



ALASKA NATIVE SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Baseline Report and Preliminary Initiatives

JUNE 2021 | BOARD OF REGENTS
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA | OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Land Acknowledgements

As we build a more diverse, equitable and inclusive future, we must acknowledge the peoples of the land on which we work and live. Each of our universities reside on unique geographical locations – we honor the peoples of these identities and cultures.

University of Alaska Anchorage

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) transforms lives through teaching, research, community engagement and creative expression in a diverse and inclusive environment. Serving students, the state, and the communities of Southcentral Alaska, UAA is a comprehensive, open access, public university established on the ancestral lands of the Dena'ina, Ahtna Dene, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, Chugachmiut, and Eyak peoples.

University of Alaska Fairbanks

We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose ancestral lands our campuses reside. In Fairbanks, our Troth Yeddha' Campus is located on the ancestral lands of the Dena people of the lower Tanana River.

University of Alaska Southeast

Our campuses reside on the unceded territories of the Áak'w K̄wáan, Taant'á K̄wáan, and Sheetk'á K̄wáan 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 X̄aadas 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, X̄aadas, 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.



Cover photos clockwise: Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration at the UAF Wood Center, photo by JR Ancheta. Wayne Price and student bending steamed cedar into bentwood box, photo by RONALDA CADIENTE BROWN. Young woman dancing, photo by Philip Hall. Graduating student, photo by James Evans. Canoers, photo by Owen Kindig. Drummers, photo by UAS Marketing.

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www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.

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Introduction

The University of Alaska strives to better represent the Alaska population, for all to feel they belong, and for the change to be visible and recognized.

Among many underrepresented students pursuing post-secondary education, Alaska Native students face substantial barriers, when compared to their non-Native peers. Although micro to macro strategies have been implemented, recruitment and retention of Alaska Native students to universities and colleges have been long-standing challenges across the nation and at UA. If enrolled, further barriers arise for Alaska Native students, particularly those from rural communities, losing their sense of identity and place. For many students, this loss of culture is insurmountable and results in degree non-completion.

In accordance with the November 2020 Board of Regents resolution¹, this report presents baseline data and identifies barriers and opportunities for Alaska Native students, staff and faculty recruitment and retention, from a systems, rather than individual, perspective. Discoveries from this report will inform the development of a five-year strategic plan to increase Alaska Native

¹The Board of Regents establishes understanding and addressing racial justice issues as a board priority. As a first step, the board authorizes and directs 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, in particular to address diminished Alaska Native and Indigenous student and faculty recruitment, selection, retention, development, and advancement over past academic years. The president will report her findings back to the board in June 2021. This motion is effective November 6, 2020.

² Brown, L. L., & Robinson Kurpius, S. E. (1997). Psychosocial factors influencing academic persistence of American Indian college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38, 3-12.

representation and success. In light of the university's current financial position, we will work within existing financial resources to enact high-impact changes, partnering with external partners and funders where possible.

A steering committee, including the chancellors, board chair and the University of Alaska Board of Regents, and Alaska Native leaders helped guide the planning process as an advisory committee to the university president. Understanding each university has unique needs and resources, university-based action teams conducted a baseline evaluation of the climate for Alaska Native students, faculty and staff at each university. Several members of the steering committee served as members of the university specific action teams; this, by design, was to ensure alignment and communication across the working groups. A full list of steering committee and action team members is included at the end of this document. Data summaries are included as appendices.

Defining Alaska Native Success at UA - *Working Draft*

The most common measures for student success in higher education are recruitment, retention and graduation rates. UA's universities report this data to the Institute of Education Sciences, the U.S. Department of Education's research, statistics and evaluation arm. This information is made public via the National Center for Education Statistics² and becomes a tool by which students, parents, politicians and other stakeholders evaluate the effectiveness of a UA education program and the return on investment.

However, scholars and practitioners of higher education have come to recognize that student success cannot be accurately captured by solely these statistics. A more holistic definition of success is needed, especially for underrepresented populations such as Alaska Native students. Refining our definition of student success is needed to measure that of Alaska Native students in a culturally relevant, contextually-aware manner. In addition to the quantitative measures, such definitions should include:

- Understanding of one's own unique needs and the needs of others, and communicating those needs of identity and cultural connection to place and community;
- Knowing how to unite one's own cultural needs in the UA environment, and communicating how the UA environment can better serve the needs of Alaska Native students;
- Realizing one's own unique contributions to the institution, their community and the greater Alaskan community;
- Job placement and/or promotion after completing any portion of a UA education to respond to labor and community needs for economic stability; and
- Personal satisfaction and/or finding meaning in using their UA education to fill a need in their family or community.

Many of these indicators should also be considered for staff, faculty and administrators. In order for students to feel empowered and embraced by our universities, UA must increase Alaska Native representation among employees and ensure that those employees feel empowered and supported. To promote Alaska Native success, these needs must be considered at all tiers. Inherent to addressing these needs, recruitment and retention will rise.

Action Teams' Recommendations for System Consideration

The list below summarizes recommendations from the action teams to improve the university climate for Alaska Native students, staff and faculty. These recommendations will be discussed with UA leadership and the Steering Committee. Prioritized recommendations will be included in the action plan for implementation.

Action Team's Recommendations for System Consideration:

- Establish a plan for a [Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation](#) process.
 - Engage First Alaskans Institute to lead a process.
 - Review UA's history to understand how racist ideology has been embedded into its culture.
 - Document in an affirming and safe way, the harms that have been created by racism both historically and today on students, faculty, staff, and each community.
 - Identify and fund interventions that serve as "equity amplifiers" to address historical harms.
- Develop an annual report on Alaska Native success at UA that includes standards and data on Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) students, faculty and staff. Such a report would help to ensure transparency in data reporting and monitoring of progress around ANSI indicators.
- Support the establishment of a College of Alaska Native Languages.
- A campaign to increase Indigenous visual representation across campuses including signage and art. Ensure Alaska Native students, faculty, and staff lead these efforts.
- Establish a cabinet-level AN/AI position within the Office of the UA President.
- Allocate equitable general funds in support of ANSI related recommendations. This would help to ensure ongoing sustainable support as opposed to an over-reliance on one-time and/or grant funds.
- Extend the work of the action teams to guide the implementation of these recommendations.
- Support recommendations made by the Alaska Native Studies Council.

Student-Related Recommendations:

- AN/AI enrollment, retention, and graduation rates must increase each year with the goal of reaching a 40% graduation rate by 2028. The ANSI action teams collectively found that student-related recommendations are at the heart of this work and more time is needed to adequately strategize to address the current disparity facing AN/AI students. For too long, AN/AI students have been expected to adapt to systems of education. Moving forward, we expect the UA system to commit to making the systemic changes needed to accommodate AN/AI students. The AN/AI student recommendations made by each University will strengthen the UA system as a whole.

Faculty-Related Recommendations:

- Set a goal of achieving 20% AN/AI faculty (10% by 2025) and charge each university and their respective colleges, schools, departments, and programs to work internally to help meet this goal.
- Identify current AN/AI term and adjunct faculty for rank changes to tenure track faculty positions.
- Set a priority of retaining and promoting successful tenure and promotion of AN/AI faculty.
- Evaluate tenure and promotion processes (including unit peer criteria) for inclusivity of Indigenous knowledge production and dissemination as well as opportunities for elders and other knowledge keepers to engage in the evaluation of candidates.

Staff-Related Recommendations:

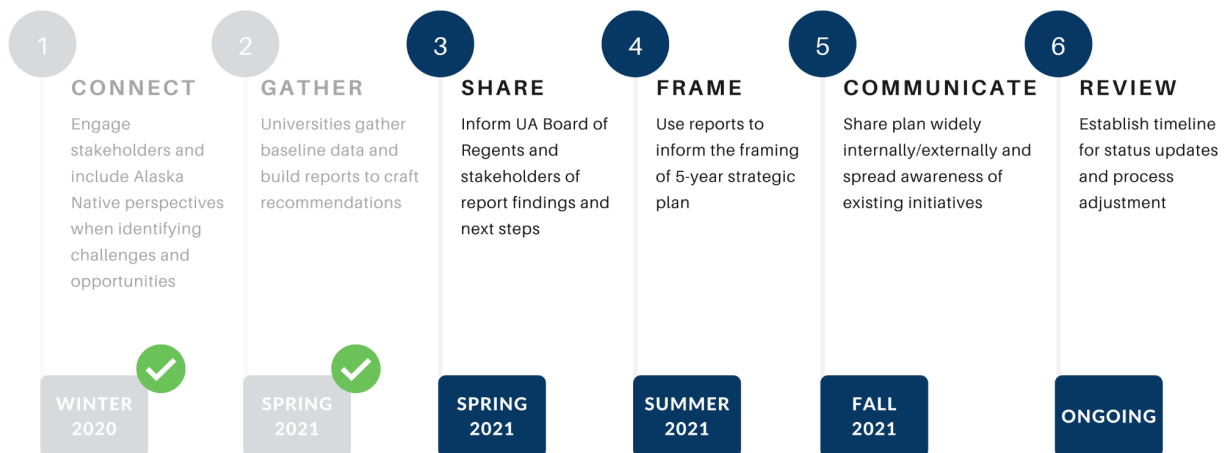
- Recruit and hire additional AN/AI staff with a goal of reaching 20% AN/AI staff for statewide as well as the three Universities.
- Commit to hiring more Alaska Native leaders into administrative positions with significant budget and authority.

Next Steps

The Alaska Native Success Initiative steering committee and action teams will:

- Clarify the needs discovered from each baseline report;
- Identify 10 key indicators for system- and university-level data to be used to measure progress;
- Continue convening throughout summer 2021 and will begin dialogue with the Alaska College of Education Consortium committee to share knowledge and build new collaborative efforts;
- Prioritize recommendations for change at the system level and at each university; and
- Draft a five-year Alaska Native engagement strategic plan.

Through expanded, system-wide collaboration, the Alaska Native engagement strategic plan will be shared at the November Board of Regents meeting.



References

Support Services

The following inventory of support services/programs have been captured from each university's website.

UAA	Alaska Native Community Advancement in Psychology (ANCAP)
	Alaska Native, Indigenous & Rural Outreach Program (ANIROP)
	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP)
	Cama-i Room
	Della Keats Health Sciences Summer Program
	National Resources Center for Alaska Native Elders
	Native Student Services
UAF	Native Student Services: Native Early Transition Program
	Alaska Native Knowledge Network
	Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Alaska Native Education
	Eileen Panigeo MacLean House
	Rural Alaska Honors Institute
UAS	Rural Student Services
	Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Alaska Native Education
	Native & Rural Student Center
	Preparing Indigenous Teachers & Administrators for Alaska Schools

Selected Academic Programs

The following inventory captures academic programs across the system with a strong Alaska Native focus. These have been captured from each university's website. This list does not reflect research programs or the many grant-funded programs focused on Alaska Native research and outreach (such as UAF's Center for Alaska Native Health Research or UAA's Alaska Native Science Partnerships for Health) and other scholarly activities.

UAA

Program	Certificate	Associate's	Minor	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Occupational Endorsement
Alaska Native Business							
Alaska Native Studies							
Alaska Native Studies and Certificate in Alutiiq Language							

UAF

Program	Certificate	Associate's	Minor	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Occupational Endorsement
Alaska Native Languages							
Alaska Native Studies							
Arctic and Northern Studies							
Eskimo							
Indigenous Studies							
Inupiaq Eskimo							
Native Language Education							
One Health							
Rural Development							
Rural Human Services							
Rural Human Services Behavioral Health Aide							
Tribal Management							
Yup'ik Eskimo							
Yup'ik Language and Culture							
Yup'ik Language Proficiency							

UAS

Program	Certificate	Associate's	Minor	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Occupational Endorsement
Alaska Salmon Enhancement							
Alaska Native Arts, Languages & Studies							
Northwest Coast Art							

Alaska Native-themed Requirement

Recognizing the needs of Alaska and acknowledging the peoples and lands on which our universities reside, UAA, UAF and UAS have each adopted an Alaska Native-themed course requirement for students pursuing associate's and bachelor's degrees. Students are required to complete a minimum of three credits of Alaska Native-themed coursework. Below are links to each university's listing of classes that satisfy this course requirement:

- [University of Alaska Anchorage](#)
- [University of Alaska Fairbanks](#)
- [University of Alaska Southeast](#)

Student Clubs and Organizations

The following inventory of student clubs and organizations has been captured from each university's website. This list is not exhaustive, as there are many informal clubs, organizations and groups.

UAA	Alaska Native Student Success Task Force (Only Spring and Summer 2019)
	American Indian Science & Engineering Society
	Multicultural Center
	Native Student Council
UAF	Alaska Native Education Student Association
	Alaska Native Social Workers Association
	American Indian Science & Engineering Society
	Festival of Native Arts
	Inu-Yupiaq (Inupiaq and Yup'ik dance)
	Native American Business Leaders
	Native Games
Native Student Union of UAF	
UAS	Troth Yeddha' Dance Group
	Wooch.een (Student organization bridging the gap between academic and Alaska Native knowledge)

Steering Committee and Action Team members

Steering Committee

Jennifer Booz, Chief Diversity Officer*
Ronalda Cadiante Brown, Associate Vice Chancellor for Alaska Native Programs*
Sheri Buretta, Interim President and CEO, Chugach Alaska Corporation; UA Board of Regents Chair
Karen Carey, UAS Chancellor
Emily Edenshaw, President & CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center
Liz Medicine Crow, President and CEO, First Alaskans Institute
Joe Nelson, Board Chair, Sealaska
Tabetha Toloff, CAO, Cook Inlet Tribal Council
Richard Peterson, President, Central Council, Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Pat Pitney, Interim UA President
Bruce Schultz, Interim UAA Chancellor
Geri Simon, Tanana Chiefs Conference
Charlene Stern, Vice Chancellor for Rural, Community and Native Education*
Daniel White, UAF Chancellor
Michele Yatchmeneff, Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering and ANSEP Assistant Director*

University of Alaska Anchorage Action Team

Jennifer Booz, Chief Diversity Officer*
Eric Carlson, Associate Professor of Library Science
Sara Childress, Director of the Office of Equity and Compliance
Emily Edenshaw, President & CEO, Alaska Native Heritage Center, community member
Annamarie Iya, Undergraduate student, Native Student Council club president
Agatha John-Shields, PhD, Term faculty, School of Education
Claudia Lampman, Vice Provost for Student Success
Benjamin Morton, Dean of Students
Joe Nelson, Board Chair, Sealaska, community member
Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart, UAA Chair of Alaska Native Studies
Christina Stuve, Associate Professor of Counseling, Kenai Peninsula College
Aleesha Town-Bain, BBNC Education Foundation executive director, community member
Jessica Saniguq Ullrich, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work
Michael Ulroan, ANSEP Senior Director of Acceleration Components
Maria Shaa tlaa Williams, PhD, Professor, Alaska Native Studies
Michele Yatchmeneff, Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering and ANSEP Assistant Director*
Rebecca Young, Clinical-Community Psychology PhD student, 2019 cohort

University of Alaska Fairbanks Action Team

Barb Amarok, Director, Northwest Campus
Jessica Black, Assistant Professor of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development
Courtney Carothers, Professor, College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences
Keith Champagne, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Dr. Reverend Anna Frank, Fairbanks Native Association board member
Owen Guthrie, Director of eCampus
Carlton Huatala, Rural Student Admissions Counselor
Margaret Rudolf, PhD student, Arctic & Northern Studies
Gabrielle Russell, Manager, Indigenous Student Services
Geri Simon, Tanana Chiefs Conference

Charlene Stern, Vice Chancellor for Rural, Community and Native Education*
Sean Asiqtuq Topkok, Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts Center for Cross-Cultural Studies
Brooke Woods, student, Fisheries & Ocean Sciences

University of Alaska Southeast Action Team

Louise Brady, Title III, Sitka
Gloria Burns, President, Ketchikan Indian Community
Ronalda Cadiante Brown, Associate Vice Chancellor for Alaska Native Programs*
Dionne Cadiante-Blattner, Tribal Education Programs Director, Douglas Indian Association
Dannielle Carlson, Rural Admissions Counselor
Lauryn Framke, UAS student
Joe Hillaire, Nang SK'at'aas, UAS student
Mischa Jackson, Assistant Professor of Secondary Education
Joe Nelson, Sealaska Board Chair
Sarah Peele, UAS student
Richard Peterson, President, Central Council, Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Lance Twitchell, Associate Professor of Alaska Native Languages

Initiative staff

Andrew Aquino, Project Coordinator, President's Office
Kerynn Fisher, Special Assistant to the President
Roberta Graham, Associate Vice President for Public Affairs
Paul Layer, Vice President for Academics, Students and Research
Steve Patin, Chief Human Resources Officer
Michelle Rizk, Vice President for University Relations

* Lead facilitators for campus action teams serve as ex officio members of the steering committee.

Appendix

Appendix A: System-wide Data Report

Appendix B: UAA Data Report

Appendix C: UAF Data Report

Appendix D: UAS Data Report