

Alexandra Fitts
Brief bio for GERC

I am a Professor of Spanish and currently coordinator of Women's and Gender Studies. I have been at UAF since 1995, and teach Spanish language, literature, and culture, as well as an occasional course in Women's Studies or World Literature. I have taught Spanish 101 and 102 and FL 200x, which are all core courses, and as chair of Foreign Languages for six years, I oversaw many core courses and their assessment.

I was approached about serving as chair of this committee, and decided to make room in my schedule to do it because I think that revisioning the core and establishing new general education requirements is one of the most important tasks facing us at UAF. In my opinion, general education and training for a profession are too often presented as different (and competing) goals and philosophies. In fact, fostering a broad base of knowledge, global and community awareness, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity can only enhance a student's ability to perform well in their chosen field. The need to assess and communicate information effectively is vital in any profession, as is a broader understanding of the world we live in. UAF students and the programs they study are widely diverse, but I believe that the education objectives and learning outcomes developed by this committee last year are ones that we would want to help all of our graduates to achieve. I cannot claim any great background or experience with general education, but it is something that I am dedicated to and will work hard for.

I have served on many committees and in several administrative capacities (I have been either a department chair or program coordinator since I was tenured in 2001). Most recently I served as co-chair of the university-wide Committee on the Status of Women, which I also represented on the Chancellor's Diversity Action Committee. I think that people who have worked with me would say that I have a low-key but effective leadership style that encourages input and accommodates diverse opinions. Since I was on sabbatical last year, I removed myself from all major committees and service obligations (except WGS coordinator). For that reason, I will be able to commit myself to the time and effort that this task will require. In practical terms, I am available every afternoon between 1:00 and 3:00 or 4:00 and can make myself free at other times as the committee needs. My schedule should be pretty much the same in the spring.

Thanks to the committee for considering me.