

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017-2022 Summary Report

What is it?

Adopted in 2017, the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) laid out seven major objectives to further diversity, equity and inclusion work at UAA. These objectives were derived from existing data, the work of 11 subcommittees, a campus climate survey and a diversity conference.

Plan Leadership

The original leadership team included Jeane T'áaw xíwaa Breinig (Alaska Natives & Diversity), Robert Boekmann (Psychology), Maria Williams (Alaska Native Studies) and Andre Thorn (Multicultural Center). In 2017, the plan was turned over to the Diversity Action Council (DAC). Subcommittees were formed to address the planning and implementation for each of the major objectives. From conception to close, dozens of faculty, staff, administrators and students provided input and leadership for the plan.

This report serves to update the university community on the progress achieved during the 2017-2022 plan, and demonstrate how the DIAP objectives have been incorporated into UAA 2025 (now known as UAA 2027).

DIAP Objectives

- Best Practices in Hiring: Establish Policies and Procedures to Increase Faculty/Staff Diversity
- Coordinate Campus Initiatives: Provide a Framework for Advocating and Managing Diversity
- Develop a System of Accountability for the DIAP
- Student Success: Target Underrepresented Populations
- Take It to the Curriculum: Enhance Diverse Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Campus Space: Ensuring Safe and Inclusive Spaces For All
- Community Campus Outreach: Connecting, Supporting and Celebrating Participation of all Campuses

Best Practices in Hiring: Establish Policies and Procedures to Increase Faculty/Staff Diversity

Accomplishments

- ★ Through the Office of the Provost, both a **multicultural post-doc program** and a **grow-your-own Ph.D.** program have been implemented as department needs and budget allow. These programs, implemented in fall 2018, allow for financial support for students to attend graduate school or engage in post-doctoral work and then gain employment at UAA.
- ★ In 2020, UA HR established a new position titled **"inclusivity specialist"** to oversee affirmative action, equal opportunity hiring efforts and disability accommodations. The CDO and director of Equity and Compliance work with this staff member on equity issues.
- ★ In 2021, UA HR created a new **Search Committee training**, including a diversity and inclusion module. The training is web-accessible and must be completed by all Search Committee members before they can proceed with the search process.
- ★ UA HR now provides **best practices** training on multiple DEI topics.
- ★ In 2021, the CDO developed and shared **inclusive hiring guidelines** with the UAA community and works with department leads, hiring managers and search committees on equitable hiring.

Coordinate Campus Initiatives: Provide a Framework for Advocating and Managing Diversity

Accomplishments

- ★ Established a new position and hired a **chief diversity officer (CDO)**. This new position was a key component of the 2016 DIAP process and document. After a national search conducted by Witt-Kieffer, Jennifer Booz was selected as the inaugural CDO in May 2020. Jennifer is a member of the Chancellor's Cabinet, advises on key issues and oversees multiple DEI initiatives. She also integrates campus-wide DEI initiatives by chairing the DAC and liaising with the Faculty Senate Diversity Committee and other DEI leaders in student, academic and administrative affairs.

OSAMA ABAZA, PROFESSOR OF CIVIL ENGINEERING, PREPARES HIS STUDENTS TO SORT AGGREGATE SAMPLINGS IN HIS PROPERTIES OF MATERIALS LAB. PHOTO BY JAMES EVANS.



MICHELE YATCHMENEFF

- ★ Similarly, a new position of **executive director of Alaska Native Education and Outreach** was developed and hired. In September 2021 a search committee made up of UA, UAA and Alaska Native leaders selected Dr. Michele Yatchmeneff for this position. Michele served in staff and faculty roles for ANSEP and the College of Engineering prior to moving to this cabinet-level role. In this role, she oversees Alaska Native recruitment, retention and community engagement, including the Alaska Native Success Initiative (ANSI).

- ★ A **Diversity Action Council** was established to advise the chancellor and support the work of the CDO. The Diversity Action Council was formed to support the interests of those active in DEI work and act as an advisory council to the chancellor and cabinet. As the CDO has taken on many of the council's responsibilities, the council now supports and advises the CDO, administers scholarships, plans and finances events, deals with hot topics and supports the work of multiple subcommittees.
- ★ A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **webpage** was added to the UAA website. The site includes information on programming, committees, best practices and resources for faculty, staff and students.
- ★ In August 2021, Ahmbra Austin was brought on as UAA's inaugural **onboarding manager**. Ahmbra is responsible for developing and implementing an onboarding program for new staff that includes training, resources and belonging initiatives. The onboarding program, piloted in fall 2022 will also include inclusion activities and multiple DEI trainings.
- ★ In addition to onboarding training, **DEI training** such as "Overcoming Implicit Bias" and "Controversial Issues Process" continues to be offered by the Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence (CAFE) and UAA's National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) affiliate.



AHMBRA AUSTIN

Student Success: Target Underrepresented Populations

Accomplishments

- ★ In 2020, Institutional Research (IR) developed a **data dashboard** allowing for access to student data disaggregated by race/ethnicity. A veteran's status dashboard was added as well. In July 2020, the DAC student success subcommittee proposed a recruitment/retention plan for underrepresented student populations. The plan was approved by cabinet and incorporated into the work of Enrollment Services and the Enrollment Liaisons committee.
- ★ In fall 2017, UAA launched the **Student Success Initiative** led by two new positions: vice provost for Student Success and director of First Year Student Advising. By fall 2018, this team had assembled a staff of first-year advisors, including advisors targeting underrepresented student populations. Since its inception, the Office of Student Success has expanded

to include initiatives such as CircleIn, a collaborative studying app; Navigate, a mobile app for advising and student success; Seawolf Mentor; a student and career mentor network; UAA Textbook Affordability, a free and reduced cost textbook initiative; and more.

★ Alaska Native Success Initiative (ANSI)

In November 2020, the Board of Regents passed the following resolution, "Authorization and direction to the University President to take the necessary actions to collect data; study and understand the University climate and programming; and identify the barriers, challenges, and opportunities to improve participation and outcomes for Alaska Native and Indigenous students, faculty, and staff." For the 2020-2021 academic year, UAA ANSI co-chairs Jennifer Booz and Michele Yatchmeneff worked with the UA ANSI Steering Committee and the UAA ANSI Committee to develop a system and university-wide plan. In November 2021, the Board of Regents approved the UAA ANSI metrics by which success will be measured. During the 2022-2023 academic year, Dr. Yatchmeneff has been assisting colleges and departments in developing ANSI strategic plans. At UAA, our ANSI institutional strategic priorities are:

- Increase Alaska Native student preparation, recruitment, retention and graduation rates.
- Increase recruitment and retention of Alaska Native faculty and staff.
- Create a culture of belonging for Alaska Native students, faculty, staff and community organizations.

This plan is an exceptional example of a targeted DEI initiative designed to address a specific need. This plan requires all members of the UAA community, including employees and students, to work together to create the systemic change needed to foster Alaska Native student, staff and faculty success and create a place of belonging.

LIBBY EUFEMIO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ALUTIIQ STUDIES AT KODIAK COLLEGE, GUIDES HER ALASKA NATIVE STUDIES A200 CLASS ON A FIELD TRIP TO THE ALUTIIQ MUSEUM IN DOWNTOWN KODIAK. PHOTO BY JAMES EVANS.



Take It to the Curriculum: Enhance Diverse Curriculum and Pedagogy

Accomplishments

- ★ In fall 2018, an **Alaska Native-themed (AKNT) General Education Requirement (GER)** was instituted. This resulted from years of effort from the Alaska Native Studies Council and faculty from UAA, UAF and UAS.
- ★ Similarly, in April 2020, the Faculty Senate approved a **Diversity and Inclusion General Education Requirement (GER)**. This requirement was implemented for students in fall 2020. The director of general education and Faculty Senate Diversity Committee developed the GER learning objectives, and over 100 courses received designation as diversity GERs.
- ★ CAFE continues to emphasize the importance of DEI in **curriculum development and pedagogical** approaches. Initiatives include new faculty orientation, UAA/APU Books of the Year, Difficult Dialogues, and inclusive pedagogy programs.
- ★ In spring 2019, the Faculty Senate Diversity Committee surveyed faculty to determine their participation in diversity-related activities in teaching, research/creative activity and service. After collection, the committee developed a **Faculty Diversity Activities Database** for data analysis and to serve as an experts database.
- ★ Each year, as part of the Chancellor's Awards for Excellence, a **Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Diversity** is awarded for outstanding contribution to the advancement of diversity of UAA students, staff and faculty through increasing the visibility and representation of diverse voices and creating an atmosphere of inclusiveness and community.
- ★ Beginning in fall 2020, and through a comprehensive year-long process, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) revised its **Faculty Evaluation Guidelines (FEGs)** to include a greater emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

Campus Space: Ensuring Safe and Inclusive Spaces For All

Accomplishments

- ★ All single-occupancy restrooms have been and will continue to be identified and adapted into **all gender restrooms**. Students, staff, faculty and campus guests are welcome to use the restroom and locker room facilities that correspond to their sex or gender identity or utilize restrooms that are designated all gender. A map of the all-gender restroom locations is available on the UAA website. Facilities will continue to work on this issue.
- ★ Recognizing the important role stable, comfortable and safe housing can play in a person's academic success, the Department of Residence Life now offers **gender-inclusive housing** to those interested in living on campus.
- ★ To provide a more welcoming environment, both Multicultural Student Services (MSS) and Native Student Services (NSS) spaces were **redesigned** in summer 2021.
- ★ In fall 2021, the Office of Facilities and Campus Services started a **DEI Sub-committee** to specifically focus on planned, and emergent DEI needs for access and inclusion.

Community Campus Outreach: Connecting, Supporting and Celebrating Participation of all Campuses

Accomplishments

- ★ In 2019, a **DAC Community Campus Subcommittee** was formed, and representatives from each campus attended regular meetings with members from the main committee. Individual campuses have also worked to establish a diversity committee and leadership structure appropriate to their communities. There is routine collaboration between main campus and community campuses for programming, workshops and funding opportunities.
- ★ Most community campuses have developed **diversity webpages** specific to their programming and community.



FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF GATHER IN CUDDY QUAD DURING THE SUMMER'S HIT SERIES CONCERTS IN THE QUAD. THE UNIVERSITY-HOSTED MUSIC SERIES BROUGHT STUDENTS, ALUMNI, FACULTY, STAFF AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE UAA. PHOTO BY JAMES EVANS.

Beyond the DIAP: UAA 2027

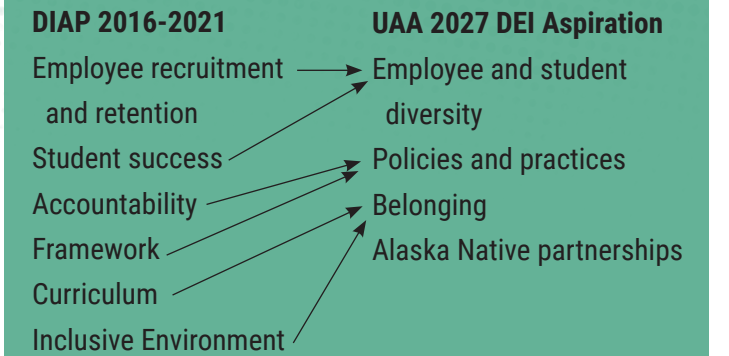
As demonstrated, tremendous progress has been made since 2016, and the work continues. Many of the objectives achieved under the DIAP will continue to be monitored and adapted by the CDO, other DEI leaders and committees.

With the onboarding of the chief diversity officer and the launch of UAA 2025 (now known as UAA 2027), new DEI strategic planning began expanding from the DIAP in 2020. As a demonstration of the commitment of UAA leadership, DEI strategic planning goals were integrated into the University Strategic Plan (UAA 2027) instead of remaining in a separate plan. This bold step ensures that "equity is everyone's work" and is tied to institutional planning, budgeting and assessment. The DEI strategic aspirations for 2027 and beyond include:

Aspiration #1: We put students first.

- ★ UAA becomes a student-centered institution.
- ★ Equity gaps in student learning and achievement are narrowed.

UAA 2027: DEI Strategic Plan



- ★ Students are retained, persist and graduate at increasing rates.
- ★ Students develop and achieve UAA's Core Learning Competencies.

Aspiration #2: We create a culture of equity and inclusion by embracing our diversity.

- ★ Increase student, faculty and staff diversity.
- ★ Address and strive to eliminate systemic racism from our policies and practices.
- ★ Create a sense of belonging and community for marginalized groups.
- ★ Strengthen existing and develop new meaningful partnerships with Alaska Native tribes, corporations and organizations.

The remaining aspirations include:

- ★ **Aspiration #3:** We embrace our role as a trusted and respected community partner.
- ★ **Aspiration #4:** We positively impact communities and the world through innovation.
- ★ **Aspiration #5:** We accelerate excellence through continuous improvement.



Diversity Action Council
UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE



Jennifer Booz
Chief Diversity Officer

jmbooz2@alaska.edu

<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/diversity/>

[@uaachiefdiversityofficer](#)