



Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
THROUGH: Diane Barrans, Executive Director
FROM: Rebekah Matrosova, Director of Outreach & Early Awareness
DATE: December 17, 2015
SUBJECT: Outreach Report

Much of this quarter's Outreach work centered on partner initiative planning.

In November, the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) Interagency Communications Planning team met to discuss upcoming SAT changes and the need for coordinating communications about the matter to the public. The UA-ACPE college access and success working group also met to discuss changes to the FAFSA coming in October 2016, and potential impacts on financial aid timelines and practices.

Activity around the Alaska Postsecondary Access & Completion Network (the Network) continues to intensify as the end of federal grant funding looms in July 2016. A set of activities designed to strengthen Network viability as a long-term, independent organization includes research on funding opportunities, and development of Articles of Incorporation. Additionally, our Board has prioritized mission-centric projects for the year to make best use of remaining funding. As part of that, I am again chairing the March Conference committee, implementing an event for cross-sector participants to learn, connect, and develop ways to collectively raise the share of Alaskans with postsecondary credentials to 65% by 2025. This substantial time commitment is eased by the skilled and engaged committee of volunteers supporting this initiative.

Representing the Network, I also participated in a DOLWD Apprenticeship Roundtable event in early December. The interest among participants in the Network was encouraging, and the event highlighted again the valuable role of apprenticeship in reaching our attainment goal. More details on Network activity can be found on p. 4 of my report.

In the Anchorage office, the Outreach team participated in Lean and A3 training delivered by our Quality Assurance team. We look forward to additional training; however, since then, a team member used the A3 concept to bring forward and implement an improvement to the unit-level budget coding process for certain procurement requests.

It continues to be a pleasure to work with both the talented and committed Outreach team, and our engaged partners. Please feel free to contact me with questions or comments on my report.

Outreach Summary: AY15 Review & Analysis

The Outreach team annually conducts an academic year review to evaluate our reach and impact, and set goals for the upcoming year. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Outreach reached a total of 16,127 individuals through 414 direct contact events, in 94 unique communities in Alaska. Events analyzed included: conference and fair booths and presentations; financial aid nights; classroom presentations; in-person and distance delivered training; and major events for programs such as College Goal Alaska, I Know I Can, and Kids2College.

Distribution Summary

Region	Total # Events	# Communities	Individuals Reached (S&P – Students & Parents; E – Educators)
Statewide	60	N/A	2,180 (872 S&P + 1,067 E + 241 Other)
Far North	69	32	1,218 (1,163 S&P, 45 E + 10 Other)
Interior	48	15	1,473 (1,441 S&P, 32 E)
Southcentral	165	21	8,379 (7,466 S&P, 168 E, 745 Other)
Southwest	27	14	779 (750 S&P + 8E + 21 Other)
Southeast	45	12	2,098 (2,025 S&P, 67E, 6 Other)
Total	414	94	16,127

Comparing Prior Years

Year	Total # Events	Approx. Travel Cost ¹	Individuals Reached
2014/2015	414	\$22,581	16,127 (13,717 S&P + 1,387 E + 1,023 Other)
2013/2014	369	\$25,134	15,508 (13,974 S&P + 658 E + 876 Other)
2012/2013	300	\$29,544	12,258 (10,302 S&P + 1,579 + 377 Other)

Key Findings:

- Individuals reached increased by 4% and events increased by 12% compared to AY14.
- The most substantial increase was in educators served. This met goals set in the prior year to increase the proportion of events targeted at educators, who then pass critical messages on to their students.
- Despite increasing reach, travel costs continue to be reduced. This too met goals set in the prior year to continue to maximize effectiveness and reach by scheduling multiple events during trips (including multi-community trips), as well as use of distance delivery methods when possible.
- Outreach efforts continue to be fairly proportional relative to population distribution across the state. Southwest AK receives slightly fewer visits given the local resource of ACAC Guides in Bethel and Kodiak.

Evaluation Results:

Attendee feedback was solicited at the two most common presentations. Feedback is generally positive, with the vast majority of respondents indicating they identified new resources and learned useful information. I do note a shift in impact, compared to 2014: a decrease from more than 90% to about 70% of individuals reporting they plan to take a specific action toward pursuing college and/or career training. Response rates were higher than last year's, so this rate may be more accurate, rather than a shift. However, given the importance of incenting action steps, we will review presentations to ensure critical action steps are clearly defined.

¹ Travel Cost reflect pre-authorization travel estimates which vary slightly from actuals.

July 2014 – June 2015	Financial Aid Night 276 responses (72% Return Rate)	APS 176 responses (77% Return Rate)
Plan to take specific action towards pursuing college and/or career training	72% (93% last year)	70% (92.5% last year)
Said more than 50% of information provided was useful to them	87% (88% last year)	84% (86% last year)
Identified something new to help them achieve college/career training	77% (79% last year)	70% (71% last year)
Learned what they hoped to learn from the presentation	87% (92% last year)	80% (88% last year)
Didn't foresee any barriers to meeting the requirements to qualify for the APS	N/A	69% (77.5% last year)
Said they are more likely to pursue the APS	N/A	78% (87% last year)

Goals for AY16:

- Increase the percentage of attendees taking action steps following presentations to at least 80%
- With lower staffing levels, maintain similar quantities of events and individuals reached
- Moderately reduce total travel costs
- Modify data collection practices to include the ACAC program as part of the annual summary evaluation. *(Excluded from this summary)*

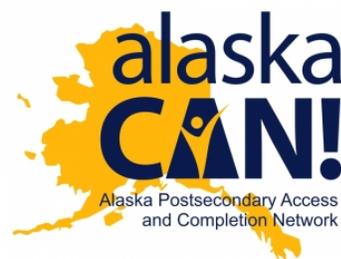
Quarterly Outreach Distribution Summary (Oct-Dec. 2015)

The Outreach unit provides postsecondary access and planning (i.e. financial aid) presentations and information tailored to specific audiences and communities across the entire state, as well as individual advising as needed. This activity summary, developed beginning in AY16, encompasses workshops delivered statewide through the Success Center, AKCIS training, workshops through ACAC Guides, and delivery of outreach programs (Kids2College, I Know I Can, and College Goal Alaska), and advising through the ACAC Guides or Success Center. Conference booth contacts are not included.

Region	Total # Events	# Communities	Individuals Reached at Events (S&P – Students & Parents; E – Educators)	One-on-One Services
Statewide	21	N/A	392 (21 S&P + 251 E)	N/A
Far North	21	1	111 S & P	119
Interior	158	4	752 (745 S&P + 7 E)	330
Southcentral	182	13	2,308 (2,216 S&P + 70 E + 22 Other)	1,334
Southwest	138	10	657 (655 S&P + 2 E)	212
Southeast	21	8	573 (505 S&P + 55E + 13 Other)	0
Total	541	36	4,253	1,995

Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network

The Network continues its work toward autonomy, building statewide interest, and implementing key projects for the upcoming year.



Quarter Outcomes:

Board of Directors and Network Activity

Board of Directors Updates:

- Motion adopted to change Executive Committee nomenclature to Board of Directors.
- Scheduled Board Elections for March (7 of 13 seats will open for nominations). An Elections Committee was formed to develop procedures, in compliance with Bylaws, and establish criteria for designated Board seats.

Network FY16 Budget Finalized: Network Funds have been assigned to the following priorities:

- Infrastructure/Sustainability: Grant Writer/Fundraiser Contracts; Website Development & Reduced travel for three in-person meetings (Jan, April & May)
- Public Messaging: Public Messaging Campaign Contract
- Professional Development: Network Conference & Stipends for CCCI (College & Career Counseling Initiative) Trainers

Requirements for Adoption & Implementation of Final Bylaws Identified:

- New procedures will include: Membership application, earlier meeting notices, and scheduling of annual membership meeting
- New committees will be: Network Development/Governance, Strategic ; and Audit & Finance

Strategic Plan Progress: Three workgroups were formed and are in the process of articulating goals and measures for top strategic priorities.

Progress on Key Initiatives

College and Career Counseling Initiative (CCCI): The Trainer position has been posted to the Network website and applications are being accepted

Network 2016 Spring Conference (March 21-22, 2016): The Conference Committee has finalized a vendor contract, developed attendee outcomes, and a draft agenda. To support goals for structured networking & tangible attendee outcomes, the conference will include a half-day, post-conference interactive workgroup option.

Public Messaging Campaign Progress: The Scope of Work has been completed and an IRFP has been issued to select a vendor.

Network Website Progress: A contractor has been identified and draft text is in development.

Additional Network information and listserv sign-up are located at acpe.alaska.gov/Access.

Alaska College & Career Advising Corps

The Alaska College & Career Advising Corps (ACAC) is comprised of recent college graduates placed in participating high schools to encourage and assist students in preparing for postsecondary education and training.

Transition & Sustainability Planning:

Enabling the ACAC program post-grant (ending in 2016) continues to be a priority, and remains on target for successful transition to a sustainable model². This quarter:

- The ACAC Program Manager met with schools and district administrators at nearly all existing sites to discuss opportunities for transition to the new model, which relies on leveraging outside partner funding for the required site contribution.
- Work with Maniilaq Corporation and the NWABSD is underway to place a Guide in Kotzebue Jr./Sr. High School by early spring, under the “Future Educators of Alaska” (FEA) Alaska Native Education Grant through UAF.

ACAC Program Quarter Highlights:

- In October, College & Career Guides attended the College Advising Corps National Adviser Summit in Atlanta, GA along with more than 500 colleagues from 26 other Advising Corps programs.
 - All ACAC returning Guides presented in breakout sessions and both groups have been approached about presenting their sessions as a webinar for all Advising Corps staff:
 - Guides from Bethel, Kodiak, Kenai, Soldotna and Nikiski presented on “College Enrollment Challenges and Strategies in Rural Communities.”
 - Guides from Anchorage presented on “Storytelling as a College Access Tool.”
 - Aneliese Palmer was recognized as a “Top 10 Outstanding Guide” by the national program.
- College Application Week was November 16 – 20 in Alaska. To encourage students to complete postsecondary applications during the week, it was also “No pie ‘til you apply!” week. The new approach proved engaging and was well received by students. Program-wide, 941 postsecondary applications were submitted.
- ACAC staff came together for mid-year training December 15 and 16 in Anchorage. Topics included updates to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), best practices for scholarship applications, and planning for spring events.



² Placements are categorized as sustainable if they are not staffed by ACPE employees nor dependent on ACPE to cover personnel costs.

ACAC Interactions (through Dec 15, 2015):

INTERACTION	Oct-Dec 2015	Compare to: Oct-Dec 2014	DESCRIPTION
Individual Sessions	1,828	1,893	Develop education and career plans, assist with postsecondary admissions and financial aid application, explain financial aid award letters, test registrations
Students served in Individual Advising Sessions	1,224	1,151	
Group Advising Sessions and Classroom Presentations/Workshops	239	363	AKCIS introduction, portfolio development and activity facilitation. College 101, financial aid and FAFSA presentations, Alaska Performance Scholarship information sessions
Students served in Group Advising and Classroom Presentations/Workshops	1,251	2,739	
	Year to date	This time last year	
Total Students w/Program-Related Contacts	3,266	4,150	

From the Field - a College & Career Guide:

College Application Week in Kodiak was a great time for partner events: More than 80 students participated in the Financial Reality Fair, coordinated with Alaska Credit Unions; over 300 participants came to the Kodiak College & Career Fair; and a Scholarship and Financial Aid Fair planned with Kodiak College was also well-attended.

Success Center

ACPE connects with Alaskans through its Success Center, our satellite location at UAA's One Stop, distance delivered and in-person presentations across Alaska, as well as participation in state-wide conferences and events. This quarter total interactions saw a significant upsurge in phone calls and visits to our UAA One Stop site. Fall presentations focused on financial aid and APS.

Success Center & Community Outreach Activity (through Dec. 10, 2015):

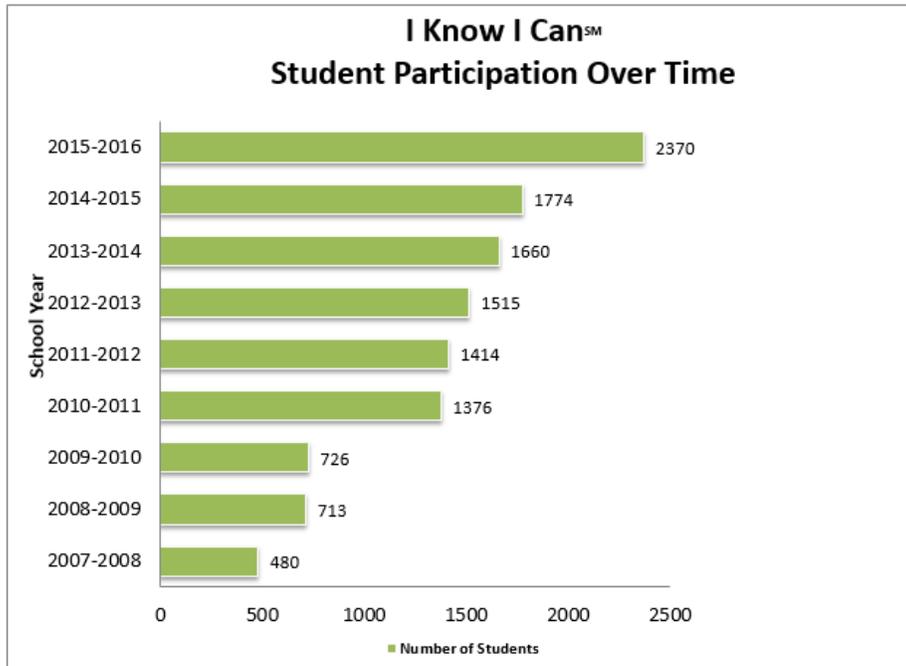
INTERACTION	Oct-Dec 2015	Compare to: Oct-Dec 2014	DESCRIPTION
In-Person Interactions at Success Center	93	127	
Phone Interactions at Success Center	66	48	
In-Person Interactions at UAA One Stop Site	104	22	
Total:	263	197	
Top 5 reasons customers visited			1: General Financial Aid Assistance 2: FAFSA Assistance/Completion 3: Requesting ACPE materials 4: ASEL Applications/Questions 5: ACPE Questions
Workshops & Presentations	28	<i>not available*</i>	Topics include: Alaska Performance Scholarship, Financial Aid overview, FAFSA, postsecondary options, and ASEL and FEL loan options
Total # Served at Workshops & Presentations	1,147	<i>not available*</i>	
Conference/Event Booths	19	<i>not available*</i>	Parent Info Nights at: East, Bartlett, Eagle River, Chugiak High Schools, statewide College & Career Fairs, Alaska School Counselors Conference, UAA Preview Day, NANA Career Fair, Alaska ACTE Conference, Elders and Youth Conference, and Armed Forces Money Smarts

**Reporting practices have changed with the integration of Community Outreach & the Success Center*

I Know I Can (IKIC) – 2nd grade College and Career Awareness

I Know I Can is sponsored jointly by the UA College Savings Plan and ACPE.

I Know I Can recruits local alumni in communities across the state as readers of an age-appropriate storybook introducing concepts about college to 2nd-graders. After discussion with the volunteer, children draw a picture of who they want to be when they grow up on a postcard, which is mailed back to them two years later. Events began in November 2007 and will run throughout the school year, with most events wrapping up this quarter.



Program Year Highlights:

- A new online application system increased processing efficiency. 70% of applicants applied online, requiring less staff support for the process. The online application greatly reduces manual data entry by importing data directly to Sharepoint. In total enhancements to program management system have reduced manual processing by an estimated 60-70 hours a year.
- AY 2015-16 I Know I Can events are scheduled at 56 schools in 30 communities.
- Nine communities are first-time participants (30% new community participation); and five of 20 school districts participated for their first time (25% new district participation).
- Approximately 375 volunteer alumni will read and discuss *I Know I Can* and career dreams with over 2,300 2nd grade students. Some rural communities are also involving high school senior volunteers to share their college/career dreams.
- Mat-Su Borough School District CTE Program ordered an additional 1,500 books with plans to introduce the program district wide.

APS Communications Coordination

ACPE annually convenes the primary agencies involved with the APS to ensure ongoing communication and collaboration in support of Alaskans' understanding of, access to, and use of the APS. This year's November 13th meeting involved personnel from ACPE, Department of Education & Early Development, Department of Labor & Workforce Development; University of Alaska system and all three major academic units.

Key takeaways included:

- Interest in maintaining communication about the status of the Alaska Higher Education Investment Fund (AHEIF), the fund source for scholarships and grants, which was tapped in 2015 to fund certain non-APS/AEG costs
- Student options for using the CTE APS, and interest in discussing changes which could expand use
- Establishment of a workgroup focused on identifying and disseminating information on school/district APS communication best practices, and a self-assessment tool
- Potential advocacy for funding of continued school-based testing
- Need to update regulations and outreach materials to reflect 2016 SAT scoring change

Also this quarter, to ensure students' optimize chance for an APS, ACPE sent 9,500 postcards to Seniors about SAT and ACT testing dates. The postcards were mailed in early October.



Social Media Update: Instagram

Based on research on the rising impacts of social media with our target audience, in December ACPE joined Instagram. In the early stage, the Outreach team is using Instagram to showcase how they work to promote higher education and training in communities across the state.



Marketing and Publications

ACPE leverages electronic and print media to spread key college access messages as widely as possible. Central to this is information about ACPE-administered state financial aid. After a very busy late summer/early fall, this activity scaled back however we continued limited paid advertising on Google and Facebook to ensure we maintain top-of-mind awareness for the 5.94% APR on Alaska Student Education Loan's (ASEL), and to promote ACPE's financial literacy resources.

Quarterly Marketing Report:

Advertising Oct-Dec 2015						
	Topic*	Freq/Number	Market Reach	Freq seen/heard	CPM**	Clicks/CPC/CTR**
Web						
Facebook Posts	Financial literacy, IKIC, Holidays, Student Spotlight, Education Conferences, ACAC, Scholarships, Test Prep, Postsecondary Success Tips	20 posts	7,929 people	Not Available	0	294
Facebook Ads	Alaska's Low-Cost Loan Programs	132,022 Impressions	21,880 People	6.03 times per person	\$0.83 per 1k Impressions	414/\$0.26
	Financial Literacy	90,108 Impressions	21,713 People	4.15 each person	\$1.21 per 1k Impressions	432/\$0.21
Google Ads	Alaska's Low-Cost Loan Programs	4,714 Impressions	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	176/\$0.70/3.73% CTR

Media Mentions Oct-Dec 2015					
Topics*	Press Release	Topic Detail:	News Outlets	% mentioning ACPE	% neutral or positive
APS	No	Webinar	Kenai Peninsula Online	100%	100%
Total- 1				100%	100%

*Topics: APS – Alaska Performance Scholarship, IKIC – I Know I Can, ACAC – Alaska College & Career Advising Corps

** CPM – cost per 1,000 reached, CPC – cost per click, CTR – click-through rate

Loan Competitor Review Oct-Dec 2015					
Lender/Loan	Fixed Rates (APR)*	Loan Limits	O-Fee	Current Promotions	Borrower Benefits/Notes
Federal Direct (Undergrad)	4.29%	\$5,500 to \$12,500	1.073%		-0.25% for auto-pay. Offers IBR, PAYE, and other attractive repayment options. In-school interest subsidized for qualifying students based on need.
Federal Direct (Graduate)	5.84%	Up to \$20,500	1.073%		-0.25% for auto-pay. Offers IBR, PAYE, and other attractive repayment options.
Federal Direct PLUS	6.84%	Up to COA	4.292%		-0.25% for auto-pay. Offers IBR, PAYE, and other attractive repayment options to students (not to parent borrowers).
Wells Fargo	5.94% to 10.51%	Up to COA	0%	Variable rates from 3.17% APR	Credit-based pricing; fixed or variable offered; in-school deferment; -0.25% for continuing borrowers; -0.25% auto-pay
Sallie Mae	6.41% to 11.69%	Up to COA	0%	Variable rates from 3.17% – 9.37% APR	Credit-based pricing; fixed or variable offered; in-school deferment, in-school repay options (pay just \$25 a month, or interest-only payments); -0.25% auto-pay ; earn rewards for paying on time
Discover	6.15% to 11.99%	Up to COA	0%	Variable rates from 2.99%	Credit-based pricing; fixed or variable offered; in-school deferment; -0.25% auto-pay, 1% cash reward for good grades
ASEL	5.94%	\$12,500	0%		Fixed rate, no credit-based pricing; in-school deferment; -0.25% for auto-pay & -0.50% for AK presence
FEL	6.25%	\$12,500	0%		Fixed interest rate, no credit-based pricing; -0.25% for auto-pay

*Federal loans display interest rates (Exempt from Truth-in-Lending APR calculations under federal law)

ON THE HORIZON

- The 2nd Annual Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network Conference is scheduled to be held in March 2016.
- The Network Board of Directors election is scheduled to take place at the March 2016 Network Conference: Seven of the 13 Board seats (to include; Students, Secondary Education, Community Org/Non-Profit and 3 At Large Seats) will be open.
- Starting in January College Goal Alaska, ACPE's primary FAFSA completion initiative, will offer events statewide. This year the marketing team is particularly focusing on reaching adult students as well as high school seniors. Events run through April.
- A survey of Alaska's financial aid professionals on ACPE services and loan materials will be initiated in late December. Results will inform loan product and awareness planning for 2016-17.