

Health Sciences Associate of Applied Sciences Report to the Provost February 2024

1.0 Program Overview

The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) Health Science Department provides students with the knowledge, skills, and learning opportunities to achieve or continue education and training toward a career in health care. Health Sciences programs provide a supportive learning environment through small class sizes, individualized advice based on career pathways, and instructors trained and credentialed in health sciences fields.

Health Sciences Associate of Applied Science Description (from the 2023-24 catalog) The Health Sciences Associate of Applied Science prepares students to enter allied health care careers and to apply or transfer to a variety of health care training programs. Students need to consult with a Health Sciences advisor before registering for courses.

A Curriculum Committee request was submitted in 2023-24 to update the description to the following: *The Associate of Applied Science in Health Sciences provides the foundational healthcare knowledge, skills and behaviors for graduates to obtain employment in a healthcare-related position, continue education in a professional health program, or enhance development of those who are employed in healthcare settings. Students need to consult with a Health Sciences advisor before registering for courses.*

2.0 Program Learning Outcomes (Current PLOs)

As outlined in the 2023-34 Assessment Plan, the Health Science faculty, with input from advisors, CELT, UAS Institutional Effectiveness, Campus Directors, and the Health Sciences Dean, have thoroughly reviewed the Health Science AAS PLOs and degree requirements.

New Program Learning Outcomes:

A Curriculum Committee request was submitted in 2023-24 to update the PLOs, degree requirements, and emphasis areas to the following:

1. Demonstrate effective listening, verbal, and written communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information in healthcare environments.
2. Incorporate knowledge of biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, spiritual, economic, and ethical factors into a healthcare foundation.
3. Integrate critical thinking and problem solving appropriate for student's allied health discipline.
4. Exhibit proficiency in the emphasis areas leading to licensure/certification to help meet Alaska's health workforce needs.

According to advisors, since the Pre-Nursing certificate and AAS emphasis requirements are more comprehensive than the UAA Nursing AAS admission requirements so a majority of students do not complete the Health Science AAS and apply for admission to the nursing program as soon as they meet the requirements. The recent 5-year program review also recommended changes for the Health Science AAS to "broaden the approach of the program to be able to transfer to both UAA and beyond ensuring the program meets transfer requirements."

Based on these factors, our workgroup developed a non-specified allied health or 'General' emphasis area to create a flexible curriculum providing a foundation for entering a career in healthcare, offer courses that incorporate multiple healthcare pathways, and increase transferability to other professional programs.

Description of the Degree Options 60 credits

General Education Requirements (18-19 credits):

- WRTG 111 Writing Across Contexts
- WTRG 211 Writing and the Humanities OR WRTG 212 Writing in the Professions • COMM S111 Fundamentals of Oral Communication **OR** COMM S235 Small Group Communication & Team Building **OR** COMM S237 Interpersonal Communication **OR** COMM S241 Public Speaking • MATH 105 Intermediate Algebra **OR** HS 116 Math in Healthcare
- PSY111 Intro to Psychology **OR** PSY S250 Lifespan Development
- HS135 Medical Terminology

The Health Sciences AAS emphasis areas (41-42 credits) were updated to the following: • *General Emphasis:* The revised emphasis area create a flexible curriculum providing a foundation for a entering a career in healthcare, offers courses that incorporate multiple healthcare pathways, and increases transferability to other professional programs using new and existing health sciences courses. • *Medical Assisting Emphasis:* No changes were made to this emphasis area.

- *Behavioral Health Emphasis:* The Health Science AAS with Behavioral Health emphasis and O.E. share the following HUMS classes: 101, 135, 140, 180, 181, 201, 103. Based on the recommendation and request of the Program Director, the Behavioral Health Emphasis area was modified to include the updated designator (BHS) and new classes were added to provide choices to students based on the appropriateness of their lived experiences and career goals. No other course changes were requested at this time.

- *Medical Coding Emphasis (new 2024-25):* Students completing the existing Medical Coding Certificate will now have a pathway to an AAS, similar to the Medical Assisting emphasis area. Existing courses are combined with electives to fulfill the requirements.

Additionally, SOC and STAT were added to the advisor-approved electives in all emphasis areas to help meet and support student goals.

3.0 How the data is collected on the PLOs

Regular assessment of the Health Sciences AAS has been challenging due to the loss of key faculty members charged with overseeing the program due to budget cuts. This has put a strain on Health Sciences faculty managing the required tasks to run and promote Health Sciences programs efficiently. Previously, a lead faculty handled ongoing administrative tasks such as reporting program numbers, curriculum requirements, regulation changes, management of an advisory board, marketing, and program reviews. The latest 5-year program review recommended changes to the Health Sciences AAS, supporting more direct program oversight. In 2022-23 a Health Sciences Chair was formalized with some academic planning and program responsibilities. In 2023-24, after the workgroup collaborated on the above proposals, the Department Chair initiated the curriculum requests and revisions to this program. For 2024-25 existing faculty will collaborate with the Career Ed Dean and Directors to clarify who will have designated workload tasks and responsibility to oversee future data gathering and reporting on the Health Sciences AAS, at a minimum, so that an annual assessment is completed.

4.0 The data collected on the PLOs during the previous academic year

Program assessment was developed quickly last academic year in order to meet the required university deadlines. One faculty member pulled individual student transcripts to formulate a report which is not feasible for this degree to continue to be evaluated. A new design to evaluate the program and assess program outcomes has been developed.

Program Outcome	Outcome Assessment
Demonstrate effective listening, verbal, and written communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information in healthcare environments.	The student will obtain employment in a healthcare related position or continue their education in health profession programs.
Incorporate knowledge of biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, spiritual, economic, and ethical factors into a healthcare foundation.	The student will have completed the AAS and emphasis area requirement with a C (2.0) or better.
Integrate critical thinking and problem solving appropriate for student's allied health discipline.	The student will obtain employment in a healthcare related position or continue their education in health profession programs.
Exhibit proficiency in the emphasis areas leading to licensure/certification to help meet Alaska's health workforce needs.	The student will have attained applicable licensure/certification in Medical Assisting, Medical Coding, or Behavioral Health emphasis areas.

5.0 Evaluation of Data

Faculty submitted the new PLOs and curriculum changes to the UAS Curriculum Committee by the 2023-24 deadline. If the changes are approved this academic year, then evaluation can begin in 2024-25, however, it may take several years of data under the new program design to identify trends.

6.0 Future Program Plans

A significant concern is that the Pre-Nursing and Pre-Rad Tech certificates feeding into the Health Science AAS have been removed from the list of programs available for federal funding. Consequentially, students have had to find alternative funding sources which has had an impact on students entering into the certificate programs. The UAS advisors also report challenges in how to guide pre-nursing and pre-rad tech students, due to loss of funding so we anticipate the Health Sciences AAS curriculum revisions made this academic year will allow more flexibility for students to have pathways into their career goals. The faculty will work with the Career and Technical Education Dean to consider recommendations regarding the continuation/discontinuation of these two certificate programs next year.

The UAA Health Science Chair is working with UAA's program director for the B.S. Health Sciences to align the support courses required for students to get significant transfer credit, and therefore, reducing the degree requirements to primarily the core program courses to complete that UAA degree. There is also willingness from UAA to accept credit for prior learning for our students who may have backgrounds working in the healthcare field and they are in the process of formalizing that through the curriculum committee.

Additionally, the industry approached UAS requesting the development of a Direct Support Professional (DSP) training course, with the subsequent intent of pairing it with existing courses into an Occupational Endorsement, creating a pathway into the Health Sciences AAS. The DSP pilot course is scheduled for June 2024 in Sitka.