



# UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

## **Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies Annual Assessment Report: AY 2022-2023**

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Submitted: April 11, 2024

### **Overview**

The Indigenous Studies Bachelor of Arts is geared towards meeting critical needs in Alaska in the fields of Alaska Native Languages, Alaska Native Arts, and Alaska Native Governance. A student of languages is preparing themselves for work as a language teacher, program administrator, or archivist; a student of arts is preparing themselves for work as a professional artist, scholar of the arts, or a curator; and a student of governance is preparing themselves for work as a board member, employee, or administrator of Alaska Native and affiliate organizations.

This report provides assessment for the bachelor's initial year (AY 2022-2023). It also discusses program strengths, challenges, opportunities for growth, and continued goals.

### **Program Level Learning Outcomes**

#### *Current PLOs as they exists within the UAS Course Catalog:*

Upon successful completion of the Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies, a graduate will be able to:

1. Navigate the interconnected social and economic structures of Alaska Native languages, organizations, histories, and peoples with a strong grounding in the complexities of colonization and assimilation efforts.
2. Advocate for reduction of institutional racism and Indigenous inclusion with foundational knowledge in the topics of Alaska Native histories, oral literatures, self-governance, subsistence, ANCSA, systemic exclusion, genocide, language revitalization, education, and the Alaska Native fight for civil rights.
3. Integrate knowledge of the fundamental interrelationships of Indigenous arts, languages, philosophies, and cultural traditions in workplaces, education, and areas of local, regional, and state governance.
4. Enter the workforce in Alaska Native Tribal Government, ANCSA Corporations and subsidiaries, Alaska Native Consortia, or Alaska Native Heritage Non-profit

organizations.

5. Demonstrate basic comprehension and speaking skills in an Alaska Native language.

Students who complete the Alaska Native Arts Emphasis degree fulfill program objectives should be able to:

1. Identify and explain regional differences and similarities within the Northwest coastal peoples and place them in proper historical context when examining historical and current Northwest Coast visual, performing, and literary arts.
2. Demonstrate competencies in a form of Alaska Native visual, performing, or literary arts and identify the qualities that show mastery in the art forms based on intensive study of masterpieces of Northwest Coast Indigenous arts.
3. Develop comprehensive artist portfolios and statements that allow for professional interaction with galleries, museums, funding agencies, and other artists.
4. Describe historical periods of Alaska Native arts and the effects that colonialism and decolonial activities have had on the development of visual, literary, and performative Northwest Coast arts.

Students who complete the Alaska Native Languages Emphasis degree fulfill program objectives should be able to:

1. Identify and explain the historical differences and interconnectedness of the Indigenous languages of Alaska, which lends to a stronger understanding of how ANCSA regions were developed and how language revitalization strategies can be implemented at the micro, meso, and macro levels.
2. Engage in language revitalization policy and planning activities that contribute to the development and maintenance of Indigenous language schools and programs, including teaching in English-medium environments, speaking and teaching in Indigenous language immersion environments, and operating Indigenous language medium schools.
3. Understand and integrate a wide variety of language teaching methodologies that are designed to promote language use and task-based learning, and to articulate how those methodologies and classroom management philosophies construct individual and programmatic pedagogy.
4. Implement social changes at the micro, meso, and macro level that contribute to ensuring that speakers of Indigenous languages are protected, new speakers are created, and the language is a language of power and use.

Students who complete the Alaska Native Governance Emphasis degree fulfill program objectives should be able to:

1. Apply theories of decolonization and equity to systems of governance and education in efforts to fortify the sovereignty of Alaska Native Tribes and the fiscal sovereignty of Alaska Native Corporations.
2. Articulate the cultural, social, linguistic, and economic impacts of Federal Indian Law in regards to Native American populations, with specific focuses on the unique situations of Alaska Native Tribes, ANCSA Corporations, Heritage Nonprofits, and Consortia.
3. Clearly define the status of Federally Recognized Tribes in regards to federal compacting and contracting, and how that affects the ability to self-govern.
4. Contribute to the capacity of Alaska Native organizations through Indigenous-centered governance, economic development, land stewardship, and

responsibilities to culture and language.

As a new bachelors program that requires at least a 4 year course sequence to complete, we've yet to see our first cohort of graduates. As a new program we also find our current PLOs need to be revisited to better account for current faculty workload capacity, and to better align with program-specific outcomes. A series of work sessions have been scheduled in spring 2024 to address those revisions, with the goal of submitting revised PLOs to Courseleaf in early Fall 2024 for implementation in the next assessment cycle.

We believe however that the core values of the current PLOs, and thus the program, remain the same.

*We recommend changing the PLOs to the following:*

Upon successful completion of the **Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies**, a graduate will be able to:

1. Identify regional differences and similarities within the Northwest coastal peoples and be familiar with Northwest Coast visual, performing, and literary arts.
2. Articulate the cultural, social, linguistic, and economic impacts of Federal Indian Law in regards to Native American populations, with specific focuses on the unique situations of Alaska Native Tribes, ANCSA Corporations, Heritage Nonprofits, and Consortia.
3. Enter the workforce in Alaska Native Tribal Government, ANCSA Corporations and subsidiaries, Alaska Native Consortia, Alaska Native Heritage Non-profit organizations, and school districts.
4. Demonstrate basic comprehension and speaking skills in an Alaska Native language.

Students who complete the **Alaska Native Arts Emphasis** degree fulfill program objectives should be able to:

1. Demonstrate competencies in a form of Alaska Native visual, performing, or literary arts and identify the qualities that show mastery in the art forms based on intensive study of masterpieces of Northwest Coast Indigenous arts.
2. Develop comprehensive artist portfolios and statements that allow for professional interaction with galleries, museums, funding agencies, and other artists.

Students who complete the **Alaska Native Languages Emphasis** degree fulfill program objectives should be able to:

1. Demonstrate increased Indigenous language fluency.
2. Enter the workforce as language speakers, teachers, researchers, documentors, curriculum developers and program leaders in partner organizations.

Students who complete the **Alaska Native Governance Emphasis** degree fulfill program objectives should be able to:

1. Articulate the cultural, social, linguistic, and economic impacts of Federal Indian Law in regards to Native American populations, with specific focuses on the unique situations of Alaska Native Tribes, ANCSA Corporations, Heritage Nonprofits, and Consortia.
2. Contribute to the capacity of Alaska Native organizations through

Indigenous-centered governance, economic development, land stewardship, and responsibilities to culture and language by entering the workforce.

## **Assessment Criteria**

### ***Current assessment criteria as it exists within the UAS Course Catalog:***

Ongoing assessment of the Indigenous Studies Bachelor of Arts will be conducted upon:

- Student self-report of academic, personal, and professional goals at mid-program after completion of ANS S101, ART S263, ANS S460, 1 year of AKL.
- Student self-evaluation of academic, personal, and professional accomplishments completed at program's end.
- Faculty evaluation of each student's culminating project in relation to program learning outcomes (scoring rubric and narrative evaluation).
- Written and oral exit interviews with graduates to gather information about each student's academic course of study, future career and study plans, demographic data, and program satisfaction.
- Annual discussion and comprehensive five-year program review of assessment materials by the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Alaska Native Education.

### ***How is data collected on the PLOs (rubrics, portfolios, etc.)?***

The program needs to fortify data collection processes. We will develop a shared spreadsheet of students and work with Indigenous student advisors and retention specialists to determine ways to track student progress more effectively, and to create a cohort identity.

A committee will be created that represents all three emphasis tracks, and a co-created capstone course will be taught in spring 2025 that will include a number of assessment specific criterias. Discussion is ongoing at the creation of a program specific end of year symposium that would allow students to showcase their work around their specific emphasis areas.

### ***We recommend changing the assessment criteria to the following:***

1. We will assess participants and produce reports of fluency levels and the rates and speeds that students are increasing linguistic proficiency, by utilizing adapted ACTFL scales of fluency, self assessments, and instructor assessments.
2. Program graduates employment placements will be tracked and updated yearly, utilizing exit interviews, surveys, and/or self-reports.
3. Student portfolios, symposium presentations, mock teacher application files, and self assessments will be evaluated by an appointed Indigenous studies committee.
4. Annual discussion and comprehensive five-year program review of assessment materials by the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Alaska Native Education.

## **Data & Evaluation**

The program is in the process of collecting initial data from program graduates, and will be using this information to assess the program and determine what changes need to be made to improve effectiveness and eliminate barriers and redundancies.

This data will be analyzed in program completion meetings that will take place after the semester ends and before faculty go off contract.

## **Goals & Recommendations**

The Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies needs a stronger process to allow for specific student inputs to the direction and identity of the program while also allowing for an internal analysis of the effectiveness of the program. The most difficult part of this process is the fact that all Alaska Native languages, arts, and governance structures are in various states of revitalization, and ongoing challenges in faculty, staff and student recruitment and retention make program management and growth a key focus for this and next year's assessment round.

Nevertheless, we believe a process of ongoing analysis can be implemented that allows for increased cohort activities and program flexibility. As we continue to accept and graduate our first cohort of bachelors students, we will continue to work with our partner organizations to ensure we're meeting the employment needs of both our students, and our organizations.

Ideally, this program could serve as a stepping stone to the upcoming Master of Arts in Teaching Indigenous Languages. The Indigenous Studies Program at UAS is in a state of growth after being hamstrung for decades with a lack of classes, faculty, and degree programs. We will increase the opportunities for students to participate in interviews and collectively review the courses and overall certificate program in a way that is decolonized and free of hierarchies.

In addition, the upcoming efforts to achieve WINHEC accreditation will allow for site visits by faculty members who have constructed similar programs, and will also allow for collaborations and increased internal review.