural College revenue sources and funding amounts for FY 2007 and FY 2008.

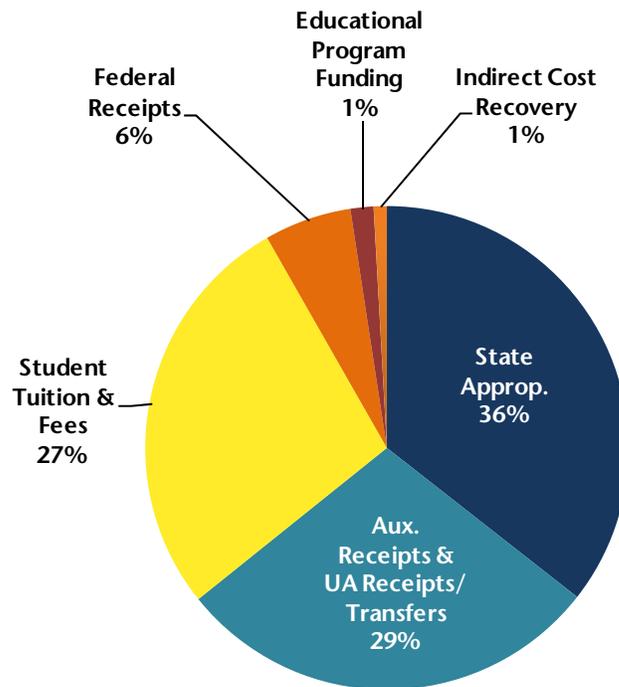
Total revenue for Rural College increased 2 percent from \$11.3 million in FY 2007 to \$11.6 million in FY 2008. State appropriations accounted for slightly more than one-third of Rural College revenue, student tuition and fees for 27 percent, and auxiliary receipts and UA receipts and transfers (combined) accounted for 29 percent of revenue.

Table 15
Revenue Sources, by Funding Source, FY 2007 – FY 2008

Source	FY 2007	FY 2008
Unrestricted		
State appropriations	\$4,453,300	\$4,110,200
Student tuition and fees	2,835,000	3,178,200
Educational program funding	65,400	177,500
Indirect cost recovery	106,400	102,000
UA receipts	1,454,000	1,471,700
UA intra-agency transfers	210,300	245,900
Restricted		
Federal receipts	\$675,700	\$673,900
Auxiliary receipts	1,535,300	1,593,600
Total revenue	\$11,335,400	\$11,553,000

Source: UA Statewide Planning and Budget. Figures have been rounded.

Figure 1
Revenue Sources, by Percentage of Total Funding, FY 2008



Description of Revenue Sources

State appropriations include receipts from the State of Alaska’s general operating fund.

Federal receipts include restricted funds, such as grants and contracts, where spending is dictated by the specific federal funding agency.

Student tuition and fees are generated by tuition charged to students for instructional programs, as well as fees charged for specific activities or items such as materials, and labs.

Educational program funding is revenue from a variety of sources used to fund specific educational activities.

Indirect cost recovery revenues are generated from federal and other restricted grants, and are used to help offset administrative and support costs that cannot be efficiently tracked directly to grant programs.

Auxiliary receipts are associated with all self-supported activities of the Rural College. They include revenues from bookstore and other operations.

UA receipts and transfers include unrestricted revenues from course and facility-use fees, educational testing fees, revenue from administrative services, and other miscellaneous sources.

Program/Department Size

The following expenditure section of this report presents Rural College expenditure data as a whole. In order to gain some perspective on the relative size of various programs/departments, the following table shows Rural College components as a percentage of the total budget. CDE and Rural Health Programs were nearly half of the Rural College Budget.

Table 16
Rural College Budget Ratios, FY 2008

Program/Department	% of Rural College Budget
Center for Distance Education	26%
CRCD Health programs	20
Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development	10
Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI)	6
Rural College administration	6
Developmental Education	5
Rural student services	4
Early Childhood Education	3
Other programs/departments	21
Total employment	100%

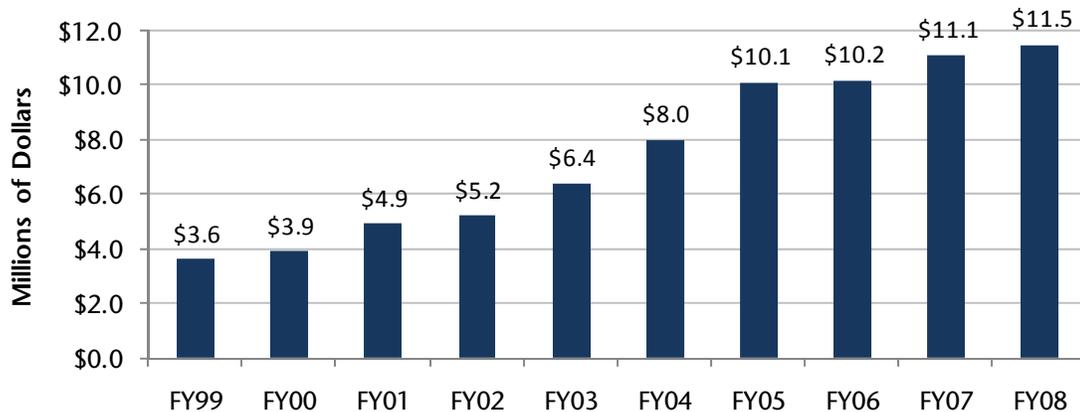
Source: UAF College of Rural and Community Development. Figures have been rounded

Expenditures

Expenditure Trends

Rural College expenditures have steadily increased since FY 1999 from \$3.6 million to \$11.5 million in FY 2008.

Figure 2
Expenditure Trends, FY 1999 - FY 2008



Source: UA Statewide Planning and Budget.

Expenditures by Type

Rural College-related expenditures include spending on faculty and staff payroll, goods and services, travel, student aid and equipment. In FY 2008, Rural College spending totaled approximately \$11.5 million, with the majority of spending (\$7.6 million) on wages and benefits. Expenditures on contract services amounted to nearly \$1.6 million, while travel expenses were \$566,500, and commodities nearly \$1.1 million. Other spending included student aid, capital and equipment, and miscellaneous expenses.

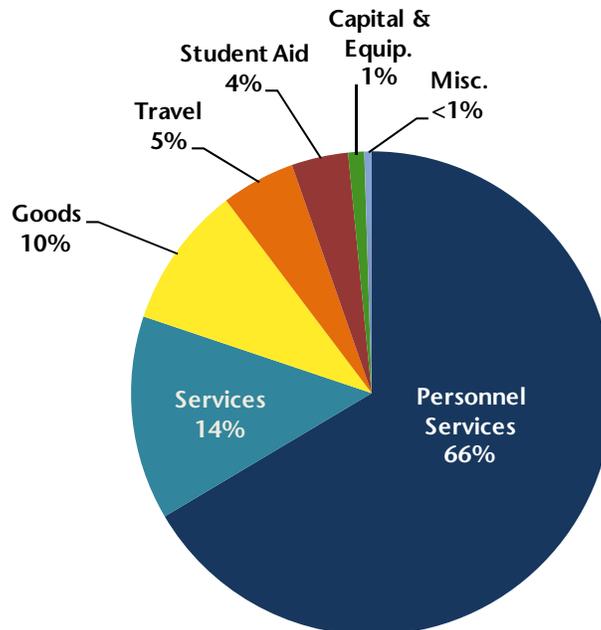
Table 17
Expenditures, by Type, FY 2008

Type	Amount	% of Total Spending
Personnel services (wages and benefits)	\$7,611,900	66%
Contracts (services)	1,569,500	14
Travel	566,500	5
Commodities (goods)	1,092,500	10
Student aid	433,700	4
Capital and equipment	122,600	1
Misc.	57,100	<1
Total expenditures	\$11,453,800	100%

Source: UA Statewide Planning and Budget.

Approximately two-thirds of Rural College spending was allocated to personnel services, which includes employee payroll and benefits.

Figure 3
Expenditures, by Percentage of Spending, FY 2008



SPENDING ON GOODS AND SERVICES

The study team analyzed detailed spending data provided by UAF CRCD for Rural College nonpersonnel spending. Ratios were developed for expenditures by location and applied to the Rural College spending data in Table 17. Rural College nonpersonnel (goods and services) expenditures totaled \$3.8 million in FY 2008. More than two-thirds of Rural College spending occurred within the state. Half of all spending on goods and services (\$1.9 million) occurred in Fairbanks and 10 percent in Anchorage. In total, spending occurred with 175 vendors in 50 communities around the state.

Table 18
Rural College Goods and Services Expenditures, FY 2008

	Amount	% of Total
Fairbanks	\$1,908,000	50%
Anchorage	376,000	10
Other Alaska communities	362,000	9
Total in-state expenditures	\$2,646,000	69%
Out of state expenditures	1,196,000	31
Total	\$3,842,000	100%

Source: UAF College of Rural and Community Development, McDowell Group analysis.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment during the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters averaged about 160 to 170 jobs. Typical staff levels are illustrated in the table below. In Fall 2008, Rural College employed 27 regular faculty and 60 regular staff, as well as 66 adjunct faculty and 10 temporary staff. When the full academic year is considered (winter break and summer staffing employment is lower), annual average employment at the Rural College was about 155 people. All but about five jobs were held by Alaska residents. Average annual employment in the Fairbanks area was about 110 people.

Table 19
Employment, Spring 2008

	Employment
Faculty regular	27
Faculty temporary	66
Staff regular	60
Staff temporary	10
Total employment	163

Source: UAF College of Rural and Community Development.

PAYROLL

Almost all Rural College FY 2008 payroll and benefits (\$7.2 million of \$7.6 million) was paid to Alaska residents. About two-thirds of Rural College staff lived in the Fairbanks area and received \$5.5 million of in-state payroll spending.

Table 20
Rural College Payroll by Location, FY 2008

	Amount	% of Total Payroll
Fairbanks residents	\$5,472,700	72%
Anchorage	853,200	11
Other Alaska communities	873,100	12
Alaska residents total	\$7,199,000	95%
Nonresidents	412,900	5
Total	\$7,611,900	100%

Source: UAF College of Rural and Community Development.

Note: Figures have been rounded.

Economic Impacts of Rural College

The economic impact estimates below are based on a widely used input/output model, IMPLAN, which estimates multipliers for determining the effects of employment and payroll on regional and statewide economies. There are three types of economic impacts related to Rural College spending and employment:

- **Direct impacts:** Campus spending on goods, services, student aid, and payroll.
- **Indirect impacts:** Jobs and income in businesses providing goods and services to the campus. For example, vendors who conduct business with the Rural College in turn buy fuel and other supplies, rent office space, and purchase services from other local providers in support of their day-to-day business operations. This spending creates additional jobs and income in the region (and statewide).
- **Induced impacts:** Jobs and income created as a result of campus employees spending their payroll dollars in the local economy (these are sometimes termed “induced” impacts).

Indirect and induced economic impacts, often described as multiplier effects, are important components of the overall economic impact of the Rural College. In general, multiplier effects for Alaska are limited, especially for rural areas, as few goods are actually produced in the state.

Rural College Spending Impacts

Based on Rural College annual average direct employment of 110 full-time/part-time individuals in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the campus had an indirect and induced impact of about 45 additional jobs within the Borough. Rural College’s total in-state, annual average employment (including Fairbanks) was 150 people and resulted in about 80 additional (indirect and induced) jobs statewide. The additional payroll associated with this indirect and induced employment totaled about \$1.9 million within the region and about \$3.2 million statewide.

Rural College FY 2008 total direct spending of \$7.4 million within the Fairbanks North Star Borough resulted in an indirect and induced impact of \$2.7 million for an estimated \$10 million in total economic activity in the Borough. Rural College’s total statewide spending (including Fairbanks) of just under \$10 million resulted in estimated total economic activity of \$14.5 million statewide in FY 2008.

Table 21
Economic Impacts of Rural College Spending, FY 2008

	Direct	Indirect & Induced	Total
Fairbanks North Star Borough			
Employment	110	45	155
Labor income (payroll & benefits)	\$5,472,000	\$1,915,000	\$7,388,000
Campus spending	1,908,000	763,000	2,671,000
Total spending impact	\$7,380,000	\$2,679,000	\$10,059,000
Statewide (including Fairbanks North Star Borough)			
Employment	150	80	230
Labor income (payroll & benefits)	\$7,199,000	\$3,240,000	\$10,439,000
Campus spending	2,646,000	1,429,000	4,075,000
Total spending impact	\$9,845,000	\$4,669,000	\$14,513,000

Source: UA Statewide Planning and Budget and McDowell Group analysis. Note: Figures have been rounded.