



October 4, 2024

Reflecting on UAA as a Dual Mission Institution

Provost

For those of you who were able to attend the Accreditation Kickoff meeting on September 13th, you know that I am pleased to be helping to lead efforts around both our current NWCCU accreditation cycle and the preparations for our next cycle. Since institutional accreditation is primarily aimed at continuous improvement, a key part of this is to work with all of our constituencies to think deeply about our mission, what we must do to ensure we are fulfilling it, and what if any changes we foresee in the near, mid- and longer-term future. As I have said several times, this is about what UAA, as a [Dual Mission](#) institution, will look like, and what might change in terms of who we serve and how we serve our communities, not only in the next few years, but also 7, 14, even 20 or more years from now.

Serving as Provost at a Dual Mission institution definitely impacts the work that we do. For example, we expend significant efforts around issues that are more typically associated with community colleges or technical colleges in the lower 48, such as dual enrollment, stackable credentials, and improving developmental education and overall college readiness. This work involves deep collaborations with faculty across all UAA Colleges and Campuses. At the same time, we are also deeply engaged in support of UAA's research and our graduate programs, including efforts to expand both, in ways that deepen the impact of our faculty's efforts. UAA's approximately \$350-\$400 million in external grants represents tremendous efforts by numerous faculty and staff, and it results in research and public service impacts to communities both inside Alaska and across the globe. Likewise, following significant declines seen after the pandemic, UAA's overall graduate enrollment has begun to return to its pre-pandemic levels, and the recent addition of, and plans for additional new graduate programs suggest that overall graduate enrollment may continue to grow.

I invite each of you to engage in these conversations in your academic departments, through your committee work, and in our larger communities. Stay tuned for future opportunities to engage more formally in this visioning and planning work as well.

Please direct questions or comments to the Provost (uaa_provost@alaska.edu).

Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness

On the Academic Affairs side, UAA faculty have been engaged in many initiatives that help UAA meet its dual mission. Some examples include the following:

Stackable Credentials. Faculty have been working hard over the past several years to create stackable credentials, allowing students to meet several milestones along the way to additional undergraduate and/or graduate certificates and degrees. Fully stackable credentials allow students to earn a credential, and then return to the institution to move seamlessly on to the next level of credential.

Affordability - Removing Hidden Prerequisites. Faculty have also been reviewing their curriculum for hidden prerequisites, which can add both time and expense for a student.

Affordability - Reviewing Course Fees. The comprehensive review of course-level fees by programs and colleges has resulted in significant savings to our students, making the cost of attendance much more manageable.

Deep Partnerships Through Practical Training Courses. UAA's faculty maintain strong ties to the community, with many programs by their very nature requiring student placements with local employers and industry, and many others already offering or currently exploring those opportunities as electives. This is a strength UAA can build on moving forward.

Using a Dual Mission Lens to Understand Mission Fulfillment. On the Institutional Effectiveness side, UAA has been looking at student success measures relative to things like part-time versus full-time attendance. Part of being a Dual Mission institution requires a willingness to look at data in new ways, to see how well UAA is meeting its mission for all the students the institution serves. More to come about data in the next Faculty Senate report!

Please direct questions to Senior Vice Provost Susan Kalina (smkalina@alaska.edu).

Student Success Report

It is no less true for being a truism that being a Dual Mission Institution shapes our approaches in the Office of Student Success. This report highlights just a couple of ways that is the case.

One significant component of our approach is the holistic nature of many of our Academic Support Services through the [Learning Commons](#). This Fall we brought back Academic Coaching, which is essentially non-subject specific tutoring that aims to help students build the skills that will foster their academic success. These include things like time management and test anxiety coping strategies and how to use UAA technologies like Blackboard. At the same time, our Writing Center and Communication & Presentation Coaching help students at every level from WRTG 080 to dissertation-level work.

The [University Honors College](#) is accessible to students in Anchorage or on our community campuses and to Associate-degree seeking students as well as to Bachelors-degree seekers. Our approach to Honors now also reflects our Dual Mission nature. Honors works closely with faculty across disciplines to offer an intentional blend of liberal arts GERs, but students also need to earn experiential and co-curricular credits in order to be transcribed as an Honors Scholar when they graduate. This enables them to develop hands-on career skills.

It benefits all of our students when education is affordable. One of the major initiatives the Office of Student Success has undertaken is related to [textbook affordability](#). We now have both ZTC (zero-textbook cost) and LTC (low cost between \$.01 and \$40.00) course attributes. Please consider these options as you plan for the upcoming spring semester and work with your schedulers to mark your classes appropriately.

Please direct any questions to Interim Vice Provost, Student Success Ray Ball (rball11@alaska.edu).

Faculty Success Report

Offering the range of curricula needed to support UAA's Dual Mission requires a diverse faculty. Our faculty come from workforce, industry, and classic academic backgrounds, so Faculty Success must provide resources designed to bridge gaps in professional preparation to help all faculty succeed in meeting our students' needs.

Faculty Success provides professional development and best practices programming which is available to all faculty at all campuses through events such as [New Faculty Orientation](#), [Headwaters](#), [Teaching Academies](#), and special topic sessions. This ranges from [syllabus design](#), foundations of [course design](#), implementing [learning technologies](#), meeting regular and substantive interaction requirements for online asynchronous online courses with our Teaching Online No Set Time ([TONST](#)) training, advising [high impact practices](#) in the classroom, and [assessment design](#). This year Faculty Success

will be introducing programming specific to mid-career faculty with Confluence and update training for pursuing promotion and tenure.

Our offices can be reached [here](#). Please direct questions to Interim Vice Provost Colin McGill (cmmcgill@alaska.edu).