

# UAS ALASKA NATIVE REPRESENTATION & SUCCESS 2021

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*recognize the series of unjust actions that attempted to remove them from their land, which includes forced relocations and the burning of villages. We honor the relationships that exist between Lingít, and their sovereign relationships to their lands, their languages, their ancestors, and future generations. We aspire to work toward healing and liberation, recognizing our paths are intertwined in the complex histories of colonization in Alaska. We acknowledge that we arrived here by listening to the peoples/elders/lessons from the past and these stories carry us as we weave a healthier world for future generations.*

## PREFACE

Directed by the Board of Regents Alaska Native Success Initiative, a team representing the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) formed and met weekly since February 15, 2021 to formulate an understanding of Alaska Native experience, identify possible strategies to improve the institution of higher education, and provide suggested strategies for system improvement. This important work has taken place in an unconventional manner due to mpo-41(due7(m)7(po-)13(l)7( )-41(m)7(a)





## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Three major priorities were identified as critical to Alaska Native representation and success by this committee:

**PRIORITY #1 Institutional Change Vision, Leadership, and Messaging on systemic racism**

**PRIORITY #2 Alaska Native Staff and Faculty Recruitment & Retention**

**PRIORITY #3 Alaska Native Student Recruitment & Retention**

The committee was unified in support of systemic improvement for the benefit of the development of a healthy, robust learning environment not only for its tribal citizens, but for Alaska.

These priorities evolved during discussions of both broad and specific themes and ideas, data, and resources on the topic of higher education. Each of the three priorities support the importance of transparency in use of data to tell the story of Alaska Native representation and success within the University of Alaska Southeast. Each meeting included data and related resources and conversation. The value of each member shared knowledge, experiences, and observations, collaboration and consensus toward priority recommendations was honored. This summary highlights the priorities of system improvement from an Alaska Native perspective.

**PRIORITY ISSUE #1**

**Institutional Change, Vision, Leadership on System Racism & Inclusivity:**

Is the University of Alaska Southeast doing sufficient analysis in ways that systemic racism impacts the Alaska Native population, and then making systemic adjustments so that Alaska Native students are not forced to assimilate their behavior, learning styles, and ways of thought and expression in order to succeed?

<b>Goal</b>	Eliminate institutional racism
<b>Strategies</b>	Develop an articulated vision statement on anti-racism and establish an organization standard and defined standard for assessment and reporting for continued growth.
<b>Strategies</b>	Implement mandatory training and evaluations for faculty and staff. Develop a transparent process for prevention, intervention, and resolution response strategies.
	Implement a transparent process for reporting violations of discrimination, anti-racism, and/or cultural safety. Define standards for grievances ( <a href="#">current process</a> ) To provide context to these priorities, the committee suggests that narratives be gathered and used to document incidents of students, staff, and faculty regarding institutional racism, to measure change over time, and evaluate its effort.
<b>Action</b>	Develop common terms and related resources for faculty and staff
	Propose changes at faculty senate, union, and staff council. **

\*\*Further, a public acknowledgement of racism within our systems, and an articulated commitment to addressing systemic racism be considered as one of the steps toward accountability. Currently, the success of Alaska Native faculty in education is not tied to any performative measures within the UA systems, meaning no one seems to be accountable for the systemic failures. Faculty reluctant to embrace diversity, decolonization, and equity, are able to avoid accountability by citing academic freedom or unfamiliarity of content in order to exclude Indigenous peoples, languages, histories, and organizations as pertinent to their specialty. Until there are systemic changes within many areas of the University of Alaska, we will continue to

The UAS committee was provided an example of UA faculty response in support of racial justice.

United Academics AAUP/AFT Local #4996

[UA Faculty Union - United Academics](#)

[United-Academics-Embrace-Antiracism-and-Support-Black-](#)



<b>Goal</b>	Ensure that our population of students, staff, faculty, and administration match the population of Southeast Alaska. (add one two five year plans all strategies can summary, action ideas)
<b>Strategy</b>	Set a goal of 20% Alaska Native faculty, staff, and administration.
<b>Strategy</b>	Increase Alaska Native Staff - "Grow our own" program that defines hiring target and supports AKN faculty opportunities and Ph.D. attainment
<b>Strategy</b>	Increase Alaska Native faculty - "Grow our own" program that defines hiring target and supports AKN faculty opportunities and Ph.D. attainment
<b>Action</b>	Make a declaration! Articulate publicly a commitment and establish measurable progress goals to hire and retain Alaska Native staff and faculty.



## PRIORITY ISSUE #3

### Alaska Native Student Recruitment & Retention

The committee reviewed a range of data and discussion on barriers to Alaska Native student success. Often, the discussion points included building a community of support that included Alaska Native tribal organizations in support of Alaska Native students as they engage in higher education goals. This includes creating an anti-racist climate and culture, and social and emotional supports, and cultural safety (identity).

#### UAS Institutional Effectiveness data points:

Compared to the overall retention and graduation rates:

**Bachelors:** Bachelor seeking Alaska Native students and out of state students have lower retention rates. At 200% Time to Degree (8 years) Males and Alaska Native students have lower graduation rates, but out of state students do not.

**Associates:** While Alaska Native associate seekers do not show retention differences, their graduate rate is 11% lower than the overall rate. Males and other minority students have lower retention rates as well, but their graduation rates are just slightly lower than the overall rate.

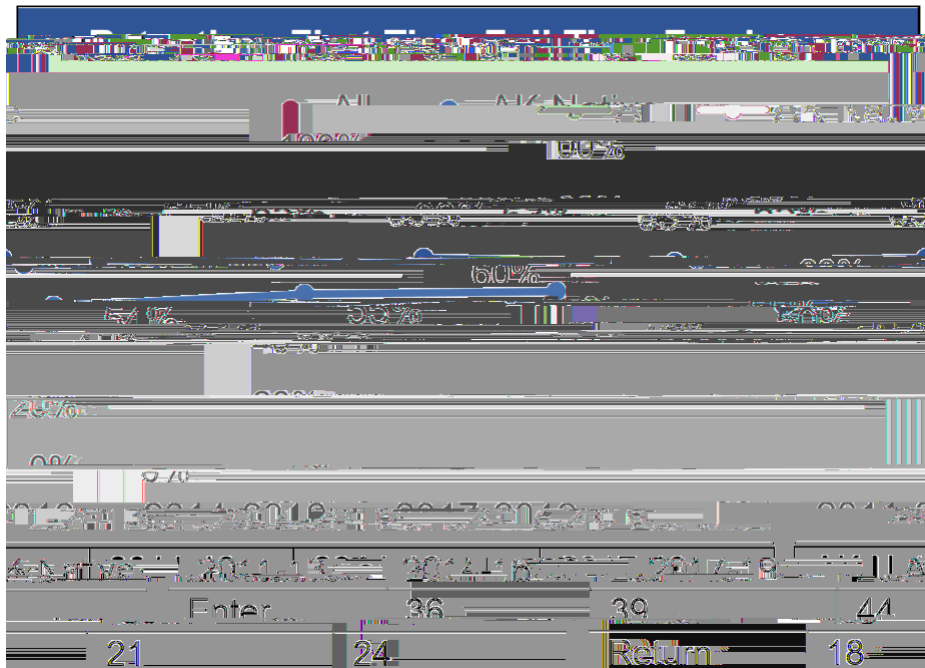
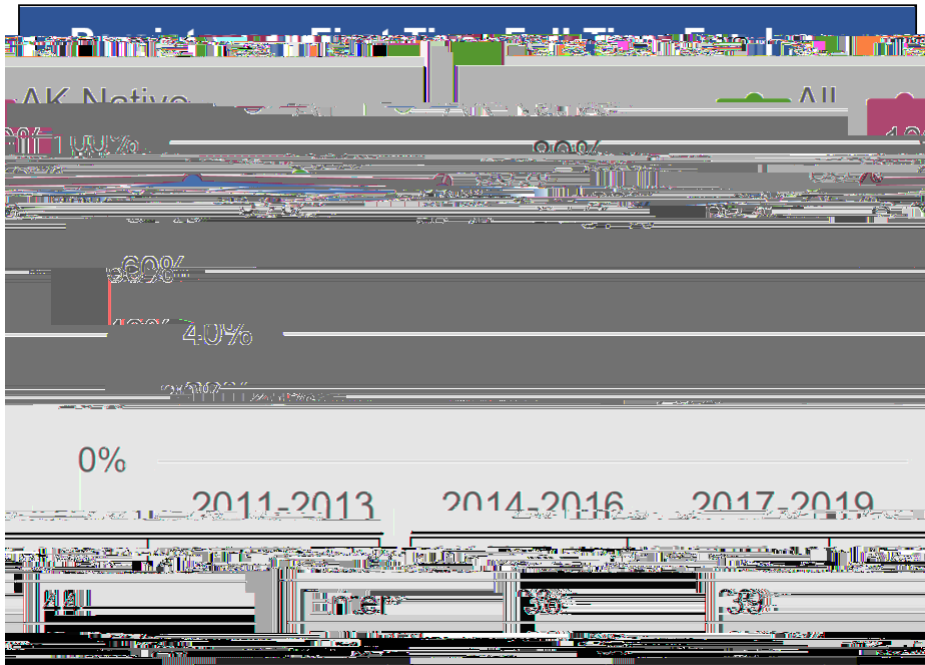
**Certificates:** Females have a lower retention rate, but their graduation rate is just slightly lower. Alaska Native students have a slightly higher retention rate, yet the graduation rate is 8% lower than the overall rate.

Source: *Beyond IPEDS* [Beyond IPEDS, All Students Data](#)

**Alaska Native Student Success, K. Handley, IE. This link contains a comprehensive summary of persistence, retention, and degree completion:**

[Alaska Native Student Success, March 2021](#)

## Persistence & Retention Rates for First-Time Full-Time



**Persistence & Retention Rates for First-Time Full-**

