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## *Using Data to Inform Our Work*

### Provost

I've recently returned from serving as an [NWCCU evaluator](#) for a university that, to some extent, is similar to UAA (is open admissions, serves a diverse student population, and uses a variety of stacking credentials from certificates through Master's level programs). Each time I serve in this way, I am reminded of just how critical data is to our ability to plan, effectively implement, assess, revise and begin anew with everything from academic programs to direct student support services, as well as for setting and tracking our broad goals and strategies around things such as enrollment, research impact, and community engagement.

At the institutional level, I think we all agree on the necessity for transparency around our data, and reliability of data, especially meaning, "we clearly define what we are measuring, and know that the data we see accurately represents that definition." Most institutions struggle, to some extent, with both of these things. Providing access to data, while maintaining students' protected information, can be a challenge. Ensuring that what gets entered into any data repository is clean and correct is sometimes hard as well. Perhaps one of the greatest struggles is with setting and communicating the data definitions, and then ensuring that (at least for most things) we are using these same data. I see this time and again during NWCCU visits, and I certainly see it here at UAA.

**For me, which definition we choose to use, for things like Retention, or Program Enrollment, is less critical than that we understand what it is we are measuring, and then that all of us are using the same definition as much as possible.**

Retention is a great example: UAA's official definition of [Retention](#) is the percentage of first-time associate and baccalaureate degree-seeking freshmen who enter in a given fall term and return the following fall. By contrast, our definition of [Persistence](#) is the percentage of first-time associate and baccalaureate degree-seeking freshmen who enter in a given fall term and return the following spring term. If you follow the links, you will find the UAA Mission Fulfillment Dashboards. I encourage you to bookmark this page, and refer to it when—for example—you are writing about UAA's student body in a

grant application, a research narrative, or other published or shared document. These dashboards are publicly available.

If you want to see more granular data, and are a UAA employee, you can find much of what you may need in the login-protected UAA Institutional Research Sharepoint site, [Students](#) tab. Here you can find critical program-level information, such as course enrollment, course pass rates, and more. Other great sources of information include the [Peer Comparisons](#) and [Student Consumer Information](#).

In my role as Provost, I also frequently need to consider data from outside of UAA, such as [labor market data](#), [career trend information](#), [high school graduation projections](#), and others.

Below, my colleagues across the Academic areas will talk more about the data their areas make available, and how data is used in their work. I hope that this is helpful to you, (both as a Governance body, and as individual faculty) and that sharing these perspectives can spark further conversations.

Please direct questions or comments to the Provost ([uaa\\_provost@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa_provost@alaska.edu))

## Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness

### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**Integrating data into a range of improvement and decision-making processes.** An important feature of how UAA uses data has to do with alignment. In the section above, the provost points to several metrics used on the institutional level for a range of purposes, including institutional accreditation, progress on mission fulfillment, and student success. For example, UAA has been publishing the [Student Success Metrics Reports](#) on the Institutional Accreditation website since Fall 2021, and the provost asks that the colleges and campuses integrate these data into their decision-making processes.

Many of these same data are integrated into ongoing, regular evaluation and improvement processes, such as [Academic Program Review](#), which, for example, provides information to the programs about graduation rates, semesters to degree for graduate programs, and course pass rates, and asks programs to report on the steps they are taking to improve these.

## INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

NWCCU is particularly interested to know that UAA uses its indicators of student achievement to inform decision making and resource allocation, as well as to inform mitigation strategies to close achievement gaps.

### **Here are the related NWCCU Standards for Student Achievement.**

1.D.2 Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, **the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement** including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and post graduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be **disaggregated** by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

1.D.3 The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be **widely published and available on the institution's website**. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

1.D.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and **implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps** in achievement and equity.

### **UAA addresses the Standards in the following ways.**

1.D.2 UAA set its formal student achievement metrics (Persistence, Retention, Graduation, Semesters-to-Degree for graduate programs, and Post-Graduation Success) and their disaggregations at the beginning of the current accreditation cycle. The metrics align with the NWCCU Standards, and also include a UAA-specific disaggregation, i.e., attendance (part-time as well as full-time). In addition, UAA has two leading indicators (Students take their Tier 1 GERs within their first 30 credits; Course Pass Rates).

1.D.3 UAA has published the Student Success Metrics Reports on the [Institutional Accreditation](#) website each year starting in Fall 2021. The newly designed Institutional

Research website features a dashboard [Accreditation Student Achievement Metrics](#) that complements the static reports. The new dashboard [Progress on Accreditation Student Achievement Metrics](#) provides another view of the measures, this time relative to identified targets. Finally, the redesigned [Peer Comparisons](#) dashboard looks at student success metrics relative to UAA's formal list of peers, including UAA's three dual-mission peers - Utah Tech University, Utah Valley University, and Weber State University.

1.D.4 The disaggregated data are used to inform and implement strategies to close achievement gaps. For example, Course Pass Rates have informed mitigation strategies implemented by the Office of Student Success, as discussed below.

**Integrating the metrics into other reporting.** UAA leadership uses the above metrics and peer comparisons in their reports to the Board of Regents. UAA also uses many of the same metrics to tell its story to external audiences. For example, UAA incorporates retention rates for associate and baccalaureate seeking students and disaggregates these by attendance (full-time/part-time) in the annual report to the State of Alaska's Office of Management and Budget.

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

## Student Success Report

The Office of Student Success uses many of the dashboards and reports mentioned above to inform its initiatives and strategies. For example, we use course enrollment and [course pass rate](#) data to shape our peer-to-peer initiatives in the Learning Commons through our Title III Grant. One example of this has been strategic partnerships with instructors in courses with high DFW rates to embed Learning Assistants who attend classes and engage with the students in experiential learning activities. LAs often also hold office hours for students and provide review sessions. We also use this information to make budgeting decisions about which areas to support with additional tutoring services.

The Office of Student Success has also previously administered the RISC Survey (Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges) that helps us to understand our students more holistically and shapes our approaches and interventions. We will be running the survey again in the upcoming spring semester and hope to partner with some faculty for its administration. We are moving to a 3-year rotation of this survey along with NSSE and short Navigate polls to help lower costs and to prevent survey fatigue among our students. We look forward to sharing the AY 2025 results with you!

At the next Faculty Senate Meeting, the Director of Student Success Initiatives, Strategy, and Assessment, Joseph Bruner, and I will be providing a brief presentation on [Navigate360](#) and Early Alerts/Progress Reports. In the meantime, though, I want to share briefly some of the ways the Office of Student Success uses Navigate Data. Academic Advising uses data collected via Navigate specific to Anchorage campus to report on the number of students included in advisor appointment campaign outreach, the number of reported advising interactions, the average student show rate to scheduled appointments, and the advisor appointment summary rate. We also use Navigate to collect qualitative data from the Anchorage and community campus advising teams around trends in student behaviors and common registration challenges. This helps us to shape communication strategies to students about things like MATH and WRTG placement and provide feedback to colleges and departments around trends in things like preferred course modalities for new and returning students. As the new advising session ramps up for the spring 2025 semester, we are also collecting feedback from students using a brief post-appointment survey via Navigate.

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

## Faculty Success Report

Faculty Success relies heavily on data to inform our internal assessment, decision-making, and pursuit of continuous improvement to best deliver faculty support and professional development. In the Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence (CAFE) decisions on the topic, frequency, mode of delivery, and timing of professional development programming are guided by a combination of quantitative data, qualitative data, and best practices. This includes event attendance data, participant surveys, high impact practices, core competencies, and reflective discussions with presenters, and the CAFE Advisory Board. We track participation in CAFE programming through registration surveys, collecting data including rank, program, college, and campus. We use these data to assess windows in which faculty are mostly likely to engage with us, what topics draw the most engagement, and how different topics and modes of delivery best suit different programs, colleges, and campuses. These data can also inform when to transition the type of support a topic may warrant. An example is Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), which was supported through numerous Teaching Academies and special sessions, and has recently transitioned to more universally integrated support materials.

[Instructional Design](#) collects participant feedback on larger scale trainings such as Teaching Online – No Set Time (TONST) and our Blackboard Ultra Course Conversion

(BUCC), and has used this data to substantially refine and improve these trainings. Additionally, we track faculty support requests and use these data to update and expand our public-facing materials, identify topics for workshops, Teaching Academies, New Faculty Orientations, newsletters, etc. The volume and types of request also impact which teaching technologies we recommend, retain, or phase out. Periodically we request data on Bb issues from IT to identify necessary elements for faculty training and support materials. Unless we specifically request and receive permission to quote, all faculty support requests and feedback are kept private and are reported outside of the unit only in aggregate/generalized forms. We keep more extensive internal data to help the team respond to future requests

The [Center for Community Engagement and Learning](#) (CCEL) is currently performing an institution-wide [survey of community engaged activities](#). We are surveying faculty, staff, Chairs, Deans, and Campus Directors to identify the scope of community engaged activities across UAA. These data will inform CCEL on how to best support institution-wide community engagement moving forward, lay a foundation for our application for the Carnegie designation as a Community Engaged Institution, and provide a clearer picture for how UAA is deeply integrated into the communities of South Central Alaska.

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