



UAS ALASKA NATIVE REPRESENTATION & SUCCESS 2021

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our campuses reside on the unceded territories of the Aak'w Kwáan, Taant'á Kwáan, and Sheetk'á Kwáan on Lingít Aaní, also known as Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka, Alaska. We acknowledge that Lingít Peoples have been stewards of the land on which we work and reside since time immemorial, and we are grateful for that stewardship and incredible care. We also recognize that our campuses are adjacent to the ancestral home of the Xaadas and Ts'msyen and we commit to serving their peoples with equity and care. We recognize the series of unjust actions that attempted to remove them from their land, which includes forced relocations and the burning of villages. We honor the relationships that exist between Lingít, Xaadas, and Ts'msyen peoples, and their sovereign relationships to their lands, their languages, their ancestors, and future generations. We aspire to work toward healing and liberation, recognizing our paths are intertwined in the complex histories of colonization in Alaska. We acknowledge that we arrived here by listening to the peoples/elders/lessons from the past and these stories carry us as we weave a healthier world for future generations.

PREFACE

Directed by the Board of Regents Alaska Native Success Initiative, a team representing the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) formed and met weekly since February 15, 2021 to formulate an understanding of Alaska Native experience, identify possible strategies to improve the institution of higher education, and provide suggested strategies for system improvement. This important work has taken place in an unconventional manner due to safety protocols required of the pandemic. The challenge of meeting outcome goals with the limits of zoom conversations and time limits provides the general framework of recommendations for change as a beginning of a deeper dive into systemic change.

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST

The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) is located in the southern panhandle of Alaska and is the traditional homelands of the Tlingit and Haida tribes, with campuses in Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. In context to higher education, as a regional university, UAS contributes to the economic fabric of Southeast Alaska through labor workforce development. UAS serves as a destination of choice in natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, education, business, and career technical education, providing education through endorsements, certificates, associates and bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees.

UAS has demonstrated a commitment to growth and improvement of institutional priorities in support of Alaska Native engagement. Further, UAS takes pride in providing courses of study specific to Alaska Native peoples, including languages, Alaska Native Studies, and Northwest Coast Art, and close collaboration with Alaska Native organizations.

An Alaska Native context and the critical importance of this work was captured in an earlier document by the Chancellor's Alaska Native Committee on Alaska Native Education (CACANE):

The intellectual, artistic, linguistic, and cultural traditions of the Indigenous peoples of Alaska are central components of the State of Alaska and its educational institutions. A commitment to improving Indigenous Education is a commitment to improving all of Alaska, and the efforts to strengthen the University of Alaska in its ability to serve Alaska Native peoples will contribute to improving the lives of learners and the state of communities in Alaska.

(adapted from the proposed draft UAS Indigenous Education Agreement, 2019)

UAS reaffirmed its accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in 2019 and was very pleased in the outcome for its recognition of its Alaska Native engagement cited in its report and notification as Commendation #1:

The Commission commends the University of Alaska Southeast for: 1. The recognition and inclusion of Alaska Native language, art, history and individuals into its buildings, curriculum, and administration. The involvement of Elders and culture bearers has created an extremely important connection between the Alaskan Native community and UAS's goal to be a place of cultural safety and equity. (excerpt from formal notice, NWCCU, 7/12/19)

In addition, UAS holds specialized accreditation in the following academic areas:

- Business, Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) <https://acbsp.org/page/about-who-we-are>
- Health Information Management *CAHIIM)
The Health Information Management (HIM) Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) at UAS is the only Alaska program accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education \(CAHIIM\)](#).
- Education (CAEP) All education programs through the Alaska College of Education at University of Alaska Southeast are accredited by the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation \(CAEP\)](#). CAEP accreditation signifies that the AKCoE has met the rigorous standards set forth for educator preparation.

UAS maintains the status of a Native Serving Institution with a 20% Alaska Native student enrollment through Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and Lumina Foundation. In a Southeast Alaska Native context, tribal enrollment data indicates an active enrollment of 32,051, of which 27,331 are 18 years and older. (source: CCTHITA Tribal Enrollment Report 2020). Sealaska Corporation, southeast Alaska's regional corporation, headquartered in Juneau, Alaska, Sealaska owns and manages 362,000 acres of land on behalf of more than 23,000 shareholders. Sealaska's land holdings in Southeast Alaska are roughly 1.6% of the traditional homelands that the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people have inhabited for more than 10,000 years. [About Sealaska Corporation](#)

Members

Richard Peterson, President Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska	Dionne Cadiente-Blattner, Tribal Education Programs Director, Douglas Indian Association
Joe Nelson. Board Chair Sealaska Corporation	Gloria Burns, President, Ketchikan Indian Community
Joe Hillaire, Nang Sk'at' áas, UAS student	Lauryn Framke, UAS student
Louise Brady, Title III, Sitka	Lance Twitchell, UAS Faculty Alaska Native Languages & Alaska Native Studies
Mischa Jackson UAS Term Faculty Alaska College of Education	Dannielle Carlson, UAS Admissions Counselor
Sarah Peele, UAS student	Ronalda Cadiente Brown, UAS Associate Vice Chancellor for Alaska Native Programs & Director of PITAAS
Karen Carey, UAS Chancellor	

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Three major priorities were identified as critical to Alaska Native representation and success by this committee:

PRIORITY #1 Institutional Change Vision, Leadership, and Messaging on systemic racism

PRIORITY #2 Alaska Native Staff and Faculty Recruitment & Retention

PRIORITY #3 Alaska Native Student Recruitment & Retention

The committee was unified in support of systemic improvement for the benefit of the development of a healthy, robust learning environment not only for its tribal citizens, but for Alaska.

These priorities evolved during discussions of both broad and specific themes and ideas, data, and resources on the topic of higher education. Each of the three priorities support the importance of transparency in use of data to tell the story of Alaska Native representation and success within the University of Alaska Southeast. Each meeting included data and related resources and conversation. The value of each member shared knowledge, experiences, and observations, collaboration and consensus toward priority recommendations was honored. This summary highlights the priorities of system improvement from an Alaska Native perspective.

PRIORITY ISSUE #1

Institutional Change, Vision, Leadership on System Racism & Inclusivity:

Is the University of Alaska Southeast doing sufficient analysis in ways that systemic racism impacts the Alaska Native population, and then making systemic adjustments so that Alaska Native students are not forced to assimilate their behavior, learning styles, and ways of thought and expression in order to succeed?

Goal	Eliminate institutional racism
Strategies	Develop an articulated vision statement on anti-racism and establish an organization standard and defined standard for assessment and reporting for continued growth.
Strategies	Implement mandatory training and evaluations for faculty and staff. Develop a transparent process for prevention, intervention, and resolution response strategies.
	Implement a transparent process for reporting violations of discrimination, anti-racism, and/or cultural safety. Define standards for grievances (current process) To provide context to these priorities, the committee suggests that narratives be gathered and used to document incidents of students, staff, and faculty regarding institutional racism, to measure change over time, and evaluate its effort.
Action	Develop common terms and related resources for faculty and staff
	Propose changes at faculty senate, union, and staff council. **

**Further, a public acknowledgement of racism within our systems, and an articulated commitment to addressing systemic racism be considered as one of the steps toward accountability. Currently, the success of Alaska Native faculty in education is not tied to any performative measures within the UA systems, meaning no one seems to be accountable for the systemic failures. Faculty reluctant to embrace diversity, decolonization, and equity, are able to avoid accountability by citing academic freedom or unfamiliarity of content in order to exclude Indigenous peoples, languages, histories, and organizations as pertinent to their specialty. Until there are systemic changes within many areas of the University of Alaska, we will continue to operate with systemic failures that are inequitable and racist in nature.

The UAS committee was provided an example of UA faculty response in support of racial justice.

United Academics AAUP/AFT Local #4996

[UA Faculty Union - United Academics](#)

[United-Academics-Embrace-Antiracism-and-Support-Black-Lives-Matter.pdf](#)

Approved by UNAC Representative Assembly on 03 June 2020 – United Academics Guiding Principles Statement to the UA Board of Regents

Inclusivity:

How does the University of Alaska integrate Indigenous content throughout the curricula in ways that overcome a history of exclusion of marginalization?

Does the University of Alaska Southeast demonstrate a consistent effort to be inclusive in course content that reflects diverse students?

Goal	Ensure that content of courses and programs is diverse and includes Alaska Native peoples, histories, organizations, and languages.
Strategies	Mandate and provide guidelines and professional development for programs and departments to develop inclusivity plans and reviews.
Action	Review CourseLeaf and Student Learning Objectives by/for... (“inclusivity rating system”- keu du.éex’ - and professional development support from local organizations)
	Develop an annotated bibliography of materials all students should encounter.
	Create/hire Indigenous Curriculum/Instructional support position to provide support for faculty to integrate indigenous scholarship and knowledge

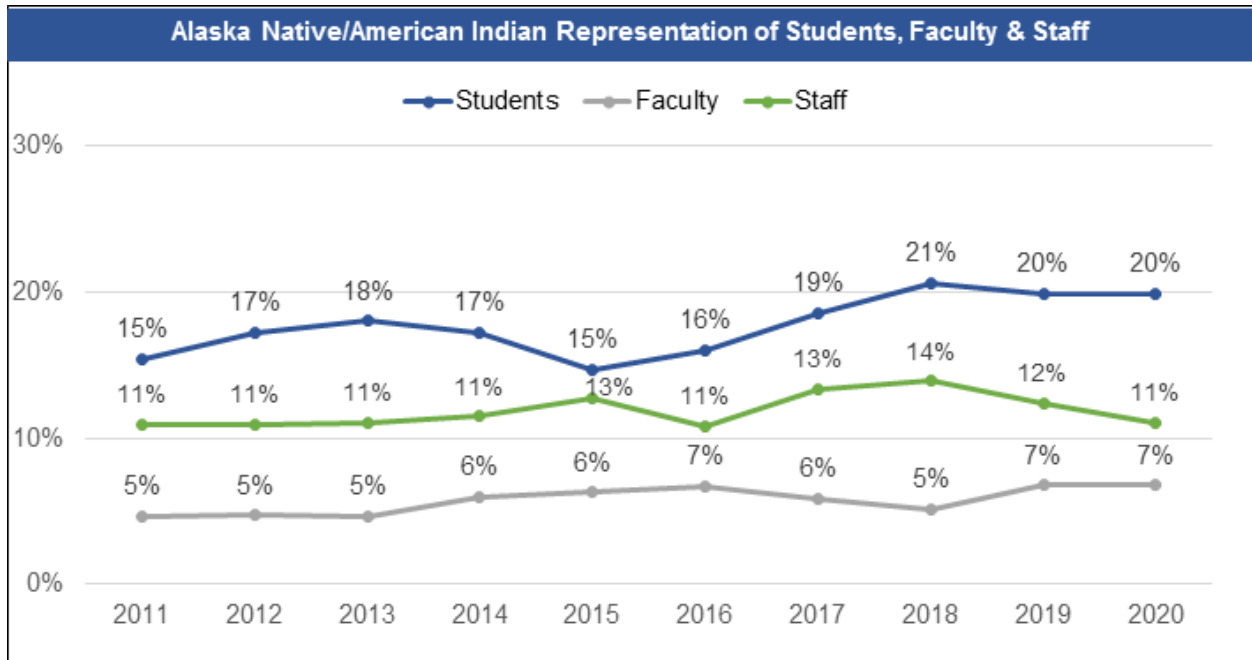
PRIORITY # 2
Alaska Native Staff and Faculty Recruitment & Retention
Diversity:

Do the personnel of the University of Alaska Southeast reflect the demographic profile of Alaska Native populations? In an answer, no. The data provided a context of the need and priority for increased Alaska Native representation.

Institutional Effectiveness data summary:

Alaska Native/American Indian Representation among Students, Faculty & Staff

- Alaska Native students have increased over time, with about 20% of the current student body being Alaska Native/American Indian
- Alaska Native staff has stayed somewhat stable over time, with about 11% of staff being Alaska Native/American Indian
- Alaska Native faculty have slightly increased over time, with about 7% of faculty being Alaska Native/American Indian



Goal	Ensure that our population of students, staff, faculty, and administration match the population of Southeast Alaska. (add one two five year plans all strategies can summary, action ideas)
Strategy	Set a goal of 20% Alaska Native faculty, staff, and administration.
Strategy	Increase Alaska Native Staff - “grow your own” that defines hiring target and support.
Strategy	Increase Alaska Native faculty - "Grow our own" program that defines hiring target and supports AKN faculty opportunities and Ph.D. attainment
Action	Make a declaration! Articulate publicly a commitment and establish measurable progress goals to hire and retain Alaska Native staff and faculty.

UAS Faculty by Type			
	Total	AK Native	% AK Native
Professor	16	0	0%
Associate Professor	25	1	4%
Assistant Professor	60	2	3%
Total	101	3	3%

Data and Resources:

March 1, 2021 Alaska Native Student Success Data.
 Kristen Handley, Institutional Effectiveness

Alaska Native first-time freshmen
[Alaska Native Student Data, First Time freshmen](#)

Alaska Native graduates in Education
 (Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Southeast) [Alaska Native Education Graduates](#)
 March 15

UA Human Resources Information: [AK Native Faculty Workforce Data](#)

Affirmative Action Summary Report to the Board of Regents 2020
<https://uaf.edu/equity/files/2020-Affirmative-Action-Report-Summary.pdf>

PRIORITY ISSUE #3

Alaska Native Student Recruitment & Retention

The committee reviewed a range of data and discussion on barriers to Alaska Native student success. Often, the discussion points included building a community of support that included Alaska Native tribal organizations in support of Alaska Native students as they engage in higher education goals. This includes creating an anti-racist climate and culture, and social and emotional supports, and cultural safety (identity).

UAS Institutional Effectiveness data points:

Compared to the overall retention and graduation rates:

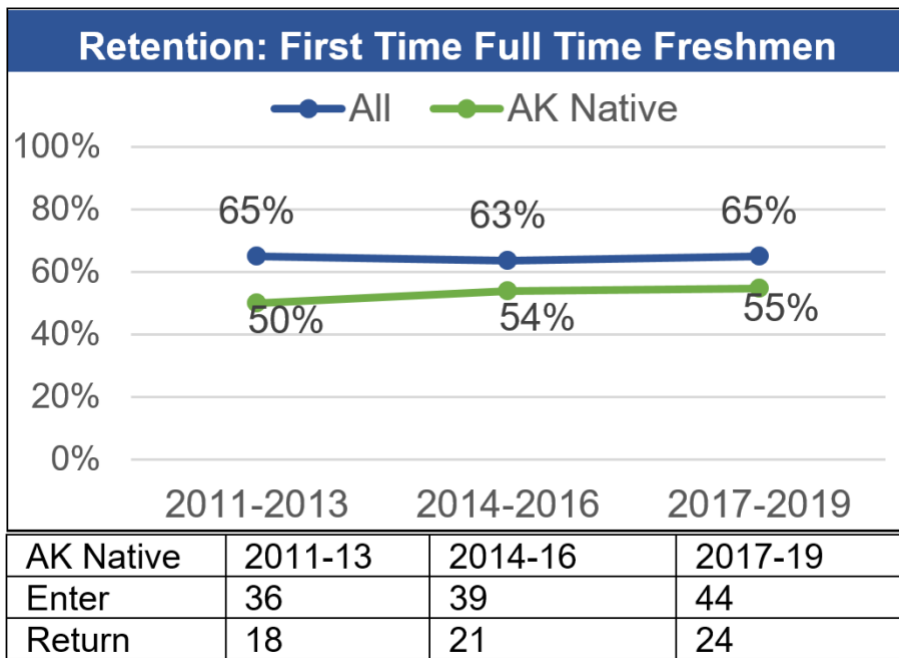
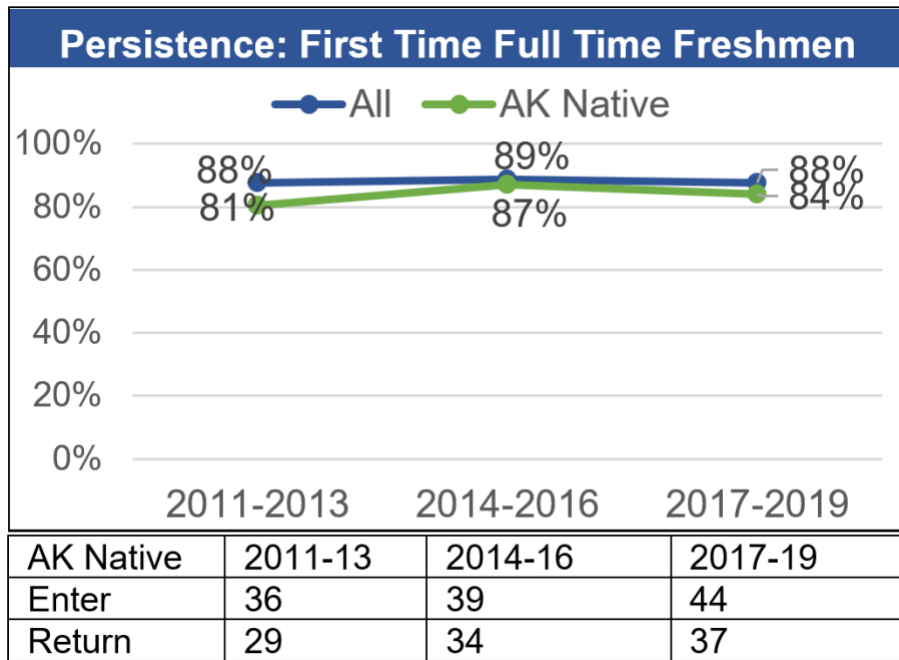
- **Bachelors:** Bachelor seeking Alaska Native students and out of state students have lower retention rates. At 200% Time to Degree (8 years) Males and Alaska Native students have lower graduation rates, but out of state students do not.
- **Associates:** While Alaska Native associate seekers do not show retention differences, their graduate rate is 11% lower than the overall rate. Males and other minority students have lower retention rates as well, but their graduation rates are just slightly lower than the overall rate.
- **Certificates:** Females have a lower retention rate, but their graduation rate is just slightly lower. Alaska Native students have a slightly higher retention rate, yet the graduation rate is 8% lower than the overall rate.

Source: *Beyond IPEDS* [Beyond IPEDS, All Students Data](#)

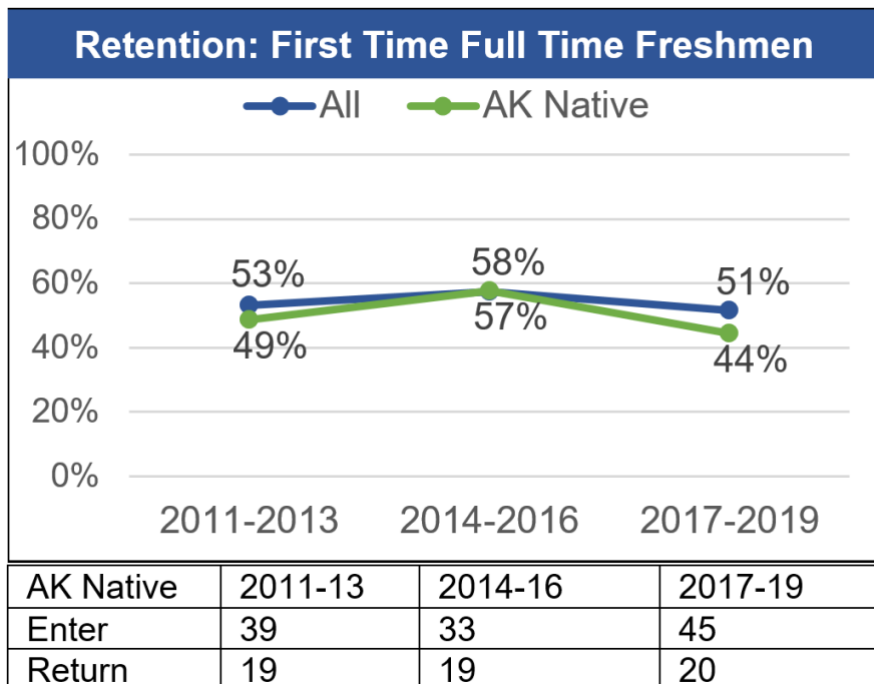
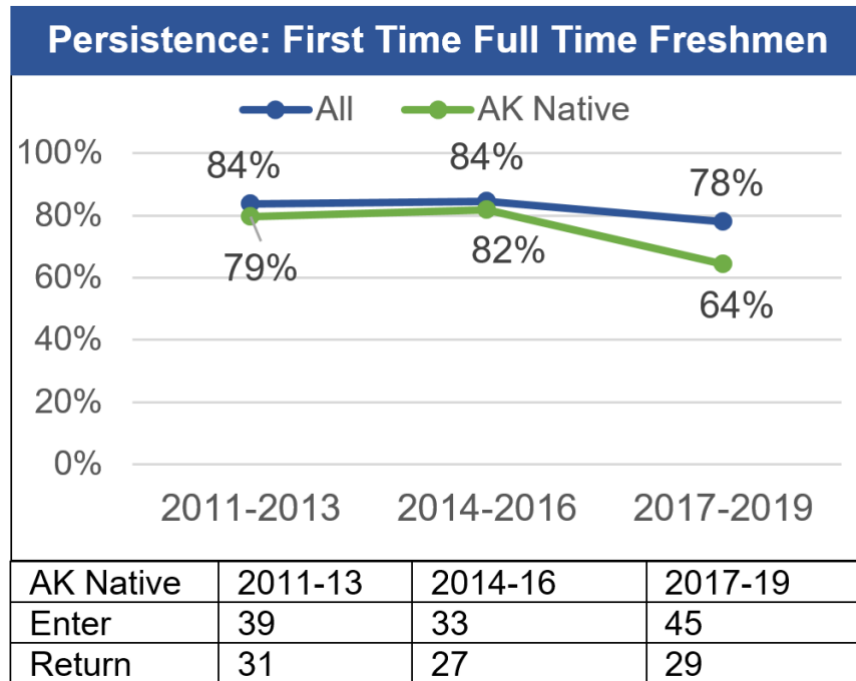
Alaska Native Student Success, K. Handley, IE. This link contains a comprehensive summary of persistence, retention, and degree completion:

[Alaska Native Student Success, March 2021](#)

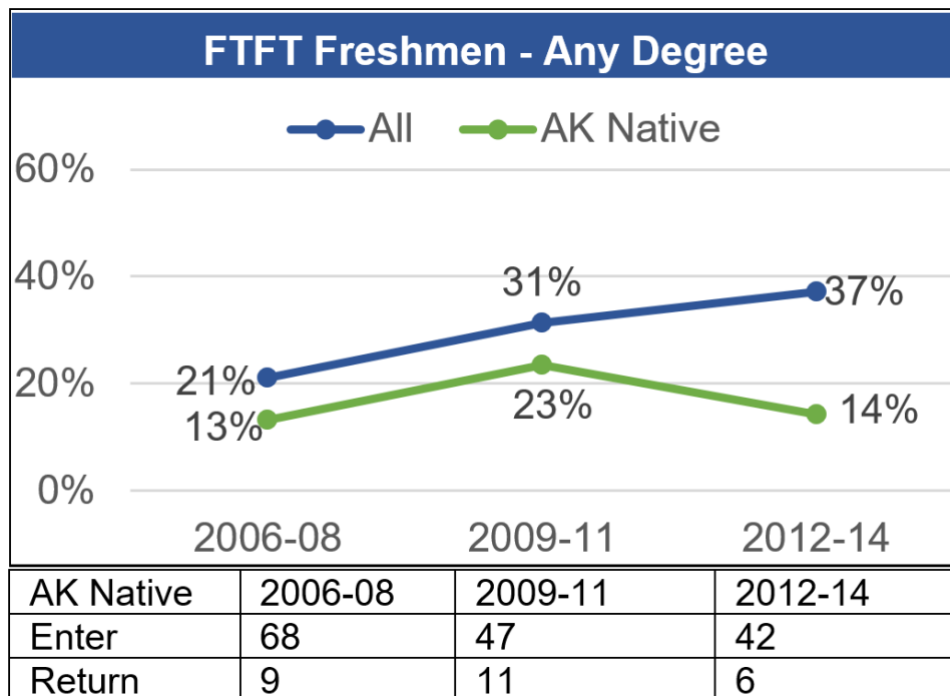
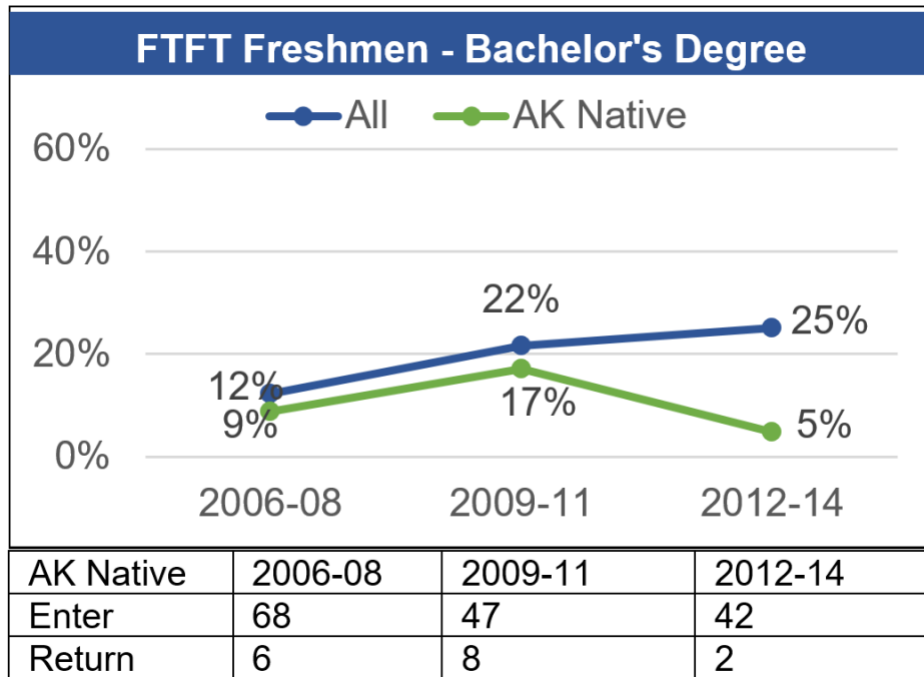
Persistence & Retention Rates for First-Time Full-Time Bachelor's Seeking Students



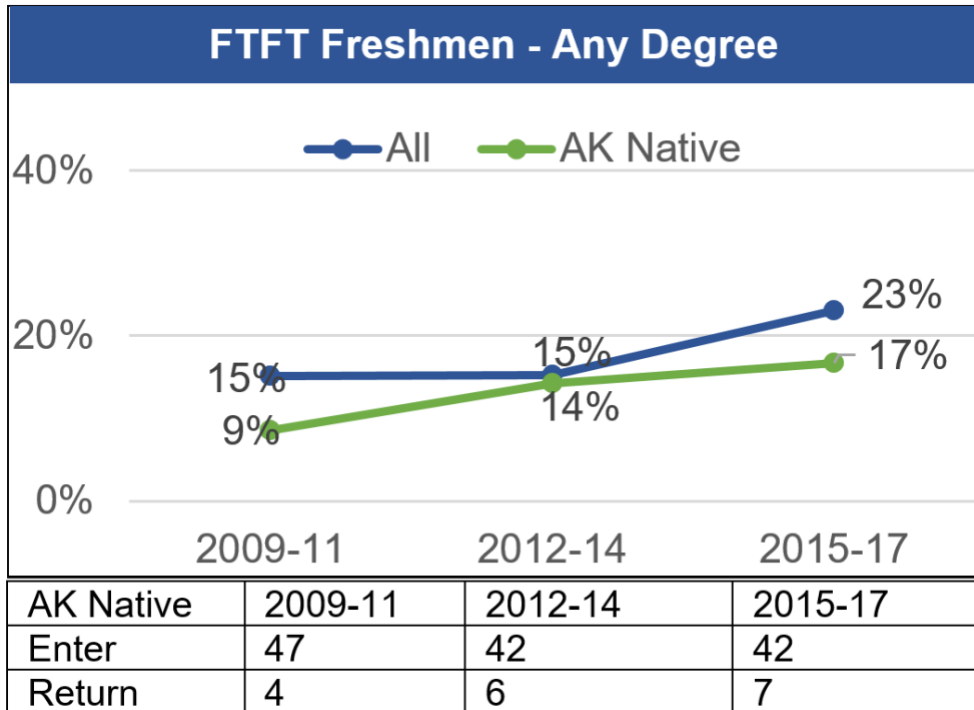
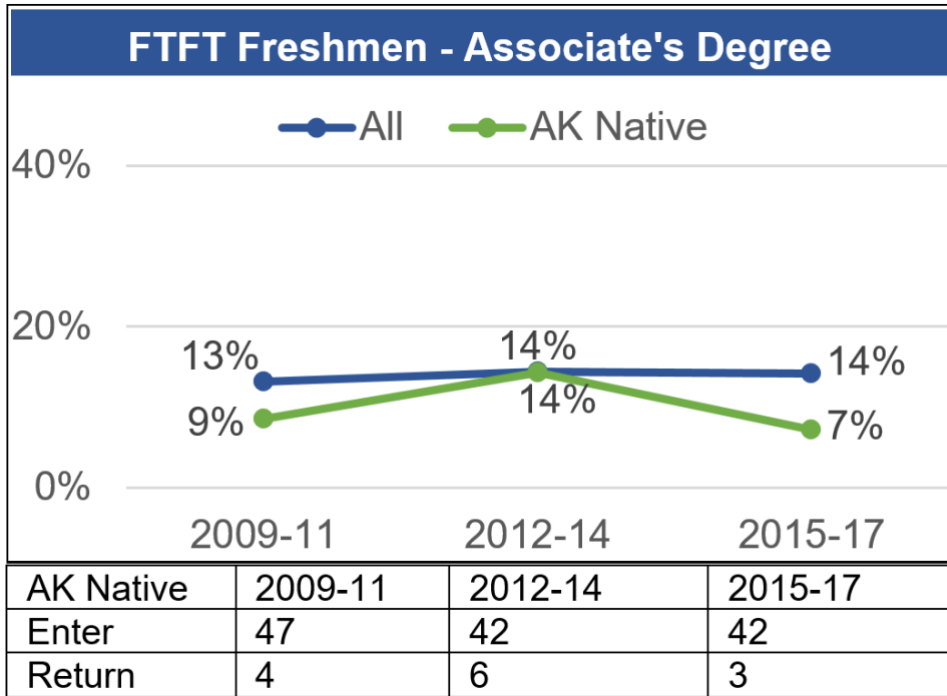
Persistence & Retention Rates for First-Time Full-Time Associate's Seeking Students



150% Time to Completion for First-Time Full-Time Bachelor's Seeking Students



150% Time to Completion for First-Time Full-Time Associate's Seeking Students



Degree Completion by Alaska Native/American Indian Students

Percentage of Degree Completed by Alaska Native/American Indian Students											
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Endorsements	14%	15%	29%	24%	33%	29%	23%	24%	26%	19%	
Certificates	11%	8%	18%	21%	4%	11%	13%	16%	25%	8%	
Associates	15%	17%	20%	16%	18%	14%	9%	16%	17%	14%	
Bachelors	11%	9%	13%	12%	18%	16%	13%	13%	12%	10%	
Masters	9%	8%	9%	17%	22%	10%	16%	12%	14%	13%	
Licensures	6%	4%	6%	25%	11%	14%	12%	8%	12%	6%	
Total	11%	10%	14%	18%	18%	17%	14%	16%	18%	13%	

Goal	Maximize retention of Alaska Native students by transforming the university. (... further define with measurable goals. UAS identifies barriers to Alaska Native student success.
Strategies	Elevate retention to a place of public reporting and transparency, and to assure that UAS, in practice and culture, maintains its status as an Alaska Native serving institution.
Action	Increase visibility through the website and launch a campaign to transform Alaska Native recruitment & retention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The committee was, without exception, engaged in thoughtful discussion with a focus upon contributing toward the success of the University of Alaska Southeast.

The importance of transparency and use of data to tell the story of Alaska Native representation and success is one step toward building a trust relationship with Alaska Native people and organizations. The continued dialogue and design of actions to address the identified priorities requires development of system goals, measures, and accountability. Committee members welcomed the invitation to serve and remained committed to the intent of this work in good faith to assure the University of Alaska Southeast is actively engaging in practices and demonstrating support of its mission by developing inspiring and meaningful engagement with us:

The University of Alaska Southeast is a student-centered university that provides instruction in liberal arts, professional, and technical fields. On the homelands of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples, we serve the coastal environments, cultures,

economies, and communities of Alaska, through interdisciplinary education, workforce development, and scholarship, research and creative activity.

Further, the committee anticipates these priorities will prove universal with the work of committees of the University of Alaska, Anchorage and University of Alaska Fairbanks and in the UA steering committee report.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CCTHITA Tribal Enrollment Summary 2020:

<http://www.ccthita.org/services/enrollment/TribalEnrollmentReport.pdf>

UAF Website

<https://www.uaf.edu/indigenous/>

Native Serving Institutions Initiative

<https://www.wiche.edu/key-initiatives/native-serving-institutions-initiative/>

http://devacerehe.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/REHE-2020-Exec-Summary-final_web.pdf

UAA Alaska Native Studies

<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/alaska-native-studies/>

UAA Diversity Hiring Practices

https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/diversity/_documents/Inclusive%20Hiring-Best%20Practices%20and%20Checklist.pdf

Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education

[Supplemental Report 2020](#)

Native Serving Institutions (Lumina Foundation & Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

[Native Serving Institutions Initiative](#)

Sound Practice: Audio Exercises for Equity

[Stanford Sound Practice](#)

High Country News, Education, Land-grab universities

[Land-grab universities](#)

Alaska Performance Scholarship 2021

[Alaska Performance Scholarship 2021](#)