

Alaska Native Students



UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE



UAA Office of
**Community
Partnerships**

Renee Carter-Chapman
Vice Chancellor

Introduction

“Unlike most universities, UAA cannot afford to think of its student population as a single ‘student body.’ There is simply too much diversity in our student population to design one-size-fits-all strategies...”

UAA Enrollment Management Plan: FY 05
Critical Factors in Meeting Enrollment Goals

Table of Contents

Alaska Natives	1
Enrollment	2
Preparation	4
Performance	5
Retention	6
Graduation	7
Programs & Services	8
New Initiatives	10
Next Steps	11
Resources	12

In 2001, UAA began to collect and examine the data that would lead to its first Strategic Enrollment Management initiative. One of the first student success measures to be studied was retention. And one of the first student populations identified for targeted emphasis was the Alaska Native population.

At that time, enrollment rates for Alaska Native students had remained virtually static since 1995. In addition, Alaska Native students were persisting into their second year at a rate of about 37%, well below the UAA average.* It was clear that UAA needed to improve its ability to attract and retain this very important segment of our student population.

Many things have changed since then. The Alaska Scholars Program has helped UAA attract greater numbers of students from across the state, including greater numbers of Alaska Natives. Innovative academic and social support programs such as the Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP), Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN), and Alaska Natives into Psychology (ANPsych) have demonstrated powerful positive results. Enrollment rates have increased dramatically, and retention rates have gained ground. UAA’s ability to identify and track the performance of individual student cohorts has also grown, to the point where we can now examine nearly every measurable aspect of a student’s interaction with the university.

This report provides snapshot summaries from a variety of data sources to highlight key demographic descriptors, trends, and performance indicators of Alaska Native students at UAA. Key measures include enrollment, academic preparation, performance, retention, and graduation. Also included is a short summary of the many programs and initiatives at UAA that work together to support our Native student population and to encourage their success.

Although there have been many positive changes in recent years, there is still room for further improvement. UAA has a special mission to serve the Alaska Native population. The goal of this report is to provide a reference point and framework for discussion to guide the university in making prudent and effective use of university resources while developing programs and services that foster Alaska Native student success.

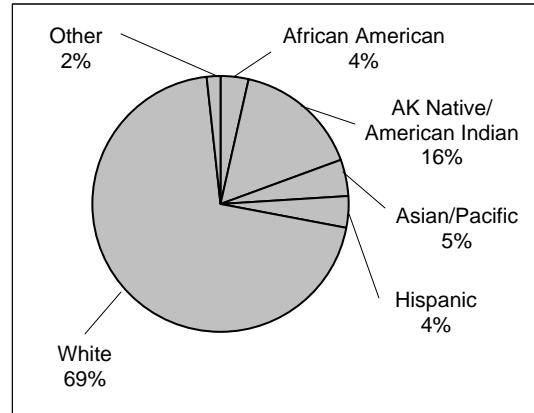
* Source: OPRA, Topic Paper 2001-04. Student Persistence at UAA. Table 5A and 5b.

Alaska Natives

A few points about Alaska Natives are worth considering for context.

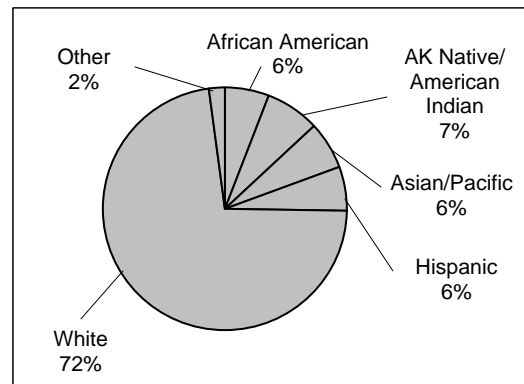
- ◆ About 16% of Alaska's population is of Alaska Native or American Indian ethnicity.
- ◆ National data sources (such as the US Census Bureau) typically combine all Alaska Native and American Indian groups as a single ethnicity. For comparison purposes, **on this page only**, UAA's student ethnicity has been calculated the same way. **For all other references in this report**, Alaska Native data does **not** include American Indians.
- ◆ The term "Alaska Native" encompasses many different cultural groups, including Aleuts, Inupiat, Yupiks, Athabaskans, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and others. These groups come from many different regions and climates, some of them thousands of miles apart. Some live in rural villages, others in Alaska's major urban centers. It may be convenient to treat them as a single group, as this report does. But it is also artificial; there is a great deal of diversity within.
- ◆ Anchorage has seen growth in its Alaska Native population with the presence of the Alaska Native Medical Center and the headquarters of a majority of the ANCSA regional corporations. The city draws many Alaska Natives from rural Alaska seeking job opportunities and medical care.

Ethnicity, Alaska



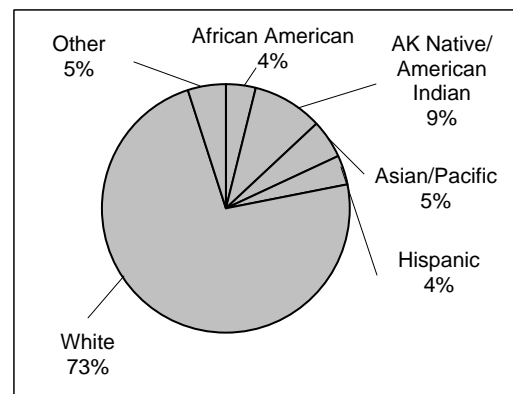
Source: US Census 2000, Quickfacts.census.gov

Ethnicity, Anchorage



Source: US Census 2000, Quickfacts.census.gov

Ethnicity, UAA



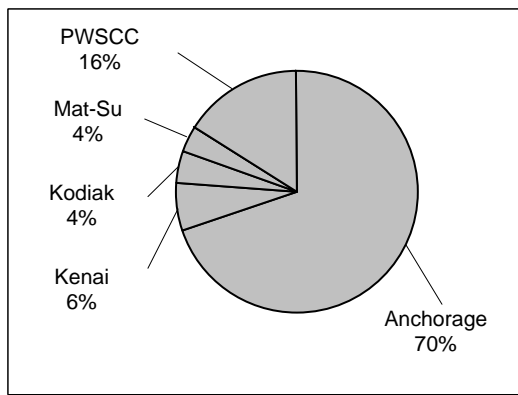
Source: OPRA, Fall 2004 Closing, all campuses

Enrollment

Headcount (MAU)

In the Fall 2004 semester, there were 1,570 Alaska Native students attending UAA (7.9% of the overall MAU student population). Seventy percent (70%) of those students attended the Anchorage campus.

Alaska Native Student Enrollment

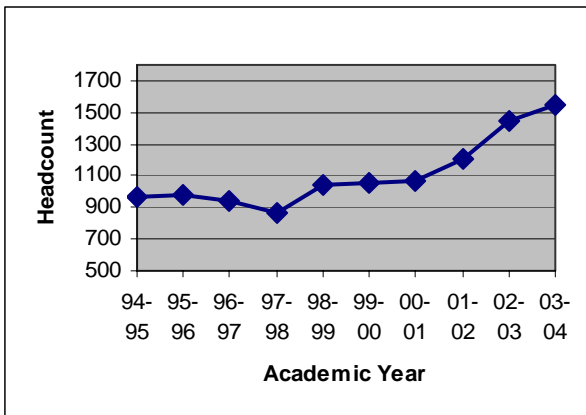


Source: OPRA, UAA Fall 2004 Closing, all campuses

Trends (MAU)

Alaska Native student enrollment throughout the MAU has increased 80% over the last five years. Alaska Natives are the fastest growing ethnic group on UAA's campuses.

Headcount Trends, MAU

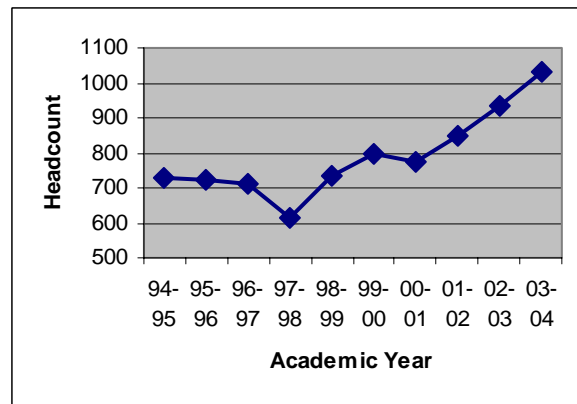


Source: OPRA, UAA Trendbook 2004, Table A-11, Alaska Natives, all campuses

Trends (Anchorage campus)

On the Anchorage campus, Alaska Native student enrollment has increased 67% over the last five years. Alaska Natives comprised less than 5% of the total student population in AY98. By AY04, their numbers had grown to over 7% of the student population. They are approaching 8% today.

Headcount Trends, Anchorage



Source: OPRA, UAA Trendbook 2004, Table A-11A, Alaska Natives, Anchorage campus

Enrollment Profile (Anchorage)

The following analysis is based on data from the Student Cohort Profiling Project, a 5-year database of student information. The **Alaska Native Cohort** includes 3,347 Alaska Native undergraduates who enrolled for at least one class at UAA's Anchorage campus between 1998 and 2003.

◆ **GENDER**

Two thirds (66%) of the Alaska Native cohort were female, as compared to 57% of the overall undergraduate population.

◆ **AGE**

With a mean age of 29, the Alaska Native cohort was significantly younger than the overall undergraduate population (mean age 33). Nearly half of all Alaska Native students were traditional age (18-24) or younger.

◆ **DEGREE-SEEKING**

Students in the Alaska Native cohort were about twice as likely to be admitted degree-seeking students, attending full time, and receiving some form of financial aid (grants, loans, and/or scholarships) as students in the overall undergraduate population. Forty percent of the Alaska Native cohort received scholarships or Native corporation/agency grants.

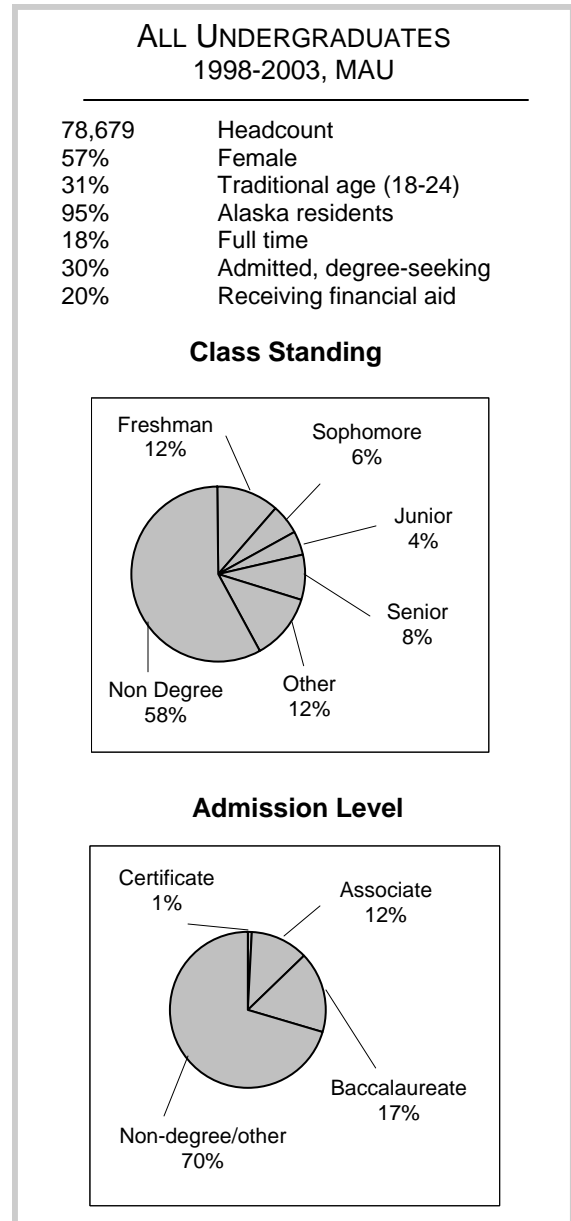
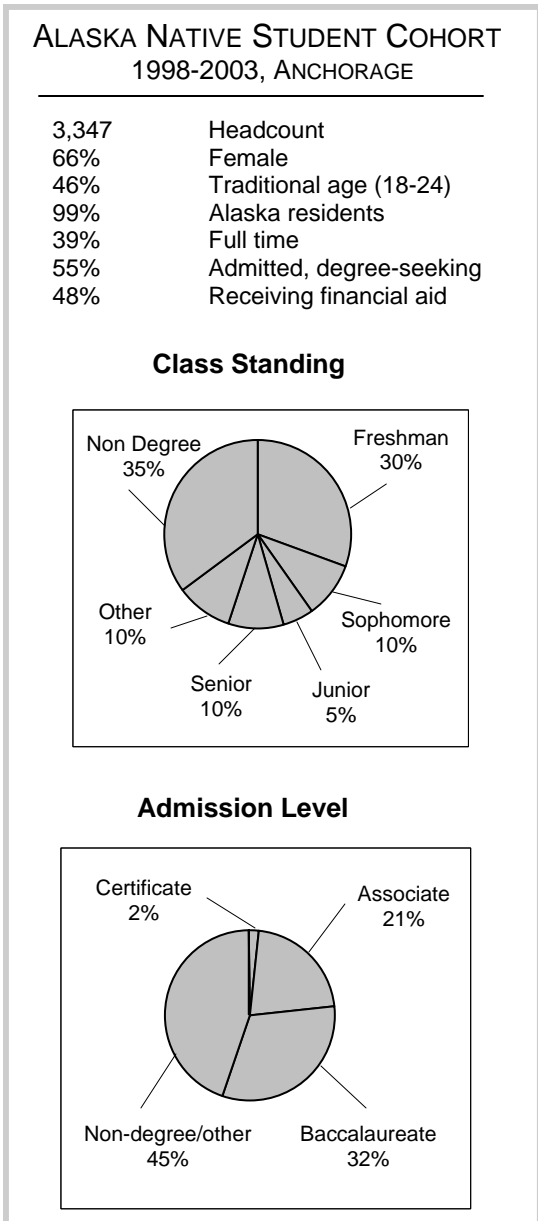
◆ **CLASS STANDING**

Nearly a third (30%) of all students in the Alaska Native cohort were freshmen, as compared to only 12%

freshmen in the overall undergraduate population. There were higher percentages of Alaska Native students at all class standings because of their greater likelihood of being degree-seeking; however, the distribution was particularly pronounced at the freshman level.

◆ **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

Roughly 2% of UAA athletes were in the Alaska Native cohort, along with 4% of University Honors students and 16% of UA Scholars.



Source: OPRA, *Minority Student Profile 1998-2003, Alaska Natives (Anchorage campus) compared to Undergraduates (MAU)*, Table E-AA-55

Academic Preparation

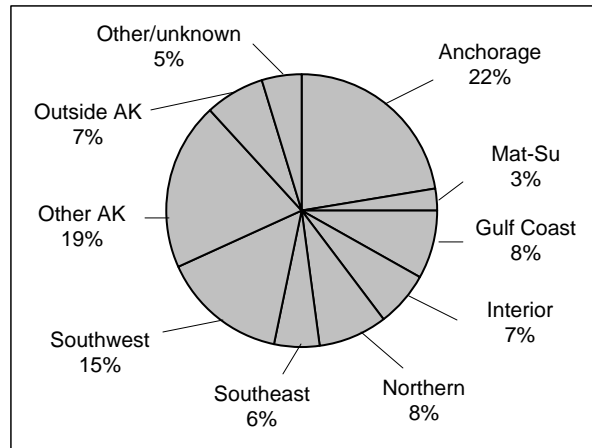
◆ HIGH SCHOOL BACKGROUND

The great majority of the Alaska Native cohort (88%) attended Alaskan high schools, as compared to 40% of the overall undergraduate population. Nearly two thirds (63%) of Alaska Native students came from Alaskan high schools outside the major urban centers of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.

◆ ACADEMIC PREPARATION

UAA's Native Student Services has found test scores to be more reliable indicators of academic preparation than either high school GPA or class rankings. Limited data suggest that Alaska Native students have equivalent high school GPAs (mean GPA of 2.90 as compared to 2.92 for the overall undergraduate population). They perform less well on the ACT and SAT than the overall undergraduate population, but their ASSET scores are very similar.

High School Background



Source: OPRA, *Minority Student Profile 1998-2003, Alaska Natives (Anchorage campus)*, Table E-AA-55

Freshman Test Scores

	ALASKA NATIVE STUDENT COHORT (ANCHORAGE)			ALL UNDERGRADUATES (MAU)		
	Number of scores submitted	Percent of population with scores	Score	Number of scores submitted	Percent of population with scores	Score
SAT						
Verbal			456			503
Math			462			496
Composite	680	20%	918	9,365	12%	999
ACT						
English			17			20
Reading			18			22
Math/Reading			18			20
Science			19			21
Composite	669	20%	18	5,038	6%	21
ASSET						
Numerical	674	20%	39	6,208	8%	39
Writing	1,159	35%	41	12,066	15%	43
Reading	1,159	35%	40	12,006	15%	43

Source: OPRA, *Minority Student Profile 1998-2003, Alaska Natives (Anchorage campus) compared to Undergraduates (MAU)*, Table E-AA-55

Performance

ALASKA NATIVE STUDENT COHORT 1998-2003, ANCHORAGE

Enrollment level

10%	Developmental	050-099
72%	Lower division	100-299
14%	Upper division	300-499
3%	Professional	500-599
1%	Graduate	600-699

Grades

65%	Success grades (A, B, C, D, P)
26%	Attrition grades (AU, F, NP, W)
9%	Other grades (AU, DF, I, NG, Blank)

ALL UNDERGRADUATES 1998-2003, MAU

Enrollment level

5%	Developmental	050-099
70%	Lower division	100-299
16%	Upper division	300-499
6%	Professional	500-599
2%	Graduate	600-699

Grades

74%	Success grades (A, B, C, D, P)
16%	Attrition grades (AU, F, NP, W)
10%	Other grades (AU, DF, I, NG, Blank)

Source: OPRA, *Minority Student Profile 1998-2003, Alaska Natives (Anchorage campus) compared to Undergraduates (MAU)*, Table P-AA-55

For this analysis, student success is measured in terms of the letter grades awarded for course completion (A, B, C, D, and P). Attrition is measured by those grades that indicate the student did not successfully complete the course (F, W, NP, and AU). Approximately 10% of "grades" fall into neither category, but instead are incomplete, deferred, or blank.

◆ DEVELOPMENTAL AND LOWER DIVISION COURSES

The great majority of course enrollments for both the Alaska Native cohort and the overall undergraduate population were in developmental and lower division courses. However, students in the Alaska Native cohort were even more likely to be enrolled in these courses, and less likely to be enrolled in upper division, graduate, or professional courses, than students in the overall undergraduate population.

◆ GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

Twenty-seven percent of Alaska Native student

course enrollments and 25% of overall undergraduate enrollments were in courses designated as GERS.

◆ LOWER COURSE SUCCESS RATES

The Alaska Native cohort had a course success rate of 65%, as compared to 74% for the overall undergraduate population. Where 53% of all grades issued to undergraduates were A's and B's, only 43% of grades issued to Alaska Natives were A's and B's.

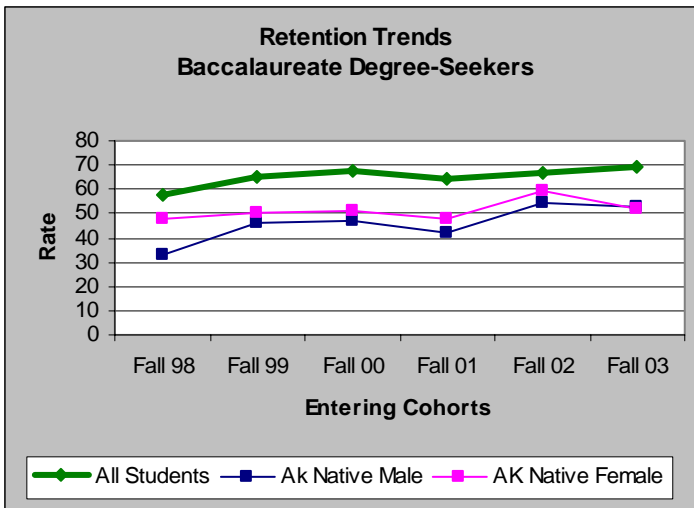
◆ HIGHER COURSE ATTRITION

The Alaska Native cohort had a course attrition rate of 26%, as compared to 16% for the overall undergraduate population. Alaska Natives had a 13% likelihood of withdrawing (W) and a 12% likelihood of failing (F) on a course-by-course basis. The overall undergraduate population had an 8% likelihood of withdrawing and a 7% likelihood of failing.

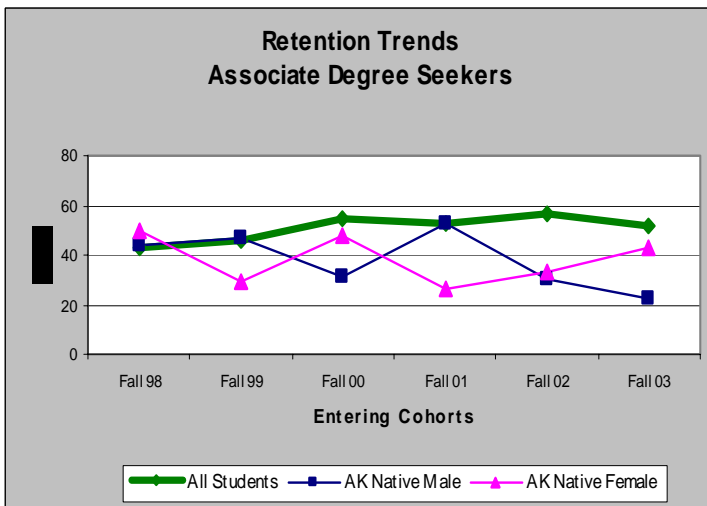
Retention

◆ **DEFINITIONS**

For this analysis, retention is expressed as the rate of first-time full-time degree-seeking students who entered the university in a particular fall semester and were also enrolled the following fall semester. The green line represents overall retention rates for the MAU; the blue and pink lines represent Alaska Native male and female retention rates for the Anchorage campus only.



Sources: OPRA, Trendbook Table B-9 (all students, MAU), and ad hoc report on Alaska Native persistence (AK Native male/female, Anchorage only)



Sources: OPRA, Trendbook Table B-9 (all students, MAU), and ad hoc report on Alaska Native persistence (AK Native male/female, Anchorage only)

◆ **GOAL DIFFERENCES**

Associate and baccalaureate degree-seeking students tend to behave differently, which is why retention rates are typically expressed in terms of the type of degree a cohort is seeking. Retention rates for baccalaureate degree-seeking students tend to be higher than those for associate degree-seeking students. This is true both nationally and locally. At UAA, there is typically about a 10-point spread between the two groups.

◆ **ETHNICITY DIFFERENCES**

Alaska Native students tend to have lower retention rates than other students seeking similar degrees. However, retention rates for Alaska Native baccalaureate students have risen steadily since 1998, reaching a peak of 58% for the cohort entering in Fall 2002. Retention rates for Alaska Native associate students have ranged between 32% and 46% during the past six years.

◆ **GENDER DIFFERENCES**

Among baccalaureate degree-seekers, there are small differences between the retention of Alaska Native males and females, with females generally being retained at slightly higher rates. This pattern also holds true for the overall baccalaureate degree-seeking population. (Note: Alaska Native males did surpass their female counterparts once: for the cohort entering in Fall 2003.)

Among associate degree-seekers, retention rates vary widely between Alaska Native males and females from year to year. A pattern seems to be when males are up, females are down, and vice versa. This pattern does not appear in the overall associate degree-seeking population.

◆ **SMALL COHORT SIZES**

It is likely that small cohort sizes play a role in the variability of Alaska Native male and female categories. Male cohorts ranged in size from 9 to 41 individuals; female cohorts ranged in size from 13 to 77 individuals.

Graduation

◆ DEFINITIONS

For this analysis, graduation is expressed as the rate of first-time full-time degree-seeking students who entered UAA in a particular fall semester and graduated within 6 years.

Two sets of data are currently available:

1. Cohorts who entered in the Fall of 1997 and graduated by the Spring of 2003
2. Cohorts who entered in the Fall of 1998 and graduated by the Spring of 2004

◆ COHORT SIZES

The entry cohorts for Alaska Native students may be too small to yield statistically reliable graduation rates. For Fall 1997 and Fall 1998, the Alaska Native entry cohorts ranged in size between 30 and 39 individual students. The male/female cohorts are subsets of the entering cohorts, and therefore even smaller in size.

◆ GOAL DIFFERENCES

First-time students who enter the university seeking baccalaureate degrees graduate at higher rates than first-timers seeking associate degrees. This is true for the overall undergraduate population as well as for Alaska Native students.

◆ ETHNICITY DIFFERENCES

Based on limited data from only two cohorts, it appears that Alaska Native students have lower graduation rates than the overall student population. This data needs further analysis and close monitoring in the future.

◆ GENDER DIFFERENCES

Because of the small cohort sizes, it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions based on gender. The Alaska Native male cohorts ranged in size from 8 to 23 individuals; the Alaska Native female cohorts ranged in size from 16 to 23 individuals. A certain amount of year-to-year variability is to be expected with cohort sizes this small.

Selected Graduation Rates				
Entering Cohort	Alaska Native Students (Anchorage)			All Students MAU
	All	Male	Female	
FTFT Baccalaureate				
Fall 1997	20%	25%	19%	22%
Fall 1998	3%	0	4%	21%
FTFT Associate				
Fall 1997	10%	13%	5%	12%
Fall 1998	10%	4%	19%	18%

Sources: OPRA, ad hoc report on Alaska Native persistence (AK Native male/female/all, Anchorage only), and Trendbook, Table B-9 (All Students, MAU)

Programs and Services

UAA has a long history of providing academic and support programs that target Alaska Native students.

Pre-College and Bridging Programs

ALASKA NATIVE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING PROGRAM (ANSEP)

- **Summer Bridging Program.** A nine-week intensive for recent Alaska Native high school graduates. Includes calculus or pre-calculus classes, college survival and life skills, plus paid internships. Students live on campus. Accepts about 20+ students per year. Founded in 1998.
- **Pre-College Program.** An opportunity for Native and rural high school students to see themselves in engineering and science careers. Students build top-end computers, teach others to build them, and earn the right to keep them by passing physics, trigonometry, and chemistry. Founded in 2001 with seed money from the National Science Foundation. Had 200 students participating in 2003/04.

DELLA KEATS/UDOC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

A six-week summer bridging program for Alaska Native high school students who plan to pursue health-related careers. Focuses on college preparation in English, Math, Science, and study skills, plus opportunities to live on campus and participate in career shadowing and exploration. Serves about 20 students each summer.

Academic Programs

ALASKA NATIVE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING PROGRAM (ANSEP)

ANSEP's University Retention Program, founded in 1995, includes on-campus living/learning communities, co-enrollment in courses, team building, group study, academic advising, scholarships, summer internships, networking with Native and professional communities, applied research opportunities, and transition to graduate school. In Fall 2004 the program had 73 students, and a program retention rate about 70%. The program has also inspired the creation of the **Pacific Alliance**, an NSF-sponsored program that seeks to replicate ANSEP's success at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Washington, and the University of Hawaii. Program founder Dr. Herb Schroeder received a 2004 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM) for his work with Alaska Native students.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF ALASKA NATIVES INTO NURSING (RRANN)

Features advising, mentoring, tutoring, financial assistance, and an on-campus living/learning community. Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Nursing. In Fall 2004 the program had 89 pre-nursing students, 26 nursing majors (8 via distance delivery), and 40 additional prospects. Thirty-five RRANN students have graduated.

ALASKA NATIVES INTO PSYCHOLOGY (ANPSYCH)

ANPsych's primary mission is to train Alaska Native and American Indian students from high school through advanced degrees in order to address the significant shortage of Native/Indian psychologists and behavioral health professionals in the state. Recruits students who wish to practice in rural locales, and provides social, cultural, financial, and academic support to see them through to completion with readiness to enter the workforce. The program had 31 undergraduate and 6 graduate students in Fall 2004.

ALASKA NATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM

Coursework introduces Alaska Native ways of knowing and seeing the world, explores Native cultures experientially and theoretically, and provides critical perspectives on traditional and contemporary Native experiences and politics. Classes attract approximately 200 enrollees per year. An academic minor focuses on Alaska Native languages and public policy.

RAVEN'S QUEST SUMMER INSTITUTE

An 8-week summer intensive for educationally or economically disadvantaged UA undeclared or associate degree-seeking students. Features career exploration in the behavioral health field, with an emphasis on rural Alaska. Includes classroom instruction, guest speakers, and 75 hours of job shadowing. There were 20 program graduates in 2003.

Cultural Programs

ALASKA NATIVE ORATORY SOCIETY

Open to Native and non-Native high school and college students who wish to keep the oral tradition alive, AkNOS helps students develop public speaking and leadership skills and provides a forum to address issues of relevance to indigenous people. The annual contest, coordinated by the Department of Communication every spring, reaches students across the state. AkNOS was developed through partnerships with several Native corporations and advocacy groups.

Student Leadership

NATIVE STUDENT COUNCIL

A student organization composed of up to 20 active members at any given time, the NSC does volunteer work, organizes potlucks and other gatherings, and hosts a variety of cultural groups who bring music,

dancing, and other forms of cultural celebration to enrich campus life. The organization has received Outstanding Social Program and Outstanding Multicultural Program awards from UAA's Club Council. A new event in Spring 2005 was the popular *Sharing Traditions Thursdays* in which students, families, and community members came together in the UAA residence halls for evenings of shared artistry, dancing, and creativity.

Student Services

NATIVE STUDENT SERVICES (NSS)

With a mission to improve the retention and success of Alaska Native and rural students, NSS provides a place to study, receive academic support, and meet with faculty and peers. NSS staff provide educational/vocational planning, academic advising, peer mentoring, career counseling, financial aid advising, and referrals to other resources. NSS supports Native students' sense of identity, belonging, empowerment, and leadership; facilitates an affirming academic and cultural climate for Native Students at UAA; and promotes scholastic excellence and success. Programs especially target entering first time rural and Alaska Native students.

New Initiatives

Performance Enhancement Initiatives 2004-05

Three initiative projects approved by the UAA Planning and Budget Advisory Council (PBAC) from Performance Enhancement Funds in 2004-05 specifically targeted Alaska Native student populations.

PREVENTATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR ALASKA NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

This project, sponsored by Student Affairs and the ANPsych program, was conceived to identify, design, and deliver a model program of culturally appropriate, preventative mental health programs to reduce the risk of suicide, depression, and alcohol abuse among UAA's Alaska Native and American Indian student populations. Focus groups of the target population in the residence halls indicated that what these students need most is a sense of community. This can take various forms, from welcoming gatherings in the first few weeks of the semester to increased interactions with the local Native community, Native corporations, and other resources. Project personnel collaborated with Residence Life, Native Student Services, the Native Student Council, and ANPsych to host community gatherings, that included a salmon bake in the spring semester that attracted over 100 people. The two ANPsych graduate students who conducted the focus groups are compiling the results into a report and action plan. The focus group students are forming an advisory board. Depending on future funding, the model program will continue to design and deliver community-building events in the residence halls during next academic year.

CREATION OF URBAN FAMILY TO ENHANCE SUCCESS, INTERCONNECTEDNESS, AND SENSE OF BELONGING AMONG ALASKA NATIVE FRESHMEN

This project, sponsored by ANPsych, enhanced an existing program that provides monthly gatherings during the academic year to establish and nurture an urban family for UAA's Alaska Native students. The gatherings bring students together with local elders from the five major cultural groups of Alaska Natives, replicating a culturally appropriate environment where students join their youthful energy with elder wisdom. Spring semester gatherings attracted over 500 people and were considered wildly successful by both organizers and participants. Elder presentations were videotaped, and edited versions will be housed in the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders, located in UAA's College of Health and Social Welfare.

ALASKA NATIVE STUDENT SUMMER ART CAMP

This project strengthens bonds between Alaska Native high school students and the university, using art as the vehicle for reaching across cultural boundaries. The project encouraged high school students, particularly from rural Alaskan schools, to submit art work to the Heard Museum Native American Student Art Show in Phoenix. Student artists will then be selected to participate in a week-long art camp at UAA taught by Alvin Amason. The program will include life skills training for urban living and successful adaptation to campus life as well as an orientation to academic requirements for degree programs. The pilot program will run in the summer of 2005.

Next Steps

This summary analysis is far from complete. Many open questions remain that invite deeper study.

- ◆ To what degree does the remarkable success of programs like ANSEP, RRANN, and ANPsych skew the statistical data and obscure the struggles of Alaska Native students who are not in those programs?
- ◆ Why are there so many Alaska Native freshmen relative to other class standings? Does this reflect a challenge in initial orientation to the Anchorage campus?
- ◆ How do we continue to improve the lower course success/higher attrition rates among Alaska Native students?
- ◆ What are the trends and performance indicators for Alaska Native students enrolled at Kenai Peninsula College, Kodiak College, Matanuska-Susitna College, and Prince William Sound Community College?
- ◆ How can we measure the effects that special programs and initiatives may be achieving on Alaska Native student success?

Resources

Doctoral Research

Several research projects are currently underway that will add to our understanding of Alaska Native student performance, retention, and success:

- ◆ Linda Lazzell, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, is studying the perceptions of ANSEP students regarding the relative value and importance of the ANSEP program elements on their persistence and academic success. This study is designed to identify factors that influence Native student achievement, including Native-focused academic services, peer group interactions, social integration, and academic integration.
- ◆ Bill Spindle, Director of Business Services, is examining the differences in academic performance and retention between students in the ANSEP and RRANN programs as compared to Alaska Native students with similar pre-college profiles in other bachelor degree programs.
- ◆ Patricia Grega, Associate Professor, College Preparatory and Developmental Studies, is doing a comparative study of three groups of students: underprepared students who take reading courses, underprepared students who do not take reading courses, and prepared students.

Sources

INTERNAL

UAA Enrollment Management Plan 2005-2009 (Enrollment Services)

UAA Trendbook 2004 (OPRA)

UAA Fall 2004 Closing Report (OPRA)

Anchorage Minority Student Profile 1998-2003 (OPRA)

Topic Paper 2001-04, Student Persistence at UAA (OPRA)

EXTERNAL

First Alaskans Institute: Forums/Discussion series

US Census 2000 Quick Facts

Produced in partnership by:

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Renee Carter-Chapman, Vice Chancellor
Kay Landis, Editor
Michael Dinneen, Photographer

University Center 131R
aypartnerships@uaa.alaska.edu
Phone: 907-786-6486
Fax: 907-786-1700

NATIVE STUDENT SERVICES

Willy Templeton, Director

BEB 108
aynss@uaa.alaska.edu
Phone: 907-786-4000
Fax: 907-786-4009

**OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND
ASSESSMENT**

Dr. Gary Rice, Director
Yuan-Fang Dong, Research Associate
Roberta Weaver, Administrative Assistant

ADM 227
Phone: 907-786-1493
Fax: 907-786-1499



UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

www.uaa.alaska.edu

UAA is an EEO/AA employer and educational institution.