

State of Alaska FY2026 Governor's Operating Budget

University of Alaska

University of Alaska

Mission

University of Alaska System (UA)

The University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples. Alaska Statue (AS) 14.40.010, AS 14.40.060

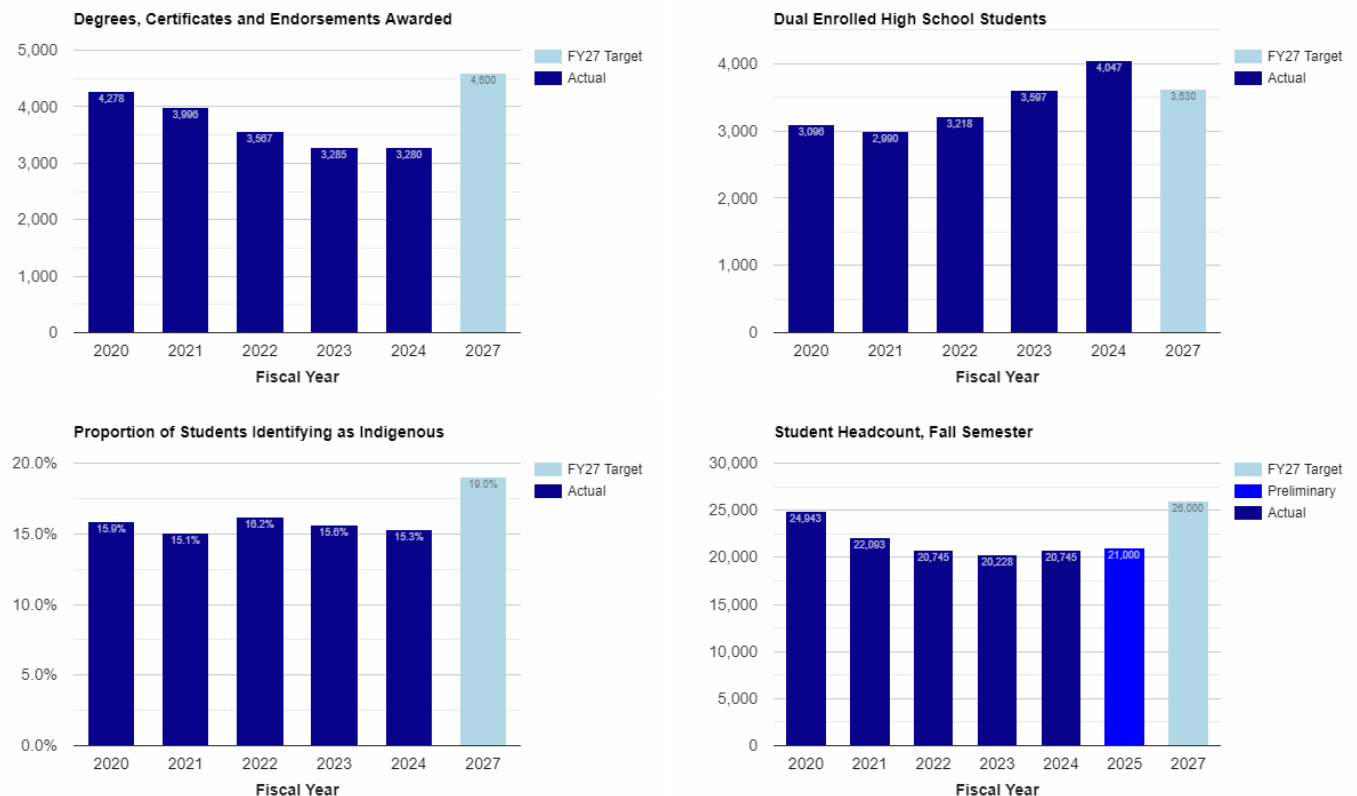
University of Alaska Mission Statement
Board of Regents' Policy 01.01.010
Adopted 10-06-00

	Core Services (in priority order)	UGF	DGF	Other	Fed	Total	PFT	PPT	NP	% GF
1	Student Instruction	262,436.6	231,860.7	49,544.8	42,544.0	586,386.2	2,463.1	215.1	0.0	73.0%
2	Research: Advancing Knowledge, Basic and Applied	61,215.5	73,891.6	19,051.4	123,655.1	277,813.6	1,056.7	100.0	0.0	20.0%
3	Service: Sharing Knowledge to Address Community Needs	17,369.3	30,109.3	6,934.3	25,637.9	80,050.7	321.3	27.9	0.0	7.0%
	FY2025 Management Plan	341,021.4	335,861.6	75,530.5	191,837.0	944,250.5	3,841.0	343.0	0.0	

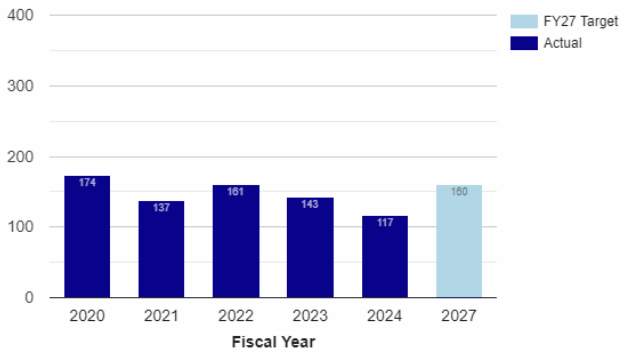
Measures by Core Service

(Additional performance information is available on the web at <https://omb.alaska.gov/results/>.)

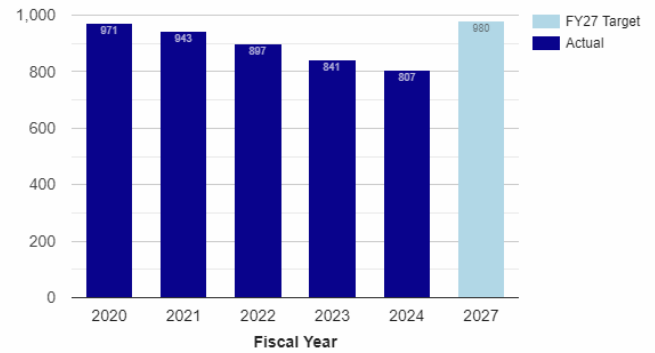
1. Student Instruction



Initial Teacher Licensure Program Graduates

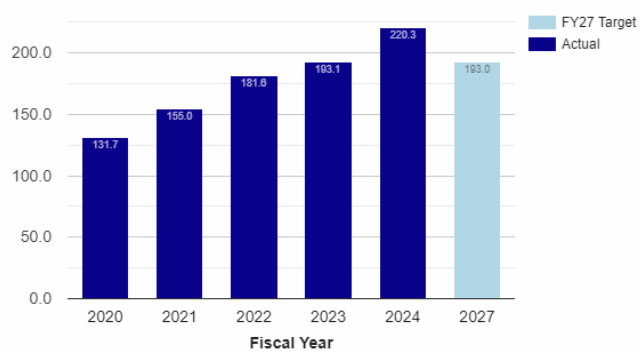


Health and Related Program Graduates



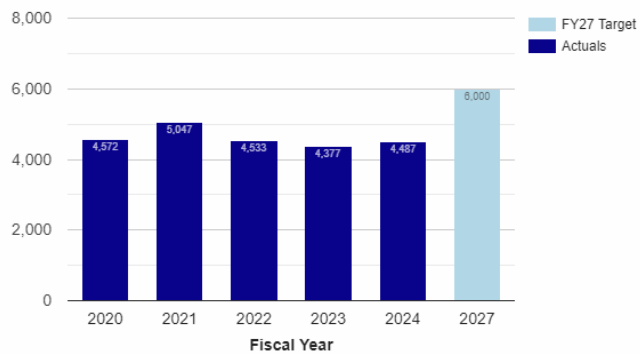
2. Research: Advancing Knowledge, Basic and Applied

Grant-Funded Research Expenditures (Million \$)

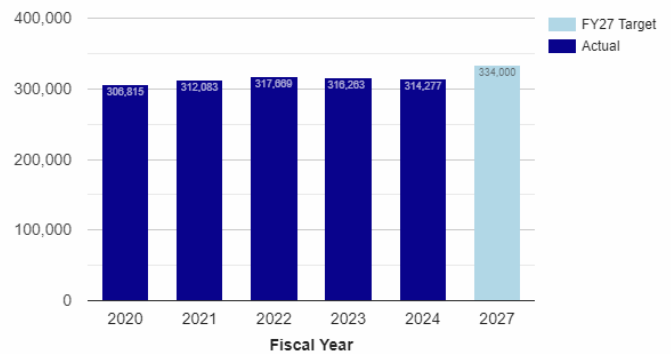


3. Service: Sharing Knowledge to Address Community Needs

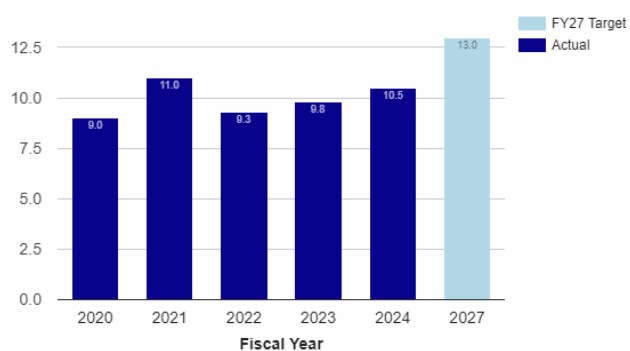
Number of Donors



Education Trust of Alaska Number of Beneficiaries



Education Trust of Alaska Assets Under Management (\$B)



Major Department Accomplishments in 2024

Educational Attainment

Credentials Awarded

The number of program credentials awarded fell 23 percent in the last five years and remained relatively unchanged in the last year, with a slight increase observed at two (University of Alaska Anchorage [UAA] and University of Alaska Fairbanks [UAF]) of the three universities. Some moderate declines in program completion numbers were anticipated as a result of overall enrollment levels dropping during the pandemic. However, recent degree award changes are anticipated to be temporary, with future growth expected as student enrollment continues to increase.

The University of Alaska (UA) is fundamental to Alaska's economic recovery, delivering relevant programs that qualify graduates to take current and future jobs in the state. Of program graduates remaining in Alaska one year after graduation, roughly 90 percent were employed in-state. About one in 10 Alaska workers are graduates of the UA system.

The UA remains optimistic that improvement is on the horizon, as stabilized enrollment translates into increased program completions with investments aimed at improving student retention and more innovative and online program delivery options.

Student Headcount Fall Semester

Over the last five years, the fall semester student headcount dropped 16.8 percent. This decline was largely attributed to the global pandemic, with 70 percent of the decrease occurring in FY2020 and FY2021. There have been improvements in fall semester enrollment with FY2023 to FY2024 enrollment increasing 2.6 percent. In FY2025, enrollment is expected to reach 21,000 students by the close of the fall 2024 semester, which would be a 1.2 percent increase over fall 2023.

Looking ahead, the focus is on adding student enrollment, by continuing to foster new students as well as working with students to encourage re-enrollment. The UA is committed to seeing this measure improve over the next few years. To this end, the institution has implemented very successful options for dual enrollment; expansion of on-line programs; partnerships with school districts and homeschool programs; and innovative program delivery.

Workforce Development

Teacher Education Program Graduates

To strengthen Teacher Education, the UA Board of Regents established the Alaska College of Education Consortium (ACEC) in June 2021. This consortium consists of the education schools at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), with the goal of providing a framework and mechanism for communication, collaboration, and resource/information sharing among the programs. The consortium is implementing strategies to increase enrollment and graduates, communicate the existing programs to potential students, and assess state needs. It also seeks to expand academic pathways and opportunities for students by ensuring that a full array of programs and services are available across the state.

The number of degrees awarded in teacher licensure programs has decreased by 32.8 percent from FY2020 to FY2024. The number of degrees awarded decreased by 18.2 percent from FY2023 to FY2024, decreasing from 143 degrees awarded to 117. Nearly half of the total decrease in teacher licensure degrees occurred in the last fiscal year. Some of these changes in degrees awarded can be explained by the impact of the pandemic on students.

Alaska faces a critical shortage of qualified teachers, especially in rural Alaska. The practicum/student teaching portion of the licensure process was identified as a barrier to entry into the profession, due to the significant time involved in this critical training element with no compensation available for the time in the classroom. Living wages have been difficult for many, and this may have a significant impact on Alaska's future education workforce. The teacher practicum scholarship program that started in FY2023, continues to provide \$1 million of support to the next generation of teachers.

Health and Related Program Graduates

Alaska's health care costs are among the highest in the nation. One way to bring down high costs is to grow our own health care workforce. The number of health and related program degrees awarded has decreased roughly 16.9 percent from FY2020 to FY2024, with a decrease of four percent from FY2023 to FY2024. From FY2023 to FY2024, total degrees awarded by the UA system remained relatively consistent with 3,285 and 3,280 degrees being awarded, respectively. Some UA health programs operate on a rolling cohort cycle, which can result in annual peaks and drops in the total number of enrollments and graduates in health and related programs.

The UA health program has discussed next steps to continue planning and coordinating programs, facilities, and resources across the UA for a holistic approach to growing health programs. These steps include working to resolve clinical placement needs across Alaska, coordinating existing university agreements with external partners, and clarifying a certified nurse assistant to licensed nurse practitioner to registered nurse pathway. Expanding the current health program to include a master of social work is already underway and talks with stakeholders to facilitate planning for a licensed practical nurse program are already underway. The UA's program participants can find jobs directly after graduation in high-demand health and related occupations necessary for Alaska's economic stability and growth. For example, about 90 percent of UA nursing and certified nurse aid program graduates are working in Alaska within one year.

The healthcare clinicals scholarship program, which started in FY2023, continues to provide \$1 million of support to the next generation of health professionals.

Student Access

The UA continues to improve and expand access to higher education; key enrollment strategies include:

- Recruitment of new students (through financial aid leveraging, niche markets in western states, dual enrollment, and massive open online courses [MOOCs]).
- Retaining existing students (advising interventions and academic success center).
- Promoting student success (living-learning communities and internships).
- Supporting workforce development (focusing on education, mariculture, health, and other community and technical college [CTC] niche programs).
- Outward facing activities (modernizing business models).
- Explore ways to reduce textbook and material costs for students.

Dual enrollment pathways, including Middle Colleges, the Alaska Advantage program, Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) Acceleration Academies, and other programs, provide a great benefit to Alaskans by improving both high school graduation rates and smoothing pathways to a successful college career -- 56 percent of middle college graduates go on to enroll in a UA degree program. The UA is satisfying a growing demand for dual enrollment programs by offering an increasing number of accessible and affordable options for every Alaskan.

From FY2023 to FY2024 the headcount of dual enrolled high school students increased 12.5 percent, indicating a strong recovery from a temporary pandemic-related decline in FY2020 to FY2021. The five-year change is an increase of 30.7 percent resulting in a total of 4,047 dual students with growth at each university within the system. One-quarter of all students systemwide have participated in UA dual enrollment, demonstrating the large impact these programs have on recruitment.

First time freshmen retention was at a five-year high in FY2024, increasing from 63 percent to 66.8 percent, surpassing the national average of 58.7 percent for public, four-year, open-enrollment institutions (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] 2023).

Continued support of the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and the Alaska Education Grant (AEG) is good for students and Alaska, as both programs are recognized to improve the college-going rate, preparedness for college, and retention and graduation rates for Alaska high school students. Significant, multi-year scholarship support is associated with an increased probability of graduation within six years for all students, with enhanced graduation rates for students who are better prepared for college.

A system-wide Scholarship Task Force has been organized to provide a high-level effort to evaluate, analyze, discuss, and develop recommendations to help enhance and improve the scholarship process from all directions. In

collaboration with the universities, the UA System Office, and the UA Foundation, the task force established two working groups: 1) an internal working group focusing on the scholarship application and selection processes; and 2) an external working group utilizing data to help identify and address unmet student financial needs.

The State of Alaska's investment to modernize UA's Student Information Systems (SIS) is underway. A key component of the UA's student modernization strategy is the effort to retire legacy code and upgrade components of the current platform called the Upgrade to Banner Self Service 9 (BSS9). One important design goal for the new UAOnline portal is to be easily accessible from any device, including smartphones.

The first phase of the BSS9 upgrade went live as planned in June 2024 and included a new visual interface and features for student and employee profiles and for managing employment related activities. The next phase of the upgrade is well underway, and includes a new student course registration tool, which is in the final stages of implementation. Other components of the next phase are related primarily to Human Resource functions. This phase is on track for a late October 2024 launch. Though not directly student related, these components must be upgraded in order to complete the BSS9 upgrade.

Campus Culture

The UA, guided by the Board of Regents, is committed to improving the participation and success of Alaska Natives through educational achievement statewide and improving Alaska Native representation and success throughout the UA. One key step in addressing and overcoming challenges is increasing the diversity of the entire UA. An aspect of this is growing the proportion of Indigenous students who attend the UA.

Currently, 15.3 percent of the UA students identify as having Indigenous heritage, in comparison to over 19 percent of the state of Alaska population. Over the past five years, the proportion of Indigenous students attending the UA has remained relatively stable.

The Alaska Native Success Initiative (ANSI), launched in 2021, continues to focus on achieving a sustainable long-term increase in Alaska Native representation among students, staff, and faculty. The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) expanded the Acceleration Academy to Kotzebue and introduced a statewide residential opportunity, resulting in nearly 150 dual-enrolled secondary students joining UAA and UAF, making it the largest class in ANSEP history. The UAS now provides free non-credit courses in Alaska Native languages, ensuring accessibility for Indigenous people to learn their own language. The enrollment in these programs has risen from less than 50 students in 2011 to nearly 300 students today.

The UA is committed to increasing Indigenous voices and presence across all levels of work, study, and research. The university has woven this commitment into strategies and goals at every level throughout the system. The ANSI strategic plan updates include:

- Develop and Implement Racial Equity and Cultural Safety Training - Commit to develop and implement a systemwide training module on racial equity and cultural safety and being responsive to Alaska Native cultures. In 2024, a training developed around the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) video, "Our Future Ancestors: A Story of Education in Alaska," is being developed and will be conducted. The video debuted at the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Convention in 2023, and the goal of the training is to educate participants about how history impacts and influences Alaska's Native Peoples' education systems from the past to the present day.
- Increase Alaska Native Visual Representation – Commit to send intentional messaging of the ANSI to amplify and support the universities' work to strengthen a sense of place through art, signage, and other visible media.
- Publish an Annual Report on Alaska Native Success – Commit to publish an annual report on Alaska Native success at the UA, to capture qualitative and quantitative measures, to ensure transparency and accessibility. This year (2024) marks the third edition of this report, provided to AFN leadership, attendees, and delegates in recognition of our support and partnership. As the initiative has progressed, the report will continue to grow to include additional metrics, information, and highlights of Alaska Native and Indigenous excellence at the UA.
- Increase Awareness of Institutional Change in Messaging – Commit to promote ANSI efforts and progress, and work with each university to share successes within the university system and greater Alaska community. All three universities continue to support and expand their programs and academic offerings emphasizing

Alaska Native and Indigenous knowledge, including new programs and certificates in Alaska Native Business Management, Arts, Languages, and other studies.

The UAF's College of Rural and Community Development also became the College of Indigenous Studies in May 2024. This is the first such college in the nation, and will help set the UA apart as a center of national Indigenous excellence. The UA has integrated the ANSI into strategic plans, ranging from facilities to accreditation planning, to make Indigenous education and accessibility an embedded and ongoing part of our universities.

- Establish a Cabinet-level Alaska Native Position within the Office of the President – Create an executive-level position to support Alaska Native success, with the goal of building a sustainable and functional department. Following a search process, the UA hired a Senior Director of Alaska Native Success and Partnerships in December 2023. In addition, the UA Chief Human Resources Officer continues to serve as the UA President's Senior Advisor for Alaska Native Success, working closely with the Senior Director of Alaska Native Success and Partnerships and the ANSI leads at each university to advance progress for Indigenous People across the university.

ANSI accomplishments from across the UA include:

University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)

The UAA launched courses on Indigenizing Education within the School of Education to help administrators and teachers implement Indigenous educational methods in their classrooms. The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) partnered with the Baird Foundation to help catapult ANSEP Business, supporting students in obtaining degrees within the College of Business and Public Policy and Alaska Native Business Management program. The ANSEP also celebrated the largest-ever graduating class of full-time Acceleration Academy students. A total of 52 students from communities across Alaska - including Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna, Bethel, and Kotzebue - earned their high school diplomas and an impressive total of 3,336 college credits.

University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)

The future Troth Yeddha' Indigenous Studies Center remains UAF's #1 capital priority. As UAF works towards completion of the design and advances to construction, this facility will serve as a flagship for integrating education, learning, and research, which engages Indigenous knowledge in solving global issues across the Arctic. Tamanta, a graduate program focused on elevating and integrating Indigenous knowledge with Western science, is now in the fifth year with 19 fellows. The fellows are changing the landscape of classes taught and the entities involved. In August 2024, the UAF's first Tamanta fellow defended their dissertation, which was titled "Salmon Stewardship and Indigenous Livelihoods: Bridging Knowledge Stems and Reshaping Research Relationality in the Kuskokwim Region of Southwestern Alaska."

University of Alaska Southeast (UAS)

The new Environmental Sciences building officially opened in the fall of 2024. Faculty and staff's vision for the new learning space is amplified by the selected name "Āak'w Ta Hit: House at the Head of the Little Lake." The Tlingit name builds on the historic significance of responsible stewardship of the land with care and responsibility. The UAS is grateful for the innovative partnership with the Sealaska Heritage Institute. Northwest Coast Arts and Indigenizing Education for Alaska Schools provide faculty, instruction, professional development, and student support. The Juneau campus hosted a range of spring and summer opportunities, including space for culturally rich high school camps and a convening of educators for the annual conference.

Safety and compliance are foundational issues at the UA. The UA ensures compliance with federal civil rights laws, working to prevent and address misconduct and discrimination under Title IX, Title VII, and the Americans with Disabilities Act among other laws. This also includes educating the UA community members on how and when to report, efficiently and effectively addressing received reports, providing parties with appropriate supportive measures, implementing consistent processes across the university, delivering quality student and employee sex and gender-based discrimination prevention training, and coalescing all of these efforts under federal guidance.

In 1996, Congress approved section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code, which allows families to save in a tax-advantaged way. The Education Trust of Alaska was formed by the UA in 2001 with the goal of creating and offering high-quality 529 plans to help residents prepare for future education expenses. These plans are specialized savings vehicles that allow students and families to start saving for post-secondary education as early as possible. Contributions are invested in accounts that grow on a tax-deferred basis and are tax-free when used for qualified

education expenses.

In the three 529 plans, the Education Trust of Alaska currently holds more than \$10 billion in assets invested for more than 300,000 beneficiaries across the country. Advisor-sold plans are facing headwinds nationally, and the John Hancock Plan's decline in beneficiaries reflects that national trend. Alaska 529 saw beneficiary increases due to the incentive program. Assets under management for the Education Trust of Alaska were \$10.5 billion at the close of FY2024, an increase of nearly eight percent from FY2023 and an increase of 17 percent (about \$1.6 billion) over the last five years.

Research

Grant-funded research expenditures reached an all-time high of \$220.3 million in FY2024, increasing by 14.1 percent (\$27.2 million) from FY2023 and 67.3 percent (\$88.6 million) over the last five years. This performance level surpasses the UA Board of Regent's adopted FY2027 target for this mission area, with near-term performance growth expected to continue. The FY2023 unrestricted general fund investment of \$2 million in alternative energy, along with other multi-year investments in drone technology, rare earth minerals, and heavy oil recovery, is expected to drive future expansion of grant-funded research.

Federally funded research at the UAF accounted for nearly all the increase, with \$167 million of the \$220.2 million total coming from federal sources. In FY2024, the UAF accounted for \$121.8 million in research expenditures compared to \$11.1 million at UAA, and \$175,000 at the UAS. Research and academic units generating more than \$5 million in external grant-funded revenue during FY2024 included the Geophysical Institute (\$52.8 million), the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (\$28.1 million), the Institute of Northern Engineering (\$11.6 million), the International Arctic Research Center (\$8.8 million), and the Institute for Arctic Biology (\$11.2 million).

Scientific research brings direct value to Alaskans through investments in local economies and improvements in community life. A climate of innovation and collaboration fosters growth in research, creative works, and commercialization. It also engages undergraduate and graduate students, helping them gain the skills and knowledge needed to become future leaders.

Economic Development

The UA's partnerships help meet the workforce needs of Alaska. In addition to creating the workforce – the UA's research capacity is instrumental for Alaska's industry. The UA's researchers have 100 years of experience studying the Arctic, and are helping businesses plan for, adapt to, and compete for new opportunities in a changing climate.

The Alaska Small Business Development Center and the Accelerating Procurement Excellence (APEX) Accelerator each receive State match funding and report through the suite of programs housed within the UAA Business Enterprise Institute (BEI). The Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC) helped 1,634 clients in over 100 communities start 198 new businesses statewide, secure \$36 million in new private sector funding, and support 3,400 jobs. The SBDC provided \$40,000 in grant funding to five Alaskan innovators to help them apply for Small Business and Innovation Research grants, resulting in over \$400,000 in federal funding for their projects. The SBDC also partnered with the State of Alaska to secure \$59 million in new funding for a loan guarantee, loan collateral, and loan participation funds to help underserved small businesses access private sector capital. Additionally, the SBDC created a collation of 129 Alaska tribes to secure \$93 million in Tribal State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funds. These efforts have helped Alaskan entrepreneurs survive and thrive.

The Alaska APEX Accelerator provides technical assistance, training, and resources to help Alaska businesses expand their reach in federal, state, and local government markets, contributing to a more robust and resilient United States supply chain. In 2023, management of the program transitioned to the Department of Defense, Office of Small Business Programs, enhancing the mission to support sustainable supply chains. Alaska APEX Accelerator assisted 486 businesses across more than 60 communities, delivering 1,750 hours of training and hosting Industry Day events to level the playing field for potential offerors. These services empowered clients to secure 5,600 government contracts valued at \$1.6 billion, with comprehensive support including up-to-date market research, the Bid Match program, and targeted guidance on procurement practices, driving economic opportunities statewide.

Philanthropy

The UA Foundation was established to solicit, manage, and invest donations for the UA's exclusive benefit. It is a private nonprofit corporation that operates as a public foundation on a fully self-support revenue model. It provides a critical service to students. More than 15 percent of degree recipients each year have been supported by scholarships administered by the UA Foundation.

The UA Foundation, UAA, UAF, UAS, and UA System Office began the UA's first systemwide philanthropic fundraising campaign, For Alaska, in FY2017. The public launch of this campaign took place in March 2021, with the announcement of a total dollar goal of \$200 million to be raised through June 30, 2024. This is a comprehensive fundraising campaign with all private support counted including outright gifts and pledges, planned gifts, and private grants. Through the collective generosity of nearly 22,000 unique donors to the campaign, including more than 12,000 first time donors and a 53.4 percent increase in Alumni giving, For Alaska far surpassed the goal, raising \$277 million through generous contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations to support students, faculty, and programs across the UA. The universities advancement teams and the UA Foundation have developed a communications plan to share the impact of the private contributions made during the campaign on UA students, faculty, programs, and research. This is a unique moment in the UA's history—a time to celebrate the support of donors from across the country and their vote of confidence in the three universities. For more information on the For Alaska campaign, please visit: www.alaska.edu/foundation/campaign.php.

The UA Giving Day tradition, which launched in the fall of 2020, is a collaborative effort between the UA Foundation and the three universities. The "49 Hours for Alaska" online event focused on the impact the universities have on thousands of lives and livelihoods across the state and encouraged philanthropic support for students, academic and training programs, and research.

The UA Giving Day provides opportunities to engage the community and expand the system's donor base while increasing the UA's brand awareness within and outside the state. In FY2024, the event raised more than \$1.3 million from more than 2,000 alumni, community members, corporate partners, faculty, and staff. Donations came from 46 states and seven countries and were designated to support specific programs, scholarship funds, or research enterprises.

Effective and Efficient Use of Resources

The UA has put over 60 percent of the funding appropriated for deferred maintenance, renewal, and repurposing projects between FY2020 and FY2024 to work, taking the opportunity to reduce operating costs as part of each capital renewal project.

The UA campuses are actively managing space to increase utilization and to reduce the cost of facility ownership. Space management strategies being used are:

- Selling, leasing, or public-private-partnerships (P3) of facilities and land to provide a source of capital for reinvestment, reduce recurring asset maintenance costs, and potentially reduce ownership risk.
- Reviewing space utilization and management strategies across campuses.
- Identifying facilities for possible demolition that are beyond their useful life.
- Identifying facilities for possible adaptive reuse.

The UA is making progress on a remedy to the historic land grant deficit. A federal bill, drafted by Alaska's Congressional Delegation, establishes a federal program that would permit the State to allocate up to 360,000 acres of federal land provided to the State that would be conveyed to the UA. The bill was passed by Congress and signed into law at the end of 2022. This law provides the UA four years to:

- Identify and select 500,000 acres of State valid or top-filed general selection lands.
- Secure concurrence on the selections from the State.

The law also directs the Secretary of the Interior to convey up to 360,000 acres of the UA's 500,000 acres of selections; however, the law does not dictate when the lands are to be conveyed. The University of Alaska Land Management (UALM) is working to identify 500,000 acres of land and secure State concurrence before the December 29, 2026, selection deadline. The UALM has submitted 380,535 acres to the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, for consideration, with 96,406 acres submitted to the Department of Interior, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, for joint relinquishment and conveyance.

The Land Grant web pages are updated regularly, and soon, UALM will be rolling out new campaign materials – print, videos, and new storytelling elements to help community members better understand the process, the significance of the Land Grant initiative, and ways to engage. Visit UALM website: <https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/about/land-grant/index.php>.

Technology

In FY2024, the UA Office of Information Technology (OIT) achieved several key milestones, including:

- **Improved Network Infrastructure:** Deployed Starlink to rural campuses providing drastically faster speeds and improved resiliency, upgraded core network speeds for research and education, and modernized data center hardware for increased capacity and energy efficiency.
- **Modernized Enterprise Applications:** Launched a major upgrade to the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, successfully deployed the first phases of the Student Information System modernization program and procured a new enterprise data warehouse solution.
- **Enhanced Security:** Facilitated now mandatory cybersecurity training, implemented multi-factor authentication for students, established a new security review processes for technology acquisitions, and expanded vulnerability management.
- **Embraced GenAI:** Developed guidelines for responsible artificial intelligence (AI) adoption and deployed initial vendor-provided generative AI services for use by the university community.

Key Department Challenges

Enrollment

Alaska has historically had one of the lowest college-going rates in the nation and consistently ranks last or second to last of all 50 states in the percentage of high school graduates going to college immediately after high school. The UA and the State of Alaska, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), have a common goal of increasing the proportion of Alaska high school graduates who go on to college directly after graduating; however, observable progress has been difficult to achieve. Within one year of graduation, 33 percent of Alaska public high school graduates (class of 2022) enrolled in college, this is down from 35 percent for the class of 2021. For comparison, the national average for the percent of graduates going directly to college following high school was 63 percent (class of 2021), this is down from 69 percent for the class of 2018. (See the DEED – Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education: Office of Management and Budget Performance measures: https://omb.alaska.gov/html/performance/ABS/index_R68.html#td10693.)

Technology

Significant efforts continue to improve the UA's cybersecurity posture. This is a critical focus area as institutions of higher education have become primary targets due to research activities and the possession of significant amounts of personally identifiable information (PII) and other sensitive information and regulated data. Balancing the Student Information System modernization and Enterprise Resource Planning upgrades and other critical technology initiatives with daily operations is also a major challenge. The quick evolution of generative AI also presents a challenging and unique opportunity to adapt and grow with this evolving technology. The development of the UA generative AI tools, and guidance while ensuring appropriate data protection is becoming a key focus.

Financial

The UA continues to request sustained capital funding to protect and maintain the aging physical assets. Aging facilities and functional obsolescence detract from student recruitment and retention. Although the UA has worked to reduce the footprint by selling or demolishing underutilized facilities, the need for a continual State capital investment is critical to the UA's ability to offer students a functional, modern, and safe learning environment.

The UA is responsible for maintaining facilities and infrastructure across the state, with nearly 400 facilities totaling 8.2 million gross square feet, an average age of 37 years, a replacement value of \$7.1 billion, and a deferred maintenance/renewal and repurposing (DM/R&R) backlog of over \$1.5 billion. Annual funding is necessary to

preserve these important State assets.

Due to many years of deferred critical capital projects, there is increasing risk and evidence of building closures. There have been numerous unplanned closures causing significant hardship on student learning and research activities, as well as the associated lost productivity of university students, faculty/researchers, and staff.

Other financial challenges facing the UA include:

- Due to the competitive labor market, the UA is experiencing overall increased compensation costs.
- The UA continues to experience higher staff benefit costs, mostly for healthcare, and is exploring options to help mitigate these cost increases.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2026

The UA is on a solid foundation, and strategically investing in long-term stability and growth to Empower Alaska and meet future State needs. The UA Board of Regents began a process to adopt a “Roadmap to Empower Alaska.” The “roadmap” revises and augments the goals and measures to establish a robust plan for the UA to advance Alaska’s economy through education, workforce development, research, and strong partnerships across this great state.

The three pillars of the roadmap represent the UA Board of Regents’ long-term vision for the university and are framed by guiding principles and achieved through the implementation of priority strategies to meet Board-established system goals and through well-defined university/system office missions, roles, and goals.

- Financially Responsible and Future-Focused: The universities and community campuses are efficient and responsive with diversified funding focused on growing enrollment and research to meet Alaska’s workforce and economic needs.
- State and Arctic Leadership: Working together within the UA, the universities and community campuses are innovative and essential to education, research, workforce, and economic development for local communities and the State of Alaska and lead the nation in advancing the United States in the changing Arctic.
- Quality Reputation: The universities and community campuses each carry a high-value, high-quality reputation and are respected as innovative and responsive ‘jewels’ in the state and their region and communities.

Guiding Principles include:

- Student-centric.
- Consistent with and/or employs national best practices.
- Innovative and transformative.
- Leverages current assets and resources, recognizing existing capacity and expertise within the system, to attract new revenues and support growth.
- Rewards collaboration across universities.
- Data-informed and data-driven.

System Goals

The goals adopted by the UA Board of Regents in February 2021 were developed in consultation with students, staff, faculty, and other university stakeholders, and represent specific aspirations for the UA as a whole. Based on input from the UA Board of Regents and other stakeholders, the following goals have been revised to be more action-oriented:

- Deliver academic excellence and success at all levels (faculty/curriculum-focused).
- Modernize Student Experience (increase enrollment, retention, and graduation).
- Contribute to Alaska’s skilled workforce and engaged citizenship.
- Operate efficiently, effectively, and responsibly.
- Grow the world-class research.
- Provide a welcoming, diverse, equitable, and inclusive university for all students, faculty, and staff.

The UA Board of Regents identified six priority strategies with implementation plans that will contribute significantly to achieving the university and system goals, supporting and fulfilling the pillars. The UA Board of Regents will direct university leadership to develop strategies and implementation plans for the priorities. The priorities will change periodically (not less than annually) as the UA Board of Regents identify higher priorities or when priorities are

accomplished. Progress on these priority strategies will be monitored by the UA Board of Regents at the quarterly meetings.

The priority strategy areas are:

Increasing Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation (Includes Systemwide Enrollment Plan)

The UA Board of Regents ad hoc committee for recruitment, retention, and graduation continues the work with the consulting team from the Education Advisory Board (EAB). Members of the EAB team have visited all three universities and provided an update to the ad hoc committee in November 2024. Ongoing efforts by the universities have improved Freshman-to-sophomore retention to 68 percent, a seven-year high, and fall 2024 student credit hours are up more than three percent over fall 2023.

The UA will be collaborating with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), and other stakeholders to develop strategies to further encourage students to take advantage of recent changes in the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and encourage Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion. Although the legislation (HB 148, Chapter 4, SLA 2024) has only recently gone into effect, these changes to APS have helped to drive a 22 percent increase in first-time APS recipients in fall 2024 over fall 2023.

Sustaining Facilities Maintenance and Modernization Plan

The UA continues to strategize on the best solution to ensure consistent annual state funding for deferred maintenance and modernization.

Achieving Cost-Efficient Operations

Significant progress is being made on a number of business process improvements. Specific to the Banner 9 Self-Service implementation, two Human Resource updates went live in October 2024. The updates are related to federal income tax withholding elections and annual income tax reporting. The two advancements will reduce manual data entry and allow paperless/electronic delivery of tax forms. Additionally, feedback is being solicited for the directory service automation, and working groups are exploring time and leave reporting, as well as streamlining the on-boarding/off-boarding process for students, staff, and faculty.

UAF Reaching Research 1 (R1) Status in 2027

The Carnegie Classification is a national framework for categorizing universities in the United States. The UAF has consistently been classified as an R2 university, a distinction held by about seven percent of universities nationally. Reviews are conducted every three years. The UAF's upcoming opportunities to achieve R1 status are 2027, based on their FY2024-FY2026 performance, and 2030, based on their FY2027-FY2029 performance. Since the last UA Board of Regents meeting, UAF has continued to distribute funding to support PhD completion, facilitated a R1 Strategy workshop, and developed additional outreach materials.

Empower Alaska Branding/Public Awareness Campaign

The UA launched a three-year public awareness campaign to enhance the overall reputation of the university system and educate Alaskans about the university's role in fueling the economy and providing Alaska with an educated and well-trained workforce. This priority strategy is continuing to make good progress. Since the last UA Board of Regent meeting, the final round of docuseries videos has been shot, the campaign has received multiple additional awards, and the Office of Public Affairs has explored ways to leverage the campaign's success beyond the end of FY2025. The UA is here to empower Alaska (<https://empower.alaska.edu/>).

Building Arctic Leaders

As part of the Rasmuson Foundation's annual Grantmakers Tour of Alaska, the UA's President highlighted the university's arctic expertise and community partnerships for representatives of national foundations with an interest in supporting Alaska programs. In addition, the Arctic Leadership Program Director is working with the Arctic postdocs to begin structuring the program for the spring 2025 student cohort. The UA began formal outreach to potential partner organizations to offer expertise, insights, and internships for the future student cohorts.

Currently, the UA is planning the fifth annual UA Giving Day, "49 Hours for Alaska", which will be held in March 2025. Last year's online giving day was a tremendous success, raising over \$1.3 million in 49 hours from over 2,000 alumni, community members, corporate partners, faculty, and staff.

The UA will continue the “Did You Know?” series to highlight the breadth, excellence, and collaboration of programs across the university. These messages will help communicate stability, confidence, and trust in the universities’ programs; elevate the value of higher education in the state, and increase enrollment in higher education (<https://www.alaska.edu/news/did-you-know/>).

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