

Date: 3/1/2024

To: Carin Silkaitis, Dean of Arts and Sciences, University of Alaska Southeast

From: Program on the Environment Coordinators, Drs. Kevin Maier and Sonia Nagorski

Re: Program on the Environment Annual Assessment for AY 2022-2023

1. Program Overview

The Program on the Environment includes three degrees:

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science
- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Resources
- Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies, which includes an emphasis option in Outdoor Studies

The program provides students with interdisciplinary training that is necessary for addressing a variety of complex environmental issues facing society. The program consists of three degrees with varying amounts of overlap. All three degrees have a shared core of fundamental, cross-cutting courses that serve students pursuing a wide-range of environmental interests.

The B.S. Environmental Science provides students with rigorous training in Earth science, chemistry, climate change, and ecology. The B.S. Environmental Resources shares many courses with the B.S. Environmental Science, but places greater emphasis on human-environment interactions and understanding the Earth from geographic and resource management perspectives. The B.A. Environmental Studies focuses heavily on human-environment interactions, including policy, philosophy, and management. Students in the B.A. Environmental Studies may choose to pursue an emphasis in Outdoor Studies. All three degrees use the natural laboratory available to students in Southeast Alaska through hands-on field exercises and guided research projects with program faculty. All program students are required to complete a capstone, through internships, an individual research project, or a capstone course. Program graduates are well-prepared for (i) employment in resource management, policy, conservation, tourism, and environmental consulting and (ii) to enter graduate programs in environmental sciences or studies, environmental education, environmental policy, political science, sociology, anthropology, geography, and related fields.

The relationships between the three degrees are illustrated in the following table.

B.S. Environmental Science	B.S. Environmental Resources	B.A. Environmental Studies
<i>Program on the Environment Core</i> 9 credits		
<i>Major Requirements</i> 36 credits	<i>Major Requirements</i> 23 credits	<i>Breadth</i> 9 credits
	<i>Interdisciplinary and Field Courses</i> 6 credits	
	<i>Human Environment</i> 6 credits	
<i>Environmental Processes</i> 17 credits (Environmental Science) 14 credits (Environmental Resources)		<i>Concentration requirements</i> Environmental studies emphasis (15 credits) or Outdoor studies (24 credits)
<i>Quantitative & Spatial Analysis</i> 8 credits		
		<i>Electives</i> 30-40 credits

2. Program Student Learning Outcomes (updated in AY 2022)

The Program on the Environment lists the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

By the time that they have finished their degree, all students in the Program in the Environment will be able to:

- 1. Describe the fundamental components and interactions of Earth systems, environments, and social systems, including an understanding of their relevance to Southeast Alaska.*
- 2. Use research techniques to investigate Earth systems and environmental problems.*
- 3. Use diverse written and oral communication skills to effectively communicate environmental issues.*

We spend AY 22/23 updating these PLOs, but they have not make it through the curriculum committee process or to the Provost's website. We have updated the PLOs for all three degrees in Courseleaf as of September 2023. While there were delays getting these through the curriculum committee process, we should be on pace to have these approved for the upcoming catalog.

In this annual program assessment, our program's first, we selected the first PLO to be the focus of this report. In following years, we plan to focus on the second and third. In our Five-year program assessments, we will evaluate all three PLOs together. We have included footnotes about how classes meet the second and third PLOs as well.

3. Methods: How the data on the PLOs were collected

In order to collect data on the effectiveness of the first PLO, we relied on several metrics: the evaluation of a subset of program course syllabi, an evaluation of transcripts of

program graduates, and their exit interviews. For syllabus evaluations, we held meetings with program faculty from Natural Sciences, Humanities, and Social Sciences in October, 2023. Over the course of two 90-minute meetings we selected two courses from each department to evaluate. The faculty group examined syllabi from each of the courses and assessed the degree to which they contribute to the PLO and how well course assignments address both the course-specific student learning outcomes (SLOs) and the PLO. An explicit objective in this process was to foster greater alignment across diverse coursework in our program. There are multiple pathways through the three degrees within the PotE, and this part of the assessment helped ensure that students met the first PLO through their coursework, regardless of their particular pathway.

To collect information from transcripts, we resurrected Degreeworks profiles for our program graduates and discussed their course selections, with particular emphasis on students who transferred in from other institutions. For the exit interviews of our graduates, program coordinators sent emails to each of our program graduates from 2022-2023 and asked them the questions listed in the Appendix of this report and then summarized and compiled the responses. Five of the ten graduates responded to our request for interviews.

4. Results: Data collected on the PLOs

4a. Results of the syllabus evaluations from the 2022-2023 academic year.

Below we summarize how each of the six syllabi we evaluated align with the first program PLO. We also provide our comments on PLO#2 and #3 in the footnotes, which might be useful for future annual assessments.

1. ENVI 120: Cultures and Environments (F2022; Forest Wagner)¹

This course meets the first PLO because it introduces students to the environments and social systems of the world, with particular focus on southeast Alaska. Of special note is the inclusion of oral histories and indigenous histories of southeast Alaska. The SLOs for this class align closely with the first PLO.

2. ENVS 102 (Earth and the Environment: F2022, M. Hekkers)² This

¹ For HUM 120: PLO2: Students conduct research for their midterm essay, to the extent that could be expected in an introductory class. Students draw on their own experiences and outside readings to explore the meaning of culture using key concepts from environmental studies. PLO 3: Students write weekly response papers and give oral presentations to the class, which help build their communication skills while synthesizing and exploring environmental science concepts and interactions.

² For ENVS 102: PLO2: Research techniques are developed by way of weekly labs, which include field investigations and laboratory measurements, as well as by way of the term research paper that involves extensive literature review. PLO3: Students use written skills in each of their weekly labs and in their term research paper, and they use oral skills to communicate environmental science issues to their peers.

course satisfies the first PotE PLO in that it is the foundational class for almost all other Earth science courses offered at UAS. Its focus is on the Earth's physical system, with little emphasis on social systems. The course has a strong focus on the climate system, with specific examples from southeast Alaska and Alaska in general.

3. **ANTH 312 (Humans and the Environment; S2023, Jen Brown):**³
This course satisfies the first PotE PLO in that this course is strong in the study of social interactions, and uses case studies from Alaska and elsewhere in the discussions and readings. This course is not designed for physical geography.
4. **ENVS 338 (Introduction to Geographic Information Systems; F2022, Sanjay Pyare).**⁴
This course satisfies the first PotE PLO in that it teaches students how to understand maps, use geographic information software, and conduct spatial analysis. Thus, students learn about both the components and interactions of physical geographic systems, with some links to human/built systems as well.
5. **ENGL 303: Literature and the Environment (S2023; K.Maier).**⁵
This course satisfies the first PotE PLO in that the main emphasis of this course is the fundamental components and interactions of social systems and environments, using narratives as a lens through which to analyze these interactions and perceptions.
6. **ANTH 314. (Archeology of Southeast Alaska; F2022, Dan**

³ For ANTH 312: PLO2: The final research project for this course employs research techniques to investigate the interactions between people and Earth systems. The research paper has multiple steps and components, including a proposal, bibliography, presentation, and final paper. PLO3: Written skills are Discussion board, short analysis papers, final 8-10 formal research paper. Oral communication skills are covered via the presentation of the project in a recording. This course, being asynchronous, provided a unique way for students to communicate their findings compared to their in-person or even in live online classes, providing opportunities for improving communication.

⁴ For ENVS 338: PLO2: The research techniques in this course are unique compared to other PotE classes, in that students learn to investigate natural and social environments using technology literacy. Students do a research project that occupies a major part of the coursework. This course is instrumental in teaching fundamental GIS skills that are utilized in upper division courses and in student research projects. PLO3: Students present their findings in the form of a scientific poster, and then they have an end of semester poster showcase. Written skill development is limited to the project proposal write up and narrative on the poster.

⁵ For ENGL 303: PLO2: Students meet this PLO by writing two essays and leading discussions, based on research of primary sources and literary criticisms. PLO3: PLO met with this course's emphasis on seminar approach to discussion.

Monteith).⁶

This course satisfies the first PotE PLO because students examine components of Earth and human systems through field research and they look at historic and current readings on archaeology and geology of southeast Alaska, thereby aligning closely with this PLO.

4b. Results of transcript evaluations and exit interviews:

i. Transcript evaluations

In spring of 2023, the Program on the Environment graduated 10 students: 3 in Environmental Resources, 4 in Environmental Science, and 3 in Environmental Studies. Four of these 10 students had transferred to UAS with a large number of classes completed at other institutions. We evaluated a subset of these graduates' transcripts and found that, not surprisingly, all students had successfully completed coursework under the various categories (e.g. Human-Environment, Environmental Processes, and Quantitative & Spatial Analysis) of the degree programs as was required for them to graduate. Many students chose Elective courses that were also complementary to their degree program (e.g. ODS, anthropology, math, and other classes). Students who transferred into the program from another university had classes substituting for some of ours, and we found that they all appeared to have good alignment with our program and its learning outcomes. We did not identify any major incongruities or gaps in the student records, all of which were unique. This suggests that it would be very difficult to complete our degree program without being able to "*describe the fundamental components and interactions of Earth systems, environments, and social systems, including an understanding of their relevance to Southeast Alaska,*" as our first PLO reads.

ii. Exit interviews:

A full compilation of the responses from the 5 alumni who replied to our inquiry are provided in Appendix A1.

In summary, students were attracted to the program due to its location, course selection, outdoor labs, and field research. When asked

⁶ For ANTH 314: PLO2: Students use archaeological and historic research methods to investigate changes in Earth systems and environmental problems in southeast Alaska. Students also critique archaeological research reports
PLO3: Oral: seminar format with weekly leading of discussions and contributions to discussions, and a final research project presentation. Written: Students have periodic shorter analysis papers, culminating in a final research paper on a topic designed by the individual student.

about the program strengths, they cited the excellent faculty, the field components of the classes, small class sizes, discussions that connect western scientific questions to Indigenous ways of knowing, and access to the faculty and staff for helpful inquiries and discussions.

For program weaknesses, alumni cited the small number of courses available, not enough faculty research visibility, and one wished that more workforce professionals outside of the university would have come and talk with students. The alumni also wished there had been classes about graduate school prep, soil science, botany, natural resource and environmental policy, environmental economics, water quality, oceanography, and a field skills class that linked Outdoor Studies with Environmental Science. All but one student said they were not able to take listed courses at some point, due to unavailability (cancellation or irregular offerings).

All respondents agreed that they received effective programmatic advising from their faculty advisors and/or from Denise Carl. Four of the five respondents participated in faculty-led research projects.

The current (at the time of the survey) career status of the respondents are as follows: Environmental Program Specialist for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in the Contaminated Sites program; Special Uses Permit Administrator for the USDA Forest Service Juneau Ranger District; a field technician doing Forest Inventory and Analysis based in interior Alaska; a Naturalist for the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies and a Habitat Restoration Volunteer with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources; and one is unemployed but trying to write a book and looking into graduate school in Environmental Law, Conservation and Resource Management.

In closing, the alumni respondents noted gratitude to the professors for their help, support, and encouragement that included both academics and mental health (“They bent over backwards so many times to help me get through school and to graduation, and I'm beyond grateful. I truly could not have done it without them,” said one); another suggested that everyone should be required to take an anthropology/ subsistence class with Forest Haven; another thanked the Disability Counselor and the testing and study center with the numerous tutors who “were essential in my completion of the program due to the ability to have access to accommodations and being able to talk out the problem with others to helping communicate what I was having difficulties with,” and another finished with, “My experience there is truly a highlight, and I look back on it with a whole lot of love. The Program on the Environment is full of very hardworking, impassioned people.”

4c. Additional program evaluation results:

We also updated the Six Year Course sequence for courses important to our program in ENVS, GEOL, and CHEM.

5. An evaluation/analysis of the data collected

5a. Syllabus evaluations for alignment with the first PLO:

Our evaluation of syllabi showed that each of the six courses had some degree of alignment with the first Program Learning Outcome. Some aligned more strongly than others, but on balance, we deemed that there was a strong coverage of content that fits with the first PLO. The limitations of this exercise were that syllabi do not necessarily give an entire accounting of the material covered in the course. For example, not every class has a strong focus on Southeast Alaska built into the syllabus, even if examples in lectures or brought up in discussion are grounded in our region. This is perhaps most notable if you compare ENVI 120 with ENVS 102; the former includes a deep and sustained focus on Southeast Alaska, while the latter necessarily focuses on broader spatial scales.

5b. Transcript evaluation and Exit interviews:

We found the transcript evaluations to not be of particularly high value, because students are closely advised while at UAS and need to meet stringent graduation requirements in order to receive their diplomas. Our degree programs are structured so that the coursework students engage in meet the PLOs. Because all students met the program criteria, we are confident that the work they did completing their degree programs met our PLOs. Program Co-ordinator Sonia Nagorski met with Assistant Dean Alison Staudinger in January, 2024, and she agreed that this part of the annual assessment is of minimal value and can be discontinued.

More informative were the exit interviews of alumni. The five alumni who replied to our request for post-graduation feedback presented overwhelmingly positive sentiments regarding the Program on the Environment. From these responses, we can conclude that students view the program very highly; especially the field components, access to faculty for research and teaching; academic advising, and small class sizes. Suggestions for improvement were fairly minor but many centered on a wish for a greater availability of classes to choose from. We recognize that not all alumni responded to our request, and it is possible that those who didn't respond had a less favorable view of the program (although that is not our sense, based on what we know about these students).

6. Conclusions and plans for program improvement

6a. Conclusions:

The Program on the Environment at UAS provides a wide variety of courses on the environment, from policy to writing to scientific foundations, and we are strong in our performance of providing students with the first program learning outcome: *Describe the fundamental components and interactions of Earth systems, environments, and social systems, including an understanding of their relevance to Southeast Alaska.* From our evaluation, we found that all of the courses we selected to focus on in this evaluation satisfied this learning outcome, and taken together, we provide a strong academic foundation for our program graduates. Based on our discussion with program faculty and on reading exit interview results from students, we conclude that students come away with a solid achievement of this program outcome. Importantly, we also want to highlight the availability of courses that provide experiential learning opportunities for students. All of the program graduates took multiple courses in which there were many field-based labs, and some took classes with expedition or multi-day field excursions. These types of courses take the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom and extend them into real-world settings, which deepens their understanding, builds skill sets, and ignites excitement and inspiration to succeed and progress in their academic endeavors.

6b. Suggestions and plans for future years:

Careful faculty advising is especially important for the Program on the Environment degrees; we need to continue to encourage students to meet with advisors frequently. Notably, there are routinely special topics/current topics courses that clearly align with program learning outcomes and that may fit in various categories in our degree requirements, so we need good advising to ensure students are aware these can be counted. For example, PSY 375 Environmental Psychology was offered in the spring of 2023. It is not a cataloged class and it therefore doesn't look like it counts in the program; careful faculty advising can ensure that courses like these that might appear in electives in Degreeworks could count for core requirements. It would also be beneficial to have more regular social events for students and faculty where we can share this information. We look forward to the new student space in the new Áak'w Tá Hít building for such events. In years past, we have hosted barbeques for students to create group cohesion early in fall semester. Events were canceled for weather several times in AY 22-23, and our single social gathering occurred at Auke Rec near the conclusion to spring semester. We should prioritize offering an event in fall semester to keep lines of communication open between faculty and students and to encourage community building among the students.

In discussing student pathways through the degree at our faculty assessment meetings, we discovered that there are some complications in advising ODS track students, as the catalog includes several asterisks and footnotes. It may make sense to mark the ODS pathway with a separate column, not unlike how the BS degrees appear in the catalog. It may be as simple as reformatting the catalog and website, rather than a strictly curriculum committee project. We are also contemplating a change in title for ENVI 120 to more accurately reflect course SLOs and content. The proposed new title will be "Introduction to Environmental Studies." And we need to clean up the last of the geography relics in the degree program. These curriculum changes will be priorities for meetings this spring and fall.

In conducting this assessment, we found some room for improvement in this process for future annual reports. While we found very good alignment across SLOs and PLOs, we also discovered that syllabi alone may not be the best tool for evaluating PLOs, as the assignments are not totally described or outlined on the syllabi we reviewed. It may make sense to also evaluate a sample of representative student work as well as course assignments and to examine fewer classes but in more detail. As for student exit interviews: we learned that it is important to solicit exit interviews from students before they fully leave UAS in order to get a higher response rate and to ensure that we have contact information for each of them.

Otherwise, program improvement can always be expected if UAS achieves greater success with recruitment of students from Alaska and beyond to attend our university. There is a lot of room for increasing our class enrollments (while still maintaining high faculty to student ratios), which could help achieve more student community, program allegiance, and eventually even justify expanding the number of faculty in our program. With more faculty, we could offer more diverse classes with more frequent offerings in the course schedules.

Appendix: Exit Interview Questions and Responses

Below is a compilation of responses from the class of 2023 alumni to a Program on the Environment exit survey we sent out in October 2023. Of the ten students we sent survey requests to, we received responses from five. Here we compile our questions, with the 5 responses below each.

1. What attracted you to the UAS Program on the Environment?

- Honestly, I just wanted to transfer to the closest program to be near my parents back when my dad's diagnosis was still considered terminal. I didn't know much about UAS, but I met with Eran Hood along with my folks on a snowy day and I thought it was beautiful and I liked Eran's description of the program. I came in with a lot of naivete and just lucked out.
- I spent my freshman year of college at Portland State University studying Environmental Studies. The entire time I was in that program I felt so disconnected to the material I was learning. I then decided to move home and attend UAS in Program on the Environment. I was drawn to being immersed in the material and being challenged in learning new concepts about the place I have called home my entire life.
- I chose to enter the environmental studies program at UAS because the program was very flexible in what courses I could take. I liked that I was able to take a wide range of courses that all counted towards my degree. Having the ability to dive into both humanities and science courses was of the utmost appeal to me as I was not so much interested in the "hard" science courses that were required of the environmental science and resources degrees. I know I am unlikely to pursue a job that necessitates those skills so it was good to divert my time with other courses I was more interested in. Aside from the flexibility in the courses I could take, I enjoyed the smallness of the program and the school overall. As an exchange student through NSE, I did not plan on transferring to UAS but I enjoyed it much more than my previous university so I stayed. My decision to stay was highly motivated by the UAS Program on the Environment.
- I was attracted to the UAS Environmental Science Program to expand my education from life cycles and individual species to the environment/habitat that they reside in to gain a better understanding of how our outside environment affects the health and well-being of species as whole and individuals organisms and how the expedited change in climate that is occurring faster than expected affect them.
- I think the initial draw for me was the outdoor labs and field research opportunities that come with such a beautiful location. Then, once I started talking to faculty, I fell in love with the customizability of the program. I came to UAS on-the-fence between a Biology degree and an Environmental Science degree, so the opportunity to use electives and upper-division field classes to explore and specialize my interests was key to getting the education I wanted.

2. How many years did you spend in the program?

- I feel a bit sheepish to admit I'm not sure how many years I spent in the program. I think I transferred to UAS back in 2015? Hardly any of my credits transferred and I took some semesters off and mostly went to school part time so I could also work. It added up to a lot of years working towards a bachelor's degree.
- Three years.
- I spent one and a half years in the program. In other words, I did three semesters and one summer internship through UAS. My other schooling was completed before coming to UAS at another university.
- I spent 4 years in the program.
- Two, my junior and senior years

3. What were the strongest or most effective aspects of the program?

- Amazing professors. UAS is so lucky to be nestled in this incredible location with awesome research opportunities that attract world class scientists. I know I'm biased, but I think the environmental science/ environmental resources program is the star of the school. Eran, Sonia, Sanjay, and Brian Buma (while he was at UAS) are the best of the best.
- The ability to provide classes and facilitate discussions that connect western scientific questions to Indigenous ways of knowing.
- The strongest and most effective aspects of the program were the field components of courses, the small class sizes, and the good-naturedness of the faculty within the program. The hands-on learning and accessibility to one-on-one time with professors made learning uncomplicated.
- The strongest and most effective aspects of the program were the specialized science and math classes that seemed to be purposely included with each other to aid in the comprehension of the studies and statistics that were a part of the coursework.
- I think the bulk of the program's impact comes from the staff and faculty. I always felt (and continue to feel, past graduation) that I could ask my professors for advice or help in any capacity, whether that be with schoolwork or future career plans, and I would always be met with genuine, engaged responses. In applying for jobs post-graduation, employers seem to be most impressed with my background in GIS and drone surveys. More than once, I've had interviewers ask me if I would be willing to start a drone/GIS program for them, even if initially the job had no relation to the technology. I think that Sanjay's GIS class series, along with the newer drone-focused courses, are going to be increasingly important in the environmental field. I also can't stress enough the importance of field labs and the shorter field intensive classes. Getting hands-on experience gave me a relevant application for the topics learned in classes, and also strengthened my love for the field by making learning fun.

4. Can you think of specific ways that we could improve the Program on the Environment for future students?

- I know that this is really unlikely to ever happen at a traditional university, but one thing I really thought Evergreen State College (where I transferred from) got right was turning the traditional model inside out. Rather than teaching these obscure, broad concepts

first, they would start with the narrowed in applied applications and use those to work outwards to the broad concepts. I always felt I did best when I took courses out of order, such as hydrology before physics, or biogeochemistry before basic chem. That's a strategy I can't see UAS adopting though.

- Bring in professionals of specific fields to debate in front of students. For example, have the Alaska Forest Association and local tribes debate the Alaska Roadless Rule. This would help students understand the diverse user group interest that our natural resources possess. As a student at UAS it can often be presented that everyone is climate positive in environmental careers but that is not the case, especially related to mineral development.
- In my time at UAS, I think the biggest hurdle for me was the small number of courses available. Coming from a large university I was used to having almost endless options of courses to choose from, whereas at UAS there is a much smaller pool of courses to choose from. It worked out that most of the classes I chose were interesting to me, though it would have been nice to have more courses to choose from. I understand the difficulty in having more classes available seeing how small the school is and the resources are limited.
- Some ways to improve the Program for other students would be to expand other options to substitute Chem 2. Gen Chem 1 was an easier class to associate with the other courses required for the program, however, Chem 2 seemed to be more in-depth than what the other courses discussed and it seemed to be disconnected from the remaining education requirements.
- I would suggest emphasizing faculty research! My most impactful and meaningful experiences came from working with my professors on their personal research projects. I wouldn't be where I am without it. Perhaps having more showcases for faculty to present their research, or encouraging professors to bring up their work in classes, would open up the opportunity for undergraduate students to get connected with research that they find inspiring.

5. Are there any courses that were not offered that you feel would have strengthened the program?

- I would have liked to see a grad school prep class. I remember there was this class (that I can't recall the name of now) where we had various professionals from the field come in and talk about their careers and answer our questions. One class, the guest speaker was a no-show, so Eran asked if we had any questions for him. It turned out we all had so many questions about grad school and the application process.
- I hoped to take Environmental Ethics but it routinely was cancelled.
- I would have been interested in taking soil science, botany, natural resource and environmental policy, environmental economics, and water quality courses.
- I feel that courses that expanded into oceanography as a part of the Environmental program would provide additional strength to ensure the complete encompassment of environmental science due to the fact that the oceans play such a huge role in the

environment naturally that this is a huge missing factor in environmental studies/science. If we want to learn about how the environment works and all the cycles that are included within them then expanding that to the oceans would only help.

- I'd love to see more interaction between the ODS program and the ENVS program! I think there is a lot of very cool overlap between the two programs that students of both disciplines could benefit from experiencing. Perhaps creating some sort of "Field Skills Basics" class for students who want to research in remote Alaskan environments. It would be useful to go over basic backcountry skills like tent set-up, cooking, bear safety, while also mixing in things like keeping a field journal, logging data, setting up different equipment (time-lapse cameras, drones, etc). It's a super broad topic that I think could take students really far!

6. Did you feel that you received effective academic advising in the course of completing your degree?

- Yes. I had friends in other degree programs at UAS who didn't have that experience, but everyone I knew in the Environmental Sci program felt that they received great academic advising.
- Yes. Eran Hood helped me graduate a semester early and always recommended classes catered to my specific career goals.
- Yes, all teachers and advisors were extremely willing and able to help me through the process of completing my degree.
- Yes, Sonia and Denise were not only effective in my advising but they were able and willing to work with me when health issues arose during my time there.
- Definitely! Both from my assigned advisor and from the rest of my faculty. I never had any problems with class registration, and my advisor was always available and willing to meet about anything, from current day school problems to long-term career planning. I am also so impressed that I was able to start taking classes towards my degree while I was still an exchange student, and that no troubles arose when I went to transfer all my credits over as a transfer student.

7. Did you feel courses were available when you wanted to take them?

- Not always. There were some courses that were on an every-other-year schedule that sometimes made it hard to piece together. That's the tradeoff to a smaller program at a small school though- and the benefits greatly outweigh the drawbacks. With a small program your professors really get to know you and invest in your academic career, and you build comradery with your classmate that stays with you beyond graduation.
- Sometimes. I ran into the issue of having classes cancelled due to low enrollment.
- Yes.
- Some were and some weren't, but I feel that this is pretty normal for a smaller campus and that space and time are limiting factors. There is only so much faculty and there is only so much time to grade/mark projects, homework, quizzes, and exams. Professors,

students, other faculty, and staff all need the same life, work, and home balance to ensure the greatest success.

- I never had any problems with classes conflicting on a weekly schedule. I think I wanted to take Glaciology at some point, but the yearly rotation meant that it didn't show up while I was there.

8. Did you participate in an undergraduate research project during your degree, and if so, in what capacity?

- I participated in a handful of paid student internships that involved research projects. One example was working for the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center on a hydrology project that we presented at the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in Sitka, AK.
- I had a full-time internship for the USDA Forest Service as a junior and senior. I was the assistant coordinator for the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy and an ANILCA Cabins Resource Assistant.
- I did an undergraduate research project as a part of my degree. I researched and wrote a lengthy paper on the effects of large agriculture on the environment and climate and how it affects not only climate change but the ongoing negative health aspects that are associated.
- No.
- I worked for a year with Jason Amundson and Eran Hood on the drone surveys of Suicide Basin and Taku Glacier. It was an incredible experience both personally and professionally, and definitely drove me to a research-centered career today. I mostly did data work in the school year, and helped with field work during the summer. I was also able to jump into a couple various projects that summer as opportunities arose, such as stream sampling with Eran's crew or time-lapse camera setup in Glacier Bay with Jason. I was also able to travel to two separate conferences and present two posters during the school year. The whole experience has been indescribably valuable to me.

9. What are you doing career-wise now, and/or what are your career or graduate school plans?

- I'm an Environmental Program Specialist for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in the Contaminated Sites program. I'm new to this role, but so far enjoy it. I still consider grad school, but have no concrete plans.
- I work for the USDA Forest Service Juneau Ranger District as a Special Uses Permit Administrator. I hope to eventually attend graduate school for Public Administration with an emphasis in Natural Resource Management.
- I just finished a seasonal position working as a field technician doing Forest Inventory and Analysis based in interior Alaska. I am now taking some time off. At the moment I have no plans for graduate school.
- Currently, I am unemployed. I am trying to write a book, and am researching how to start a podcast. I have applied to many places and had lots of interviews, but can't seem to land anything in regards to work. I have been looking at going back to school to attend a master's program but to do that I would need to take a few electives to increase my accumulative GPA to be in the right range for consideration that would have to be covered out of pocket. If I were to try to expand into a master's program I would be

interested in Environmental Law, Conservation and Resource Management, or land use management. I have also been looking into herbalism schools to become an herbalist and work with indigenous plants of the area to build and gain importance around these plants and to try to aid in people living healthier lives.

- I am currently making my way through a couple of seasonal jobs as I prepare for grad school a few years down the line. I spent this past summer working in a Naturalist position with the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies in Homer, AK. This was a mostly environmental education position centered on intertidal and coastal rainforest ecology. This October, I'll start a 7-month stint on Kure Atoll, working as a Habitat Restoration Volunteer with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. I'll be part of a 4-person team that lives in a remote field camp on the 200-acre island, eradicating invasive plants and monitoring the populations of seabirds and seals that inhabit the atoll. In the very long-term, I want to eventually become a professor, hopefully specializing in migratory seabirds. Before I get there, I'd love to spend more field seasons in remote bird colonies, specifically on the Aleutians or with the penguins in Antarctica. Grad school is on the horizon, but only once I feel I've spent enough time in the field to choose a Master's degree that fits me.

10. Are there ways that the Program on the Environment could have better prepared you for your expected career pathway?

- The Program on the Environment offered me many paid student internships that provided me with a diverse and well rounded resume before I'd even graduated.
- I think that at least one class within the Program on the Environment should have a Federal and State resume building unit.
- As a Greenhorn graduate, I feel content with my experience in the program and well-prepared for finding a career.
- I feel like if there needed to be classes or seminars on how to find work in the field, or how to build up cover letters or resumes that really showed off the education that we received and how to incorporate that into the workplace would have really helped. It's definitely what I'm struggling with the most now that I've graduated.
- Not that I can think of off the bat! I think the program did a great job!

11. Any other comments?

- I'm so grateful to my professors for their help, support, and encouragement that went beyond academics. I struggled a lot with mental health during my time at UAS and my professors were incredibly supportive and understanding. They bent over backwards so many times to help me get through school and to graduation, and I'm beyond grateful. I truly could not have done it without them.
- I think that everyone should be required to take an anthropology/subsistence class with Forest Haven. Her class best prepared me to be mindful and aware of Indigenous ways of knowing especially while in a government capacity. I am willing to discuss any of my comments further if needed.

- I genuinely loved this program and the fact that it was a small campus where I was able to be on a first-name basis with my professors and the small class sizes provided me with the security to feel comfortable to go talk to them if I was having any issues understanding the concepts that we were discussing and it really aided in me being able to gain the knowledge that was being presented to me. The Disability Counselor and the testing and study center with the numerous tutors were essential in my completion of the program due to the ability to have access to accommodations and being able to talk out the problem with others to helping communicate what I was having difficulties with.
- Thank you so much to everyone I worked with at UAS. My experience there is truly a highlight, and I look back on it with a whole lot of love. The Program on the Environment is full of very hardworking, impassioned people.