

***NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES***

**A Regular Interim Evaluation Report**

**University of Alaska Southeast**

**Regular Interim Visit  
October 25-26, 2004**

**Prepared by  
Dr. Elizabeth M. Street, Executive Assistant to the President for Policy and  
Planning, Central Washington University  
Dr. Joyce Kinkead, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Research, Utah  
State University**

***A Confidential Report Prepared for the  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
Representing the Views of the Evaluator***

## INTRODUCTION

Drs. Elizabeth Street and Joyce Kinkead visited the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) on behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities as part of a regular interim evaluation. A full-scale evaluation visit in fall of 1999 had resulted in four recommendations. A required progress report describing progress on the recommendations was submitted and accepted by the commission in fall 2002.

The regular interim evaluation allows the commission “to monitor institutional change, to evaluate the institution’s on-going compliance with Commission eligibility requirement, standards, and policies, and to evaluate the extent to which the institution has adequately addressed the recommendations in the last full-scale evaluation report.”

The regular interim report provided by the institution described progress on the university’s four recommendations and included a summary of certain changes with respect to Standards 1 and 2. Careful reading of the report revealed that the institution had misunderstood the instructions for its preparation and had failed to respond to some required elements in standard 2 and to all required elements in standards 3 – 9. The evaluators contacted the institution’s accreditation liaison officer to point out the misunderstanding. Subsequently, the university provided additional narrative when the evaluators arrived on campus and provided an array of exhibits and supplementary material that allowed for a full review of the institution’s progress. Still, the quality of the report and its failure to tell fully the impressive story of University of Alaska Southeast is a missed opportunity for this institution that has made remarkable progress in the five years since its full-scale evaluation.

Dr. Roberta Stell, provost, and Ms. Maria Moya, assistant to the provost, took great care in arranging the details of the visit and in accommodating the needs of the evaluation team. The lovely Juneau campus benefits from the natural beauty of its surroundings. The enthusiasm and devotion of faculty, staff, and students were easily and immediately apparent. It was in this context, then, that the visit was conducted. Drs. Street and Kinkead met with eight groups of individuals representing various campus constituencies (See Appendix A.) Dr. Kinkead toured the library, and Dr. Street toured the campus including the nearly completed student recreation center. Although neither evaluator had an opportunity to visit the Sitka or Ketchikan campuses, the campus directors for the two sites participated in a meeting with the evaluators and one student and one faculty member were connected by interactive television.

## SECTION A: RESPONSE TO 1999 RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1999 evaluation team’s report included four recommendations. Each is addressed separately.

***1999 Recommendation 1: The evaluation team endorses the self-study recommendation that the UAS community examine its mission and vision statements in light of evolving conditions and of increased collaboration with the University of***

***Alaska system. The team further recommends that UAS engage in institutional strategic planning to achieve its mission and goals, particularly with respect to suggestions and recommendations concerning fiscal planning, enrollment management, educational program quality, and administrative operations.***

Although work already had begun to improve planning and administrative operations at the time of the 1999 visit, the evaluation team's recommendation spurred greater activity and focused the university's attention on mission development and planning. Chancellor Pugh and his cabinet developed a strategic planning process and timeline early in 2000. The initiative, operating under the theme *UAS – The Next Decade*, was advertised widely and invited participation from all members of the university community. All three campuses of UAS were involved in the planning process, and convocations, focus groups, workshops, and web discussion groups provided multiple means for input throughout the 2000-2001 academic year. This work culminated in a new mission statement, which was approved by the Board of Regents of the UA system in March 2001. The university also adopted a set of core values.

Shortly afterwards, a draft strategic plan was developed and posted to the web for comment. It was adopted by the campus community in August 2001. Once the strategic plan was solidified, the institution turned its attention to a facilities master plan. Both plans were formally adopted by the University of Alaska (UA) system Board of Regents in March, 2002.

Conversations with campus constituents confirmed that the strategic plan is a living document. In the words of one person on the administrative team, "We are a planning community, and we brag about it." There was ample evidence that both the university chancellor and the system president are committed to planning and expect new initiatives to be grounded in the institution's long range goals.

The strategic plan drives the acquisition and allocation of faculty, financial, and facilities resources. It provided the backdrop for the university's success in garnering special funds available through the UA system's Presidential Initiative. It guided the university's aggressive and successful enrollment management plan to increase the number of full-time students and to improve retention rates of all students, particularly from sophomore to junior years. It provided the impetus for new program development. The university has added a series of new programs in recent years that are consistent with the strategic goals to enhance the university's presence in teacher education, marine and environmental science, business and public administration, and health occupations.

At the same time that it is strengthening full-time enrollment by largely traditional students, the university continues to serve the needs of non-traditional students, many of whom enroll as part time students. Further, the institution continues to provide vocational and continuing education to citizens of southeast Alaska. The entire community appears to embrace these multi-faceted goals, and university leaders have been successful in building programs that meet the sometimes conflicting needs of their different student populations.

The strategic plan has spawned other initiatives as well, including in the area of facilities expansion. A classroom wing added to the Egan Library has more than doubled classroom space on the campus. A newly acquired 10,000 square foot Natural Sciences Research Laboratory houses ten laboratories, three offices, a conference room, and equipment storage and provides research space that is needed to improve and expand science programs. A new student activity center, a joint-use facility constructed in partnership with the Alaska National Guard, supports the university's goal to provide improved student life opportunities for its full-time residential population.

Most remarkable is the degree to which the institution is able to be guided by its plan without being unduly constrained by it. Board of Regents chair Brian Rogers describes UAS as the system's nimblest institution, and evidence supports the claim. The institution is willing and able to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities. Chancellor Pugh was described by several constituents as a "risk-taker," but it was also clear that the risks he takes are grounded in the institution's plans for the future and guided by sound financial policies.

In addition to being a planning campus, this campus is clearly a data-driven campus. Money is sufficiently tight and the strategic goals are sufficiently important to them that the campus has an interest in knowing if its efforts are paying off. Institutional and system-wide benchmarks assist the institution in measuring its progress toward its goals, and it is making progress. In 2004, it became clear to campus administrators that the large majority of objectives in the strategic plan had been achieved. Subsequently, the campus entered into a six-month period during which it developed new goals and objectives. The revised plan is scheduled to go before the Board of Regents for review in fall, 2004.

There is ample evidence that the community and the state has taken notice of this institution and is impressed by its attentiveness to its newly defined mission and its willingness to move forward to become *the* regional university in southeast Alaska. It is a rising star in the UA system, and the confidence of its administrators, staff, faculty, and students is well grounded in evidence of its success. There is one caution. In the midst of the mountains of data that the institution has compiled, it was somewhat difficult to find a clearly articulated set of performance indicators. The institution might be well-advised to develop a brief dashboard report that captures in one place the most salient data and that is in a form that is accessible even to those outside the institution.

**2004 Commendation: The University of Alaska Southeast is to be commended for the inclusiveness of its strategic planning process and the utility of the plan that has emerged. This is a forward-looking campus that dreams big and that is witnessing the benefits of an aspirational plan in guiding its actions. Initiatives are considered on the basis of their cohesiveness with the plan, and local and system-wide resources are allocated on the basis of the goals the campus has agreed to. The planning process and its use to guide campus direction**

**have positioned the campus to garner state and federal resources that heretofore seemed out of reach. This is a vital campus that knows where it's going and measures each initiative on the basis of its ability to help it get there.**

*1999 Recommendation 2: Concerned that consistency of academy quality may be affected by confusion across campuses as to channels, authority, and responsibility in curricular matters, the evaluation team recommends that UAS examine its procedures and communication practices to ensure that responsibility for curricular matters is properly vested and clearly articulated. Standard 2.A.7 requires that responsibility for design, approval, and implementation of the curriculum be vested in designated institutional bodies with clearly established channels of communication and control, and that faculty be key players in curricular matters. Standard 6.A.4 requires that division of authority and responsibility in a multi-unit system be clearly delineated.*

The evaluation team finds that much of the confusion noted in the 1999 report has been eliminated with reorganization and the addition of essential administrative personnel. As faculty described to the team, in matters academic, the directors of the UAS Sitka campus and the UAS Ketchikan campus report to the provost; in matters non-academic, the directors report to the chancellor. The haziness of who reports to whom has been "cleared up." The response to the recommendation in the campus report notes that enrollment management issues are coordinated with the UAS dean of students. Likewise, the directors of the Ketchikan and Sitka campuses reported that they appreciate greatly the addition of deans for the academic colleges. These four key administrators oversee the School of Arts and Science; Education; Career Education; and Business, Public Administration, and Information Systems. (The latter two are currently administered under one dean.) These administrative positions have helped the university's three campuses move toward a feeling of being "one university." Academic issues are coordinated via a weekly Provost's Council. Campus directors from Sitka and Ketchikan noted that program chairs are also "known" to them although they are not as visible as the deans.

Consistency in curriculum and programs has been achieved by common orientation sessions in which faculty members gather on one campus and enhanced communication among the faculty members of degree programs. While faculty members generally travel to the UAS Juneau campus, there is also evidence of the Juneau faculty traveling to the UAS Sitka campus. Some programs--for example, writing--collaborate to a high degree and are extremely cohesive.

The institutional procedure for approving programs is well defined, and appropriate bodies oversee this process. In a new recommendation, there will be comment about the role faculty play in curricular matters and their assessment.

The evaluators find that UAS has addressed the concerns raised in this recommendation in a satisfactory manner and that channels of communication and lines of authority should no longer provide impediment to academic quality.

***1999 Recommendation 3: The evaluation team recommends that UAS address the limited staffing strength in technical support areas such as Computing and Media Services in order to increase instructional support opportunities for both on-campus programs and distance education. The team also encourages expansion of efforts, such as those for faculty mentoring; in order to strengthen pedagogies suited to the various means of course delivery. (Standards 2 and 4)***

The evaluation team found that UAS has made extraordinary progress in addressing this recommendation. The technical support positions have doubled in number; the student employment staff has tripled from 10 to 30. The Sitka and Ketchikan campuses have each added full-time technology support staff member in addition to temporary help. The staff positions do not reflect in number those additional staff hired through grant funds and a partnership with military education initiative. Staff turnover due to competitive job market has been reduced as a result of a pay reclassification that improved salaries significantly for members of the unit. The energetic staff offers faculty a menu of technologies from which to choose with support and development to go along with that menu. The staff members display a willingness to tailor technology to appropriate pedagogies for the faculty, the course, and the students.

The campus is fully wireless. In terms of distance delivery, the unit can be somewhat hampered by bandwidth, dial-up technologies, and remote rural locales. The unit makes good use of a course management system. In addition, they have thought carefully about the philosophy of instructional technology; for instance, they have chosen to brand the campus with *UAS Online* rather than any vendor's name. Synchronous delivery is just one innovation. UAS has been the system leader in distance education delivery. Two regional committees with broad-based membership have been created to create cohesive programs: Infrastructure Support Planning Committee, which serves as a technical expertise group; and the more recent Instructional Design Workshop, which serves as professional support. Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtables focus on improving teaching and learning through the "thoughtful use of technology." Equipment is replaced in a regular and planned way through the "computer refreshment" program.

Not only is the recommendation no longer a concern; the team found that the use of instructional technology on the UAS campus has risen to the following commendation.

**2004 Commendation: The evaluation team commends UAS for foregrounding the importance of technology in all programs and services and providing the resources needed. The Instructional Technology unit is comprised of energetic, dedicated, and "thoughtful" members who deliberately seek opportunities to be helpful to the academic mission of UAS. The team further endorses the Commendation of 1999 that lauded "the staffs in the Library, Computing, and Media Services for successful and widely recognized efforts to develop a rich combination of traditional and electronic**

**information resources to support tri-campus and distance programs.”  
(Standard 8.B)**

***1999 Recommendation 4: The evaluation committee recommends that UAS initiate a strategic long-term planning process that is supported by a long-range financial and capital plan.***

As UAS moved forward with its strategic plan, it did so in the context of current and anticipated resources. A six-pronged approach has enabled the university to solidify the financial and capital assets needed to put in place its ambitious plan: improved resources from the state; increased enrollment; improved success in the area of grants and contracts, beneficial partnerships, increased emphasis on development and fundraising, and internal reallocation. That the university has been successful on all of these fronts speaks well to the solidity of the plan, the enthusiasm of the institution’s leaders, and the strategies that the institution has employed.

First, the university needed to achieve better parity with its peers in the UA system. As the system’s smallest and newest regional baccalaureate and master’s degree granting institution located in a sparsely populated area of the state, its financial needs had sometimes been overlooked. Its size also meant that it was not positioned to benefit from economies of scale. Realizing that the strategic plan required adequate funding, the chancellor set out to advocate for a more equitable share of state funding. He found an able ally in President Hamilton, and together they have achieved an enviable reversal of fortunes for this university during a time of economic downturn for the state. The university’s state general fund has increased by 37% since 1999. UAS, with approximately 10% of the UA system’s students, now receives approximately 10% of the available operating funds. The university has benefited from system-wide resources, including funds set aside to bring faculty salaries more in line with the Oklahoma Study. UAS also was particularly successful in competing for funds through the Presidential Initiative Fund, a fund set aside by President Hamilton to support initiatives that meet critical needs of the state and to reward existing programs that meet or exceed their goals.

Second, university leaders recognized that meeting its enrollment targets would radically improve tuition revenue. Since 1999, the institution has witnessed a 23% growth in first time freshmen, a 41% growth in “other” freshmen, and a 61% growth in students enrolled at the junior level.

Third, the university began to aggressively seek grants and contracts to support important initiatives. Targeted requests were tied to the institution’s strategic plan. The university work in this area almost immediately began to bear fruit, and by 2003, federal and state grants and contracts had increased by 254 % from 1999 levels and federal receipts were up by 568% during the same period.

Fourth, the university aggressively sought partners for some of its most costly initiatives. The most impressive of these is the partnership with the Alaska National Guard to build a shared facility that will provide for the Guard’s needs at the same time that it provides

over 25,000 square feet of dedicated and shared space for a much-needed student activity center. Two-thirds of the \$15 M price tag for this facility will be paid for by the Guard, although expected use of the building largely favors UAS.

Fifth, the university has stepped up development and fund raising efforts. The addition of an Office for Development and External Relations to oversee fundraising and alumni relations already has provided great benefit to the university. The office has raised between \$200,000 and \$500,000 each year since its inception. The fundraising effort already has increased scholarships for students and provided a stunning outdoor pavilion that enhances the university and community performing arts programs. Efforts are now directed toward purchase of a new Steinway grand piano and repair and maintenance of other pianos in various locations at UAS. Most important, this effort is reconnecting the university with its alumni and promises to provide a continuing source of revenue for the university.

Sixth, Chancellor Pugh has set aside part of the annual operating budget for reallocation. The chancellor's special project fund and the outcomes-based reallocation fund provide funding to support departments and units that propose initiatives in support of the strategic plan or that meet or exceed stated goals and objectives. In addition, the chancellor pools all vacant positions under his control for reallocation on the basis of demonstrated need.

The long-range master plan is a perfect companion to the strategic plan and provides guidance for direction as the university moves forward. However, it, too, is a flexible document that allows the university to take advantage of unexpected opportunities that arise. The recent purchase of the Natural Sciences Research Laboratory reflects this flexibility.

Although this institution is programmatically liberal and inventive, it is also appropriately fiscally conservative. The university maintains defensible reserves and debt ratios that are consistent with system-wide policy and wise financial management. UAS has aggressively sought funding to support its strategic initiatives, and it has found a level of support from the state and the community that is admirable.

**2004 Commendation: UAS is to be commended for its long-range fiscal and facilities planning model and for the clear relationship that exists among its long-range strategic plan, its long-range master plan, and its budgeting process. In addition, the university has been able to strike the right balance between planning and flexibility, between risk-taking and fiscal constraint. UAS's foray into and success in competitions for federal grants is nothing short of astonishing. This is a university that is well-grounded at the same time that it is reaching – successfully – for the stars.**



## REVIEW OF CHANGES WITH RESPECT TO THE STANDARDS

### **Standard One: Mission and Goals; Planning and Evaluation**

UAS has undertaken a thorough going strategic planning process since the 1999 visit. The chancellor led this process and invited the participation of the university community including faculty, staff, students, and advisory councils at all three campuses. The plan that emerged was both aspirational and attainable. It, along with a facilities master plan, has served as the primary road map for the institution in the last five years. The university has made great progress toward the objectives it laid out, so much so that a new set of objectives has been crafted and awaits Board of Regents approval.

The university collects an impressive array of data about its performance. Although the data are readily available for review, a more easily digestible format might improve the institution's ability to share its success story both internally and externally.

It is apparent that campus leaders review evidence and make midcourse corrections as necessary to maintain forward progress toward achieving their goals. Their successes have spawned a rightful feeling of pride in the institution's accomplishments, a pride that is reflected in the comments of students, faculty, staff, and advisory council members.

UAS has added new programs and migrated existing programs to new formats. Some of these programs appear to be sufficiently different in direction to trigger review by the commission. However, substantive changes have not been filed for these new programs, and there is some confusion about the conditions under which a substantive change is warranted.

**2004 Recommendation 3: It appears that some new academic programs which should have been submitted to the commission as substantive changes have not been. The institution should move quickly to receive written confirmation from the commission about the status of each of its new programs. (Policy A-2)**

### **Standard Two: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness**

Enhancements in the educational program and new degree offerings are evidence of the institution's careful data gathering, review, and revision done in accordance with its planning process. New degree programs on the Juneau campus both anticipated and reflect growth in the number of traditional students. Likewise, each of the campuses was experiencing growth in the number of students who were changing careers. To accommodate them, minors were established; new bachelor and graduate programs were developed; and career education programs were created to meet state and regional needs. In addition, UAS has a program in connection with the military as well as service to citizens in the Yukon via a reciprocal program. The summer program of Breadloaf

School (sponsored by Middlebury College) is housed at UAS and enjoys the newly constructed Pavilion for its performances.

New baccalaureate degrees include the following: English; Social Science; Mathematics; Elementary Education; Marine Biology; and Information Systems. Certificates established include Health Care Privacy; pre-Nursing Qualifications; Community Wellness Advocate; Residential Building; Automotive Technology, and Fisheries Technology. An AAS in Health Sciences was also created. The education faculty has developed two new endorsements as well as a Masters in Education. The MBA has been reopened and reconfigured for distance delivery. All of these degrees are the result of planning.

General Education is offered via a menu of course selections that meet the commission's Policy 2.1 in that students are introduced to "the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge." UAS has established six competencies that are delivered through general education and discipline-specific courses: communication; quantitative skills; information literacy; computer usage; professional behavior; and critical thinking. Although syllabi regularly mention these competencies as well as course objectives, students did not seem well informed about them. More intentional communication with students by the faculty may be helpful. Likewise, a matrix or grid that demonstrates to students where they will encounter required competencies may be helpful. The evaluator found that competencies varied in how they were introduced and assessed. For instance, faculty are left to integrate the computer usage competency into courses as they feel appropriate. When asked, staff in the computer laboratory provide students assistance in skills they need to acquire. But there is no systematic approach on which students or faculty can depend. At the same time, the use of a portfolio assessment strategy to assess competency in writing is exemplary. The faculty of the writing program demonstrate cohesion and a sense of shared values and standards. Students have a clear vision of what the portfolios are to contain and how they will be evaluated.

The evaluators concluded that there isn't a consistent underlying philosophy to guide instruction or assessment of these competencies. For example, should students acquire them before they proceed in their coursework? Should the competencies be integrated throughout the curriculum, and, if so, how can UAS be assured that all skills are being met? Should each competency be tested at the end of program to assure that it has been met? The statement in the catalog that "these six competencies will be assessed periodically" is not borne out consistently by evidence.

Similarly, assessment of major specific learning objectives and faculty-driven program review is inconsistent across UAS. Portfolios have been used as capstone experiences for the BLA degrees and the MAT degrees, and both are commendable in meeting the commission's Policy 2.2 on Educational Assessment. Documentation reveals that students are clearly aware of the requirements of these portfolios and that the information gathered from the portfolios is used to revise and improve the program.

Partial compliance is noted in several areas, but other areas seem not to have fully addressed degree-specific assessment. Some programs have easily accessible learning objectives; some do not. Some departments use only grades as evidence of competency development; others use multiple measures but don't clearly articulate the system of assessment and its use to guide program reform.

The commission recognizes that faculty members must select outcomes appropriate to their fields of study. An employer survey may be appropriate for business majors, for instance, while a survey of principals may be suited to education majors. In other areas, focus groups of students, interviews with graduate advisors at receiving schools, standardized exams, certification exams (and success rate), electronic portfolios, senior projects, or alumni surveys may be useful. It is the responsibility of the faculty to design, deliver, and review the curriculum, employ a socially-validated measure of competency acquisition, and then use the results of assessment to improve the curriculum and thus the learning experience of its students. The formal program review process is not, in its current form, sufficient to meet Policy 2.2.

Again, several programs demonstrate very good models that can be used to show how students' knowledge and skills improved or increased as a result of instruction. In particular, we found these in career education programs; writing; business; and education.

**2004 Recommendation: The evaluation team recommends that UAS work toward consistent application of Policy 2.2 Educational Assessment, ensuring that assessment is integrated fully and thoroughly. While most syllabi appear to include objectives statements on the “6 basic competencies” and the course objectives, they sometimes do not reflect how a particular course fits in the overall program. Students were notably naïve about the existence of the basic competencies. Some programs still have not adopted a “culture of assessment,” in particular a lack of attention to a continuous process of academic planning, the carrying out of those plans, the assessment of the outcomes, and the influencing of the planning process by the assessment activities. Furthermore, there does not appear to be consistency in reporting on how the evidence gathered on the “effectiveness of educational programs” results in “improvements in the program” as a result of the evaluation process. Exemplary models can be found on the UAS campus in its professional programs, career education, MAT, and writing portfolios. (Standard Two: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness; Policy 2.2 Educational Assessment)**

### **Standard Three: Students**

The team met with a particularly articulate group of student leaders, who spoke with enthusiasm about the quality of instruction at UAS and praised the institution overall. They applauded the low student to faculty ratio and the personal touch that extends

beyond the classroom. Support services (e.g., Learning Center, Computer Lab) are consistently helpful. They felt that their voices are heard and heeded in governance of the institution. They also appreciate the diversity of the student body in terms of ethnicity and age.

Admissions standards have been regularized since the 1999 visit to continue with the open enrollment philosophy but require either a high school diploma or evidence of earning a GED. Likewise, admission to a bachelor's degree program now requires standardized exam scores from SAT or ACT. This is a logical step to take in the evolution of UAS.

Many institutions are creating an administrative position to oversee undergraduate achievement, and UAS has done this in hiring a Vice Provost for Student Success, who is charged with providing leadership in retention, advising, and other areas crucial to retaining and graduating students. The Vice Provost and the Dean of Students have collaborated on an enrollment management plan, developed in concert with consultation from the Noel-Levitz group. The N-L College Student Inventory has provided valuable data to help guide decision-making. With the recent addition of an institutional research officer, this effort should be integrated fully into the university. The staff in financial aid was also lauded for its commitment to students.

The enrollment goal of UAS is 1,000 full-time students, which the institution believes will provide stability. The students felt as though UAS has arrived at a good marriage between the former community college system and the university system. They especially appreciate the opportunity to complete a certificate or associates degree and then transition to a four-year degree. Having the career education programs is "terrific."

Although the university collects an impressive array of data about enrollment and student demographics, their ability to compare data with other schools in the system is somewhat impaired by the odd practice of the UA system of setting a freeze date by the calendar rather than by the number of days the semester has been in session. While administrators rightly point out that their most important comparisons are with a set of peer institutions that are like them on selected features, their competition for funds within the system is based in part on SCH productivity. They and other schools in the system would benefit from an equitable comparison.

Still plaguing the institution is a lack of connection among the various sites in the Juneau area. Students cited the downtown Juneau campus, the Bill Ray Center, the forthcoming Natural Resources Research Lab, and the Anderson Building as examples of a rather sprawling campus. They questioned how or if these sites can be connected back to the Auke Lake Campus, not only via transportation but also metaphorically. In addition, they noted the potential safety issues of walking to the Anderson Building, a walk that requires crossing the highway (although they also pointed out a shuttle bus runs in the winter), and walking to student housing after evening classes on dimly-lit trails. They were quick to point out that the construction of additional private apartments along the

trail may increase lighting and decrease bear activity. (Note: Students receive bear bells during orientation.)

The primary concern voiced by the students was the quality of advising, a problem the university is aware of, having formed a task force to review advising on campus. Students lauded marketing efforts such as “Got Class?” an initiative that was designed to influence students to register in a more timely way. Students spoke of general advising as not having sufficient specificity to help them in terms of programs and career outcomes. In addition, there is a feeling that four-year plans by major are not readily nor universally available and that time to graduation may be lengthened because of less-than-optimal advising and limited class offerings. Having an undergraduate plan is essential to the students’ success.

The institution has worked to create successful environments for its students through additional or enhanced support services. The Native and Rural Center provides services to meet the special needs of this population. The Learning Center has a new advisory board committed to ensuring that the needs of a diverse student body are met.

The institution’s proactive stance of putting students first and caring deeply for their success and its thoughtful outreach to provide access to native and rural students are particularly noteworthy.

**2004 Concern 1: UAS should continue to investigate ways to improve the advising system to help students make choices about degree programs and to move as efficiently as they choose through the programs.**

**2004 Concern 2: UAS should think carefully about the connectedness of its Juneau campus dispersed over a wide area and how that affects practical considerations such as transportation as well as the overarching sense of how people think about UAS. In addition, Standard 3.B.4 requires that the “institution makes adequate provision for the safety and security of its students and their property. Information concerning student safety is published and widely distributed.” The dimly-lit trails and the hike across the highway to an outlying building are indications that the institution may not be fully meeting this responsibility.**

**2004 Concern 3: The University of Alaska system would be well-advised to revisit its data-collection methodology for enrollment figures. The “opening freeze” is set by the system it seems without regard to the various starting dates of the campus. Apparently, there are also varied start dates among the University of Alaska system that can create difficult coordination for students enrolled at multiple campuses.**

## Standard Four: Faculty

The UAS students who met with the evaluation team were uniformly positive about the faculty and its commitment to quality academic experience. UAS faculty numbers have increased by 37.6% over the past 5 years from 77 to 106 as more degree programs have been approved. The students noted how willing members of the faculty are to offer directed readings to fill in any gaps – for example, under-enrolled courses--in programs that are still new.

To teach at UAS, most faculty members must be facile with technology, and the majority employ technology among the wealth of options. The evaluator saw faculty teaching in the broadcast studio of Egan Library and also on the receiving end via the television. Faculty acknowledged that technology is a “huge priority” at UAS; they indicated that the instructional technology unit staff members are extremely supportive and go out of their way to be helpful. Those who work in faculty development are “eager to help” and “have been great.”

In terms of governance, many of the faculty interviewed felt there is improved communication between the current administration and the Faculty Senate. There are “fewer surprises,” according to one faculty member. While there is much more transparency in initiatives and plans—particularly through posting documents to the on-line *Caucus* facility—faculty members suggested that an alert via electronic mail, when documents are posted for review, would be helpful. The faculty’s participation in developing and knowledge about the strategic plan varied by college. There appeared to be some confusion about how the opportunity to participate is communicated: via academic structure or via the Faculty Senate. Even those who felt they had little involvement in developing or reviewing the plan did note that it represented “the right direction” for the university. The faculty commended the provost and the vice provost for student success for their frequent informational visits with the Faculty Senate. The faculty members also noted that the former confusion on lines of authority noted in the recommendation from 1999 had been resolved.

Faculty members are active participants in the selection of new colleagues, regardless of where they are assigned. Moreover, they increasingly know and interact with their colleagues among the three campuses. This is particularly true in some areas such as writing where the portfolio process brings faculty together.

For professional development, the faculty is supported by an endowment fund for travel to conferences and meetings. In addition, the Chancellor’s Fund solicits proposals for projects of merit up to \$5000, an initiative that has been popular among faculty. “It’s helped us get what we need,” noted one faculty member. In terms of orientation to the campus, new faculty participate in an academic year long Faculty Development Seminar. A collective meeting of faculty from the three campuses of UAS occurs during Fall Convocation. An increased emphasis on grants and contracts is clear among the faculty,

and they pride themselves on the research among undergraduates. A Glacier Symposium held in downtown Juneau, involving campus and community, including undergraduate research posters, was in progress during the visit.

The faculty operate under three different collective bargaining units, one for those faculty who had primarily a community college appointment in the previous organization and who taught lower-division courses; one for the university faculty; and one for adjuncts. Faculty members may be on a bipartite or tripartite appointment with the primary difference being that the latter includes a research component. The evaluation team is concerned that UAS has not clearly articulated how its faculty meet Standard 4.B on Scholarship, Research, and Artistic Creation, which states that such activity is inherent in faculty work, no matter the size or nature of the institution. There is leeway in how *scholarship* can be defined to meet this standard, but it does need to be defined consistently for all faculty. The team recommends that the Faculty Senate review the standard and create a document that addresses it in a way appropriate to UAS. An existing committee on the Scholarship of Teaching may be able to provide some assistance. (There has been a flurry of activity on the scholarship of teaching, for instance, following the Boyer report; Peter Seldin's *The Teaching Portfolio* comes to mind.) The team notes, however, that the standard is not prescriptive and can be tailored to UAS faculty and the campus culture.

The team observed that the affiliations of faculty with a particular union may be an artifact of the three campuses' previous organization. Contractual arrangements have continued even when programmatic needs have changed. For example, some faculty members who belong to the community college union teach upper-division courses. In addition, faculty members teaching upper division courses on one campus may be in different unions and have different scholarship expectations. Further, faculty who teach the same class on different campuses may be held to different standards. All of these individuals are qualified by credential to hold these positions and most, regardless of union affiliation, may have a rich life of scholarship either because of personal interest or "professional development" expectations. Still, the team found that university policy does not clearly and unambiguously articulate the expectation and definition of scholarship. While collective bargaining agreements may pose limitations on the ideal, the university is encouraged to revisit the comparability of expectations imposed on faculty who have similar teaching responsibilities.

UAS is working to increase faculty salaries and has moved along with the rest of the University of Alaska system to the Oklahoma survey for its baseline metric. A market survey this past year was used to provide some increases with a goal of getting to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Oklahoma survey.

While there seems to be a fairly heavy reliance on part-time and adjunct faculty, a significant number of these are long-time instructors at UAS with allegiance and loyalty to the institution. Some of them work in professions that provide direct links to the degree programs and, in effect, provide students with an "expert in residence" in an area

of study. While the team was concerned with the proportion of this group of instructional staff at the beginning of the visit, its concerns were assuaged by the end.

Faculty evaluation is delineated in contractual language. The *Faculty Handbook* has not been revised to reflect changes. Following the 1999 review, the faculty developed guidelines for evaluating research. The faculty is beginning to revisit how teaching is evaluated. UAS piloted an on-line course evaluation system in spring 2004; although the return rate was modest, it provides a base from which to improve. The students requested that course evaluations be made public to them; student evaluations provide one of several important indices on faculty evaluations at UAS.

The evaluation team finds that UAS does meet Policy 4.1 on Faculty Evaluation in that plans and procedures that specify the process and criteria by which faculty members are evaluated on a continuing basis have been developed; that multiple indices are used to evaluate teaching, scholarship, and service, and that, where improvements are indicated, plans are developed to address areas of concern. One caveat is that there appears to be a group of faculty who do not meet Standard 4.B on Scholarship, which must be addressed prior to the next evaluation team visit.

The evaluation team affirms the general commendation made in 1999 and commends UAS faculty and staff for their enthusiastic commitment to student learning.

**2004 Recommendation: The evaluation team recommends that UAS address how it meets Standard 4.B on Scholarship, Research, and Artistic Creation. This standard requires, “regardless of the size or nature of the institution,” that all faculty engage in some level of scholarship. The Faculty Senate Committee on the Scholarship of Teaching may provide an excellent vehicle for the campus to define criteria that satisfy this standard. Likewise, discussions of electronic teaching portfolios may provide a good method for reflecting on and documenting the scholarship of teaching. Multiple approaches exist from which the campus may choose to implement this standard. (Standard Four: Faculty)**

#### **Standard Five: Library and Information Resources**

The UAS library is a focal point of the campus, enhanced by the addition of the classroom wing. In addition to its traditional mission, the library offers events space for lectures and concerts with its “Evenings in Egan,” which brings the community to campus. The facility is also a beehive of activity with students using their wireless capabilities throughout the building, students finding academic help through the Learning Center, and students attending classes in media-enhanced rooms. The Pacific Coast Native Art is particularly attractive, engaging, and interesting. (A guide is available to the art and artifacts on display.) The library staff is keenly aware of the diverse and distant audiences it serves and has developed materials to assist them (e.g., instructional CD on use of the library). The staff seems eager to be helpful to all patrons. The



evaluation team commends the Library and its staff for its fine facility and its dedication to the core mission of the university and for serving its students and teachers at all campuses of UAS.

### **Standard Six: Governance and Administration**

Since 1999, the university has continued to refine its leadership and governance structure, particularly with an eye toward better integration of the university's three campuses and strengthened academic leadership. Two primary changes are noteworthy. First, the chancellor changed the reporting lines for the Sitka and Ketchikan campus directors from his office to the provost's office. In 1999, the entire faculty reported through one dean who was responsible for oversight of all programs. The chancellor recognized that current and anticipated program growth required discipline based academic leadership and proposed replacing the existing Dean of Faculty with four school deans – arts and science, education, career education, and business. These deans would have region-wide (Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan) responsibility for curriculum, instruction, and faculty. In the end, the plan proved too costly, and business and career education were combined under one dean. The new leadership in the deans' offices plus the new reporting structure of the campus directors to the provost greatly improved coordination of academic programs. Now, the three deans and the campus directors, along with other campus leaders, participate in the Provost's Council which has primary responsibility to ensure integrity and coordination of the instructional program across all three campuses.

In the UA system, one Board of Regents oversees the operation of the three universities in the system. Each university has its own chancellor and one or more Citizen's Advisory Councils. Such arrangements can work well or poorly depending on leadership and policy. In this case, the arrangement works very well. President Hamilton is well connected to the UAS campus, is knowledgeable about its strengths and challenges, is interested in its welfare, and is a strong advocate for the university in statewide conversations. Similarly, members of the Board of Regents understand the UAS campus and provide the support it requires.

The Juneau Advisory Council's connectedness to the campus was apparent, and members general knowledge about education and their specific knowledge about higher education, their recognition of the critical importance of solidifying an upper division higher education institution in southeast Alaska, their obvious interest in promoting the institution, and their wise counsel to the chancellor are obvious strengths of this institution. Members seem clearly to understand that their role is to look at the big picture. Neither they (nor the UA system president and regents) seem interested in micromanaging the institution.

Perhaps most pivotal to the success of this institution is the leadership and advocacy of Chancellor Pugh, who knows how to work with people and how to bring them along toward shared goals. His history with the institution has proven to be an asset, and he has avoided the pitfalls of those who rise to leadership in an institution of which they've been a part for many years. His outreach to the community, his ability to see opportunities, his

open, honest, and friendly nature, and his genuine love for this institution that he has served for nearly two decades is the institution's biggest asset. An Advisory Council member called him a "hustler" in a way that gave a new and altogether positive meaning to the word. He is a tireless advocate and sees opportunity where others don't. Chancellor Pugh's open and enthusiastic leadership style has energized this campus in a very visible way. He has built a leadership team that is cohesive and forward thinking. He has made this campus believe that it can become what it has set out to become: the institution of choice in southeast Alaska.

**2004 Commendation: Chancellor Pugh is to be commended for his effective leadership of this three-campus university, for his ability to create a regional university out of three entities that began with very different missions, for the quality and effectiveness of the leadership team he has assembled, and for fully integrating planning into the life of this university. His enthusiasm and love for this institution is matched only by his ability to see into its future and lead faculty, staff, and students down the right path that will lead them to that future. This is an exceptional campus filled with dedicated faculty and staff who care for their students and for the role of the university as a regional resource. (Standard 6.C)**

#### **Standard Seven: Finance**

The institution's financial stability and its long-range financial plan is described in greater detail in the team's response to Recommendation 4. The institution engages in systematic financial planning that is explicitly tied to its mission and strategic plan. The University of Alaska system requires detailed annual reports of the current financial health and financial outlook of the institution. Using Banner as its relational database, the institution has easy access to financial reports and updates budget numbers as changes occur. Debt policy is set at the university system level, and UAS stays well within their guidelines. Currently, the university carries a debt of slightly over \$5 M, a significant portion of which pays for the recently acquired Natural Resources Laboratory Building. The university system has a triple A bond rating, and its actions and those of universities within the system are designed to maintain it.

Although no one would argue that resources are optimal, they are adequate to the institution's mission and goals, its programs, and the size of its student body. Approximately 40 % of the entire budget of the university is devoted to instruction, and the number climbs to 60% of the state general fund and tuition budget. As the institution continues to grow, proportional increases in state general fund support and increased tuition revenue should combine nicely with the newly emerging entrepreneurial activities of the university to support new initiatives.

Multiple systems of checks and balances ensure the financial solvency of the institution. The university maintains adequate reserves to protect against an expected downturn in enrollment or state support.

Financial functions are centralized under a single, qualified financial officer who reports directly to the president and provides frequent updates. In addition, UAS is accountable to and provides extensive annual evaluations to President Hamilton and to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska system. It is at this level that the annual operating and capital budget and requests are approved. Independent audits of the university records, which are conducted annually in conjunction with audits of the entire University of Alaska system, confirm that the institution operates within commonly accepting accounting practices and that its reports fairly represent the financial status of the institution.

### **Standard 8: Physical Resources**

The facilities master plan followed close behind and was informed by the comprehensive strategic plan. In the words of the director of facilities, “You can’t build a house until you know who will live there.” As details about the people and programs that would occupy space emerged, the university got serious about remodeling existing facilities and acquiring new space for university operations. The addition of a classroom wing to the Egan Library on the Juneau campus provided much-needed classroom space and reinforced the role of the library as the center of academic life on the campus. A new student recreation center, currently under construction, will add over 25,000 square feet of space and meet the needs of the growing resident population. The purchase of a laboratory science building previously occupied by the Department of Environmental Conservation will provide highly specialized laboratory space in support of the programs and faculty research in environmental science. This acquisition also supports the overall goal of strengthening research among faculty and students.

Four new laboratory spaces, two seminar rooms, and a multi-purpose room have provided much needed space on the Sitka campus. The specialized science laboratories are particularly noteworthy because they meet very specific programmatic needs for students studying in Sitka.

Major renovation and upgrade to the Robertson/Hamilton complex in Ketchikan has resulted in more integrated space, corrected code deficiencies, and upgraded mechanical and electrical systems. This completely renovated facility reopened in spring 2004.

The Board of Regents requires proper stewardship of state facilities under its control. To that end, it asks campuses to set aside for maintenance and repair each year 1.5% of the replacement costs of building. UAS’s spending on maintenance and repair exceed the board’s requirement and, as a result, deferred maintenance on the three campuses of UAS remains relatively low.

The Juneau campus is located in a remarkably beautiful natural setting in the Mendenhall Valley, and structures are designed to be in harmony it. The campus is extremely well maintained, and there is an obvious pride of ownership on the part of students, faculty, and staff. There are actually two Juneau campuses – one in the Valley on Auke Lake and

one downtown. This separation – a distance of about 12 miles – along with the separation between academic buildings and between housing and academic buildings on the Auke Lake campus creates some challenges. The university has worked with the city to improve public transportation, but students still find it challenging to move from location to location. Some concern was expressed about the poor lighting of the foot path between academic buildings and housing at Auke Lake and about the safety of the road crossing that is required to get to the Anderson Building. This concern is described in more detail in our response to Standard 3.

### **Standard Nine: Institutional Integrity**

There is ample evidence that the university maintains high ethical standards in its treatment of faculty, students, and staff. They are guided by university system-wide policies and regulations, but they also have institution-specific policies. The board maintains policies on dispute resolution, scholarly productivity, equal opportunity and non-discrimination. In addition, employees are guided by the State of Alaska Executive Ethics Act and the Alaska Professional Teaching Practices Commission. Policies regarding intellectual property and academic freedom are embedded in the institution's collective bargaining agreements with faculty. Currently, a draft of a UAS Student Code of Conduct is making its way through the approval process.

#### **2004 COMMENDATIONS**

**Commendation 1:** The University of Alaska Southeast is to be commended for the inclusiveness of its strategic planning process and the utility of the plan that has emerged. This is a forward-looking campus that dreams big and that is witnessing the benefits of an aspirational plan that guides its actions. Initiatives are considered on the basis of their cohesiveness with the plan, and local and system-wide resources are allocated on the basis of the goals the campus has agreed to. The planning process and its use to guide campus direction have positioned the campus to garner state and federal resources that heretofore seemed out of reach. This is a vital campus that knows where it's going and measures each initiative on the basis of its ability to help it get there. (Standards 1A)

**Commendation 2:** UAS is to be commended for its long-range fiscal and facilities planning model and for the clear relationship that exists among its long-range strategic plan, its long-range master plan, and its budgeting process. In addition, the university has been able to strike the right balance between planning and flexibility, between risk-taking and fiscal constraint. UAS's foray into and success in competitions for federal grants is nothing short of astonishing. This is a university that is well-grounded at the same time that it is reaching – successfully – for the stars. (Standards 1A, 7A, 8.C)

**Commendation 3:** Chancellor Pugh is to be commended for his effective leadership of this three-campus university, for his ability to create a regional university out of three entities that began with very different missions, for the quality and effectiveness of the leadership team he has assembled, and for fully integrating planning into the life of this university. His enthusiasm and love for this institution is matched only by his ability to

see into its future and lead faculty, staff, and students down the right path that will lead them to that future. This is an exceptional campus filled with dedicated faculty and staff who care for their students and for the role of the university as a regional resource. (Standard 6.C)

**Commendation 4:** The evaluation team commends UAS for foregrounding the importance of technology in all programs and services and providing the resources needed. The Instructional Technology unit is comprised of energetic, dedicated, and “thoughtful” members who deliberately seek opportunities to be helpful to the academic mission of UAS. The team further endorses the Commendation of 1999 that lauded “the staffs in the Library, Computing, and Media Services for successful and widely recognized efforts to develop a rich combination of traditional and electronic information resources to support tri-campus and distance programs.” (Standard 8.B)

## **2004 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1:** The evaluation team recommends that UAS work toward consistent application of Policy 2.2 Educational Assessment, ensuring that assessment is integrated fully and thoroughly. While most syllabi appear to include objectives statements on the “6 basic competencies” and the course objectives, they sometimes do not reflect how a particular course fits in the overall program. Students were notably naïve about the basic competencies. Some programs still have not adopted a “culture of assessment,” in particular a lack of attention to a continuous process of academic planning, the carrying out of those plans, the assessment of the outcomes, and the influencing of the planning process by the assessment activities. Furthermore, there does not appear to be consistency in reporting on how the evidence gathered on the “effectiveness of educational programs” results in “improvements in the program” as a result of the evaluation process. Exemplary models can be found on the UAS campus in its professional programs, career education, MAT, and writing portfolios. (Standard Two: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness; Policy 2.2 Educational Assessment)

**Recommendation 2:** The evaluation team recommends that UAS address how it meets Standard 4.B on Scholarship, Research, and Artistic Creation. This standard requires, “regardless of the size or nature of the institution,” that all faculty engage in some level of scholarship. The Faculty Senate Committee on the Scholarship of Teaching may provide an excellent vehicle for the campus to define criteria that satisfy this standard. Likewise, discussions of electronic teaching portfolios may provide a good method for reflecting on and documenting the scholarship of teaching. Multiple approaches exist from which the campus may choose to implement this standard. (Standard Four: Faculty)

**Recommendation 3:** It appears that some new academic programs which should have been submitted to the commission as substantive changes have not been. The institution should move quickly to receive written confirmation from the commission about the status of each of its new programs. (Policy A-2)

**Appendix A: List of Meeting and Attendees with  
Evaluators Dr. Elizabeth Street and Dr. Joyce Kinhead**

UAS Executive Management

John Pugh, Chancellor  
Roberta Stell, Provost

UAS Administrative Team

John Pugh, Chancellor  
Roberta Stell, Provost  
Brendan Kelly, Dean of Arts & Sciences  
Marilyn Taylor, Dean of Education  
Karen Schmitt, Dean of BPAIS & Career Education  
Karen Polley, Ketchikan Campus Director  
David Felland, Sitka Campus Director  
Paul Kraft, Dean of Student Services  
Carol Griffin, Vice Chancellor for Admin. Services  
Barbara Hyde, Director of Budget Services  
Keith Gerken, Director of Facilities  
Tom McBrien, Director of Business Operations

Computer/Media Services

Mike Ciri, Director of Information Technology Services  
Mona Yarnall, Information Systems Manager  
Joe Nell, Infrastructure Manager  
Barney Norwick, Academic Computing Manager  
Jim Gage, Media Services Coordinator  
Rita Fuller, Sitka Technical Support  
Elise Tomlinson, Instructional Services Librarian

Juneau Campus Advisory Council

Sally Smith, Council Chair  
Peggy Cowan, Superintendent, Juneau School District  
Mary Becker, Juneau School Board  
Gordon Evans, Attorney  
Carol Gerken, Educator  
Peggy Ann McConnochie, ALaska Coastal Homes  
John Williams, Owner, Juneau Real Estate

Student Leadership

Toby Coate, Juneau Student Senate President  
Ben Shier, Juneau Student Senate Vice President  
Dan Bleidorn, Juneau Senator  
Heather Okland, Juneau Senator  
Brian Westad, Juneau Senator  
Hellen Fleming, Juneau Senator  
Willow Griffin, Sitka Student Senate President

#### Faculty Senate

Ginny Mulle, Chair of the Faculty Senate  
Jonathan Anderson, Business Faculty Representative  
Priscilla Schulte, Ketchikan Faculty Representative  
Brian Blitz, Juneau at Large Representative  
Sherry Tamone, Natural Science Faculty Representative  
Chuck Craig, Career Education Faculty Representative  
Janet Dye, Chair of the Faculty Senate the previous two years

#### Finance Team

Carol Griffin, Vice Chancellor for Admin. Services  
Tom McBrien, Director of Business Operations  
Barbara Hyde, Director of Budget Services

#### Board of Regents (Telephone Conference)

Brian Rogers, Chair

#### Exit Interview

John Pugh, Chancellor  
Roberta Stell, Provost  
Carol Griffin, Vice Chancellor for Admin. Services  
Paul Kraft, Dean of Student Services