

# University of Alaska Fairbanks Year One Self-Evaluation Report

August 2012

Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities





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Institutional Overview





Report. The UAF Planning and Budget Committee incorporated the five core themes into UAF's formal budget decision-making process for 2012 – 2013. The Office of Management and Budget was created in late spring 2012 and will further refine the process for aligning budget development with the strategic plan, core themes, and objectives for the FY14 budget process. The new UAF strategic plan will be completed in 2013, after the UA Statewide strategic directions plan is complete, so that alignment between the two can be assured.

## **Core Themes**

### **Educate**

Undergraduate and Graduate Students and Lifelong Learners

### **Research**

To Create and Disseminate New Knowledge, Insight, Technology, Artistic, and Scholarly Works

### **Prepare**

Alaska's Career, Technical, and Professional Workforce

### **Connect**

Alaska Native, Rural, and Urban Communities by Sharing Knowledge and Ways of Knowing

### **Engage**

Alaskans through Outreach for Continuing Education and Community and Economic Development

## Preface

### **Brief Update on Institutional Changes Since Last Report**

UAF received reaffirmation of accreditation on Feb. 1, 2012, on the basis of the fall 2011 comprehensive peer

## **Leadership Changes Since Fall 2011**

John (Jake) Poole, vice chancellor for University Advancement, retired June 30, 2012. Mike Sfraga, vice chancellor for students, was charged with the responsibilities of that position and his title changed to vice chancellor for





## Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

### Eligibility Requirements

The University of Alaska is established by the constitution of the state of Alaska, Article VII, Section 2. The board of regents and its authority over the University of Alaska are established by the constitution of the state of Alaska, Article VII, Section 3. Statutory provisions related to the authority of the board of regents over the University of Alaska are contained in AS 14.40. The statements of these articles and law are in the board of regents' bylaws.

UAF's mission and core themes are defined in the following sections. The board of regents approved the mission statement and the core themes in June 2012. UAF's purpose is to serve the educational interests of students, to ensure that our principal programs lead to recognized degrees, and to devote our resources to support our educational mission and core themes.

### Standard 1.A: Mission

#### Mission Statement

The following UAF mission statement was approved by the UA Board of Regents on June 8, 2012, and is contained in its policy ([01 0 0 1 401.68 585.82 Tmcore themes.0 cG0052001 004B400480003tatement0 0 0 78rg0 0 1 RG](#))

- Engage: Alaskans through Outreach for Continuing Education and Community and Economic Development

As a state research university and Land, Sea, and Space Grant institution, UAF advances (Research) and disseminates (Educate, Prepare, Engage, Connect) knowledge through teaching, research, and public service. Because of UAF's location in Interior Alaska, we have a strong commitment to maintain and further develop partnerships with Alaska Native and rural communities (Connect). The mission emphasis on Alaska, the circumpolar North and their diverse peoples is represented in all our core themes with the exception of Educate. The Educate theme addresses our broad national and international instructional responsibility within which we strive for academic excellence and student success. Lifelong learning is addressed specifically in both the Educate (for credit) and Engage (not for credit) themes but is evident in Connect as well. Thus, our core themes manifest the essential elements of UAF's mission and collectively encompass our mission.

UAF aligns its research, educational, and public service activities to fulfill these essential elements of its mission through cooperation and collaboration among all its units. For example, UAF conducts extensive climate research because climate change will have important impacts on the forests, tundra, wildlife, and fisheries of Alaska, and those will in turn impact northern peoples who rely on these natural resources. Alaska Native people have observed the environment and its living resources for millennia, and their knowledge contributes to understanding the effects of climate. Extension units engage the public around the state by sharing the useful information provided by research, and also provide a feedback mechanism for helping establish public priorities for research. In addition, the drier climate affecting Interior Alaska in recent years has resulted in an increase in the number and severity of wildfires. The emergency services associate of applied science program responds to that by preparing graduates for wildland fire control.

Excellent research opportunities improve the educational outcomes of undergraduate and graduate students and their degree-completion rates. The interconnections among UAF's themes are too numerous to fully describe, but these examples show that all parts of the university contribute to fulfilling our mission.

## **Interpretation and Articulation of Mission Fulfillment**

UAF is dedicated to maintaining high standards and continually assessing mission fulfillment. The core themes are connected to our mission, vision, values, and strategic planning, as illustrated in the previous section. These connections provide the context for defining mission fulfillment using indicators of achievement for the objectives for each theme.

The rubric on the following pages identifies for each core theme thresholds for each indicator of achievement indicating when mission fulfillment is surpassed (Likert scale index 5), met (index 3), or below expectation (index 1). We define mission fulfillment as achieving an average index value of 3.0 or better for each subset of indicators, with no more than one indicator in each theme below expectation.

All but one indicator are used to define mission fulfillment; one indicator in the Connect theme is considered experimental because historical information is not available. Ratios, e.g., publications per faculty FTE, were used whenever possible so that external factors, such as major budget reductions, will not compromise our definition of mission fulfillment. This subset of indicators and the target ratios will be revised as we collect and summarize information over future accreditation cycles.

Our assessment of both qualitative and quantitative indicators will address natural variation and external factors, such as the economy, which may impact results. A few indicators (e.g., first-time full-time student retention rate and graduation rates) have natural boundaries, and continuous improvement is naturally limited.

Some indicators of achievement are based on productivity; these are mandated by the UA System in our required annual report to the state Office of Management and Budget. While such indicators do not



Mission Fulfillment Definition Rubric by Theme					
Likert Scale	5	4	3	2	1
Theme	Surpasses Mission Expectation		Meets Mission Expectation		Below Mission Expectation
	Students' responses to NSSE Student Engagement questions are higher than peers at other institutions (effect size +0.8 or more).		Students' responses to NSSE Student Engagement questions are similar to peers at other institutions (effect size between -0.5 and +0.5).		Students' responses to NSSE Student Engagement questions are lower than peers at other institutions (effect size -0.8 or less).
	Employment placement of master's and PhD graduates in degree-appropriate positions within 1 year of graduation is more than 85%.		Employment placement of master's and PhD graduates in degree-appropriate positions within 1 year of graduation is 65 to 75%.		Employment placement of master's and PhD graduates in degree-appropriate positions within 1 year of graduation is less than 50%.
	Students produce more than 200 independently reviewed research and creative products annually.		Students produce between 100 and 150 independently reviewed research and creative products annually.		Students produce less than 50 independently reviewed research and creative products annually.
Research: To Create and Disseminate New Knowledge, Insight, Technology, Artistic and Scholarly Works	The number of peer-reviewed publications per year per faculty member with a research workload is more than 1.5.		The number of peer-reviewed publications per year per faculty member with a research workload is 0.75 to 1.25.		The number of peer-reviewed publications per year per faculty member with a research workload is less than 0.50.
	Grant or contract research expenditures per faculty member are more than \$200,000 per year.		Grant or contract research expenditures per faculty member are \$75,000 to \$125,000 per year.		Grant or contract research expenditures per faculty member are less than \$50,000 per year.
	The average number of citations per publication is more than 12.		The average number of citations per publication is between 8 and 10.		The average number of citations per publication is less than 6.
	The number of creative exhibitions and performances per faculty FTE in the fine and performing arts are more than 1.25.		The number of creative exhibitions and performances per faculty FTE in the fine and performing arts is 0.75 to 1.0.		The number of creative exhibitions and performances per faculty FTE in the fine and performing arts is less than 0.50.
	More than 30% of baccalaureate students complete a research, thesis or honors project.		15 to 25% of baccalaureate students complete a research, thesis or honors project.		Less than 10% of baccalaureate students complete a research, thesis or honors project.
	The number of visiting professional and student scholars and local graduate students making use of the Museum of the North collections is more than 300 annually.		The number of visiting professional and student scholars and local graduate students making use of the Museum of the North collections is between 150 and 250 annually.		The number of visiting professional and student scholars and local graduate students making use of the Museum of the North collections is less than 100 annually.











**Objective:** Retain and graduate degree-seeking undergraduate students.

**Indicator:** First-time undergraduate degree-seeking students persist and graduate.

**Rationale:** The six-year baccalaureate graduation rates within the UA System (24 percent) and UAF (31 percent) are low by national standards (46 – 52 percent, depending on the source). Completion rates for certificate and associate programs also need improvement. Although UAF has improved first-time undergraduate degree-seeking student (including certificate and associate students) retention rates over the past decade and is working hard to improve these rates,  $66 \pm 3$  percent retention is the current range. A high proportion of underprepared and nontraditional students and limited state financial aid support contribute to this problem. Retention rates will be reported by preparation level. Degree completion rates



measurable, and a plan is in place to collect it regularly. This indicator is also in the Research theme.

## **Core Theme 2      Research: To Create and Disseminate New Knowledge, Insight, Technology, Artistic and Scholarly Works**

### **Brief Description**

UAF, America's arctic university and a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university, is Alaska's only Carnegie-classified high-research activity institution. The university's faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students perform research, scholarship, and creative activity that reach across the North and beyond. Our focus on high-impact, pure and applied, locally engaged, and transformative scholarship demonstrates our prominence in the global research community. UAF has nationally and internationally recognized research programs in fields ranging from Alaska Native languages to wildlife biology.

In light of current challenges in obtaining adequate research support through federal research funding, UAF is focusing

**Indicator:** Faculty conduct externally funded research at a rate comparable to peer research institutions.

**Rationale:** The [Center for Measuring University Performance](#) ranks institutions according to total research expenditures nationally among public universities, so this indicator is a nationally recognized meaningful indicator of research quality and productivity. While peer-reviewed publications provide a more direct measure of quality and outcomes than expenditures, the UA Strategic Plan 2009 lists research excellence as a goal, and states as an objective to “rely to a greater extent on competitively obtained financial support for research.” In addition, grant-funded research expenditure is a UA System performance metric, so this information is reported annually, making the information available and measurable. Grant-



## Chapter One



high-demand job areas is directly related to meeting this goal and Alaska's need to grow its own workforce. UAF reports the number of HDJA graduates annually in a performance report to the UA System and provides projected numbers of these graduates for future years. A five-year average number of DLWD high-demand job career and

As an example, rural community campuses are working with tribal organizations and technical training centers to build a construction trades technology program. Student cohorts are trained to pass industry-recognized certifications and earn degrees in the carpentry, electrical, and plumbing trades. These students master skills for upkeep and maintenance of local housing inventory while providing aid for elders with upkeep and maintenance of their homes.

Our partners help us document and share traditional knowledge. Early in its history, as Alaska's first university, UAF allocated resources to the study and teaching of Alaska Native language, culture, and history. For example, the Alaska Native Language Center is an internationally recognized center for the study of Inupiaq, Yup'ik and northern Athabaskan (Dene') languages. Faculty and staff members provide contemporary and traditional materials for bilingual teachers and other language workers throughout the state. They assist social scientists and others who work with Native languages, and provide consulting and training services to teachers, school districts, and state agencies involved in bilingual education. Our role in language and cultural education is guided by the UAF Mission Statement, which indicates that we should:

- Celebrate the unique contributions to Alaska by its Native peoples
- Continue to conduct research and provide instruction in Alaska Native languages and cultures
- Build on the role university campuses play as centers for cultural activity.

**Objective:** Academic programs relevant to Alaska Native and rural residents are delivered broadly across Alaska.

**Indicator:** Alaska Native and rural high school students enroll in and earn certificates and degrees at rates similar to other students.

**Rationale:** Alaska Native students make up a significant minority of the UAF student population. (21.3 percent; see Table 1.04 in [UA in Review](#)). On rural campuses, these students are the vast majority, whereas in the urban areas their percentage is far lower, although still a statistically significant subset of the student population. The university strives for uniform success, especially given the challenges for rural Alaska school districts to provide math, science and college preparatory-level curriculum. This is a common concern for rural districts anywhere, but more so in Alaskan communities off the road system. In many of these communities, English is often the second language and school districts struggle to find local teachers and retain others who are not from the region.

**Indicator:** Students complete Alaska Native and rural-related courses and programs.

**Rationale:** Courses and programs about Alaska Native history, culture, and language enable both Alaska Native and non-Native students to engage in place-based learning. Effective and relevant courses and delivery methods such as cohort intensive sessions, along with e-learning when bandwidth to communities is available, create a strong continuum of modalities that are compatible with sharing diverse perspectives of the world.

**Objective:** Alaska Native knowledge and ways of knowing are integrated into the academic programs.

**Indicator:** Student research projects, theses, and dissertations incorporate indigenous knowledge.

**Rationale:** For Alaska Native students, reducing the sense of marginalization inside a dominant culture structure is critical for student success. Staying in a community to complete an academic goal or allowing that place-based value system to be a part of a project or demonstration of knowledge maintains strong ties to a student's surroundings and indigenous knowledge, producing work that is relevant and applicable to the changing conditions of home and sense of place in the world. Non-Native students also benefit from a broader understanding of the diverse cultures that make up the student population and the state.

Projects, theses and dissertations that include Alaska Native language, Alaska Native culture or history, or include Alaska Native participants in research (beyond normal demographic occurrence in broadly distributed surveys) or use community-based participatory research will be classified as incorporating indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. Incorporation of indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into undergraduate projects will be assessed by Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activities, and graduate theses and dissertations will be assessed by the Graduate School. UAF has never attempted to collect this information before so this indicator is experimental; we will attempt to collect the information over the next few years and then assess its utility. This indicator is not included in the mission fulfillment rubric because we have no basis for assessment at this time; we expect to include this indicator in the rubric in the Year Three report, if data collection over the next two years supports doing so.

Student projects from the following graduate programs will be examined to determine if indigenous knowledge is incorporated:

- Applied Linguistics MA
- Counseling MEd
- Cross-cultural Studies MA

- Education MEd
- Rural Development MA

mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources. The fundamental tenet of this activity is the appreciation and respect for the knowledge and information the community has to offer and to incorporate it in a mutually reciprocal relationship in which partners learn from each other to achieve goals of mutual interest. This more complete form of engagement is important to UAF because it provides input and relevance to our work and encourages alumni, donors, decision makers, and others to continue to support the university's mission and/or new initiatives. These partnerships provide a feedback mechanism for engaging with and identifying public priorities for university research and creating information in a usable form to help apply new information to solve problems and meet challenges that face the people of Alaska. UAF recognizes the vital function it serves to enhance the quality of life through engaging the community in services and programs that extend well beyond the education of traditional degree-seeking students. A wide array of non-credit courses are offered and tracked by institutional research as an important indicator of providing lifelong learning to community members. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute delivers non-credit courses ranging from social media, Shakespeare, and nutrition, to educational travel programs celebrating the Katmai National Park centennial and a grandparent-grandchild trip to Denali National Park and Preserve. Numerous youth development programs exist, such as science symposia, arts and music academies, 4-H, and academic summer programs for rural students.

UAF communicates knowledge it creates through partnership, scholarship and research, distributing numerous publications via the mail and internet. CES offers a wide variety of [publications](#) covering subjects from gardening to home construction and child development. Research publications such as *Agroborealis* highlight important research that UAF faculty conduct which is of relevance to Alaska. The UA Press produces publications on topics ranging from skijoring (dog mushing on skis) to Denali weather, and also publishes educational children's books about the northern environment, cultures, and

**Rationale:** In January 2010 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching announced an elective institutional [Community Engagement Classification](#). During the 2010 institutional selection process they found that “partnerships require a high level of understanding and intentional practices specifically directed to reciprocity and mutuality.” [Carnegie’s Community-Engagement Classification: Intentions and Insights](#) by Amy Driscoll states that “Institutions with strong and long-term partnerships presented compelling evidence that their operation entailed collaborative and multi-faceted relationships

- SNRAS (*Agroborealis*)

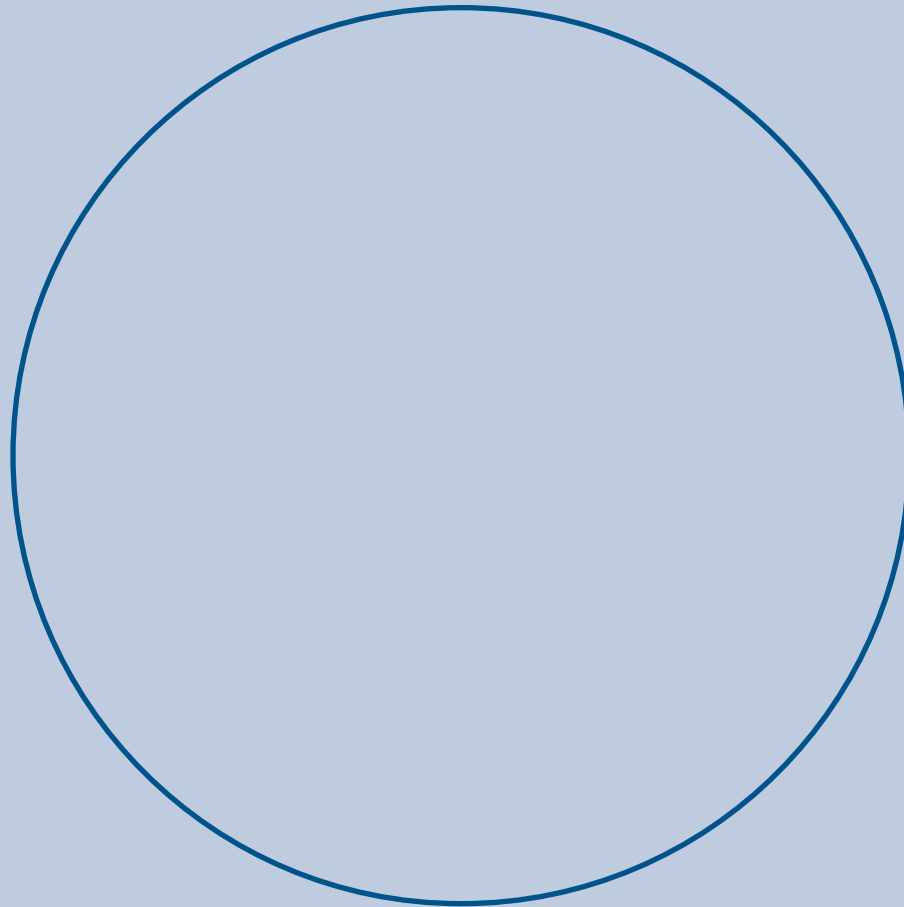
**Indicator:**

Not all invention disclosures lead to non-disclosure agreements or provisional patents. Not all provisional patents lead to patents, and not all patents lead to licensable products. Since licensing agreements are an important goal of OIPC, they are an indication that the first four steps were effective. If licensing agreements are not achieved, we will analyze where in the process we could do better to carry ideas through to inventions, non-disclosures, patents and/or licenses.



## CONCLUSION

Based on its recently approved revised mission statement, UAF has identified five core themes that communicate the essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission. Objectives have been identified for each core theme to further clarify UAF's purpose and intent. Thirty-one meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement have been identified. Thresholds have been set for 30 indicators to assess mission fulfillment.



**Year One  
Self-Evaluation Report  
Appendix  
August 2012**

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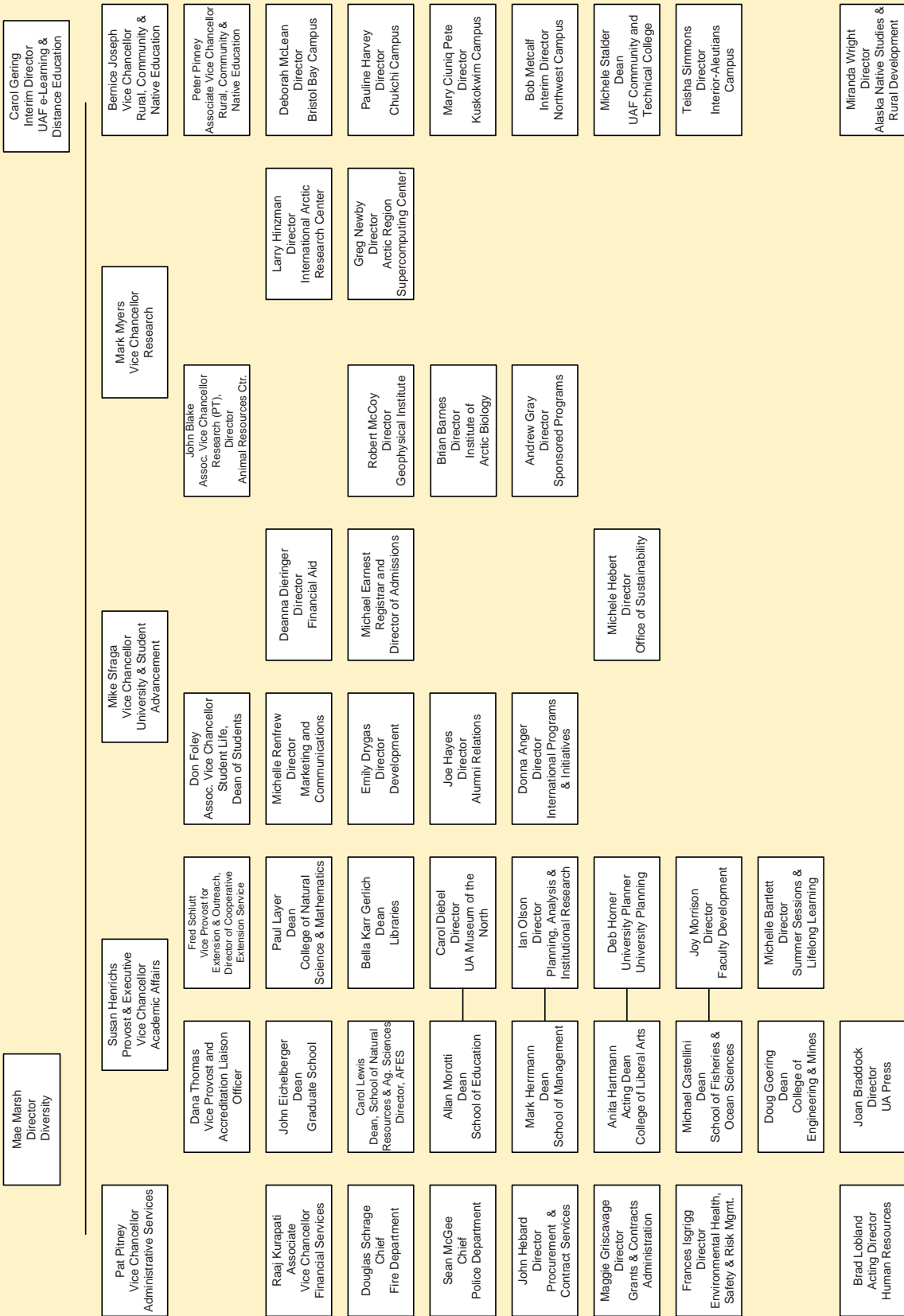
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**Brian Rogers  
Chancellor**



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