



For Immediate Release  
February 19, 2015

### **Alaska's Postsecondary Completion Crisis - "65 by 2025"**

Alaska has a postsecondary completion crisis, consistently ranked among the poorest performing states in postsecondary access and completion. Alaska currently ranks 49th in the nation (29.5%) in the percent of undergraduate credentials awarded per 1,000 18- to 34-year-olds; and is one of only a few states with higher degree completion rates among its 35- to 64-year-old residents than its 18- to 34-year-olds. At the same time, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects roughly 65% of Alaska's fastest-growing, high-wage jobs will require *some* form of post-high school credential by the year 2020. With enrollment, retention and completion levels consistently rating among the lowest in the nation, immediate, focused action to improve postsecondary access and completion is critical.

A broad cross-sector of engaged Alaskans and organizations are uniting to address this challenge through an Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network. During its formation process, the Network is housed at the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, which is providing staff support and funding through the federal College Access Challenge Grant.

The Network aims to increase the percentage of the adult population with a postsecondary credential and/or degrees from 47% to 65% by 2025 by: creating synergy among service providers, supporting professional development, strengthening public messaging, and conducting and disseminating relevant research.

Alaska's highly engaged stakeholders make up the leadership of the Network. They include school districts, state agencies, business, postsecondary institutions, non-profits, native corporations and others. This leadership team, representing these various sectors, is committed to improving Alaska's postsecondary access and completion rates and experience. Members are engaged in relevant projects within

their own organizations, but agree that a coordinated, unified effort is essential to advance toward the goal.

Recognizing the first step to a unified effort is a clearer picture of the numerous, existing activities in the state, the Network contracted with the McDowell Group, LLC., to develop an inventory of approximately 40 current postsecondary access and completion programs in Alaska. This recently completed inventory, available at [http://acpe.alaska.gov/Portals/0/CAST/ACPE\\_Final\\_2\\_12\\_15.pdf](http://acpe.alaska.gov/Portals/0/CAST/ACPE_Final_2_12_15.pdf), provides the most comprehensive, current overview of Alaska's current postsecondary environment, and will inform the Network's work.

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

-30-

For more information, contact:

Saichi Oba  
Chair, Executive Committee, Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network  
University of Alaska  
[stoba@alaska.edu](mailto:stoba@alaska.edu)  
(907) 450-8146

Diane Barrans  
Executive Director  
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
(907) 465-6740