

**Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC)**  
**Budget Increment Request Form**

**PURPOSE:** Use this form to propose new UAS operating fund increments or initiatives (e.g. legislative requests for programs or positions) which require either NEW resources or a major internal REALLOCATION of existing funding. Individuals preparing proposals should consult with their dean or director prior to submitting to SPBAC.

For more routine and/or modest proposals affecting existing department or program budgets, please consult UAS Personnel Budget Procedures & Practices (<http://uas.alaska.edu/budget/docs/budget/uas-personnel-budget-procedures-practices.pdf>).

<b>Increment Title:</b>	<b>Research Development Funding for Term Research Assistant Professorship</b>	
<b>Campus/Department or Program:</b>	<b>Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center, Vice Provost Research &amp; Sponsored Programs</b>	
<b>Fiscal Year/Time Frame</b>	<b>FY15 continuing</b>	
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Allison Bidlack, ACRC Director</b>	<b>Date: 10/29/14</b>

**A. Program/Position Description** *(Provide a description of the request and of its overall purpose)*

The Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center (ACRC) has developed research capacity in alignment with ACRC’s and UAS’s mission by housing a Term Research Assistant Professor of Biogeochemistry. The term research assistant professor is responsible for conducting ecosystem science research relating to carbon and nutrient cycling in the temperate rainforest; stream ecology; and the impacts of climate change in Southeast Alaska.

The term research faculty position is currently appointed in the Department of Natural Sciences with a 0.75 FTE 9-month contract funded entirely by research grants to UAS faculty investigators Eran Hood, Brian Buma, and Allison Bidlack; the position currently has no state-appropriated general fund (GF) support. ACRC is requesting one month equivalent of the current .75 FTE term appointment GF to fund salary support for research development in the term research faculty member’s workload. With a base of GF for research development in the appointment, the term research faculty member will be expected to productively use the ACRC-funded portion of his/her workload to develop new collaborative research projects with UAS faculty, write grant proposals to fund their term position on an ongoing basis, and participate in Department of Natural Sciences faculty meetings and other campus activities.

**B. Need & Justification for Program/Position** *(Explain why the request is needed, including enhancement of existing programs, response to market demand, taking advantage of new opportunities. If applicable, include the number of students affected and specific employer demand met.)*

The budget and administration of ACRC were transferred from the Provost to the Vice Provost for Research and Sponsored Programs in September 2014. This request is the top priority of the ACRC in order to support research development activities and capacity, particularly for grant writing and development of ACRC research collaborations with faculty in UAS Department of Natural Sciences. Grant-writing is an essential part of a term research faculty workload because external grants provide funding for faculty salary, research activities, student mentoring, infrastructure and instrumentation, outreach, and indirect cost recovery. Developing ACRC’s ability to successfully compete for research grant awards is vital to the center’s sustainability and to UAS’ continued success in the accomplishment of the ACRC mission to “build partnerships and catalyze collaborative ecological, economic and social research in the north Pacific coastal temperate rainforest to support vibrant and resilient communities and ecosystems.”

The current Term Research Assistant Professor, Dr. Jason Fellman, is involved with three inter-related research projects with several UAS faculty and agency collaborators, and has had two UAS undergraduates working with him in the field and laboratory over the past six months. ACRC's ability to provide GF support for Dr. Fellman's workload will directly support his non-grant-funded work with faculty in the Department of Natural Sciences for the development of new research proposals and the development of collaborations with ACRC partners such as the Pacific Northwest Research Laboratory, Alaska Climate Science Center, Department of Commerce, Division of Community and Economic Development, and Alaska EPSCoR.

**C. UAS Mission & Core Themes** (*Identify which aspects of the UAS Mission and Core Themes this request supports and explain how it advances the mission and themes.*)

ACRC plays a key role in supporting the university's mission and core themes. ACRC faculty and staff contribute to "student learning [that is] enhanced by faculty scholarship, undergraduate research and creative activities, community engagement, and the cultures and environment of Southeast Alaska," (UAS Mission Statement).

Student Learning and Student Success: Student learning occurs in the classroom and beyond. Research faculty are critical in providing undergraduates with on-the-ground and in-the-lab research opportunities, as well as in mentoring students, developing their professional skills, and helping them find jobs or graduate programs after graduation. These relationships are key factors in retaining and graduating students as shown by recent MacDowell Group surveys.

Faculty Scholarship: Research faculty can spend most of their time actively engaged in research and scholarship activities, which enrich the intellectual life of the university and community, and contribute to the student experience. Successful research faculty secure grant funding that generates revenue, provides student research opportunities, and creates knowledge to enhance Alaska's communities, economy, and environment.

Undergraduate Research: Faculty members actively pursuing research provide opportunities to include students in research. Undergraduate research experiences lead to greater student retention, provide students with practical research skills, and lead to relevant employment after graduation. At present, our natural science faculty cannot support all the students who want to conduct research, despite taking on teaching overloads every year. Additional research faculty will provide increased research opportunities for our eager students.

Community Engagement: UAS Natural Sciences faculty routinely collaborate with scientists in state and federal agencies to conduct research, and interact with the community through talks, tours, presentations, and mentoring. Research faculty can increase this community engagement through collaborative research and outreach.

Environment of Southeast Alaska: The ACRC's research mission focuses on the environment and communities of the north Pacific coastal temperate rainforest, and any projects under the ACRC umbrella will naturally contribute to this portion of the UAS mission.

**D. UA Statewide Priorities: Shaping Alaska's Future** (*Identify which of the five themes and issues this request supports and explain how.*)

**Theme 1:** Student Achievement and Attainment; Issue C: UA students must demonstrate skills and knowledge in their particular majors.

Undergraduate students that gain real-world field and laboratory research experience are better equipped to fill science-related jobs with state and federal governments, as well as private industry. Research faculty provide these opportunities to our students.

**Theme 4:** Research and Development (R&D) to Sustain Alaska's Communities and Economic Growth; Issues A, C, and E:

UAS is ideally situated to lead and conduct research related to the temperate rainforest region, from icefield to ocean, including work on the effects of climate change. Faculty at UAS are already contributing to world-class research on climate change, glaciology, biogeochemistry, marine biology and forest ecology; however, limited state funding and heavy teaching loads impair their ability to maintain productivity and remain competitive for research and infrastructure grants. Dedicated research faculty help fulfill this important R&D role within the UA system.

**Theme 5: Accountability to the People of Alaska; Issue E: UA will further address revenue generation, cost-effectiveness, and cooperation across the UA system.**

Research faculty provide great value to the UA system because the majority of their salary is covered under grants, yet they mentor students and contribute to the overall mission of the university. A small investment by the university for partial salary support generates revenue in the form of external research funding and overhead to individual departments.

**E. Other Strategic Priorities** *(Explain how this request relates to any other local, regional, or statewide priorities)*

ACRC was established in 2009 by the University and external partners to facilitate and conduct research in the coastal temperate rainforest region. In 2012, the ACRC was fully integrated into the UAS administration, and a director was hired and holds a faculty appointment in the UAS Department of Natural Sciences. ACRC's mission is to "build partnerships and catalyze collaborative ecological, economic and social research in the north Pacific coastal temperate rainforest to support vibrant and resilient communities and ecosystems." ACRC administration is funded by both UAS and UAF, as well as the USDA Forest Service, and serves a vital role in building science collaborations among the MAUs and agency partners. Research faculty will contribute to the overall missions of both the ACRC and UAS (as outlined above). In addition, ACRC plays a leadership role in the Juneau Economic Development Council's Research & Development Cluster Working Group, an effort to build the research industry in southeast Alaska. Research faculty contribute directly to supporting this industry, and represent one type of professional job created by this effort.

**F. OMB Performance Measures** *(Identify the anticipated positive impact of the request on each performance measure or the negative impact of not receiving a replacement funding request.*

*See: [http://uas.alaska.edu/provost/ie/docs/OMB\\_performance\\_measures.pdf](http://uas.alaska.edu/provost/ie/docs/OMB_performance_measures.pdf))*

**Research and Creative Expression: Research proposals**

Highly qualified research faculty will secure grant funding that generates revenue, provides student research opportunities, and creates knowledge to enhance Alaska's communities, economy, and environment.

**Research and Creative Expression: Research assistants**

Faculty are asked to fund undergraduate research assistants in the grant proposals that they write, as long as that is not prohibited by the grant. Successful research faculty routinely hire undergraduate assistants to assist in laboratory and field research. Research faculty in ACRC will increase the number and kind of research experiences and opportunities available to undergraduate students.

**G. How does the increment promote academic excellence, optimize existing capacity, and/or create efficiencies or cost savings?**

Support for research faculty will help promote academic and research excellence through scholarship, facilities, and student mentoring; will optimize existing capacity by providing funding for grant-writing and other activities not currently covered; and will create efficiencies by increasing UAS's capacity to apply for, receive, and maintain research funding and programs.

**H. Budget** (Explain the amount of funds requested for non-personal services expenses such as salary and benefits, travel, contractual, commodities, and capital expenditures. Provide a brief description of the expenditures.)

FTE: .08 FTE term research faculty position (1 month salary & benefits for 9-month UNAC contract with a .75 FTE research appointment)

(Provide the number/fraction of full-time equivalent positions requested and type, e.g. faculty or staff.)

Category	Amount	Description
Salary and Benefits	\$6,600	1 month @ .75 FTE salary + benefits for UNAC term research assistant professor
Travel		
Contractual		
Commodities		
Capital Expenditures		
<b>Total Requested:</b>	<b>\$6,600</b>	

**I. Facilities or other resources** (Explain what facilities needs might be associated with this request—e.g. office space, lab, shop, IT infrastructure, larger equipment)

The ACRC provides office/lab space in the NSRL for term research faculty positions (Fellman, Nagorski) and a research graduate student (Buma); laboratory space for Dr. Fellman is provided through the UAS ACRC partnership with the PNW Laboratory.

Review by Dean/Director

*Karen Schmitt*

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Dean/Director signature reflecting consultation about proposed increment/initiative

**SPBAC Recommendation to Executive Cabinet:**

Pursue funding through:  Legislative Request  Institutional reallocation  School reallocation  Other  
 Do not pursue funding at this time

SPBAC comments to Executive Cabinet:
