



For Immediate Release  
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### **Alaska's Postsecondary Completion Crisis the Focus of Statewide Gathering**

Representatives from Alaska agencies, schools, businesses and institutions will meet in Anchorage March 17 and 18 for the first Alaska Postsecondary Access & Completion Network Conference. The conference focus and goal is to increase understanding and addressing Alaska's postsecondary completion crisis. Nationally, Alaska consistently ranks among the poorest performing states in postsecondary access and completion.

The inaugural conference is coordinated by the Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network, or, "the Network", comprised of highly-engaged stakeholders working together across sectors to reach the stated goal of "65 by 2025" for Alaska. The Network aims to raise the percent of the population with workforce credentials and degrees from 47% to 65% by 2025. The Network's specific strategies are to reduce duplication of effort and create synergy among service providers, support professional development, strengthen public messaging, and conduct and disseminate relevant research. During its formation period, the Network is housed at the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, which provides staff support and funding through its federal College Access Challenge Grant.

Alaska currently ranks 49th in the nation at 29.5% for undergraduate credentials awarded per 1,000 18- to 34-year-olds with no college degree, and is one of a handful of states for which their 35- to 64-year population have higher rates of degree completion than do 18- to 34-year olds. Meanwhile, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that roughly 65% of Alaska's fastest-growing, high-wage jobs will require some form of post-high school credential by the year 2020. With levels of postsecondary enrollment, retention and completion consistently among the lowest in the nation, focused action to improve postsecondary access and completion is critical.

Lee Gorsuch, Chancellor Emeritus, University of Alaska Anchorage and President Emeritus, City University, will present the keynote “49th in the Nation: Alaska’s Postsecondary Crisis”. In addition, local and national experts will present a total of 24 breakout sessions on topics sessions on credential and degree completion-focused topics.

Participant takeaways will include a common understanding and sense of urgency concerning Alaska’s serious postsecondary access and completion challenge, learning about the Network, and a deeper and shared knowledge of current existing Alaska initiatives, service coverages and gaps, and existing best practices.

To learn more about the conference and opportunities to get involved with the Network, visit [acpe.alaska.gov/access](http://acpe.alaska.gov/access).

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For more information, contact:

Rebekah Matrosova  
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
[rebekah.matrosova@alaska.gov](mailto:rebekah.matrosova@alaska.gov)  
907.269.3025

Saichi Oba  
University of Alaska  
[stoba@alaska.edu](mailto:stoba@alaska.edu)  
907.450.8146

Conference registration site:

<https://www.signup4.net/public/ap.aspx?EID=20151288E&OID=50>