



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: October 2, 2015
SUBJECT: Outreach Report

Given the state government-wide focus on creating efficiencies wherever possible, we have taken the opportunity through the recent retirement of the Anchorage office administrative assistant, to do so while minimizing impacts to the Alaskans we serve. Effective October 1, duties previously assigned to this position were redistributed across staff in both the Anchorage and Juneau offices, who are to be commended for their willingness to take on additional responsibilities in support of the transition.

Ongoing work with the Senior Management team on Lean leadership implementation is proving valuable. Focus is on: 1) effective strategies to engage staff in unit planning; 2) more efficient processes; and, 3) aligning unit priority outcomes to clearly articulated and measurable agency goals.

This work affirms that even in a time of shrinking budgets, we must continue striving to meet Alaska's higher education planning needs over the coming years, to ensure residents are able to benefit from our state's postsecondary institutions and training programs, and wisely manage Alaska's investment in state financial aid.

Anticipating these budget pressures, Outreach managers have proactively been working to diversify funding streams to support our efforts. Several contributions this quarter towards FY16 program activities illustrate wide-ranging support for this work:

- \$14,000 from the National College Access Network (a competitive grant) for implementation of the FAFSA completion program "College Goal Alaska"
- \$10,000 from the Department of Education & Early Development's Career and Technical Education program - an update to our long-standing partnership - to offer AKCIS integration with school districts' student information systems
- \$13,000 from the UA College Savings Plan for 5th/6th grade early awareness initiatives
- \$14,000 from local partners to cover costs related to the ACAC program in Nome
- \$17,000 towards the ACAC program approved by the national College Advising Corps Board
- A federal grant to the University's K-12 Outreach office that will fund two ACAC Guides

We will continue to actively cultivate these and other valued partnerships in support of postsecondary access and success. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding my report.

Outreach Distribution Summary (Jul-Sept. 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 is new to the quarterly report: it 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. It excludes conference booths.

Region	Total # Events	# Communities	Individuals Reached at Events (S&P – Students & Parents; E – Educators)	One-on-One Services
Statewide	5	N/A	130 (100 S&P + 30 E)	N/A
Far North	0	0	0	0
Interior	46	3	492 S&P	72
Southcentral	114	12	3,178 (3,087 S&P + 33 E + 58 Other)	1,055
Southwest	23	9	803 (800 S&P + 3 E)	117
Southeast	2	2	12 (7 E + 5 S&P)	0
Total	190	26	4,615	1,244

Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network

The Network continues its work toward independence, building statewide interest, and initiating a number of showcase projects for the next year.



Quarter Outcomes:

Executive Committee and Planning Team Activity

Network Budget Review:

- Network budget for FY16 more robust than anticipated in April due to opportunities to redeploy grant funding from other program areas
- Identification of top FY16 funding priorities: spring conference, public messaging campaign, additional staff support (if feasible), and stipends for CCCI initiative trainers
- Considering shifting funds from in-person meeting expense to other priorities
- Discussion of realistic needs and potential opportunities for FY17 (post-grant) budget

Continued Progress on Bylaws:

- Confirmation of Executive Committee-directed process for bylaws changes
- Confirmation of hybrid membership structure allowing individual or organizational members

Strategic Plan Focus:

- Agreement on value of clarifying mission statement to indicate work will be achieved through partnerships
- Interest in adding values statements to strategic plan
- Agreement on top priorities for Network in upcoming year: Public Messaging, Professional Development (Spring Conference & Counselor Training Initiative), and Organization Strength (to include a transition and funding plan)

Progress on Key Initiatives

College and Career Counseling Initiative (CCCI) Trainers:

- Reviewed/added to list of qualities/characteristics to consider during selection process
- Determined formal vetting process essential in identifying potential trainers

New Initiatives

Network 2016 Spring Conference:

- Executive Committee developed charge for Conference Committee including high-level objectives for the Network and for conference attendees.
- Committee Members are: Rebekah Matrosova, Kathy Moffitt, Kacey Miller, Saichi Oba, Mary Gower, Frank Coenraad, Lacy Karpilo
- Additional committee members will be solicited from among broader Network membership

Next Steps:

1. Develop “Scope of Work” for Public Messaging Campaign
2. Begin application and selection process of College & Career Counseling Initiative (CCCI) trainers
3. Develop goals for Strategic Plans priority focus areas: Professional Development, Statewide Messaging, and Organization Strength

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) places recent college graduates into participating high schools to encourage and assist students in preparing for postsecondary education and training.

Transition & Sustainability Planning:

Preparation for the future of the ACAC program post-grant (ending in 2016) continues to be a priority, and remains on target for successful transition to a sustainable model¹. This quarter:

- A second College & Career Guide was hired under a pilot designed to reduce both administrative costs and complexity through a contract with a staffing agency. The Guide has recently been placed at Nome-Beltz High School. Of 13 total College & Career Guides, three now fully meet the requirements for sustainable placement, and a fourth contains key elements of the model.
- ACPE received notice that the “Future Educators of Alaska” (FEA) Alaska Native Education Grant proposal was awarded. This consortium effort, led through the University of Alaska’s K-12 Outreach Office, will fund two additional sustainable placements. Guides will serve the Bering Strait School District (distance-based from Nome) and Northwest Artic Borough School District (blended model with a Guide based in Kotzebue Jr./Sr. High School).
- ACPE has developed and distributed ACAC program marketing materials to raise awareness and solicit interest in the post-grant model by new and existing sites. The materials have sparked positive responses and are an effective tool to ensure final milestones for successful program transition are met.

ACAC Program Quarter Highlights:

- The 13-member 2015-2016 cohort of ACAC Guides is actively working in schools. To kick off the year, Guides are meeting with students in large groups to facilitate awareness throughout the school. They also meeting with Seniors individually to prepare admissions applications.
- Parent outreach has increased through “Back to School” and “Senior & Parent” nights. Guides report high attendance and follow-up by parents seeking their support.
- Through partnership with the Kodiak Area Native Association and the “Transitioning Alaska’s Youth” Coalition, the Kodiak Island Guide has scheduled travel for in-person services to students in Kodiak’s seven village schools. Topics for the day-long visits will include career exploration, postsecondary options, using the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS), and technologies to follow up with the Guide.
- A successful College Colors Day on September 22 at Bethel Regional High School saw many classes with 100% student and teacher participation.



¹ Placements are categorized as sustainable if they are not staffed by ACPE employees nor dependent on ACPE to cover personnel costs.

ACAC Interactions (through Sept. 22, 2015):

INTERACTION	July – Sept 2015	Compare to: July – Sept 2014	DESCRIPTION
Individual Sessions	902	1,093	Develop education and career plans, assist with postsecondary admissions and financial aid application, explain financial aid award letters, test registrations, postsecondary transition advising (2015 graduates)
Students served in Individual Advising Sessions	702	951	
Group Advising Sessions and Classroom Presentations/Workshops	161	174	AKCIS introduction, portfolio development and activity facilitation. College 101, financial aid and FAFSA presentations, Alaska Performance Scholarship information sessions, postsecondary transition events
Students served in Group Advising and Classroom Presentations/Workshops	3,844	1,579	
	Year to date	This time last year	
Total Students w/Program-Related Contacts	3,864	1,835	

From the Field - A College & Career Guide

"I had a parent of a student from last year come up to me in Safeway and tell me that I changed his son's life because there was no way they were going to be able to afford to send him to college but after they found out about FAFSA and all the need-based aid out there, they're only paying for 20% of his tuition and everything else is covered."

Success Center & Community Outreach

ACPE's walk-in assistance center has locations at the Dimond Mall and UAA's One Stop. With recent staff restructuring, Krystal Garrison, in her new role as Community Outreach Supervisor, has taken on leadership of the Success Center, which is now fully integrated with statewide Community Outreach, and staffed with three positions (reduced staffing levels implemented through the restructuring process). Center staff assist customers with postsecondary planning – in person or via distance - and facilitate workshops and financial aid events across the state. Two vacancies were filled as of September 3. This quarter's data provides an indication that program reach is beginning to return to last year's levels.

Success Center Activity (through Sept. 18, 2015):

INTERACTION	Jul-Sep 2015	Compare to: Jul-Sep 2014	DESCRIPTION
In-Person Interactions at Success Center	175	238	
Phone Interactions at Success Center	92	157	
In-Person Interactions at UAA One Stop Site	124	119	
Total:	391	514	
Top 5 reasons customers visited			1: FAFSA Assistance/Completion 2: General Financial Aid Assistance 3: APS Questions 4: ASEL Applications/Questions 5: ACPE Questions
Workshops & Presentations	8	not available*	
Total # Served at Workshops & Presentations	335	not available*	
Conference/Event Booths	5	not available*	UAA Campus Kick-Off; Armed Forces Money Smarts; Senior Nights at Bartlett and Career Tech High Schools (Anchorage); Su Valley College & Career Fair <i>Coming Next Quarter: Elders & Youth Conference; Alaska ACTE Conference; Statewide College & Career Fairs</i>

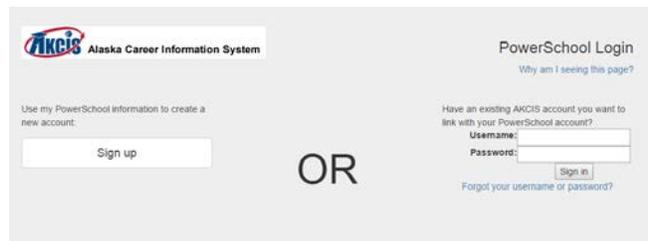
*Reporting practices have changed with the integration of Community Outreach & the Success Center

Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS)

The fall release of 2015-2016 AKCIS is being met with positive reactions. Two enhancements are receiving significant attention: Personal Learning Plan (PLP) Premium and Student Information System (SIS) Integration.

PLP Premium is an optional component users can select to access more features for updating their Personal Learning & Career Plans, making plan development and maintenance simpler and more intuitive. This premium feature is being deployed as a pilot to assess its feasibility as a revenue-generator to offset program costs in future years.

SIS Integration allows schools and districts across Alaska that use PowerSchool to connect to AKCIS with a single sign-on. This makes AKCIS use easier for students, teachers, and parents. We also anticipate staffing support efficiencies through reduced requests for password resets and username look-ups.



2015-2016 Site Activity:

To access AKCIS cost-free, sites must annually renew activation agreements. To date, activation agreements have been processed for schools in 30 of the 54 school districts, as well as for postsecondary institutions, job centers, businesses, and Native or community organizations. Among the activation agreements for this year are several new sites, and several other sites who had been inactive in previous years. This month, follow-up calls will be placed to sites that have not yet completed their renewal.

“College & Career Training in Alaska”

Each fall, ACPE releases the *College & Career Training in Alaska* magazine. The 2015-16 publication targets upper class high school students exploring postsecondary opportunities. It profiles Alaska institutions while providing key information on the postsecondary process. This edition, informed by student-centered input from ACAC Guides, offers new features including a quiz to compare postsecondary paths, Alaska scholarship tips, and “Five key people to know” on campus. Also new to the magazine are education loan myths, information about the cost of not finishing, and highlights benefits of choosing Alaska for college or training.



The magazine - now in its 13th year – is still among the most requested publications ACPE provides, and resonates with students in focus groups. In consideration of the current fiscal environment, the team took steps this year to significantly reduce costs, cutting expenses by nearly 1/3. In addition to vendor negotiations, this included reducing the quantity printed: The magazine will still be distributed via direct mail to Alaska 11th graders but bulk quantities to schools are available only by request.

Marketing and Publications

ACPE leverages electronic and print media to broadly distribute key college access messages, including about ACPE-administered state financial aid. This quarter, paid advertising on Google and Facebook served to: 1) maintain top-of-mind awareness for the 5.94% APR on Alaska Student Education Loan's (ASEL) interest rate of 5.94%; 2) promote ACPE's financial literacy resources; and, 3) raise awareness of the Alaska Education Grant (AEG) program.

Quarterly Marketing Report:

Advertising July-Sept 2015						
	Topic*	Freq/Number	Market Reach	Freq seen/heard	CPM**	Clicks/CPC/CTR**
Web						
Facebook Posts	Consumer protection (debt relief); assorted scholarships, career planning, Community Visits, ACPE General	9 posts	3,236 people	Not Available	0	302
Facebook Ads	Alaska's Low-Cost Loan Programs	249,814 Impressions	55,585 People	3.5 times per person	\$1.81 per 1k impressions	2,101/\$0.26
	AEG	177,033 Impressions	74,851 People	2.37 times each person	\$2.82 per 1k impressions	2,181/\$0.23
	Financial Literacy	221,190 Impressions	55,396 People	5.86 times each person	\$2.97 per 1k impressions	2,127/\$0.23
Google Ads	Alaska's Low-Cost Loan Programs	13,515 Impressions	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	239/\$1.78 1.77% CTR

Media Mentions July-Sept 2015					
Topics*	Press Release?	Topic Detail:	News Outlets	% mentioning ACPE	% neutral or positive
IKIC (3x)	Yes	Applications open for "I Know I Can" – ACPE/UA CSP program	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Newsletter	100%	100%
K2C (3x)	Yes	Applications open for "Kids2College" – ACPE/UA CSP/Sallie Mae program	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Newsletter	100%	100%
AKCIS Jr (3x)	Yes	Promoting free PLCP tool	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Newsletter	100%	100%
Total- 9				100%	100%

*Topics: APS – Alaska Performance Scholarship, AEG – Alaska Education Grant, K2C – Kids2College, IKIC – I Know I Can, PLCP – Personal Learning & Career Plan, UA CSP – UA College Savings Plan

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

Loan Competitor Review July-Sept 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 borrowers already having a WF student loan; -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, creative repayment options (pay just \$25 a month, or pay only the interest on your loan); -0.25% auto-pay
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%		Single interest rate, no credit-based pricing; in-school deferment; -0.25% for auto-pay & -0.50% for AK presence
FEL	6.25%	\$12,500	0%		Single interest rate, no credit-based pricing; -0.25% for auto-pay
<i>*Federal loans display interest rates (Calculation of APRs are not required under federal laws)</i>					

ON THE HORIZON

- ACAC staff will participate in the 2015 College Advising Corps Summit in Atlanta, GA on October 11 – 15. The summit will bring together the more than 500 recent college graduate mentors of the College Advising Corps for training and best practice sharing.
- All seven returning ACAC guides have been selected to lead break-out sessions at the Summit. Alaska’s Corps is the only CAC program to have 100 percent of eligible staff selected to present at this conference.
 - Guides from Bethel, Kodiak, Kenai, Soldotna and Nikiski will present on “College Enrollment Challenges and Strategies in Rural Communities.”
 - Guides from Anchorage will present on “Storytelling as a College Access Tool.”
- ACAC staff are preparing for College Application Week 2015 in November.
- I Know I Can program applications have been submitted by 41 schools in 17 districts. Events will begin in October and run throughout the school year, with most events taking place in November.
- The APS postcard alerting high school Seniors to important test dates is scheduled for October distribution.
- The annual APS interagency meeting, intended to ensure the state agencies sharing responsibility for effective APS administration have an opportunity to discuss issues of importance to the program, has been scheduled for early November.
- The Outreach team will be meeting to develop a plan to address the federal changes announced for the 2016-2017 FAFSA, with emphasis on adaptation of Outreach messages and programs for maximum student and family benefit.