

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Strategic Plan 2012-19

As we approach the 100th anniversary of our charter, we will reflect on a century of growth and change that set our current trajectory to become recognized as one of the nation's outstanding student-oriented research universities. The world is changing rapidly, demanding flexibility and nimbleness from an active citizenry. Over the past decade climate change and economic, social and environmental sustainability have emerged as significant issues. Today's universities must educate students to address challenges yet to be identified and prepare graduates for jobs that do not yet exist. This Strategic Plan provides a map whereby UAF can capitalize on new opportunities and engage Alaskan communities in developing the state's future. The seven goals and associated strategies provide a vision of how we see ourselves serving Alaska and the world in the coming years.

The Strategic Plan was developed by dozens of faculty, students, and staff members. Led by a steering committee, participants were organized in subcommittees according to UAF's five core themes and one for resources and capacity. Through this process it became clear that many of the University's goals reach across more than one of our core themes, demonstrating the profound degree to which the mission is as integrated as it is complex. The Plan is organized around goals and corresponding strategies, each followed by a short elaboration. Associated core themes are identified after each strategy. In the final goal the strategies are relevant to all themes.

The Chancellor initiated the process of developing the UAF strategic plan in 2011 and a draft was completed in 2012. Because of the parallel Strategic Directions Initiative being carried out by the UA Statewide System, the final approval of the draft was delayed to allow for any revisions that might be needed to conform to the UA System document. That document, now titled *Shaping Alaska's Future*, was approved by the UA Board of Regents in April 2014 and incorporated into Board Policy in June 2014. Review of the UAF Strategic Plan showed that it was congruent with *Shaping Alaska's Future*, and Chancellor Brian Rogers formally approved the UAF Strategic Plan in April 2014.

Goal 1: Educate students to be informed, responsible, and active citizens by incorporating real-world experiences and applications into the undergraduate curriculum.

Goal 1 Strategies

- Implement new general education requirements, designed for the 21st century. (*Educate, Prepare*)

This updated curriculum will improve our ability to serve diverse student needs, take advantage of broad faculty expertise, and prepare our students for 21st-century life.

- Empower students to achieve their educational objectives in a timely manner. *(Educate, Prepare)*
This focus on the objectives of the students themselves is appropriate for the diverse student body and broad mission of UAF.
- Increase undergraduate participation in research, scholarship, and creative activity.
Support for these activities will involve new strategies including mentorship by graduate students, more research-based capstone courses, and a stronger Honors research program. *(Educate, Research)*
- Provide more opportunities for experiential learning.
Academic exchanges (national, international, and rural Alaskan), internships, discipline-specific competitions, community-based learning, and other forms of experiential learning enhance “regular” classroom work. *(Prepare, Educate, Engage)*

Goal 2: Promote UAF as Alaska’s premier research enterprise in partnership with state and federal agencies, industry, Alaska Native organizations and civic groups.

Goal 2 Strategies

- Establish new research partnerships in targeted growth industries that have potential to improve life in the north or competitive advantages of Alaskan business. *(Research, Connect)*
Relationships with industry may be strengthened through establishment of testing centers, intellectual property licensing agreements, and grants and contracts.
- Respond to emerging issues in Alaska through greater integration with state agencies. *(Research, Connect)*
Establish institutional links such as co-location of state agency offices on the Fairbanks and regional campuses, internship programs, and conventional grants and contracts.
- Increase partnerships with Alaska Native organizations and other rural groups. *(Research, Connect)*
Augment current research efforts in rural development, behavioral health, and Native languages and arts, and establish more rural scholarships and visiting artist/scientist programs.
- Focus federal research efforts on growth areas in which UAF has a demonstrated expertise or natural advantage. *(Research)*
Growing fields include biomedical, energy, natural resources, and climate research.
- Diversify Alaska’s economy through promotion and commercialization of intellectual property. *(Research, Engage)*

Increase the number of licenses per year and establish a formal research corporation.

Goal 3: Serve Alaska’s diverse communities in ways that are increasingly responsive and accessible and enhance the social, economic, and environmental well-being of individuals and communities.

Goal 3 Strategies

- Incorporate traditional and local knowledge more fully in appropriate curricula at every level from college preparation to graduate programs. *(Connect, Educate)*
University teaching and research should be reciprocal in nature.
- Expand accessibility for a variety of learners. *(Educate, Engage, Connect)*
Increase continuing education, e-learning, and asynchronous offerings, and certificate and degree programs available entirely by distance.
- Undertake focused recruitment of underserved and underrepresented Alaskan populations and provide appropriate support services following enrollment. *(Connect)*
UAF will seek ways to serve populations such as young men in rural areas, with historically low enrollment rates in higher education.
- Obtain classification as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution. *(Engage, Connect)*
Document engagement and outreach efforts across all campuses and sites to demonstrate clear commitment to public access.
- Build outreach efforts to Alaska’s youth. *(Engage)*
UAF will be the state’s leading resource and information source for positive youth development, by building on successful models such as youth camps.
- Foster scholarship in the discipline of outreach and engagement. *(Engage)*
UAF’s land grant mission would benefit from study and promotion of best practices in outreach, engagement, and applied research.
- Establish new economic development partnerships with the business community. *(Connect, Engage)*
Such partnerships can generate new research ideas and student internships and address needs of the business community.

Goal 4: Improve assistance to students in making transitions across all phases of the education continuum.

Goal 4 Strategies

- Implement a new comprehensive undergraduate advising model. *(Educate, Connect)*
Help students transition successfully from high school into college and from college to graduate education or the workforce using current research on effective practices.

- Extend efforts to collaborate with rural and smaller high schools to improve readiness for post-secondary education and training. *(Connect)*
Coordinate course offerings to increase opportunities for tech prep, college readiness, and eligibility for the Alaska Performance Scholarship.
- Ensure availability of professional development opportunities for students at all UAF campuses. *(Prepare)*
Useful examples are seminars and colloquia in skills such as resume building and effective interviewing.
- Establish a comprehensive English as a Second Language (ESL) program to open education and workforce training opportunities to a broader population. *(Connect, Educate)*
Improve transition of international students into UAF programs and provide a community resource for non-English-speaking residents.
- Increase the effectiveness of mathematics programs that help students make the transition from developmental to post-secondary higher education. *(Educate)*
College-level mathematics is crucial for educational and employment advancement, and has been identified as a road block for many students.
- Expand the Rural Alaska Honors Institute in the area of workforce development. *(Connect)*
Pursue new initiatives; recent examples are Geoforce and Process Technology.
- Identify additional opportunities to showcase events that emphasize applied learning. *(Connect, Engage, Prepare, Educate)*
These events attract prospective students and enhance professional development of current students.

Goal 5: Create or expand graduate programs in targeted areas of identified need and existing strengths.

Goal 5 Strategies

- Maintain an average of 50 doctoral degrees per year over the next five years. *(Educate, Research)*
This is a criterion for Carnegie classification as an RU/VH (Research I) university, which improves UAF's competitiveness for federal research grants.
- Explore opportunities for new doctoral programs in areas for which there is demonstrated need and existing capacity. *(Educate, Research)*
As the state's lead research university, UAF has a responsibility to meet the state's needs for highly educated citizens.
- Diversify sources of graduate student funding. *(Educate, Research)*
Pursue endowed graduate student funding to support recruitment of exceptional students and timely completion of graduate degrees.

- Double the number of Alaska Native graduate students. (*Educate, Connect, Engage*)
Alaska Native students are underrepresented in graduate programs relative to their proportion in the state's population.
- Implement 2+2 veterinary program. (*Educate, Research*)
This program will address the shortage of veterinarians in rural areas of Alaska.
- Expand UAF's commitment to the University of the Arctic. (*Educate, Research*)
UAF is the lead institution for graduate programs in the University of the Arctic and is well positioned to increase access for students around the circumpolar north.

Goal 6: Enhance UAF's competitive advantage by attracting and keeping the best and brightest students, staff, faculty.

- Create and implement compensation models for faculty that allow the university to attract and retain high-profile faculty members. (*Research, Educate*)
UAF needs to compete effectively with other universities for high-profile faculty within the constraints of collective bargaining agreements.
- Expand support for visiting scholars, artists, and industry professionals, particularly in those areas of research and creative activity for which UAF is already recognized nationally. (*Educate, Research*)
Visiting experts enrich the university and give students a broader learning experience.
- Pursue strategies to increase the quality of students attracted from Alaska and elsewhere. (*Educate*)
Diversify and enhance the intellectual capital of the University by considering such options as in-state tuition for Outside students in the top 10% of their classes or better marketing of UAF's nationally recognized programs.
- Leverage faculty resources by strengthening collaborative partnerships among schools, colleges, and campuses. (*Prepare, Educate, Research*)
Research, teaching, and public service benefit from interdisciplinary cooperation.
- Strengthen processes for attracting and retaining highly qualified staff by offering excellent compensation, benefits, and development opportunities; fostering an environment where staff contributions are recognized and valued.
UAF needs to compete effectively with other employers inside and outside Fairbanks to hire and keep talented staff.

Goal 7: Develop innovative approaches to managing University resources to support its mission and position it to meet challenges of the future.

Goal 7 Strategies

- Insure that the budget and planning process is clearly tied to the objectives of the Core Themes.
Core Themes have been recently developed and the planning and budget process should be integrated to match.
- Identify and implement administrative efficiency and effectiveness.
Complete the current comprehensive administrative review and process mapping efforts.
- Conduct a fundraising campaign centered around the 2017 centennial celebration of the University charter signing.
This serves to publicly highlight UAF's rich history and diversify its funding.
- Complete the plan for the West Ridge Deferred Renewal project.
This will result in upgrades and new construction to support UAF's extensive research enterprise.
- Finalize plans for and begin construction on a new co-generation power and heat plant for the Fairbanks campus.
The current plant is well beyond its intended lifespan.
- Complete a new Engineering building.
This will significantly enhance the capacity to train engineers for which Alaska has a high demand.
- Develop public-private partnerships for construction of dining and housing facilities on the Fairbanks campus.
This new fiscal model will be used initially in expansion of Wood Center dining facilities.
- Optimize use of teaching space and campus facilities during off-peak hours and seasons.
Benefits include more efficient use of our resources and more options for nontraditional students.
- Develop a sustainability plan for library materials, electronic resources and services.
Library resources directly impact teaching, student learning outcomes, research, and accreditation requirements.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for campus computing upgrades and sustainability of the system.
Information technology is increasingly central to all activities at a university.
- Identify, prioritize, and implement an infrastructure improvement plan for the delivery of STEM education at the rural campuses.
Increased rural access to UAF's science courses and laboratory and other research experiences is necessary for reasons of equal access and fair assessment, and will also provide increased opportunities for graduate student training and Alaskan-based research in STEM areas.