



**Alaska  
Commission on  
Postsecondary  
Education**

COLLEGE & CAREER PLANNING • FINANCIAL AID • CONSUMER PROTECTION  
Promoting Higher Education & Training for Alaska

*Fall Quarter Commission Meeting*

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*October 19, 2023*

ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting #: 949 7685 9815

Password: ACPE

Teleconference: 1 (888) 788-0099; Code: 949 7685 9815 #

**AGENDA**

**Thursday, October 19, 2023**

- 1.\* 10:00 a.m. Convene/Roll Call
- 2.\* Adoption of Agenda
  - *Suggested Motion: move to adopt the agenda of the October 19, 2023, Commission Meeting.*
3. Ethics Disclosure Relative to Adopted Agenda
- 4.\* Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 13, 2023
  - *Suggested motion: move approval of the meeting minutes from the July 13, 2023, Commission meeting.*
- 5.\* Committee Appointments
  - Confirmation action not required:
    - Institutional Standards and Evaluation –
      - Josh Bicchinella
      - Keith Hamilton
      - Donald Handeland
      - Trish Zugg
      - John Brown
    - Internal Audit –
      - Karla Head
  - Confirmation action required:
    - Executive Committee –
      - Keith Hamilton
      - Lorri Van Diest
    - *Suggested Motion: move approval of Commissioners Hamilton's and Diest's appointments to the Executive Committee.*
6. Welcome New Members
  - Lorri Van Diest
  - Paula Harrison
  - Karen Perdue
  - Justina Hamlin

ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

- 7.\* Determine October 2024 Meeting Date
- *Suggested motion: move the Commission to hold its fall 2024 quarterly meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2024.*
8. Public Testimony:
- Individuals: 3-minute limit
  - Group Representatives: 5-minute limit
9. 10:15 a.m. University of Alaska Update –Vice President Paul Layer
10. 10:35 a.m. Executive Director Report – Sana Efird
- 11.\* 10:55 a.m. Personnel Bylaws Review
- *Suggested Motion: move approval of the suggested amendments to the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education’s Personnel Bylaws.*
12. 11:15 a.m. Almanac Presentation – Kierstin Keller, Publications Specialist
13. Noon Break
14. 1:00 p.m. Compliance Activities Report – Tyler Eggen, Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator
- 15.\* Institutional Standards and Evaluation – Tyler Eggen, Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator
16. 1:45 p.m. Management Team Reports:
- Finance – Julie Pierce
  - Program Operations – Jackie Hall
  - Communications and Outreach – Kate Hillenbrand
  - Information Support Services – Jamie Oliphant
  - HR Update – Written Report
17. 2:10 p.m. Commissioner and Department Reports:
- Alaska Student Loan Corporation – Barbara Adams
  - Board of Education and Early Development – Lorri Van Diest
  - Board of Regents – Karen Perdue and/or Paula Harrison
  - Community Colleges – Vacant
  - Student Representative – Justina Hamlin
  - Alaska Workforce Investment Board – Trish Zugg
  - Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network – Written Report
18. 2:45 p.m. Miscellaneous:
- Administrative Action Log
  - Commission Members’ Affiliations
  - Future Scheduled Meeting Dates
    1. January 11, 2024

ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

2. April 17, 2024

3. July 11, 2024

d. ACPE Commonly Used Acronyms

19. 2:50 p.m. Mission Moment

20. 2:55 p.m. Commissioner Closing Comments

21.\* 3:00 p.m. Adjournment

- *Suggested Motion: move the Commission adjourn the October 19, 2023 meeting.*

**\*Action Required**

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

A meeting of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), conducted via distance delivery, originated from the office of the Commission at 3030 Vintage Boulevard, Juneau, Alaska on Thursday, July 13, 2023. Chair John Brown called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

**ATTENDEES**

Commission members present for all or portions of the meeting: Chair John Brown, Vice Chair Josh Bicchinella, Dr. Barbara Adams, Keith Hamilton, Donald Handeland, Trish Zugg, Senator Löki Tobin, Paula Harrison, and Representative Julie Coulombe.

Commission members absent: Karla Head, Justina Hamlin, Karen Perdue, and Lorri Van Diest.

Commission staff present for all or portions of the meeting: Sana Efird, Executive Director; Julie Pierce, CPA, Chief Finance Officer; Kerry Thomas, Director of Program Operations; Kate Hillenbrand, Director of Communications and Outreach; Jamie Oliphant Director of Information Support Services, Tyler Eggen, Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator; Susan Sonneborn, Assistant Attorney General; and Dannielle Erickson, Executive Secretary.

Presenters in attendance: Vice President Paul Layer and AlaskaCAN! President Theresa Novakovich

Institutional representatives in attendance: Jeff Siemers with Alaska Christian College; Krista Staveland with Generations Southeast Community Learning Center; Christopher Lisenby, Joshua Green, and Misty Lisenby with the Alaska Driving Academy; Duane Polsdofer, Alexis Harris, Ron Spradling, and Cory Brown with Waldorf University; and Heather Allen, Josh Swayne, and Joel Nelson with Charter College.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Vice Chair Bicchinella moved to adopt the agenda of the July 13, 2023 Commission Meeting. Chair Brown seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

**ETHICS DISCLOSURE**

Vice Chair Bicchinella and Commissioner Hamilton declared conflicts of interest for agenda item 16 involving Charter College and Alaska Christian College. Both members abstained from discussion and voting on their respective conflicts.

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION**

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

**Vice Chair Bicchinella moved to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation as written for Representative Andi Story. Commissioner Zugg seconded. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Vice Chair Bicchinella moved to adopt approve the July 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Zugg seconded. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

**Discussion:** *None.*

**MEETING DATE**

**Commissioner Hamilton moved to schedule the summer 2024 commission meeting on July 11, 2024. Commissioner Zugg seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

*Discussion: None*

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Chair Brown opened the public testimony period. There being no testifiers, Chair Brown closed the public testimony period.

**ALASKACAN! PRESENTATION – PRESIDENT THERESA NOVAKOVICH**

President Novakovich began her presentation by explaining that she would be sharing the history and purpose of AlaskaCAN! as well as its future objectives and goals going forward. She explained that she is the Director of the South Central Alaska Area Health Education Center, AHEC, which is hosted by the Alaska Primary Care Association. Additionally, she serves as the Health Education Coordinator Coach for the Alaska Primary Care Association, and significantly, and part of the reason that she is here serving in this capacity, she is a class of 2022 Graduate of the University of Alaska Anchorage. She is passionate about postsecondary education. She started as a college student back in the late 1980s but did not complete her education, as she took time off to raise a family. When she got back into the workforce, it became evident that her opportunities were severely limited by her lack of postsecondary credentials, and at the age of 50, she went back to school and, while working full time, completed her education, graduating in May of 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology.

She added that because of her passion for the work that AlaskaCAN! does, she ran for the Board of Directors a little over a year and a half ago. She has been serving as President just in the last few months, since their last election in March of 2022.

Next, she provided a little history by explaining that AlaskaCAN! is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit member organization, and they are united in fostering and supporting a culture of postsecondary

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

participation and success with the goal of positively impacting Alaskans, their families, and ultimately Alaska's economy. Funding for AlaskaCAN! initially came through ACPE's Federal US College Access Challenge Grant. Its work started in 2013, with the first board member elected into office in December of that year. AlaskaCAN! was incorporated as an independent entity of the State of Alaska on January 29, 2016. AlaskaCAN! started because the Center on Education and the Workforce Center on Education and Workforce at Georgetown University projected that by 2020, 66% of Alaskan jobs would require some type of postsecondary credential. Data at the time showed that only 55% of the Alaska adult population had postsecondary credentials. At that point, Alaska was already facing an inadequate supply of industry credentials and certificates in the skill trades. What was and is more concerning is that Alaska has been one of a minority of states in which the share of adults ages 45 to 64 held more degrees than those 25 to 34. This is significant because it indicates that younger generations are earning fewer postsecondary credentials than previous generations. In fact, Alaska's difference in postsecondary attainment between these age groups is the starkest of any state in the nation. It is not only the younger generation though - a full 30% of Alaskans have started some form of postsecondary education, but never actually received a credential. This entity alone, they know, cannot change the tide. However, collectively, they believe they can influence this complex issue. The goal of AlaskaCAN! is to foster an increase in the percentage of Alaskan adults with postsecondary credentials to 65% by 2025.

AlaskaCAN! is led by a 16 member Board of Directors elected to a 3-year term. The Board of Directors composition is intended to represent key constituencies and stakeholder groups, such as postsecondary student services, registered apprenticeships, state agencies, Alaska Native Organizations, community organizations and nonprofits, including members of the general community at large. AlaskaCAN! committees have been established and adapted over time to ensure that they align with the purpose and strategic priorities of AlaskaCAN! Each committee and their work play a critical role in advancing AlaskaCAN! priorities through building community and making a positive impact across Alaska's educational and workforce landscape. Annually, AlaskaCAN! brings together secondary educators and administrators, postsecondary education and career training providers, business and nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and student representation in the community at large to better understand the core challenges that Alaskans face and empower individual organizations and service providers to help them reach their ambitious goal.

This year's conference theme, *Moving Forward Together*, built on the shared vision of Alaska's education and workforce stakeholders. If they are to find ways to approve postsecondary team and workforce readiness in Alaska, they know that they must do so together. The first day of the conference focused on the student experience, they heard from a student panel comprised of students from secondary and postsecondary education, career and training pathways and recent graduates regarding their experience in pursuing education and training during and after high school. Later that day, the bridging programs panel spoke on programs and organizations currently available to youth as they make the transition from secondary education into postsecondary and the workforce. In between the panels, they heard from State leaders representing Alaska Native Organizations, state agencies, and the University of Alaska System. They closed the first day of the conference with a work session looking at removing those barriers and increasing access. The second day of their conference was focused on workforce

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

readiness. They heard from four different workforce readiness panels centered on the following sectors: apprenticeships, K-12 and school districts; with an emphasis on career and technical education, postsecondary institutions and community of State organizations. They closed the conference with another work session looking at finding solutions to barriers.

Beginning in May of 2022, the AlaskaCAN! Board of Directors embarked on a month's long strategic planning process in partnership with the Foraker Group through analysis, dialogue, and brainstorming. In the true spirit of collaboration, the AlaskaCAN! Board of Directors asked: What are they here to do? What can Alaska can do to affect change? In addition, what are they here to support and serve? Out of these questions, they found answers and created their enhanced vision, core purpose and core values.

Their strategic operating priorities are that they will be Alaska's trusted and valued convener by inviting and gathering strategic partners across the wide range of education and workforce pathways, beyond college and formal credentialing to significantly impact both Alaskans and a thriving Alaska economy. They will develop strategic partnerships by focusing on bringing real, positive and lasting impacts to Alaska's workforce partnerships that engage AlaskaCAN! members, industry stakeholders, school districts, Alaska's colleges, universities and training centers, workforce development organizations and professionals and state agencies, among many others. They will build awareness through outreach and advocacy for all Alaskans to understand the importance of completing education and workforce pathways for themselves, their families, their communities, and Alaska's economic health. In addition, they hope that organizations and institutions supporting postsecondary workforce pathways are aligned in addressing the systemic barriers to and opportunities for increasing access and ensuring completion. Finally, they will grow AlaskaCAN!'s organizational sustainability with high-performing representative Board members and oversee the sustainable growth of the organization through engaging members, developing solid human resources and improving on their long-term financial stability.

She added that perhaps the biggest pivot as an organization is in identifying how and where they can actually affect meaningful change as AlaskaCAN! and that is reflected in their future goal of 65% of Alaskans obtaining credentials by 2025. They realized that their work as AlaskaCAN!, and the efforts they put forth collectively cannot end in 2025, or upon hitting that one benchmark. Instead their place, as AlaskaCAN!, must go beyond this number and build upon the scope of work and content they can offer as an organization. As such, their new vision for AlaskaCAN! is in supporting an equitable statewide culture in which all Alaskans have access to meaningful postsecondary workforce pathways as Alaska's recognized strategic partner.

She concluded by stating that AlaskaCAN! is a knowledgeable guide, respected convener, and trusted resource in a culture shift based on acknowledging and sharing the value of postsecondary workforce connected learning wherever and however it is accomplished. She then opened for questions.

*Discussion: Representative Coulombe asked where the funding for AlaskaCAN! comes from. President Novakovich explained that at that time, all of their funding is sourced through donations. She added that the Governance Committee is working on sustainability by looking into grants and funding opportunities and possibly having some paid full-time staff to continue*



**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*the work. Most of the significant donations come from AlaskaCAN! stakeholders, organizations and training providers. The Board of Directors contribute individually, as their circumstances allow.*

*Representative Coulombe asked how the organization started, and specifically if it was launched with a grant. President Novakovich explained that ACPE received a Federal Grant to do the initial research to see if the organization was feasible.*

*Commissioner Zugg asked what the current percentage 65 by 25 is at and what constitutes being involved or credentialed in postsecondary education. President Novakovich explained that the latest data available was that 55% of Alaskans hold some type of postsecondary credential. There are three metrics that go into that and those metrics are available on the AlaskaCAN! website. She then explained that traditionally, the qualifications have been an Associates or Bachelor's degree, however they are starting to recognize that there are many other opportunities, including military apprenticeships or technical education. At their last Board of Directors meeting, they started redefining what postsecondary credentials should be included. She added that employers have started changing their ideas of what skills, qualifications and credentials they need for a qualified workforce. They are looking at 65 by 25 with new lenses, casting the net wider, and really acknowledging those valuable skills available outside of the traditional four-year college degree.*

*Chair Brown asked what the statistic was for postsecondary credentials among the demographic of 20 to 34. President Novakovich explained that the discrepancy between the older demographic and the younger demographic in terms of obtaining a postsecondary credential was 5.5%. So 5.5% less of that younger demographic than the older demographic. Chair Brown then asked what was discussed during the workshop on finding solutions to barriers and what some of the more significant barriers were. President Novakovich explained that there were a wide variety of barriers discussed, but the ones at the forefront of her mind were internet access and childcare. Internet access is especially difficult in rural areas and it is almost impossible to receive quality education without internet access. Additionally, at this point, the lack of childcare options is a statewide problem we have. She added another topic that came up was housing as in some of the State's more touristy areas, many property owners are finding that they can make more money by renting out their homes as vacation rentals, which leaves the workforce and students without housing options. For example, there is a desperate need for healthcare workers in rural areas, but there's no place for them to live should they choose to go out to serve in those villages. She concluded it is a complex and multi-pronged issue, which the State needs to rally the resources needed to solve.*

*Executive Director Efirid wanted to thank President Novakovich for presenting and to piggyback on a few things mentioned in the presentation and discussion. She explained that ACPE was the catalyst for the formation of AlaskaCAN! with the Challenge Grant. Then with them becoming a non-profit and a 501(c)(3) they are now supported through donations. She added that some ACPE staff are involved and provide time and funding to support the administrative operations for AlaskaCAN! She then acknowledged ACPE Staff members, Dominika, Shelly, and Julia for their work and wanted to give a shout out to Communications and Outreach Director, Kate*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*Hillenbrand as she served as the President last year. She noted that the connection between ACPE and AlaskaCAN! is prominent as the priorities are aligned and some staff overlap. Chair Brown wanted to highlight President Novakovich's work obtaining her degree in 2022 and offered his congratulations.*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Executive Director Efirm explained that she would highlight some of the work that ACPE had been involved in over the quarter. She explained that she worked with all of her senior managers, internal staff, contractors, and, of course, commissioners to complete the next step in the outsourcing project to help our borrowers, and our other systems through outsourcing of our loan originations. She was happy to report that conversion happened in April and Program Operations Director, Kerry Thomas, would share more details in her report. She added that the next six months, staff would be focusing on post-conversion, which will consist of working closely with contractors to ensure that they are maintaining the high standards that ACPE requires to work with borrowers.

Next, she provided an update on the budget wrap-up. The Governor signed the budget in June with some line-item vetoes announced on June 19<sup>th</sup>. This included a veto of the K-12 additional funding the Legislature had added. However, the Commission's approved budget was similar to the proposed budget, with minimal changes. It is a maintenance budget to continue the current work.

She provided some updates on the legislative session wrap-up. Firstly, she explained that none of the legislation affecting the Performance Scholarship was passed during the session. She added that she is hopeful that working together in the next legislative session, we will be able to get some new pieces for modernizing the APS into statute to open the program up to even more students. She wanted to acknowledge the admirable effort that Representative Story put forward in trying to get this bill passed. She added that Rep. Story has been focused on removing barriers and helping to open up the eligibility criteria for the APS for several years. Next, she explained that the new legislative representatives on the Commission are both representatives of those Education Committees that work to help bring forward an even stronger bill to ensure that we are widening and casting the net for our students to help support their financial need in Alaska. She explained that she is excited to work toward that in the next legislative session.

She continued by stating that ACPE in conjunction with the University is very focused on getting this new modernization and some of these barriers removed to help students receive the APS. She explained that she has had several conversations with Vice President Paul Layer about a concerted effort for both organizations to move forward with this project and provide as much education and support for these bills over the next session. Next, she explained that there was a list of bills that impacted education in Alaska, which included their status. She added that those bills would roll over into the second session.

Next, she provided a brief Federal education update surrounding President Biden's Student Loan Debt Relief package, which included a pause on repayment of federal student

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

loans. The pause on the payment of loans had been extended for two and a half years, but in negotiations for a Fiscal Responsibility Act that was dubbed the Debt Ceiling Legislation that was recently passed, payments will be resuming in September or October. She also explained that on June 30, the Supreme Court decided that President Biden does not have the authority to actually forgive student loans.

She then explained that there are efforts to combat the federal legislation prohibiting a preferred lender list for institutions' financial aid officers to share any preferred lender, name, or share information without some other accountability for them. This legislation prohibits our institutions from sharing that ACPE funds have no penalty fees. It prohibited other states, non-profits, and other state lending organizations from getting their information out there to students and explaining how their loans compare to private lenders. Senator Murkowski has tried to introduce the legislation to correct this issue. A representative has now picked up the bill on the House side. Director Efird has contacted Representative Peltola's office to provide information about why this legislation would be beneficial to Alaskans and our families.

She also provided some feedback that ACPE has received from borrowers in regards to the contractors. She added that staff are working diligently with those contractors to ensure all needs of borrowers are being addressed. She explained that one thing we're hearing from borrowers that our new contractors and the systems that they have in place have some additional functionalities and processes that have been helpful for them. For example, our Servicer, American Education Systems, AES, is able to provide text and email reminders to borrowers to make payments and check in on their account status. The contractor that is now supporting loan originations is able to do soft credit pre-qualification checks, which does not have an impact on an applicant's credit report, so they can see before they actually go through whether they're going to meet the criteria. In addition, they have extended call hours so that borrowers can call throughout the day and evening for information.

Next, she explained that the 2023 Higher Education Almanac was released and is available for public consumption. She added that there will be a presentation on the Almanac at the Fall Quarter Commission Meeting on October 19, 2023. The presentation will be an opportunity for Commission Staff and Members to brainstorm improvements.

In concluding her report, she thanked the Commission for their time and explained that their generosity of their time is an inspiration and a motivation to her and Commission Staff. Lastly, she welcomed the new Members to the Commission.

*Discussion: Commissioner Zugg thanked Executive Director Efird for her report and for setting such a high bar and an amazing standard for an administrative report. She also stated that the meeting packet as a whole is a great template and motivates her to do her job a little differently when reporting. Executive Director Efird thanked Commissioner Zugg for her feedback and gave a huge thanks to Executive Secretary Danni Erickson for taking care of the logistics.*

*Chair Brown noted the new Anchorage Office location and was excited to see that it was located near the University of Alaska Anchorage and a High School as that may increase foot traffic.*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

**MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORTS**

➤ Finance

Julie Pierce, CPA, Chief Finance Officer, referred to the table of the Commission's approved FY24 Operating Budget with minor changes from the last time the Governor's proposed budget was presented. She also explained that Alaska Student Loan Corporation met on May 11 and reviewed an investment performance presentation from the Chief Investment Officer at the Department of Revenue and approved the investment policy, which had no material changes from the existing policy. The Board also approved variable interest rates for variable rate ASLC loans and approved of increased annual and aggregate loan limits for ASLC Loan programs as recommended by staff. Lastly, she explained that the next Corporation Board meeting was scheduled for November 2, 2023, during which the Board is to review the annual audited financial statements and the annual dividend to the State of Alaska.

*Discussion: None*

➤ Program Operations

Kerry Thomas, Director of Program Operations, explained that there were two versions of her report for the quarter. The written report included the statistics through May. However, the yearend statistics were now available so she wanted to provide Commissioners with the updated information. Over the last quarter, staff have been spending a lot of time on refinance loans, as a new interest rate was implemented earlier in the month. Staff pushed to get additional refinance loans for borrowers at lower rates before they increased. ACPE was one of the lenders that was slow to move on increasing rates, while the rest of the refinance and student loan industry raised rates as the Federal inflation rates rose. Typically, for-profit lenders also raise their rates along with them.

She explained that there were some results from marketing and communication efforts. However, it takes some time for refinance loans to go through the full process because we have to obtain lender verification data from the underlying loans that are being refinanced. Staff will know in the next month how many of those transition into new refinance loans for the Commission. In-school loans ended flat compared to last year, which is a good thing, because the majority of loans this past academic year were in school loans. Loan volume was down compared to last year and prior years. She explained there was an increase in the number of loans made within the State of Alaska this year. ACPE is continuing to work with Alaska schools, as well as out-of-state schools to ensure that all Alaska students attending postsecondary education know about ACPE as a lender for their higher education goals. Going into this academic year, staff is optimistic that loan volume and the number of students that borrow from ACPE will increase.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

Next, she touched on the outsourcing project and explained that working with the new vendors has been going very well. There have been a few hiccups and transition pains, but staff are working through those items. Operations is focused on supporting customers and ensuring any impacts of the transition do not negatively affect our customers. Staff are working behind the scenes to smooth out some processes. The next two quarters will be focused on developing and implementing a robust oversight and monitoring structure where we're ensuring that the services being provided by our vendors are what we expect, and that our customers are being serviced and treated the way we expect. This monitoring will continue over time.

Lastly, she explained that this year's Higher Education Almanac includes three new articles or features: one is on Alaska FAFSA, the other is on Alaska Student Financial Aid, and the last one is on ACPE loans. She included a link in her written report to a survey that provides readers of the Almanac an opportunity to provide feedback on the almanac.

*Discussion: Commissioner Adams asked if staff have already done formal surveys with consumers about their experience with our contractors or if this has all been somewhat informal. Director Thomas explained that they have primarily been informal, however there is a formal customer survey planned for early 2024. She added that there were some problems or issues with the transition in doing a survey. Staff decided to give it a good 6 months of regular standard processing before surveying customers on how they feel about the new contractors. However, they've received a handful of informal complaints. She added it is unusual for people to reach out when they've had a positive experience, so the negative experiences may not account for all. Executive Director Efird also added that staff had just offered a few meetings for financial aid officers (FAO) for all Alaskan institutions across the state, which was a bit more formal than the other contacts have been. These meetings provided FAOs the opportunity to share any feedback or ask questions they have received from students. They also had the chance to dispel any rumors surrounding the outsourcing. A few have mentioned the concern that ACPE was "selling" their loans, but staff quickly cleared that up as ACPE is still responsible for taking care of the loans.*

*Chair Brown wanted to comment on Customer Service Support and the importance of responsiveness. Many people struggle with change, so ACPE still providing that support to borrowers is encouraging and important.*

➤ Communications and Outreach

Kate Hillenbrand, Director of Communications and Outreach, explained that her report for the July reporting reflects both the previous quarters' activities for outreach programs, which include the ACPE Success Center, the Alaska Career Information System or AKCIS, the Alaska College and Career Advising Consortium as well as our early college and career exploration programs. Therefore, it includes the previous quarter as well as a yearend summary of information because most programs do follow the academic school year.

She explained that ACPE Outreach had connected with students, families, and stakeholders through 195 telephonic or virtual sessions, presented in 75 work sessions,

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

trainings, webinars, and reached just over 1,900 Alaskans year to date. This small but mighty team connected with nearly 18,000 Alaskans in their efforts. There were various email, large-scale email and print marketing campaigns to support and engage with Alaskans regarding a variety of items, including the Alaska Performance Scholarship, the free application for Federal student aid, or FAFSA, as well as ACPE's education, refinance loan. Staff reached nearly 64,000 Alaskans through these campaigns.

Other outreach highlights include steady use and implementation of AKCIS throughout Alaska's school districts, and a variety of other organizations and site types. Lastly, they are focusing efforts on supporting and improving FAFSA completion rates in Alaska. She also added that they were planning on hosting a FAFSA Summit in late September. (As an update, this has been changed to October 25-26 since this meeting.)

*Discussion: Chair Brown stated he is excited to hear more details on how the FAFSA Summit goes at the October Commission Meeting. He added that this will be a good thing and thanked staff for the heavy lifting.*

*Executive Director Efird wanted to point out that ACPE received some COVID funds initially to make this transition to the AKCIS 360 through the Governor's Office and the Department of Education. She added that ACPE is very appreciative of that funding and that they are still working with staff on this. She also noted that ACPE will hopefully be working with other state agencies to continue being able to update this platform and ensure it continues making the information accessible and very Alaska focused and centered.*

*Representative Coulombe asked for more details on the FAFSA Summit: where it will be held and who are the stakeholders. Director Hillenbrand explained that the intent is for a variety of Alaska Education Stakeholders, so secondary school districts. She added that legislators could participate in whatever capacity is possible. Then she explained the Summit would be held at the Anchorage Marriott Hotel.*

*Representative Coulombe then asked if there was any clarity as to what barriers were preventing school districts from getting FAFSA applications completed. Director Hillenbrand stated that she believes school districts are trying to get the information out by hosting financial aid information nights and being supportive of ACPE through passing on its resources and information. She explained that one of the challenges is the first application as it can take a while for High School Seniors to get all their ducks in a row in order to get the application completed. It is a huge challenge for school counselors to find the time to help each student individually and to try to get parents involved. At one point, ACPE had College and Career Guides in a variety of High Schools, but has since lost the funding for that program. There just isn't the human capacity in regards to staffing. Executive Director Efird also added that another challenge is the education piece surrounding the FAFSA and what it provides. There appears to be trust issues and an all-around misunderstanding that the FAFSA is solely for loans, when ACPE's first goal is to open up student access to the Pell Grant. She added that there is some myth busting needed. Lastly, she explained that the*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*FAFSA Summit will be a great opportunity for ACPE to partner with Stakeholders and find solutions to these barriers.*

➤ Information Support Services

Jamie Oliphant, Director of Information Support Services (ISS), highlighted a couple things from her report. She first explained that ISS was involved in the implementation of the new 2024 Academic Year program year loans and the WICHE and WWAMI programs. She added that refinance loan rates increased on July 3. She explained that ISS is there to support all of the different divisions within ACPE. They also worked with the Gold Bridge contractor on the Student Aid portal as well as some routine updates. Lastly, she explained that ISS had been focused on the Anchorage Office move and ensuring equipment and network setup is done efficiently.

She also explained that Jeff Wockenfuss retired from ACPE after 28 years as a programmer. She wanted to express her gratitude for his service.

*Discussion: Chair Brown echoed Director Oliphant's gratitude for Jeff Wockenfuss' service to the state.*

➤ Human Resources - Written Report

**UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA UPDATE – Vice President Dr. Paul Layer**

Dr. Layer began by explaining that President Pitney, could not join as she was at a summit in Washington, DC. on critical minerals, which is a priority for the State in terms of production, but also in terms of workforce. The university has been a big advocate of that and is supporting the Governor's initiatives in that area. He explained that he had a few updates to share.

First, he explained that he had joined the meeting early on and was able to hear Director Hillenbrand's report and her mention of the work on the FAFSA. The University has been working very closely with Commission Staff on FAFSA completion. It is a huge priority for them, and they are pleased to be working with ACPE on the FAFSA Summit. He explained that he had a conversation with Executive Director Efir, about that the prior day and that UA would be willing to help partner with ACPE and help work on that initiative. UA is looking at how to get parents and schools to participate in FAFSA Completion. They are committed to building a financial package that reduces debt and would provide access to higher Education, whether that is with UA or with other institutions.

Next, he touched on the appointments to the Commission of University Board of Regents Harrison and Perdue. He added that Governor Dunleavy appointed a few others, but they are still subject to confirmation hearings by the Legislature at the next session. Therefore, they will be tracking those regents at the next legislative session. He believes they will be joining them at their late August Board meetings, which will be in Juneau.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

Next, he provided a few legislative updates. They saw a very positive movement on the UA budget this year and they appreciate the work of the legislature authorizing a lot of funding for the University, most of which made it through the Governor's Line Item Vetoes. They are tracking several bills for next year that are of importance to them and ACPE. One is the Alaska performance scholarship bill that was very exciting for UA. The Bill was close to the finish line, and they are hopeful this year that the Legislature can get it over the finish line to really provide support for students and have them be notified in a timely manner of their eligibility. Additionally, of interest to UA is extending the education tax credits for investments into higher education. They will be tracking a few other bills as well.

He explained that the budget highlights include that they got a \$6.5 million supplemental for FY23 for retroactive pay increases for faculty. That was part of their collective bargaining agreement. They also received \$15 million for FY24 for pay increases for faculty and staff. They are dedicated to trying to provide competitive salaries and opportunities for faculty and staff. They saw some modest increases, obviously in WWAMI. They did not get as much in terms of deferred maintenance or funding. Those were subject to veto, so they are looking for alternate funding. Overall, they are very pleased with the support that the University has received from the Legislature and from the Governor and are looking forward to working with them again next year. For the most part, he believes they are on the right track.

The other piece he wanted to update the Commission on was enrollment. Enrollment in Higher Education is always a challenge, even nationally, as enrollment tends to be either flat or down in most states. UA is seeing, overall from a system perspective, their enrollment has gone up about 5% in terms of who is registered now. However, they still have a long ways to go in terms of registrations. They are seeing the biggest jumps in their community campuses and technical colleges. Those campuses and programs were hit hard during COVID in Alaska. Nationally, he saw a bigger decline because of COVID due to the hands-on nature of many of those workforce programs. They have seen bounce backs at the UAA Community Technical College and many of their branch campuses across the system. They are excited about having students coming back into those workforce ready programs and really building up on those areas as well.

His last update was that the University of Alaska Southeast would be getting their new Chancellor, Dr. Aparna Palmer who joined the system officially on July 1.

He then opened up for questions.

*Discussion: Commissioner Zugg wanted to note that the Students in the Pharmaceutical Doctoral program would like to have the APS modernized so that they may access the funds, as they are not able to at this time. They intend to go to school here in Alaska on UA campuses. She added that we should be cognizant of those students. Dr. Layer explained that UA is supportive of that sort of funding for those students. Alternatively, maybe there is a way that the funding that the students pay could go through some of UA's business processes to ISU, and so they might be able to work out something like that.*



**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE – SANA EFIRD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Executive Director Efird started by explaining that she wanted to refresh Commissioners with what has been approved thus far in the strategic planning process, and to share with new Commissioners as they have not yet seen what staff has been working on. So far, the Commission has approved its new vision and mission, as outlined in the meeting packet. The Commission’s vision is that *Alaskans are educated and skilled contributors to its vibrant communities and economy*. To carry out that vision, the Commission’s mission is to *provide sustainable solutions for college career and technical training by championing individuals and families through broad access to federal and State programs, grants, scholarships and loans, together with the tools and resources that allow them to make informed decisions about funding their education*.

Next, she explained that as the Higher Education Agency for the State of Alaska, the Commission advances policy and fosters collaboration to build a skilled workforce that meets the needs of communities and employers supporting economic development across the State. The commission has approved those pieces, and then the third piece that has been approved by the Commission are the new priorities. The new priorities were also included in the packet on page 57. The page included the main goals and the priorities under them. She explained she was not going to read each of them, but wanted to touch on the first one, which stated, “increase visibility, understanding and awareness of ACPE and its products, resources, partnerships and programs.” She explained that the Commission had already approved the main goals while the priorities underneath were what staff had put together since then. Staff are also working on even more focused pieces under that to ensure they have the Commission’s objectives and projects that are going to meet each of these priorities and goals. They are putting together the work plan for staff to achieve those objectives. For example, *to increase visibility, understanding, and awareness of ACPE, its products, resources, partnerships, and programs*, staff will be developing and implementing a proactive holistic marketing campaign structure. Senior Managers and staff are working on the plans for this marketing campaign by looking at what that project will entail and who will be the lead staff person to begin that.

She explained that in October staff will have a work session with the Commission to delve deeper into the details of this project and help Commissioners understand those big initiatives through the next 3 to 5 years. The work session will cover where each of these projects happen and timing of staff and resources to actually achieve this. They will look at ways of weaving all those pieces together to come up with a plan that will actually utilize staff in the most productive way and prioritize which things have to happen first over the next few years.

She explained that first steps would be starting the communication plan, designing the new logo and modernizing the website. She added that the Commission and Senior Managers have to ensure that Staff can focus on meeting these goals and objectives to help the Commission reach their goals within the next 3 to 5 years. She concluded by stating that the conversation in October will be an important next step toward completing these goals.

*Discussion: Chair Brown wanted to confirm if this review was a preview for the October quarterly meeting and if the work session would be allocated to work on this topic. Executive*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*Director Efird confirmed it would be. Chair Brown thanked Executive Director Efird for the preview.*

**INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORIZATION COMPLIANCE REPORT**

Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator Tyler Eggen referenced his written report on recent compliance activities starting on page 68 of the meeting packet. Information in the report included:

- Institutional monitoring
  - Alaska Career College’s renewal of accreditation was to be considered at The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) May 2023 Meeting. As of writing this staff report, ACPE has not received any update from ACCSC.
  - Charter College received approval from the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) this past quarter for the Associate in Applied Science (AAS)- Diagnostic Medical Sonography program. At the October 2022 meeting, the Commission authorized this program. The AAS in Radiological Technology program was not approved by ABHES for full distance modality, however, the College intends to submit an Administrative Approval to change the modality to a blended format. This program was conditionally approved by the Commission at the July 2022 meeting, contingent upon accreditor approval. After submitting the Administrative Approval request to ACPE for the modality change, the College will submit a new Application for New Program Approval with ABHES.
  - Alaska Pacific University recently was awarded a nearly \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, to be distributed over five years, to help diversify and expand the state’s nursing workforce.
- Institutional Authorization Activities
  - The Board of Massage Therapists’ proposed regulations relating to the educational requirements leading towards Massage Therapist licensure went into effect May 2023. The proposed regulations state graduates must complete a Board approved massage therapy program of at least 625 hours, with no specific hour requirements in the subject areas. There is no anticipated impact to the current Authorized Institutions (Alaska Career College, Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, and Massage Therapy, and THE Beauty School) or their graduates for licensure in Alaska.
- Complaints
  - There were two informal complaints this quarter, where the students were directed back to the Institution’s Grievance Policy, and one request for the formal Complaint Form after attempting to complete the Institution’s Grievance Policy.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

- As of the date of this report, there were no formal complaints this quarter.

**INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS AND EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

➤ Renewal of Authorization

- Alaska Christian College

**Commissioner Adams moved to approve a renewal of authorization through July 31, 2026. Vice Chair Bicchinella seconded the motion. Vice Chair Bicchinella motioned to amend the motion to approve a renewal of authorization through July 31, 2028. Commissioner Zugg seconded the amended motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye on the amendment. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye on the motion. The motion carried.**

*Discussion: Chair Brown asked Institutional Representative, Jeff Siemers if he wanted to address anything from Mr. Eggen's report. Mr. Siemers stated he has appreciated Tyler's insight and help. He added that the Site Visit went well and they appreciated Mr. Eggen's time and attention to detail.*

*Vice Chair Bicchinella asked Tyler if, given the size of the institution, it would be more fitting to give a little more of a lengthy authorization period. He stated that during his time on the Commission, he has seen other similar institutions receive sometimes 5 to 7 years of authorization. Tyler explained that per regulations institutions could get up to 5 years for renewal of authorization. He added that this recommendation was due to the historical graduation rates; however, it is subject to any alterations that the body sees fit and can put forth. Vice Chair Bicchinella then asked if given the last recommendation from the Commission, if ACC has maintained or exceeded all the recommendations and continue to be in good standing. Tyler explained that yes, they have, aside from one observed violation of Alaska Statute to regulation code relating to one student record. That was due to a nuance of their application being embedded in their housing program, but since changing the application process and taking corrective action it is no longer an issue. Vice Chair Bicchinella then moved to amend the existing motion to approve authorization for Alaska Christian College from July 31, 2026 to July 31, 2028, given its positive interactions with community and students and its good standing with ACPE.*

*Commissioner Adams wanted Commissioners to come back to the point that Tyler explained about the graduation rate as it might be more of an issue with the accrediting body and explained that she would like to see a bit more discussion surrounding that concern. Vice Chair Bicchinella thanked Commissioner Adams for pointing that concern out, but then explained that it's difficult for him to overlook the challenges the state as a whole has seen over the last 3 years or so with the pandemic and how it has impacted everything. He explained that is why he was leaning toward extending the authorization as enrollment has been impacted nationwide and because ACC has continued to be in good standing. He added that it is important to note that the*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*accrediting body is essentially responsible for setting those guidelines and getting that information to the institution. If they are working through that, it might behoove this body to give them the time to work through that and receive the communication.*

*Chair Brown asked if the construction of the new recreational facility was to try to connect and build more community among those first year students in the population identified in order to retain them and make them feel more connected. Mr. Siemers explained that having a full athletic center or gymnasium for their students has been a goal for some time for many reasons, including retention. He added that they are hoping the facility will help improve the overall mental and physical health of their students and, in turn, encourage them to continue their education at ACC.*

*Chair Brown asked Assistant Attorney General Susan Sonneborn for clarity on the next step due to the amended motion. AAG Sonneborn explained that the commission would need to proceed with a vote on whether to amend the original motion as suggested and then after that vote is taken they would need to do a vote on the motion as amended.*

- Generations Southeast Community Learning Center

**Vice Chair Bicchinella moved to approve a renewal of authorization through October 31, 2023. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

*Discussion: Vice Chair Bicchinella asked Institutional Representative, Krista Staveland, if she could explain a little bit about the lack of communication with Commission Staff with the initial outreach. Ms. Staveland explained that with some staff changes, the communication just dropped off. However, communication with Mr. Eggen has been increased and will not be an issue moving forward. Vice Chair Bicchinella then asked for an update on the corrective action in terms of the Student Records issue. Ms. Staveland explained that the Institution had planned to go paperless, but have tabled that. They have since printed documents and created folders for students and are holding those files in a fireproof space on-site. Vice Chair Bicchinella then asked if the 3 months was enough time for the Institution to come into compliance with staff recommendations and the necessary demonstration of compliance. Ms. Staveland stated that yes, it is enough time.*

➤ Initial Authorization

- Alaska Driving Academy

**Commissioner Hamilton moved authorization through January 31, 2025, contingent upon DMV approval. Vice Chair Bicchinella seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*Discussion: Senator Tobin asked if the institution has stipulations or provisions to ensure that students get the type of education and remedial education they need even if it takes longer than 4 weeks. Institutional Representative, Chris Lisenby, explained that they work diligently with their students from start to finish. There is a small percentage of students during that 4 week time period that struggle in certain areas. However, the institution works with them to ensure they learn all the rules of the road.*

- Waldorf University

**Vice Chair Bicchinella moved authorization through January 31, 2025, contingent upon staff recommendations. Commissioner Zugg seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

*Discussion: Commissioner Hamilton asked if there has been any change in Waldorf's status because of the 1.4 composite score. Institutional Representative, Alexis Harris, explained that the current composite score shouldn't be a 1.4 but rather a 3.0. This score is more related to SARA and not necessarily the State of Iowa. Institutional Representative, Duane Polsdofer, explained that the composite score would have been lower looking at Waldorf University alone, but after the changeover in ownership the composite score went up and the school is financially sound. Commissioner Hamilton then asked when their fiscal year is up. Mr. Polsdofer explained that as a for-profit school, they always had their fiscal year set as January 1 through December 31. However, this will change and end on June 30. Commissioner Hamilton then asked if the Commission will know the new composite score within the next 18 months. Mr. Polsdofer explained that if that is done on every audit, then yes, as their new fiscal year ended on June 30 and an audit will take place sometime in the fall.*

➤ Update and Request for Special Action

- Charter College

**Commissioner Zugg moved to modify the current Authorization to Charter College with staff recommended conditions through January 31, 2027, or until the Commission determines that Charter College is financially sound. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

*Discussion: Institutional Representative Josh Swayne, wanted to express his gratitude for the opportunity to represent the institution. He continued by stating that the Institution fully understands why they are in the position they are in based on 2022's performance, but at the same time they hoped the Commission can see that this is not who they are or have been. This issue is due to the conflicts higher education went through with the pandemic. He added that he*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

would like to present to the Commission that he believed that Charter College by definition is currently financially sound as indicated on page 2 of the report. He noted that Charter College meets many of the criteria used to categorize an institution as financially sound. For example, he stated they do not have a negative cash flow from operations and, in fact, they have a surplus of \$4.3 million based on the balance sheets they provided. For a composite score, Charter College is at a 2.3 and while they did fall below the threshold of 1.5 at 1.4, they are currently on the increase. He added that their ABHES Accreditor has taken no adverse action toward them, but actually has found them to be financially sound. Additionally, the Department of Education has taken no action against them. He then stated that Charter College would like to ask the Commission to either drop or maybe postpone the requirement of an additional surety bond at this time, at least until the next Commission Meeting. He explained that they are concerned about tying up or spending unnecessary cash in order to increase their surety bond when they currently do meet what he sees as the criteria for a financially sound institution and continue to meet and exceed the obligations to both the students and faculty.

Commissioner Coulombe asked to clarify with Tyler Eggen if the Institution was, in fact, financially sound. Mr. Eggen explained that in light of the quarter number two statements coming in just two days prior to this meeting, there is a number of things for the Commission to consider. He added that while there is projected revenues based upon the proposed budget provided by the Institution, there is actually going to be a reduction in some of those revenues. This is also subject to change based upon student enrollment in light of the pandemic and a number of other factors. He added that if the institution is financially sound, they would not need to increase their current surety bond, but the surety bond will not make a financially unsound institution sound. The surety bond is a State Law Statute, and all institutions must have one. When they are unsound, they need to increase the amount of it. Representative Coulombe explained that her biggest concern is protecting students and that she believes not increasing the surety bond could put students at risk. She then asked if the surety bond is put in place to ensure students can be reimbursed and for other protections, if needed. AAG Sonneborn explained that yes, the purpose of the bond is to protect students in the case of an abrupt closure. It can get much more complicated than that but that is the short answer.

Representative Coulombe then asked Mr. Swayne why, if they were having budgetary issues, they seemingly did not reduce expenditures or layoff any staff. Mr. Swayne explained that the Institution wanted to be sensitive to the unique experience of the pandemic. They put goals and directions in place that they felt would allow them to maintain staffing, projects, and goals. It was later identified that was not going to happen. Many higher education institutions suffered lower enrollments, including them, and some of the initiatives they thought would combat that lower enrollment did not come into fruition. So in the last part of the 2022 Fourth Quarter, they began to make the net changes that needed to take place to rectify and match the levels of enrollment they had in terms of staffing and other projects. With these changes, they have begun to see a more neutral enrollment. He then explained that while they did not do well in 2020, looking at them now they are financially sound based on the criteria outlined in the staff report.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*He concluded by stating he is hoping the commission will propose to postpone the decision until their next meeting.*

*Commissioner Adams stated that what she is hearing from the Institution is different than what they have heard from the Staff Report. She then asked if this motion were to not pass, what that would mean for the Institution. AAG Sonneborn explained that if the motion does not pass, the Institution would remain at the current status, which is just the minimum \$250,000 bond rather than the proposed \$3.5 million. Mr. Eggen explained that if the commission takes no action on the staff report, it would continue to be an unresolved issue of the surety bond until potential future commission action or until Commission Staff determine the Institution financially sound. Commissioner Adams added that where things fall financially versus how things are budgeted may not be the same picture after a year or several years. She continued by stating that she would feel extremely irresponsible if the commission did not ensure they were protecting students.*

*Institutional Representative, Joel Nelson, wanted to add in, as Commissioners may be unaware, that the standard cost of a surety bond is an upfront cost of 1% to 5% of the amount designated. Currently the Charter College budget is estimating a profit of about a half a million dollars for the year. He continued stating that if they were to go with a \$3.5 million surety bond, that would be \$35,000, which is a reasonable cost. However, since they have been designated as a financially unsound institution, the more likely scenario is that they would get a higher rate, which is \$175,000. This cost would eat up a considerable amount of their profits and could lead to the things that the Commission and the Institution would like to protect students from. He concluded that this is why they were asking for a little grace.*

*Chair Brown asked if staff arrived at the \$3.5 Million surety bond to cover a 10-week academic period. Mr. Eggen explained that was correct. The potential amount is a deviation from the regulations as the \$18 million was unobtainable, so they had to find an alternative amount, which is where the \$3.5 million came from with the current 10-week cycle that exists today for Alaska and online operations. If Charter obtained a \$3.5 million bond and an abrupt closure happened, the students who are currently enrolled would receive some relief from their currently enrolled courses. He then touched on the issue that Mr. Nelson alluded to in that the decision could impact consumer protection either way, but that was why the Commission was there to try to identify a path forward that allows for the students to be protected.*

*Chair Brown asked if Charter was able to get to a more financially stable place, if they would be able to get their surety bond back to the \$250,000 level. Mr. Eggen explained that if the Commission determines them to be financially sound then they would go back to the regulatory amount based upon their tuition revenues, which would equate to a \$250,000 bond. He added that while their current trajectory is going toward a more positive direction, he believes there are still a number of concerns regarding the true trajectory of the Institution. He continued by stating that in 3 months' time, as the Commission gets an additional balance sheet and some documentation regarding admissions, enrollments, and seeing that there might be again an increase in that, or the fact that the expenses are remaining commensurate with those pieces then*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*they would be on a good trajectory. He pointed out that there are State Statutes regarding quality assurances on programming and staffing. This Institution has made some necessary cuts and if they make further cuts, they might be made at the expense of the quality programming that students are signing up for in their enrollment contracts. There is truly a lot to take into consideration. If there is a 3.5 million dollar bond at 5%, it is a \$175,000 cash up front. Currently in their cash line, as reported in the Commission packet, they have 4.3 million dollars related to the entire operations of Prospect Education, LLC. That is indicating that, while there is some financial soundness, it also indicates that they have the financial capacity to provide this \$3.5 million surety bond. In the eyes of protection it seems warranted that this gets put in place and it is possible that then, at a future date, with updated information, if there is a less of a consumer protection concern, that amount could be reduced via commission action.*

*Institutional Representative, Mr. Swayne stated that while he understands the need for consumer protection from their perspective if the motion goes forward and they are required to do a \$3.5 surety bond, that is going to be cash out even now and they will not be reimbursed for that amount. Again, he asked the Commission to look at this further out by tabling this decision so that the Commission can review their finances later on as they are on a trajectory toward financial soundness.*

*AAG Susan Sonneborn provided a summary of some of the obligations and the authorizations in statutes and regulations related to the Commission's role about financial soundness of the educational institutions. She explained she would only highlight a few. She added that they had been talking a bit about the purpose of the bond, and the purpose of ensuring that institutions are financially sound, and what that means for protection. Firstly, a part of the general purposes of the Commission is ensuring the protection, education, and welfare of the citizens of the State and its students by establishing minimum standards, including fiscal responsibility. Then in the minimum standards, under 14.48060, one of those is that the institution is financially sound and capable of fulfilling its commitment to students and then that rather ties in well, to this the next statute, which does specifically address bonds. It does not address setting bonds when an institution is determined to be financially unsound, rather it sort of addresses it more generally. Additionally, that surety bond is in an amount determined by the Commission. She added that this is not specifically for financially unsound institutions, but the bond is meant to be appropriate to ensure adequate protection for the students or enrollees, or their parents or guardians or classes thereof. The institution would also be conditioned to provide indemnification to any student or in release to a parent, guardian, or class, or if determined to have separate loss or damage because of an act or practice which is a violation of this chapter by the institution. The purpose of the bond is to address student loss, if the institution were to close.*

*The next statute she touched on gives the Commission the authority to either revoke, suspend, or condition an authorization based on a violation of any of the requirements, including the financial soundness. And then the next regulation she addressed stated that an institution that is determined to not be financially sound, the bond increase determination is made greater than the*



**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

*highest amount of revenue projected by the Commission for the institution during an academic or vocational program period of the current year. This was determined to be \$18 million. She added that there might be a little ambiguity in terms of interpreting the exact meaning of academic or vocational program period. The most reasonable interpretation of that would be the 18 million, so this \$3.5 million would be a reduction and as the chair mentioned more of a compromise. Lastly, she explained that she is not there to provide a recommendation, but make the Commission aware of some of the statutes and regulations.*

*Representative Coulombe asked about enrollment and, specifically, how many Alaskan students were currently enrolled. Institutional Representative Heather Allen answered that there were 625 students currently enrolled through Alaska.*

*Chair Brown asked if the \$3.5 million bond would protect the 600+ Alaskan students. Mr. Eggen explained that yes, in the worst-case scenario that is correct.*

*Commissioner Handeland stated that if the financial institution Charter goes to for the bond reviews the same financial information as the Commission then they should get a fairly low rate.*

*Commissioner Hamilton stated that the rate is solely up to the financial institution, and the Commission is simply there to resolve the issue at hand. Thne he asked, if Charter were to close today without an increased surety bond, would there be enough money to take care of every single student halfway through a semester. Mr. Eggen explained that based upon the discussion on the current revenues, the current surety bond would not provide adequate relief to students in the case of an abrupt closure. He added that students may potentially receive relief from the Federal Student Aid Office related to Federal Funding Sources. Additionally, students receiving funding from the Veterans Affairs Office may receive some relief to their funding sources. However, both instances would take substantial time. He concluded that the current \$250,000 surety bond would not cover the current Alaska based students or online students for the classes they are enrolled in.*

*There being no further questions or comments, Chair Brown closed the discussion and had staff call a roll call vote.*

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Alaska Student Loan Corporation – Commissioner Adams explained that since the Commission heard from both the Executive Director, and the Chief Finance Officer regarding the May meeting, she would not go too in-depth. She explained that they set the new rates for variable interest loans, and kept the Corporation’s policies intact without making any modification to those policies.

Board of Education and Early Development – Commissioner Van Diest was not present to provide a report.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

UA Board of Regents – Regent Harrison did not have anything to share.

Community Colleges – This seat is vacant so no report was provided.

Student Representative – Commissioner Hamlin was not present to provide a report.

Alaska Workforce Investment Board – Commissioner Zugg explained that she would give a brief report from the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. They have a new executive director, who has been busy familiarizing herself with each of the board members. Additionally, they have had some new board members appointed. Then with the budget recently passed with the State, they have started to look at how that will affect the work they do as the Workforce Investment Board. This includes looking at how the Department of Labor navigates how they spend their funding, and then administering multiple grants that are connected into what this Commission does. These grants will allow young folks to access resources and institutions to deliver training. They have spent a significant amount of time looking at institutions that would like to access those funds for preparing the State's workforce.

Next, she explained that there is a youth systems build Academy that is out there through a grant. It is in the planning stages. She added that there has been desire across many organizations, particularly post COVID, to align where the State has redundancy in efforts more strategically. They are looking at things that do not always come to fruition. In addition, how does the State align systems to move to action, for youth and workforce development? The Board desires to do that. She added that this grant will do very explicit work in aligning systems, and the McKinley group was hired to conduct focus groups with at-risk youth on their work experience, how they apply for work, and the challenges to them seeking job training. She is looking forward to seeing how the grant helps to align systems.

Next, she discussed a few details about a youth convening that has been scheduled for September 11 at the Cook Inlet Tribal Council with the purpose of bringing together organizations that serve youth to assist in building out Alaska's youth system. The AWIB will stand by and be involved with the convening. It will look at how youth access training programs and postsecondary in Alaska.

Lastly, she explained that a major focus for their director and the board will also be what's being called an industry-centered workforce development convening. This convening will be industry-centered and look at what will be required around postsecondary training and education.

Network Report – written report provided in the meeting packet.

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

Commissioner Adams thanked Chair Brown for chairing his first full meeting. She appreciated his leadership. She also shouted out ACPE staff for their hard work and that she appreciated their dedication.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**Quarterly Meeting Summary of**  
**July 13, 2023**

Commissioner Zugg also thanked Chair Brown for his leadership and the staff for their work. She added that she is particularly interested in seeing what enrollment across Alaska looks like in the fall for all realms of postsecondary education. She also noted that she is looking forward to digging into this year's Higher Education Almanac.

Regent Harrison stated that it is a pleasure to be serving on the Board and that she is looking forward to learning a lot over the next year.

Vice Chair Bicchinella stated that it was a wonderful meeting and thanked Chair Brown for his leadership. He added that he wanted to extend a thank you to all of the Commission staff for their detailed reports. He also noted that he is looking forward to gathering in October.

Commissioner Hamilton noted that he will be unable to attend the in-person meeting in October as he and his wife will be celebrating their marriage anniversary on a cruise. He added that he will miss everyone.

Chair Brown thanked everyone for the feedback regarding his first meeting. He also thanked everyone for their engagement and added that he believes our fellow Alaskans are in good hands with people that care.

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Zugg moved to adjourn. Commissioner Adams seconded the motion. By a roll call vote, all members present voted aye. The motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:03 p.m.

Approved by:

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Chair

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Date



**Lorri Van Diest Biography**  
**Commissioner for ACPE**  
**6/30/23**

Lorri Van Diest is a life-long Alaskan who grew up in Seward. She graduated with honors from Seattle Pacific University in Seattle, WA in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. Lorri obtained her teaching credential the following year from SPU and returned to her hometown of Seward to begin her teaching career.

Later, Lorri moved to the Mat-Su Valley and was part of the original staff who opened Colony High School. In 1996, Lorri received her Master of Science in Counseling and Guidance from Oregon State University in Corvallis, OR and later obtained the

Alaska Licensed Professional Counselor credential. She worked at Colony High School and Teeland Middle School as a school counselor for 11 years. While Lorri was at Colony High School, she was an assistant varsity coach for the girls' basketball program.

Prior to retiring from the Mat-Su School District in 2010, Lorri was the District Curriculum Coordinator for 6 years. After retirement, she worked as a substitute school counselor and later a part-time elementary counselor. Recently, Lorri started her own counseling business and is currently working part-time as a school clinician at a high needs elementary school in the Mat-Su School District.

Lorri is a member of the State Board of Education and currently serves as the First-Vice Chair. She is completing her sixth year on the board. She is also involved in her local community council and church and has served on various community boards.



**Paula Harrison**

**University of Alaska Board of Regents**

**Seat: Regent Representative**

**Term:**

Governor Dunleavy appointed Paula Harrison in 2023. She has 40 years of experience in human resources and labor relations across the public and private sectors. Regent Harrison is the past chair of the Alaska Labor Relations Board. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in political science/economics from the University of Colorado-Denver and her Master of Arts in management from Webster University. Regent Harrison and her husband, Dirk Craft, a retired internal medicine physician, have three daughters who are graduates of the University of Alaska and one son who is a graduate of the University of South Dakota.



**Karen Perdue**

**University of Alaska Board of Regents**

**Seat: Regent Representative**

**Term: 2017-2025**

Karen Perdue, vice chair of the board, was appointed in 2017 by Governor Walker. She is a lifelong Alaskan with a background in health care, public policy and interests in the history and culture of Alaska.

Regent Perdue is a graduate of Stanford University. She is semi-retired, focusing her work on critical public health issues and serves on the board of the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Most recently she represented the interests of Alaska's hospitals and nursing homes as the CEO of the Alaska Hospital and Nursing Home Association. She served a decade as the Associate Vice

President of Health Programs at the University of Alaska working with industry, chancellors and faculty in the expansion of the nursing, medical education, pharmacy, therapies and behavioral health academic programs.

She served as Commissioner of Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services for eight years - the longest serving health commissioner since statehood. During her commissionership, the state launched the Medicaid waiver system, closed institutions that serve the developmentally disabled and implemented Denali KidCare.

She served as a congressional aide and press secretary to Senator Ted Stevens.

She is the recipient of numerous awards including the National Rural Mental Health Association Victor Howery Award and the Alaska Historical Society for her role in the Lost Alaskans Morningside Project, which traced the history of mental health care in territorial Alaska and the ancestral information of over 5,000 Alaskans sent outside for care. She has been honored by both the Girl and Boy Scouts as a Distinguished citizen.



Justina "Tina" Hamlin  
 Commissioner for ACPE  
 6/30/23

Tina Hamlin was appointed by Governor Dunleavy in June of 2023. Tina is from Soldotna, Alaska, and has lived there for 25 years. She lived out of state for ten years, in California and Texas. She attended Mount San Jacinto College in Menifee, Ca. Tina is currently a student at Kenai Peninsula College. She is pursuing an AAS in Human Services, with an emphasis in Art. She is currently the President of the Kenai River Campus Student Union. Her goal is to help others heal Childhood Trauma with Art expression. Currently she is also in an Occupational Endorsement Certificate program for Children's Behavioral Health.

Tina has been in the Human Services field since she was 19. In California, she began this by becoming a Sexual Assault Advocate where she ran a hotline and would go to the hospital with victim's to help advocate and be their support during examinations to collect evidence. In 2011, when she returned to Alaska, she began working as a PCA for clients. Shortly thereafter, Tina began working as a Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence advocate for the local woman's shelter. She was there for about 3 years and then joined the Board of Directors, as Treasurer, for 2.5 years.

Her passion for helping people led her to the substance abuse arena where she received her Chemical Dependency Counselor 1 certification. Tina was contracted to the local prison where she held groups and conducted assessments where she would diagnose inmates and prepare them for inpatient or outpatient care upon release from prison.

After a couple of years outside of these fields, Tina decided to go back to school to further her education and further develop her passion for advocacy, understanding, and to help make a difference in her community.

# OCTOBER 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1. OCTOBER 2024



## 9. Dr. Paul Layer Bio



### **Dr. Paul Lauer, Ph.D. Vice President for Academics, Students & Research**

Dr. Paul W. Layer oversees academic and research programs for the University of Alaska system, which has three accredited universities: UA Anchorage, UA Fairbanks and UA Southeast. In addition, he serves as the co-chair of the Alaska State Committee for Research.

Dr. Layer is also a Professor of Geophysics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He served as department head/chair for the Department of Geology & Geophysics from 1995 to 2003, and then again in 2007. He also served as dean of UAF's College of Natural Science & Mathematics from 2009 to 2017.

Dr. Layer has had a long affiliation with the University of Alaska Fairbanks since 1989. He has published over 120 papers in his research areas of radiometric geochronology and tectonics, and built strong national and international collaborations in support of his research.

Dr. Layer received his BS in geology from Michigan State University, and his MS and PhD degrees in geophysics from Stanford University. He spent three years as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto, Department of Physics.



## Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
**FROM:** Sana Efird, Executive Director  
**DATE:** October 3, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Director Report

During this quarter, the Executive Director's Office has supported staff with the transition to third party contractors, worked with senior and general managers to outline projects to support implementation of our new strategic priorities and goals, held an all-staff retreat to build relationships and connect all staff to current projects, presented to various groups, attended multiple national conferences with other similar state organizations, and started FY2025 budget preparation.

#### **Budget Update:**

Senior Managers and I are in the budget planning and proposal process for the FY2025 Governor's Proposed Budget. Chief Finance Officer Julie Pierce and I met with the Office of Management and Budget and the Governor's Office staff in September to present ACPE's FY2025 budget proposal. This information is confidential and deliberative until the Governor releases his budget in December.

ACPE's FY2023 Budget has been closed out successfully and management is finalizing line item budgets/authorization for each Division's FY2024 budget.

#### **Upcoming Legislative Session Preparation:**

One of the Commission's top priorities is to modernize the current Alaska Performance Scholarship program to increase eligibility and usage. ACPE has been working over the past three years to provide data and information to the Administration and legislative committees to support changes in the APS program. During the upcoming legislative session, we will continue to support efforts to pass APS legislation. Currently, HB148 and SB56 have passed from their respective Education Committees and we are hopeful one of these bills will pass this session. APS eligibility as a percent of the total number of public high school graduates over the last five years shows the class of 2023 has the lowest eligibility rate of 15% since inception of the program in 2011, followed by 16% for the class of 2022. We are concerned about this decline in eligibility and are working with schools and families to ensure the program requirements are

understood, and are hopeful that the pending legislation is adopted to address some of the known program challenges.

### **Outsourcing Projects Update:**

With outsourcing complete, ACPE's focus has shifted to oversight and monitoring for compliance of our third-party contractors. I am focused on meeting with contractor management to ensure concerns are addressed timely and resolved to the benefit of our customers. Staff are working through this transition to update and implement new policies and procedures to outline new processes.

### **Human Resources Update:**

Staff changes over the last quarter resulted in the separation of one employee, Student Intern, Krishna Sanguni, and the placement of one employee, Suzann Phillips, into temporary acting status to fill the role of Accountant V, Loan Portfolio Accountant. Our records indicate there are a total of four (4) employees eligible to retire in calendar year 2023.

Currently, there are eleven vacant positions: one (1) in the Executive Office, two (2) in Finance, one (1) Outreach, one (1) in Information Support Services, and six (6) in Program Operations. Recruitment efforts have begun for an Administrative Assistant and a Program Coordinator in Program Operations. Management continues to review all vacant positions for future need including possible deletion or reclassification to retain the flexibility required to provide support for agency initiatives. At present, ACPE has 44 positions filled: 10 in Anchorage, 34 in Juneau. The breakdown of those positions by divisions is as follows: ISS-10, Finance-12, Program Operations-13, Outreach-6, and Executive Office-3.

With the deletion of ACPE's Human Resources Officer, DEED's Human Resources Officer, Bobi Jo Grimes, is providing advising and support on any human resource matters and is working closely with Grace Newman, Administrative Assistant to ensure ACPE's HR matters are addressed appropriately and timely.

As of September 12, staff are teleworking three days a week and in office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

### **Strategic Planning/All Staff Retreat:**

All ACPE staff gathered in person at the State Library, Archives, Museum building in downtown Juneau on September 29. The goal of this time together was to build connections between Anchorage and Juneau staff as well as share new strategic priorities and the projects that will help meet new identified goals. It was a fun and productive opportunity to have everyone together in one space!

**Juneau and Anchorage Lease/Space Update:**

As a result of position reductions and the current hybrid in-office/telework structure, we have been working to reduce our footprint in both Juneau and Anchorage. I am pleased to share both moves have been completed and staff are settling in to their new spaces. Even though there are still boxes to unpack, old files to archive or shred, and other various projects to complete to help the new spaces feel comfortable, we are finally getting there!

**Alaska Student Loan Corporation Meeting:**

The Alaska Student Loan Corporation (ASLC) Board held its regularly scheduled meeting on May 11, 2023. The Corporation Board is required to review the investment policy annually to determine the policy's effectiveness and consider adjustments to reflect changes in investment strategy and goals. Mr. Zach Hanna, Chief Investment Officer Department of Revenue provided a review of the Alaska Student Loan Corporation investment policy and current portfolio performance. Pursuant to the review, the Corporation Board voted to accept the ASLC Investment Policy and Procedures with no material changes. Additionally, the Board approved interest rates for variable rate Alaska Student Education Loans.

**Professional Organization Meetings/Conference Attendance:**

I attended regular monthly and semi-monthly meetings with the Education Finance Council (EFC), State Higher Education Officers Association, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), and the Alaska Business Education Compact.

In July, I attended the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Annual Meeting in Portland. This meeting gathers CEO's of state higher education boards and commissions and leaders of national and regional organizations to encourage discussion and sharing of key state and national higher education policy issues and relationship building.

Julie Pierce, Chief Finance Officer and I attended the in-person EFC Conference in Washington, DC in September. This is always a productive conference providing an opportunity to meet with peers from other similar state organizations across the country to hear about their current successes. Keynote speakers included Richard Cordray, Chief Operating Officer, Federal Student Aid and the Honorable J. C. Watts, Jr., former U.S. Representative from Oklahoma. I was also able to meet in person with leadership from our new contractors CampusDoor (CD) and American Education Services (AES) to share information on our conversion and with our financial advisors, Lee Donner and Tim Webb of Hilltop Securities.

During my time in Washington, I also met with Senator Murkowski's staff to update them on the work of ACPE. Unfortunately, I was unable to meet with Representative Peltola or Senator Sullivan.

**Other Meetings/Activities:**

- Met with Governor’s Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, and DEED Commissioner Bishop on education matters
- Alaska FAFSA Summit planning meetings
- Orientation presentations for new commissioners
- Alaska Statewide Education Leaders Collaboration meeting
- ADN Interview on Loan Forgiveness
- Meetings with Financial Aid Officers
- Met with new UAS Chancellor, Dr. Aparna Palmer
- Check in meetings with contractors, CampusDoor (CD), American Education Services (AES), and Transworld Systems, Inc. (TSI)
- Provided a presentation to Superintendents at the annual DEED Superintendent summer Juneau Fly-In
- Participated in Tribal Workforce Roundtable monthly meetings
- Working with representative from Complete College America to determine what efforts might work to help encourage Alaskans to complete their education/training programs
- Elgee-Rehfeld ASLC Audit exit conference

It is exciting to have the major outsourcing projects completed. I cannot emphasize the heavy lift this was for ACPE staff. They worked tirelessly to meet the multiple deadlines to achieve this success. Even though we are over the finish line for the initial conversion to our contractors, there is still a large body of work to ensure we transition successfully to our new roles of oversight and monitoring to continue supporting our borrowers.

As always, it is my pleasure and I am humbled to serve the Commission. I am proud to lead such a dedicated team of individuals to support Alaskans and their access to higher education opportunities.

Thank you!

**Attachments:**

1. August 11, 2023 Alaska Performance Scholarship Press Release
2. [Alaska College and Career Guidance Report](#)



August 11, 2023

### **Alaska Performance Scholarship**

JUNEAU- The Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) is a merit-based award for Alaska high school graduates. Students qualify for one of three award levels by meeting specific criteria: Grade Point Average (GPA), completion of a specified rigorous curriculum, and a qualifying score on a standardized exam. Additionally, submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) serves as the application for the APS. Students should submit the FAFSA by June 30<sup>th</sup> each year they plan to pursue education after high school.

Standardized test scores such as the ACT, SAT, and WorkKeys are required for APS eligibility. Students must earn a qualified score on one of these tests in order to meet the testing requirement of the Alaska Performance Scholarship eligibility. The test requirement remains in place for the Class of 2024 as well as the recently graduated Class of 2023.

ACPE encourages students starting their senior year of high school to research standardized test administration dates and complete their test registration. By taking a standardized test earlier in their senior year, students will have time to either re-test, if needed, and to ensure their qualifying test score is reported on their official high school transcript. Typically, testing should be completed by April of a student's senior year, for the score to be recorded on their final high school transcript.

ACPE offers many resources for students, families, and secondary schools to utilize for successful preparation in earning the APS, including:

- [APS website](#)
- [APS Coursework Checklist](#) (curriculum)
- [APS FAQs](#)
- [APS Informational Flyer](#)

ACPE supports modernizing the APS to expand eligibility and increase use of the award. Increased eligibility and use will ultimately result in increasing the number of Alaskans with postsecondary credentials who are prepared to meet the needs of Alaska's workforce.

#### **ABOUT THE ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION:**

Funded by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, ACPE promotes access to and success in education and career training beyond high school.

#### **THE COMMISSION PROVIDES:**

- Education planning tools and resources
- Advocacy and support for postsecondary participation in Alaska
- Financial aid for college and career training
- Education consumer protection through institutional authorization and complaint investigation

**Alaska Commission on  
Postsecondary Education**

**Personnel Bylaws**

**Amended**

~~May 14, 2013~~ October 19, 2023

**For further information, contact:**

*ACPE's ~~Human Resource Administrative Officer~~ Executive Office  
Administrative Assistant  
(907) 465-6671*

## ACPE Personnel Bylaws

### CONTENTS

#### 1. General

Personnel Bylaws  
 Personnel Policies  
 Matters not Addressed in the  
     Personnel Bylaws  
 Distribution of Bylaws and Policies  
 Personnel Files

#### 2. Ethics

Oath of Office  
 Code of Ethics  
 Outside Employment and Activities  
 Abuse of Office  
 Nondiscrimination  
 Sexual Harassment  
 Drug Free Workplace  
 Solicitation  
 Criminal Arrests and Convictions

#### 3. Classification of Positions

Exempt Employment  
 Job Evaluation  
 Employment Categories  
 Probationary Employment  
 At-will Employment

#### 4. Recruitment and Staffing

Appointments  
 Equal Employment Opportunity  
 Affirmative Action  
 Position Advertisement  
 Recruitment and Selection Process  
 Nepotism

Moving Expenses

Discretionary Rehire

#### 5. Compensation

Compensation Responsibilities  
 Placement  
 Movement  
 Performance Awards  
 Overtime  
 Compensatory Time  
Flex Time  
 Travel Expenses

#### 6. Benefits

#### 7. Leave/Holidays

Leave  
 Floating Holidays

#### 8. Employee Relations

Performance Evaluation  
 Disciplinary Actions  
 Reasonable Accommodation for  
     Disabilities  
 Open Door Policy  
 Dispute Resolution Process

#### 9. Separation

Resignation  
 Presumed Resignation  
 Retirement  
 Dismissal  
 Non-retention



# Personnel Bylaws

## *Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education*

The following personnel Bylaws govern the terms and conditions of employment for staff of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. These Bylaws are adopted by the Commission pursuant to AS 14.42.040 and may be modified or amended by the Commission, except as otherwise provided by law. These Bylaws are effective December 1, 1995.

### 1. General

#### 1.01.00 Personnel Bylaws

A majority vote of the Commission membership will be necessary to approve or amend ACPE Personnel Bylaws.

#### 1.02.00 Personnel Policies

The Executive Director will be responsible for the implementation of ACPE Personnel Bylaws through the establishment and maintenance of ACPE Personnel Policies.

#### 1.03.00 Matters Not Addressed in the Personnel Bylaws

While these bylaws are written to address the vast majority of human resource matters, situations may arise which are not addressed herein. If a situation occurs which is not specifically addressed in the bylaws, the Executive Director has the authority to determine the terms and/or conditions related to employment, compensation, or any other human resource matter.

#### 1.04.00 Distribution of Bylaws and Policies

Written copies of Personnel Bylaws and Personnel Policies will be made available to all ACPE employees. Personnel Bylaws and Personnel Policies may be made available in alternative formats upon eligible request. Two weeks' advance notice may be required for alternative format requests.

#### 1.05.00 Personnel Files

Employee Records (Department of Administration)-will be responsible for maintaining the official personnel files of ACPE employees. The Executive Office Administrative Assistant will maintain a working copy of personnel files for ACPE employees.

##### 1.05.01 Access to Personnel Files

Employees may examine their own personnel file upon advance written request to [the Administrative Assistant or Employee Records](#). Employees will receive a copy of their own personnel file within three days of a written request ~~to the Administrative Assistant. Official copies from Employee Records may take longer.~~

**1.05.02 Confidentiality of Personnel Files**

In recognition of the privacy interests of employees, ACPE will seek to avoid unnecessary exposure of the contents of individual personnel records. However, the Commission and its employees recognize that ~~a portion of the~~ contents of [exempt](#) personnel records are subject to public disclosure under state law, including: names of employees, position titles, prior positions, dates of employment, and compensation information ~~(AS 39.25.080).~~

~~Contents of personnel records that are not subject to public disclosure may be reviewed by individuals within the agency having a need to know, as determined by the Executive Director or HR Officer.~~

In response to requests from individuals outside the agency, ACPE will make reasonable efforts to advise the affected employee(s) before disclosing information from personnel records [and remove Personal Identifiable Information \(PII\)](#) ~~that is not subject to public disclosure.~~

**2. Ethics**

**2.01.00 Oath of Office**

Before beginning their duties, all employees must take and subscribe to the oath or affirmation of office required by AS 39.05.045.

**2.02.00 Code of Ethics**

ACPE employees will be subject to the policies provided in the State of Alaska Code of Ethics (AS 39.52).

**2.02.01 Notification of Potential Ethical Violation**

When an ACPE employee is involved in a situation that may be or may become a violation of the Code of Ethics, the employee must delay action related to that situation and must immediately disclose the matter in writing to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will provide a written determination of whether a violation exists or will exist. The Executive Director may reassign duties to avoid the violation (where feasible), direct the employee to remove the conflicting personal or financial interest, or find another solution.

**2.02.02 Alaska ~~Student/Alaska Advantage~~ Education Loan Disclosure**

Upon initial hire, each ACPE employee must disclose, on a form provided by the agency, the names of any family members who are current borrowers or cosigners on loans made by ACPE. For disclosure purposes, “family members” include the employee’s spouse, child, stepchild, foster child, parent, grandparent, or sibling; the employee’s spouse’s parent, grandparent, or sibling; and any other person living in the same household as the employee. Additionally, should an employee or family member receive a student loan during an employee’s tenure, the employee must immediately disclose that fact by filing an updated form. Failure to disclose loan information may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Applicants who are borrowers/cosigners on an outstanding loan made by ACPE must be current in payments to be considered for employment. ACPE employees who have such a loan must also keep payments current. If payments are or become delinquent, the employee or candidate for employment must immediately pay the account current or agree to a payment arrangement designed to bring the account current within six months and ~~submit enroll in a automatic payments payroll deduction authorization~~ for the duration of the payment arrangement. Failure to bring the account current within six months or make timely payments may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

All employees who are repaying loans made by ACPE are strongly encouraged to ~~initiate a payroll deduction agreement~~ enroll in automatic payments to ensure timely payments.

## **2.03.00 Outside Employment or Activities**

Outside employment or activities, paid or unpaid, are encouraged to the extent that they increase the effectiveness and broaden the experience of ACPE employees or provide service to the community or state. However, outside employment or activities must not interfere with the performance of ACPE employees’ regular duties; involve the use of ACPE facilities, equipment or services; or violate the ethics laws of the State of Alaska.

ACPE employees must report paid outside employment and volunteer work that could potentially conflict with their state duties or for which they receive any type of compensation, including travel or meals, annually to the Executive Director and whenever changes in outside employment occur.

## **2.04.00 Abuse of Office**

No ACPE employee may assert or imply that he or she is officially representing the Commission or its Bylaws or Policies, unless expressly authorized to do so by the Executive Director. In a political forum, any employee who uses his or her ACPE position as a means of identification

must clearly state that the opinions being expressed are private and imply no Commission or agency endorsement.

An employee who wishes to campaign for or hold any political office or to serve as a registered state or federal lobbyist will be subject to the agency and state policies and regulations relating to outside employment and activities.

ACPE funds, resources, or space may not be used to support partisan political activity. Electronic or printed letters or written materials constituting partisan political activity may not be produced or written on ACPE stationery, disseminated using state-owned equipment or distributed by or to ACPE employees during business hours.

### **2.05.00 Nondiscrimination**

ACPE will not engage in illegal discrimination. In accordance with federal and state law, ACPE makes its employment decisions and services available without discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, physical or mental disability, marital status, changes in marital status, genetic information, pregnancy or parenthood. ACPE employment decisions will be based on the individual's qualifications, abilities, and performance, as appropriate.

### **2.06.00 Sexual Harassment**

All employees of ACPE should be able to work in an environment free from conduct or behavior of a sexual nature commonly understood by persons of average sensibilities as being inherently offensive or harmful. As a matter of official policy, ACPE will not tolerate sexual harassment of its employees.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or necessary effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating a hostile, intimidating or offensive working environment; and
- Such conduct or behavior was known by the perpetrator to be unwelcome, harmful or offensive; or
- A person of average sensibilities would clearly have understood the behavior or conduct was unwelcome, harmful or offensive.

Individuals may possess different perceptions and cultural backgrounds, which may make it difficult to recognize certain conduct or behavior as a form of sexual harassment. Similarly, some individuals may be unreasonably

sensitive to certain conduct or behavior of a sexual nature that would not be commonly understood by most as inherently offensive or harmful.

Sexual harassment is a serious offense. Given the substantial possibilities for simple misunderstandings, as well as the potential harm to individuals who may be subjected to false or malicious claims of sexual harassment, the Executive Director will ensure prompt and thorough investigation and resolution of all sexual harassment complaints.

All employees are responsible for helping to keep ACPE free of sexual harassment. Employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or retaliation must report it immediately to the appropriate personnel. The confidentiality of all complainants and witnesses will be preserved to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the rights of the accused and ACPE's interest in investigating harassment allegations thoroughly.

Retaliation or reprisal against any employee for lodging a complaint of sexual harassment, participating as a witness, or assisting in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Retaliation is also prohibited in cases where the charges are proved to be false. Severe disciplinary actions, up to and including suspension and discharge, will be applied to any employee who violates this policy.

Employees of ACPE who participate in sexual harassment or retaliation, or who refuse to cooperate in an investigation without legal justification, will be severely sanctioned. Disciplinary actions for violating ACPE's Sexual Harassment Policy include suspension and discharge. Recurring incidents of conduct in violation of ACPE's Sexual Harassment Policy will increase the severity of disciplinary actions.

### **2.07.00 Drug Free Workplace**

Employees are prohibited from unlawful manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a controlled substance in any ACPE workplace. All employees will abide by this policy as a condition of their employment and will notify the Executive Director of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace within twenty-four (24) hours after conviction. Within 30 days of receiving notice of conviction, the Executive Director will take appropriate personnel action, up to and including termination.

### **2.08.00 Solicitation**

No ACPE employee may solicit another ACPE employee for any purpose while either employee is on work time. The distribution of flyers, tickets, brochures, or other literature during work time is prohibited.

With prior approval from a member of the Senior Management Team, employees can post in the break room flyers for fundraisers, charitable events, personally owned items for sale, and other approved postings on a case by case basis.

Persons not employed by ACPE are prohibited from soliciting any employee or distributing literature on agency premises, including in break rooms and staff lounges or at other employee work locations at any time.

The Alaska State Employees Combined SHARE Campaign and/or activities sponsored by the ACPE Employee Incentive Awards Committee are the only solicitations with ongoing or “blanket” approval.

## **2.09.00 Disclosure Requirement for Arrests and Convictions**

All ACPE employees must report to their immediate supervisor if they are arrested or convicted of an offense. The employee’s report must occur within twenty-four (24) hours, or the next business day if the arrest or conviction occurs over a weekend.

## **3. Classification of Positions**

### **3.01.00 Exempt Employment**

All positions established by the Commission are in the exempt service under AS 39.25.110. These positions are not subject to the classification plan for state positions in the classified and partially exempt service. The Commission delegates its authority to authorize positions, designate titles, hire and discharge ACPE employees other than the Executive Director to the Executive Director.

All ACPE temporary, probationary and Senior Management Team appointments are designated as at-will employment, meaning that the employment relationship between the Commission and the employee may be terminated at any time for any reason or no reason and with or without notice.

### **3.02.00 Job Evaluation**

Criteria for the establishment, maintenance and implementation of the job evaluation process will be established by the Executive Director. The process for appealing job evaluations will be established by the Executive Director (See Section 8.01.00). Job evaluations are not grievable through the formal dispute resolution process.

### **3.03.00 Employment Categories**

#### **3.03.01 Regular Employment**

To be considered a regular employee, employees must be on active or leave-without-pay status and have a budgeted continuing appointment.

#### **3.03.02 Temporary Employment**

Temporary employees work in unbudgeted positions and are not eligible for full employment benefits.

#### **3.03.03 Full-time Employment**

Full-time employees have an appointment for an anticipated work week of 30 or more hours and are eligible for full employment benefits.

**3.03.04 Part-time Employment**

Part-time employees have an appointment for an anticipated workweek of less than 30 hours on a continuing basis. Part-time employees may elect health benefit coverage by agreeing to pay half of the premium associated with the coverage.

**3.03.05 Probationary Employment**

All new regular assignments at Range 13 and under are subject to an initial six-month probationary period. All new regular assignments at Range 14 and above, except Senior Management Team appointments (See 3.01.00), are subject to a one-year probationary period. Throughout the probationary period an at-will employment relationship in accordance with Sections 3.01.00 and 3.03.06 will be maintained and the employee's performance and general suitability for ACPE employment will be closely monitored. An employee who, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor, has satisfactorily passed the prescribed probationary period shall be retained and given permanent status. An employee who, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor, has not or will not satisfactorily pass the prescribed probationary period shall not be retained as an employee. During the probationary period, an employee's assignment may be terminated by either party for any reason or no reason at all and with or without notice.

A regular employee who is voluntarily appointed (promoted, demoted or transferred) to a job in which he or she has not already served a probationary period must serve an initial probationary period in that job.

The provisions of this section do not apply to temporary or Senior Management Team appointments that maintain an at-will employment relationship throughout the duration of employment.

**3.03.05.A. Extension of Initial Probationary Period**

A supervisor may at his or her own discretion extend an initial six-month probationary period (Range 13 and under only) for up to six months to allow for additional training and monitoring of the employee's performance and general suitability for continued employment.

Employees so extended must be verbally notified of the extension prior to completion of the six-month time period and notified in writing no later than thirty days thereafter. An employee who, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor, has satisfactorily passed the

prescribed extended probationary period shall be retained and given permanent status. An employee who, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor will not satisfactorily pass the prescribed extended probationary period shall not be retained as an employee. Extensions of probationary periods beyond one year of service are not generally permitted and must be approved by the Executive Director.

The initial probationary period will be extended one month for each accumulation of 23 working days of leave without pay.

**3.03.05.B. End of Probationary Period**

The effective date of the end of the initial probationary period will be the first day ~~of the next pay period (first or sixteenth day of the month)~~ after the successful completion of the probationary period, unless the probationary period has been otherwise extended in accordance with these bylaws. If extended, the effective ending date will be the first day ~~of the next pay period (first or sixteenth day of the month)~~ after successful completion of the extended probationary period. ~~In the event the first or sixteenth day of the month falls on a weekend day or holiday, the effective ending date of the probationary period will be the next business day the agency is open for business.~~

**3.03.06 At-Will Employment**

At-will employment means that the employment relationship between the Commission and the employee may be terminated by either party at any time for any reason or no reason and with or without notice. See 3.01.00 for categories of employees designated as at-will.

**4. Recruitment and Staffing**

**4.01.00 Appointments**

The Commission may appoint the Executive Director. The Executive Director serves at the pleasure of the Commission.

The Executive Director will be empowered to make appointments to authorized staff positions. Persons employed in staff positions serve at the pleasure of the Commission, through the Executive Director (See 3.01.00, 3.03.05 and 3.03.06).



**4.02.00 Equal Employment Opportunity**

ACPE seeks to hire, train and promote individuals based solely upon qualifications, abilities, and performance, as appropriate, consistent with 2.05.00.

**4.03.00 Affirmative Action**

ACPE recognizes that discrimination in employment practices has in the past foreclosed economic opportunity to a substantial number of persons in the United States. The Commission is committed to opposing illegal discrimination and prohibiting it within the agency. In addition to prohibiting employment discrimination that violates federal and state law and policies, the Commission is committed to recruiting, employing and promoting persons on the basis of merit while engaging in practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce. ~~protected by federal law because of their historical under representation in the workforce. This commitment to affirmative action in employment does not require the agency to dilute standards necessary for the successful performance of its jobs. It also~~This commitment does not compel the Commission to employ or promote any person who is less qualified than another person who is competing for an employment opportunity. The Commission will take active steps to ensure equity in employment by working to remove barriers that adversely impact candidates based on their inclusion in a group or subgroup; for example, removing education requirements where experience alone will suffice. ~~The Commission's commitment to affirmative action does require, however, the elimination of standards or criteria which have a demonstrable adverse impact on the employment or advancement of members of legally protected classes, unless the Commission can demonstrate that such criteria or standards are conditions of successful job performance.~~

**4.04.00 Position Advertisement**

All recruitments will be advertised both externally and internally. Recruitment can be waived with the approval of the Executive Director.

**4.05.00 Recruitment and Selection Process**

The Executive Director will specify a process for recruitment and selection of ACPE employees in accordance with the Commission's affirmative action and equal employment opportunity Bylaws. The process will include background checks.

**4.06.00 Nepotism**

Candidates will not be prohibited from employment on the basis of their relationship with employees of ACPE. However, no employee of the Commission may supervise or participate in employment, dispute resolution, retention, promotion, salary, leave, or other personnel decisions concerning members of his or her immediate family as defined by AS 39.52.960(11).

Any exception to this Bylaw requires the written approval of the Executive Director in advance of any action taken.

#### **4.07.00 Moving Expenses**

Employees are subject to the moving expense policies issued by the Commissioner of Administration as administered by the Executive Director.

#### **4.08.00 Discretionary Rehire**

Subject to approval by the Executive Director, employees who resign from ACPE in good standing may be re-employed by the Commission into a job class they successfully held without the need for competitive recruitment for two (2) years from the effective date of their separation.

## **5. Compensation**

### **5.01.00 Compensation Responsibilities**

The Commission recognizes its responsibility to the citizens of Alaska to maintain a compensation program that both recognizes the public service responsibilities of the agency and enables the Commission to attract and retain highly qualified employees.

#### **5.01.01 Executive Director's Compensation**

The Executive Director receives compensation fixed by the Commission.

#### **5.01.02 Staff Compensation**

ACPE staff receive compensation based on the ACPE staff salary schedule. The ACPE staff salary schedule will be established and maintained by the Executive Director and approved by the Commission.

### **5.02.00 Placement**

New employees will be placed in Step "A" of the appropriate range assigned through the agency's classification process. Placement in Step "B" or "C" may be approved in writing by the supervisor, in consultation with ~~the HR Officer~~ [Human Resources](#), for candidates with documented qualifications clearly in excess of the minimum requirements of the position. Placement beyond Step "C" is an exceptional placement and must be approved by the Executive Director based on extraordinary qualifications or experience that are clearly relevant to the position and the agency or based on well-documented market issues.

### **5.03.00 Movement**

#### **5.03.01 At End of Probationary Period**

A one-step salary increase will be awarded on the first day ~~of the next pay period~~ after the successful completion of an initial

probationary period if the employee was promoted/demoted to or hired at Step “A.”

For new hires, the first anniversary date will be the first ~~or sixteenth of the day~~ following one year of service, unless service was interrupted by a period of leave without pay of 23 days or more.

**5.03.02 Service Increases**

Service increases of one step in the appropriate salary range will be awarded on the employee’s anniversary date upon receipt of an annual performance evaluation with an overall rating of “acceptable” or better. Employees at the last step of their assigned salary range are not eligible for service increases.

**5.03.03 Merit Increases**

A merit increase is intended to recognize higher than expected service and outstanding job performance and may be awarded to an employee whose overall performance is excellent and who strives to do more than what is asked of him or her. A division director may award a merit increase of two steps in the appropriate salary range in lieu of a service increase on the employee’s anniversary date upon receipt of the supervisor’s separate written recommendation and an annual performance evaluation reflective of outstanding performance.

A ~~double 3-step~~ merit increase is intended to recognize exemplary public service by an employee performing in an outstanding manner in all aspects of job performance, with little or no room for improvement. With the approval of the Executive Director, a merit increase of three steps in the appropriate salary range may be awarded in lieu of a service increase on the employee’s anniversary date upon receipt of the division director’s separate written recommendation and an annual performance evaluation reflective of exceptional performance.

**5.03.04 Pay Increments for Meritorious Service**

Pay increments, computed at the rate of 3.25 percent of the employee’s base salary, may be provided on an employee’s anniversary date after an employee has remained in the final step within their given range for two (2) years.

To receive a pay increment, the employee must have worked continuously for the Commission for seven (7) years and the current annual rating by the employee’s supervisor must be reflective of ~~outstanding or otherwise exceptional~~ performance that regularly exceeds expectations and supported by a separate written

recommendation from the employee's division director.

All pay increments must be approved by the Executive Director.

### **5.03.05 Transfer**

An employee who transfers from one position to another that is classified in the same salary range will retain the same salary and anniversary date. Transferred employees are eligible to receive their next scheduled service increases, even if serving a probationary period, provided their performance is "acceptable" or better.

### **5.03.06 Promotion**

A promotion is movement from a position in one range to a position in a higher range, either through reassignment to a different position or reevaluation of an employee's current position. Salary placement for promotions will be at Step "A" of the new salary range or at the step in the new range that is closest to but does not exceed a 5% increase in salary, whichever is greater. When a division director believes a larger increase is appropriate, the Executive Director may approve a larger increase upon receipt of the division director's written recommendation. However, a promotional increase may not exceed the last step of the new salary range.

The salary anniversary date of a promoted employee will be adjusted to the first ~~or sixteenth of the month~~ day following one year of service in the new position, including the completion of the appropriate probationary period, if required.

### **5.03.07 Demotion**

A demotion is movement from a position in one range to a position in a lower range, either through voluntary or involuntary reassignment to a different position or reclassification of an employee's current position. An involuntary demotion, made expressly for the benefit of the agency and not disciplinary in nature or performance related, will result in salary placement in the new range at a step, which is closest to but does not exceed a 5% decrease in salary. A voluntary demotion and those demotions made for disciplinary or performance reasons, will result in salary placement in the new range at a step closest to but not exceeding the step that the employee would have been, based on length of service and without regard for any merit increases the employee may have otherwise received, had initial appointment with the agency been at the new salary range. However, salary placement for a demotion may not exceed the last step of the new salary range.

The salary anniversary date of a demoted employee will be adjusted to the first ~~or sixteenth of the month~~day following one year of service in the new position, including the completion of the appropriate probationary period, if a probationary period has not already been served in the new job class.

**5.03.08 Appointment to an Acting Position**

With the approval of the Executive Director, an employee who is asked to serve in a higher position as a result of a temporary appointment for more than 30 calendar days may be advanced to Step “A” of the salary range associated with the acting position or to the step in the new range which is closest to but does not exceed a 5% increase in the employee’s regular salary, whichever is greater. For special circumstances, a larger increase may be approved by the Executive Director, however no temporary increase may exceed the last step of the salary range associated with the acting position.

**5.04.00 Performance Awards**

The Executive Director may establish, from available resources, funds to be distributed as awards to meritorious employees, including those employees whose regular pay is at or beyond the end of the assigned salary range. The Executive Director may establish the process and procedures for determining and distributing awards.

**5.05.00 Overtime**

Except for those positions designated in writing by the Executive Director as “overtime exempt,” all Commission positions are eligible for overtime (time and a half) pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per work week. Overtime work must be approved in advance by the employee’s immediate supervisor. “Hours worked” excludes all forms of leave and holiday hours.

The Executive Director may designate positions as “overtime exempt” based on the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Positions designated as “overtime exempt” are compensated by salary and are not eligible for overtime pay.

**5.06.00 Compensatory Time**

The Executive Director, or his or her designee(s), will have the authority to authorize and regulate the use of compensatory time. Pursuant to written agreements reached before the overtime work is performed, compensatory time may be provided in lieu of monetary overtime pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek. Compensatory time may also be provided in lieu of straight pay for hours worked in excess of 37.5 but less than 40 hours per workweek. Just like overtime work, compensatory time work must be approved in advance by the employee’s immediate supervisor. Hours worked excludes all forms of leave and holiday hours.

Use of accrued compensatory time will be approved by the immediate supervisor within a reasonable period after a request is received if it does not unduly disrupt the operations of the Commission.

Upon termination, an employee will be paid for unused compensatory time.

Positions designated as “overtime exempt” are compensated by salary and are not eligible for compensatory time.

5.07.00 **Flex Time?**

With prior approval of their immediate supervisor, employees in positions designated as “overtime exempt” may flex their time within a pay period to make up for planned schedule changes – for example, an employee who is exempt from overtime who leaves early for a doctor’s appointment may make up that time within the pay period to meet the work requirement.

In addition to informal flexing of hours, the Executive Director, or his or her designee(s), will have the authority to authorize and regulate the use of formal flex time plans for staff in positions designated as “overtime exempt”.

Pursuant to written agreements reached before the additional work is performed, flex time may be accrued during periods of high demand for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek. Hours worked excludes all forms of leave and holiday hours.

Use of accrued flex time will be approved by the immediate supervisor within a reasonable period after a request is received if it does not unduly disrupt the operations of the Commission. Flex time may accrue to a maximum of <x hours>, and will expire within <x timeframe> after accrual.

Upon termination, unused flex time will be cancelled without pay. Flex time has no monetary value and may not be cashed in.

5.0708.00 **Travel Expenses**

Employees are subject to the travel guidance, expenditure, and reimbursement policies issued by the Commissioner of Administration. The agency Travel Desk will ensure policies published to the ACPE online Topics Based Index are up to date at all times and available to staff.

## 6. Benefits

**6.01.00 Benefits**

Regular employees are eligible to participate in the benefits plan for State of Alaska employees, as administered by the Division of Retirement and Benefits.

## 7. Leave/Holidays

### 7.01.00 Leave

Employees are subject to the leave rules for State of Alaska employees published in the Alaska Administrative Code, 2 AAC 08.010--2 AAC 08.999, and any amendments adopted by the State of Alaska Personnel Board.

Additional criteria and policies regarding the use of leave may be established by the Executive Director.

### 7.02.00 Floating Holidays

If a supervisor and overtime exempt employee agree it is in ACPE's best interest, or provides a benefit to the employee, for the employee to work on a State-recognized holiday the employee's personal leave account shall be credited with the number of hours the employee worked on the holiday. This agreement must be in writing and approved by ~~the HR Officer~~ the Employee's supervisor or Senior Manager prior to the holiday in question.

## 8. Employee Relations

### 8.01.00 Performance Evaluation

The performance of all permanent ACPE employees should be evaluated at least annually. Probationary employees will be reviewed according to 3.03.05.

In the event an employee disagrees with the performance evaluation, the employee may, within ten working days, attach comments to the evaluation. These comments will be placed in the employee's official personnel file along with the evaluation document.

If, in response to the employee comments, the evaluator wishes to change the evaluation, the revised evaluation will be attached to the original and comments and placed in the employee's official personnel file. By mutual agreement, the original evaluation and comments may be removed and replaced by the revised evaluation.

Performance evaluations are not subject to the dispute resolution process.

### 8.02.00 Disciplinary Actions

Performance standards must be maintained in any work group. Generally, these standards are recognized and observed by individual members of the work group without any need for action or comment by the supervisor. When an employee does not observe these standards, counseling or a verbal reminder from the supervisor is usually all that is necessary to result in acceptable future performance. When an employee does not respond to verbal reminders, more formal discipline may be appropriate.

Normally, the discipline imposed would progress in order of increasing severity from informal action through formal written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension and termination. However, in appropriate cases which the supervisor believes to be justified by the gravity of the circumstances or shortcomings in an employee's performance or conduct, the supervisor may choose to skip one or more steps in the normal progression, with the approval of the Executive Director and [HR Officer in consultation with the Human Resources Business Partner for DEED](#). For example, a supervisor might be justified in terminating an employee as the initial action in imposing discipline.

**8.02.01 Disciplinary Probation**

At any time an employee demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to satisfactorily meet acceptable performance standards or objectives, the supervisor may place the employee on disciplinary probation. The employee will be notified in writing of the terms of the probation. Disciplinary probation periods will not exceed six months.

If the employee fails to attain adequate standards of performance or conduct during the disciplinary probationary period, the employee will be terminated for cause in accordance with Section 9.04.00 and Section 8.05.04.

**8.03.00 Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities**

Employees or applicants for employment with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodation(s) may request accommodation(s) by submitting a request to [the HR Officer the Human Resources Business Partner through their supervisor and the Executive Director](#), who serves as the agency's ADA Coordinator.

Employees may be required to provide [proof of disability medical documentation](#) and/or participate in a reasonable accommodation interview to determine if and how the agency can best accommodate the individual.

**8.04.00 Open Door Policy**

Employees are welcome to raise a concern with any level of management, without fear of retaliation.

Whenever possible, employees should try to resolve problems with their immediate supervisors. The immediate supervisor is the person closest to the situation and may already be aware of the problem. The immediate supervisor is also likely to be in a position to offer a different perspective or facts that may be helpful to the employee with a problem.

In cases where the supervisor is part of the problem or an employee is unsatisfied with the supervisor's response, the employee may want to take the problem to the next level of supervision. Employees are encouraged to follow the chain of command since that is often the most direct way of getting



matters resolved quickly and effectively. However, employees are free to contact someone at any level of management if they believe it is the best route for resolving a particular problem.

~~The HR Officer~~ [the Human Resources Business Partner](#) is also available to provide specialized assistance to employees seeking resolution of employment problems.

**8.05.00 Dispute Resolution Process Involving Legally Protected Rights**

**8.05.01 Stage One Dispute--Informal Mediation**

If an employment problem or a dispute involving legally protected rights cannot be resolved through the open door policy or other informal communication efforts, the parties may agree to request the assistance of ~~the HR Officer~~ [the Human Resources Business Partner](#) or a neutral third party to act as a mediator.

When a problem involves allegations of a sensitive nature, the Executive Director may require aggrieved parties to participate in informal and confidential resolution efforts before pursuing formal resolution.

**8.05.02 Stage Two Dispute--Formal Dispute Resolution Request**

If the parties do not agree to informal mediation or informal mediation fails to resolve the problem and the grievant elects to proceed with the grievance, the grievant will present a written request for dispute resolution. To be considered, the request must be received within 30 days of the occurrence giving rise to the grievance, or within 30 days of the date the grievant learned or should reasonably have learned of such occurrence, or within 10 days of the failure of informal mediation, whichever is later. The written request will be submitted to the Executive Director (or ~~the HR Officer~~ [the Human Resources Business Partner](#) in the event the respondent is the Executive Director) and must include:

1. the name of the grievant;
2. the name and title of the respondent;
3. a description of the act or omission being grieved, including a clear and concise statement of the relevant facts;
4. a citation of the bylaw, policy or law believed to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied and an explanation of how the bylaw, policy or law has been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied;
5. a description of the remedy sought;
6. the grievant's signature and the date.

The Executive Director or his/her designee (or the Commission Chair or his/her designee in the event the respondent is the Executive Director) will investigate the matter and issue a written response to the request usually within fifteen working days. The decision of the Executive Director or his/her designee is final.

### 8.095.003 Abuse of Dispute Resolution Process

The dispute resolution process is intended to afford employees a meaningful opportunity to resolve disputes within the structures of the agency. Its success depends on the good faith effort of all employees to use the process for its designated purpose. Employees who utilize the process to harass other employees or file vexatious or repetitive complaints that are determined by the Executive Director to be without merit may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **8.06.00 Termination for Cause Dispute Resolution**

A termination for cause is governed by this section rather than Sections 8.05.01-03. This section is not applicable to those employees designated as at-will employees in Sections 3.01.00 and 3.03.06 of these bylaws.

Within three working days following receipt of written notice of termination an individual (grievant) may request a hearing to contest the termination. The request must be submitted in writing to ~~the HR Officer~~ [the Human Resources Business Partner](#).

Upon receipt of the request, ~~the HR Officer~~ [the Human Resources Business Partner](#) will ~~will request the Executive Director appoint a senior staff person with no standing in the matter or other neutral third party to act as a hearing officer~~ serve as a neutral third party to act as a hearing officer, -if they were not involved in the termination. If the Human Resources Business Partner was involved in the termination, a neutral party from the Employee Relations group at the Department of Administration will be requested to serve as the hearing officer. The hearing officer will conduct an investigative hearing, at which time the manager(s) effecting the termination will have the burden to demonstrate that cause exists or existed for the termination. The grievant will be afforded an opportunity to present testimony and other evidence as to why the action should not have been taken. Either party may be represented by legal counsel, at their own expense. The hearing officer will hear the facts of the case and report the findings and recommendations to the Executive Director for review.

The Executive Director may accept or reject the findings and recommendations of the hearing officer in whole or in part or remand the matter to the hearing officer for further clarification or evidence. The

Executive Director will issue a written decision within ten working days from the date the hearing officer issues their findings.

A grievant that is not satisfied with the Executive Director's response to the hearing officer's recommendations may appeal the decision in writing to the Commission Chair. The appeal must be submitted within three working days of the receipt of the response to the hearing officer's recommendations. The Commission Chair will appoint a subcommittee of at least three members to hear the appeal. The subcommittee will consider the matter at or before the Commission's next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting and issue a written response within fifteen working days of that meeting. The subcommittee will base its decision on the record established at the hearing and may take any action it deems appropriate. The decision of the Commission subcommittee is final.

~~When a request for a hearing is received, an employee not yet terminated may be placed on disciplinary leave with pay pending the final decision of the Executive Director or Commission, as appropriate.~~

**8.07.00 Failure to Exhaust Administrative Remedies**

The failure of an employee to exhaust administrative remedies by seeking review of a decision under these Bylaws to the next higher level within established timelines will be judged to constitute acceptance of the decision and resolution of the dispute. It is ACPE's responsibility to generally inform employees of the dispute resolution process; however, it is the employee's responsibility to be cognizant of the process, time limits and deadlines included in the Bylaws and Policies.

Failure to receive a response from management within the established time frame will not preclude an employee from proceeding to a subsequent step in the dispute resolution process.

**8.08.00 Extension of Time Limits**

All timelines specified in these dispute resolution processes may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties.

~~**8.09.00 Abuse of Dispute Resolution Process**~~

~~The dispute resolution process is intended to afford employees a meaningful opportunity to resolve disputes within the structures of the agency. Its success depends on the good faith effort of all employees to use the process for its designated purpose. Employees who utilize the process to harass other employees or file vexatious or repetitive complaints that are determined by the Executive Director to be without merit may be subject to disciplinary action.~~

**9. Separation of Employment**

**9.01.00 Resignation**

An employee wishing to resign from employment with ACPE will submit a written resignation stating the effective date and the reason for leaving. To resign in good standing, an employee must give at least fourteen (14) calendar days' prior notice. Notice requirements may be waived at the discretion of the supervisor.

A resignation, once accepted by the supervisor, may only be withdrawn with the approval of both the supervisor and the Executive Director.

### **9.01.01 Notice Pay**

In extremely limited circumstances, and with the Executive Director's prior approval, management may pay in-lieu-of-notice pay. In this event the employee will be paid their salary for the period of notice [given in a lump sum in accordance with payroll processes and policies](#) and will finish their employment with the Commission on a date designated by management.

### **9.02.00 Presumed Resignation**

An unauthorized absence from work for a period of three consecutive working days may be considered as abandonment of duties and a presumed resignation.

### **9.03.00 Retirement**

The specific provisions for retirement eligibility are governed by the State of Alaska Public Employees Retirement System, as administered by the Division of Retirement and Benefits. An employee who is planning to retire should provide as much notice as possible. [There is no mandatory retirement age. See doa.drb.alaska.gov for specific information.](#)

### **9.04.00 Dismissal for Cause**

In the event of a decision to dismiss or immediately terminate an employee for cause, the supervisor will provide the employee with a written statement of the reason(s) for the action and notice of the employee's rights to seek a hearing regarding termination for cause through the appropriate section of the dispute resolution process in Section 8.~~0506.0400~~.

### **9.05.00 Nonretention**

Nonretention is the severance of the employment relationship that is based on a decision not to renew or continue an existing employment relationship such as in the case of an employee who fails to satisfactorily complete an initial or subsequent probationary period or the rescinding of a Senior Management Team appointment. Nonretention normally does not reflect discredit on an employee's performance. Nonretention may also be the result of a lack of available work; lack of sufficient funds to support the position; reorganization; a decision of the Commission to exercise its rights under AS 14.42.040, or another business reason that does not reflect discredit on the affected employee(s).

In cases other than a failure to satisfactorily complete an initial probationary period and/or the rescission of a Senior Management Team appointment, an employee will normally be given four ~~weeks notice~~weeks' notice of nonretention. With the prior written approval of the Executive Director, four weeks of pay may be given in lieu of four ~~weeks notice~~weeks' notice.

Employees whose conditions of employment stipulate that employment is for the duration of a particular project, term, or pursuant to funding of a particular activity, project or term and not beyond will not be provided notice of nonretention.



THE STATE  
of ALASKA  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Alaska Commission on  
Postsecondary Education

INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORIZATION

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Juneau, Alaska 99811-0505  
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MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education Members  
**THROUGH:** Sana Efird, Executive Director  
**FROM:** Tyler Eggen, Institutional Authorization Program Coordinator  
**DATE:** September 29, 2023  
**RE:** **Compliance and Activities Report for September 29, 2023**

Quarter Applications

Renewal of Authorization

Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, and Massage Therapy  
Northern Industrial Training  
Generations Southeast Community Learning Center

Program Amendment

Charter College

Exemptions

Institutions qualifying for Exemption from Authorization in the quarter and current as of report.

Location	Certification this Quarter
Alaska	34
Out-of-State	21

**Administrative Approvals****Charter College**

- Review and approve Change in Senior Manager, Norman Beasley.

**Generations Southeast Community Learning Center**

- Review and approve Change in Senior Manager, Krista Staveland.

**Northern Industrial Training**

- Review and approve changes to Advanced Carpentry program.

**Outer Coast**

- Review and approve program offerings through Alaska Pacific University.

**Wayland Baptist University**

- Review and approve Change in Senior Manager, Don Ashley.

**Institutional Monitoring**

**Alaska Career College:** The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) at their May 2023 meeting deferred final action of Alaska Career College's Renewal of Accreditation until the November 2023 meeting. The College had submitted their application for Renewal of Accreditation, application for Initial Distance Education, and an Employment Verification Report, however, ACCSC has requested additional information.

**Charter College:** The Accredited Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), approved the College to open its Sandy, Utah Separate Education Center, in which the College will offer three programs: Certificate in Medical Assistant, Associate of Applied Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography, and Associate of Applied Science in Nursing. Classes are scheduled to begin on September 11, 2023 for the Sonography program and January 2024 for the Nursing program. ABHES on-site verification will take place during Fall 2023 and the evaluation of the site visit will be considered at the Commission's January 2024 meeting. The College will also be receiving a virtual visit from ABHES regarding its Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal program in early October 2023.

At the July 2023 Commission Meeting, **Charter College's** Authorization was modified due to the College being determined financially unsound. This included increasing the surety bond to \$3,500,000 within thirty days of Commission action. The College later requested an extension to obtain the new bond amount, which was granted via the Commission's Executive Committee. The College made an additional request for the Commission to remove the increased bonding requirement. At the special Commission

meeting in August 2023, the Commission modified the College's Authorization to obtain a \$1,000,000 bond, which was a \$750,000 increase from the existing \$250,000 bond. The College met the deadline issued by the Commission at the August 2023 meeting, in which cash was deposited with the Commission.

Additionally, the College is required to provide unaudited quarterly financial statements to the Commission no later than ten business days after the quarter has ended. Due to Commission staff providing this report more than 14 days in advance of the Commission meeting on October 19, 2023, Commission staff will make a verbal update at the Commission meeting.

### **Institutional Authorization Activities**

In August 2023, the **U.S. Department of Education** Gainful Employment and Financial Value Transparency rules from the [2021-Negotiated Rulemaking cycle](#) were submitted to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, [Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs](#) for final approval. In September 2023, the Office would later approve the proposed changes, and in late September, the U.S. Department of Education finalized the [new rules](#).

### **Gainful Employment**

Since 1965, the Higher Education Act has required all programs offered by proprietary institutions, and all non-degree programs offered by public and private non-profit institutions, to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. In short, new standards were created during the Obama administration, which included comparing the typical debt a program's graduates took on with their typical earnings after graduating. If a program's debt-to-earnings ratio did not meet the standards established by the Department of Education, the program would lose access to its Title IV eligibility. These rules would be subject to lawsuits and would later be rescinded under the Trump administration. During the Biden administration, these new rules are more stringent than those under the Obama administration. The new Gainful Employment program framework will go into effect on July 1, 2024, with the first official metrics published in early 2025. The first year that programs may become ineligible is 2026.

### **Financial Value Transparency**

The Financial Value Transparency reporting requirements are new requirements put forth by the Department of Education, in which the Department would host a website to provide students and families with information about the financial value of degrees across all institution types of higher education, who are Title IV eligible. This would include information on program costs, financial aid, loan burdens, completion data, occupational licensing requirements, and licensing exam passage rates. The goal of this new rule is to provide information to students



prior to enrollment. The rule would require institutions to provide a link to the Departments disclosure website, requiring students to acknowledge that they have reviewed all the programmatic information, prior to Federal financial aid being disbursed if they are enrolled in or planning to enroll in a program that consistently leaves students with unaffordable debt. The reporting requirements will start July 1, 2024, with the new website being built and launched, prior to the students being required to sign the acknowledgements starting in 2026.

Other notable accountability proposed rules put forth by the Department of Education include areas such as, Financial Responsibility, Administrative Capacity, Certification Procedures, and Ability to Benefit, which are currently under review at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. As of the writing of this staff report, it is unknown if the review will be completed and Department published prior to the November 1, 2023 deadline for new rules, pending a potential U.S. Government shutdown. If these proposed rules are approved after November 1, 2023, the earliest they could go into effect is July 1, 2025.

For the **U.S. Department of Education** [2023-2024 Negotiated Rulemaking cycle](#), the Department sought nominations for Negotiators for the Student Loan Debt Relief committee. After identifying the Negotiators, it is expected that the Department will hold public hearings and listening sessions this Fall. There has been no request for Negotiators for the Institutional Quality and Accounting committee, which could take up areas including State Authorization, Accreditation, and Distance Education. Commission staff are monitoring the proposed changes from both Rulemaking cycles and their potential impacts to institutions.

### State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

The [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement \(SARA\)](#) provides a streamlined, reciprocity based process for institutions to gain approval to offer interstate distance education without individually applying to each state for approval. SARA is operated by the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement's (NC-SARA) in partnership with [four regional compacts](#). Alaska is a member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), and Commission staff serve on the WICHE-SARA or W-SARA Regional Steering Committee RSC). New in 2023 was the created SARA Policy Modification Process, which resulted in submission of 64 proposals this past spring. The proposals were subjected to public comments, amendments, and potentially being withdrawn. This September, RSC's voted on 44 remaining proposals, which resulted in six proposals being submitted to the NC-SARA Board for final approval. The NC-SARA Board is scheduled to take up these proposals at its October Board Meeting and if approved, are subject to being effective in the new SARA Policy Manual as of January 1, 2024.

### Complaints

When complaints arise, our regulatory complaint procedure requires that students attempt to resolve matters with their Institution through the Institution's Grievance Policy. Generally, there is resolution at this point. However, if resolution cannot be reached, the student may file a formal written complaint with the Commission.

To date, one Formal Complaint was submitted this quarter. Commission staff follow the compliance process as regulatory defined under 20 AAC 17.145. After the complaint has been investigated and a report is prepared, the report is distributed to both parties. Upon distribution, the parties have 30 days to request reconsideration to the Executive Director, whose decision may be an appeal to the Commission. Because the Commission is the final decision making body, and in accordance with 20 AAC 17.910, the details of the complaint will remain confidential until the request for reconsideration hearing window has expired.



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Alaska Commission on  
Postsecondary Education**

INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORIZATION

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**Staff Report**

**Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Massage Therapy  
Renewal of Authorization**

Summary

The Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Massage Therapy (Institute) offers training in Anchorage in the fields of traditional Chinese medicine and massage. The Institute offers a Massage Therapy Program that meets the licensure requirements of the Alaska Board of Massage Therapists, and short courses for licensed professionals that meet the continuing education requirements of the Alaska Board of Massage Therapists. It is one of three Authorized massage schools in the state. The other schools are located in Anchorage and Wasilla.

In Alaska, massage therapy program requirements are regulated by the Board of Massage Therapists, which requires a total of 625 hours of instruction leading towards professional licensure. The program offered by the Institute exceeds this requirement and graduates from this program have gone on to work in chiropractic offices, wellness clinics, and private practice.

Chief Administrator	Cynthia McMullen, CEO	Financial Statements	Financially Unsound
Address	2636 Spenard Rd., Suite 2 Anchorage, AK 99503	FY22 Tuition Revenues	\$331,538
Year Founded	2003	Enrollment Data	35
Authorized Since	2003	Complaints since last Authorization	0
		Surety Amount/Type	\$180,000/Bond

Program name	Program length	Cost
Massage Therapy Program	830 hrs	\$16,422
Tuina Medical Acupressure	258 hrs	\$ 3,500

Thai Yoga Massage	174 hrs.	\$ 2,350
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#### Updates since Last Renewal of Authorization

The Institute was previously renewed for Authorization in October 2020, which was for three years. Since then there have been changes to the facility to include an expansion of the resource library, redefining how the main school location and the secondary school location (across the parking lot) get utilized for classroom and clinical space, and the creation of a new advisory board to support the mission of the school.

While there is no statutory or regulatory requirement with the Board of Massage Therapists for licensing purposes, or requirements with the Commission for the Institute to be accredited, long term, the Institute is looking to explore the accreditation process through the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation.

#### ACPE Statutes and Regulations regarding Financial Soundness

**AS 14.48.060 (b)** A postsecondary educational institution must be maintained and operated, or, in the case of a new institution, must demonstrate that it can be maintained and operated, so that (8) the institution is financially sound and capable of fulfilling its commitments to students.

**20 AAC 17.102 (c)** A postsecondary educational institution is not financially sound if

- (1) its financial statements or the commission staff's investigation shows
  - (A) operating losses;
  - (B) negative cash flows from operations;
  - (C) adverse financial ratios; or
  - (D) conditions or events similar to those described in (A) - (C) of this paragraph that raise substantial doubts that the institution will be able to continue to fulfill its commitments to students and creditors;
- (2) its accrediting agency, if any, has found it not to be financially sound; or
- (3) the United States Department of Education has
  - (A) made a final determination that the institution is not financially sound; or
  - (B) placed the institution on reimbursement status.

#### ACPE's Consumer Protection Role

Authorized Institutions must follow specific requirements to protect students, should an institution not have the financial or administrative capacity to continue operations. These requirements include: full surety bonding, a Commission-approved teach-out plan, and notice to current and prospective students. The bonding must be in favor of the State, for the monies to be disbursed by the State to refund students and pay for expenses associated with a teach-out. In the case of a school closure, Commission Staff provide teach out oversight, facilitate

communication with students, respond to any student complaints and determine refunds. The accreditor may also assist with a school closure.

### Financially Unsound FY22 Financial Statements

Included in the Institute's application was the Institution's financial statements. Upon Commission staff review, as well as the opinion of the Commission's third party auditor for financial soundness tests, Commission staff determined that the College was financially unsound. Commission staff review of the financial statements indicated an operating loss of \$44,974 on operating revenues, a negative cash flow from operations of \$52,448, and adverse ratios were present including negative months of expenses in reserve.

As such, the Institute would be subject to the following:

- Providing a surety bond in the amount of all tuition and fee revenues for all programs in the fiscal year or the highest amount of revenue for all students projected by the Commission that the Institution would receive in a fiscal year.
- Maintain a Commission-approved, detailed teach-out plan, which included submission of a financial improvement plan.
- Providing a Commission approved financial unsoundness disclosure to current and prospective students, which includes Commission contact information.
- Instructing that the Institution would pay for an independent financial soundness review annually from a firm approved by the Commission, until the Commission determines the Institution to be financially sound or the teach-out plan has been completed and the Institution has closed.
- Providing unaudited quarterly balance statements, no more than ten business days after the financial quarter has ended, for each quarter until the Institution has been determined to be financially sound or a teach out plan has been completed and the Institution has closed.

The Institute complied with Commission requirements, which included the financial improvement plan and identifying the root cause of the financial unsoundness. The Institute reported several causes, including how the COVID-19 pandemic lingered and influenced incoming clientele, staffing shortages, and a change in student funding options/financial hardships.

The Institute has submitted the financial unsoundness disclosure to the Commission for approval, and with Commission action taken, the Institute will disseminate the disclosure to all current students and all prospective students. Additionally, the Institute provided a teach-out plan in which students would be able to finish their education in the event of institutional closure.

The Institute currently holds a surety bond valued at \$180,000. Upon reviewing the FY22 Sources of Funding, the current bond level exceeds the current amount of expenses that

students have paid out of pocket and the amount the students would be responsible for to their creditors.

Strategies for Improvement

In September 2023, the Institute held its first alumni appreciation day, which reportedly had a large turnout, and the event is planned to be hosted annually. By inviting alumni back to the Institute, the desire is to have greater alumni engagement in operations, as well as to be used in the marketing of the massage program for recruitment. Additionally, the Institute has engaged with various sources of funding to assist students understanding the funding options available to them. The Institute has previously assessed its current tuition rates and facility expenses, and made the current decision to not increase tuition costs or downsize in space, but may reassess those when appropriate.

Annual Report 2022 Data

Program Name	Number of Students	Completion Rate	Placement Rate
Massage Therapy Program	20	73%	69%*

*Completion rate does not include students still enrolled.*

*\*Provided explanation for placement rates under 70%*

Site Visit & Student Experience Survey

Commission staff conducted a Site Visit, which observed no violations or concerns regarding life and safety matters and space, equipment, and resources. Commission staff would get a tour of the new library and resource area, which was expanded since the Institution’s last Renewal of Authorization.

Commission staff conducted a Student Experience Survey with the 16 students participating from two different cohorts of Massage Therapy students. The student’s responses indicated themes regarding positive experiences with classmates and instructors, and the instructor’s abilities to share from their professional experiences. The survey responses also demonstrated the Institution’s compliance with enrollment contract and catalog regulations. The students’ survey results also indicated no themes regarding what the Institution could do to improve the student experience.

Materials Review

Materials were submitted in a timely manner and follow up requests were responded to appropriately.

Evaluation

Minimum Standards Component - AS 14.48.060	Staff Evaluation/Comments
1. Program and courses meet stated objectives	830 hours exceeds licensure requirements with Board of Massage Therapists
2. Adequacy of space, equipment, and resources	Compliant
3. Appropriateness of staff/faculty credentials	Compliant licenses
4. Catalog/brochure compliance	Compliant
5. Credential compliance	Certificate awarded
6. Adequacy of records	Compliant
7. Compliance with applicable laws	No observations of non-compliance with other applicable laws
8. Financial soundness	Does not meet regulatory soundness requirements
9. Advertising and sales	Compliant
10. Administrators are of good reputation	Background check-no adverse findings
11. Student housing, if any	N/A
12. Refund policy compliance	Reviewed and documented
13. Costs and charges compliance	Reviewed and documented

Recommendation:

Staff recommends an authorization for one year for Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Massage Therapy, through October 31, 2024, contingent on the following recommendations:

- Continued unaudited financial statements, in accordance with 20 AAC 17.102(g)(1), which would include balance sheets, an income statement, and a statement of cash flows. The statements would continue to be delivered to the Commission no more than ten business days after the financial quarter has ended, until the Institution has been determined to be financially sound.
- Updated student account ledgers at the end of each fiscal quarter, to be delivered to the Commission no more than ten business days after the end of fiscal quarter, as a requirement of the teach out plan, until the Institution has been determined to be financially sound.
- Disbursement of the financial soundness disclosure for student signature, to be placed in the student's record, until the Institution has been determined to be financially sound.
- Paying for an independent financial soundness review annually from a firm approved by the Commission, until the Commission determines the Institution to be financially sound or the teach-out plan has been completed and the Institution has closed.
- Maintaining current bonding levels.

Motion Needed:

*“Move to approve authorization for Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Massage Therapy, through October 31, 2024, based upon staff recommendations.”*





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**Staff Report**  
**Generations Southeast Community Learning Center**  
**Renewal of Authorization**

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Summary

Generations Southeast Community Learning Center (GSCLC), formerly known as Vocational Training & Resource Center (VTRC) is a component of and operated by the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA). Historically, GSCLC offered Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Class “A” Training in Juneau and short courses of study in online vocational certifications (Flagger, HAZWOPER).

In July 2013, GSCLC expanded their offerings and was approved to deliver online training with local support using the programs of Penn Foster. Penn Foster is a Pennsylvania-based postsecondary institution, institutionally accredited by the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) and authorized by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Education, Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education.

Chief Administrator	Krista Staveland, Generations Southeast Manager	Financial Statements	Financially Sound
Address	3239 Hospital Dr Juneau AK 99801	FY22 Tuition Revenues	\$223,717.00
Year Founded	1996	Enrollment Data*	29
Authorized Since	1997	Complaints since last Authorization	0
		Surety Amount/Type	\$60,000/Bond

\*Based on longer programs reported during Annual Reporting 2022

GSLC Programs

Program name	Program length	Cost
Pro Truck Driver 160 Hour TD/107	160 hrs	\$15,000
Online Flagger Certification	6 hrs	\$165
40-Hour HAZWOPER	40 hrs	\$400
8-Hour HAZWOPER Refresher Certification	8 hrs	\$125
Child Development Associate Certificate	600 hrs	\$2,000
First Aid, CPR, AED Certification	6 hrs	\$150
Business Basics Certificate	12 hrs	\$300
Financial Skills Certificate	6 hrs	\$150
Work Readiness & Soft Skills Development Certificate	6 hrs	\$150
Administrative Assistant Program Level One Certificate	160 hrs	\$4000
Administrative Assistant Program Level Two Certificate	160 hrs	\$4000

Penn Foster Programs

Program name	Program length	Cost
Accounting	330 hrs	\$1,718
Administrative Assistant	480 hrs	\$1,513
Auto Repair Technician	520 hrs	\$1,626
Basic Electronics	315 hrs	\$1,649
Bookkeeping	310 hrs	\$1,489
Business Management	330 hrs	\$1,718
Certified Personal Trainer	235 hrs	\$1,697
Child Care Professional	285 hrs	\$1,466
Computer Graphic Artist	300 hrs	\$1,698
Carpenter	287.5 hrs	\$1,542
Dental Assistant	405 hrs	\$1,629
Diesel Mechanics/Heavy Truck Maintenance	835 hrs	\$1,692
Dog Obedience Trainer	295 hrs	\$1,628
Drafting with AutoCAD	535 hrs	\$1,699
Dressmaking & Design	235 hrs	\$1,558
Electronics Technician	730 hrs	\$1,698
Online Flagger Certification	4 hrs	\$165
Furniture & Cabinet Maker	412.5 hrs	\$1,698
Gunsmith	240 hrs	\$1,692
High School Diploma	36 months max	\$2,100
Hotel/Restaurant Management	162.5 hrs	\$1,651
Human Resources Management	360 hrs	\$1,718
HVAC Technician	417.5 hrs	\$1,629
Jewelry Design and Repair	152.5 hrs	\$1,549

Landscaping Technology	213 hrs	\$1,628
Legal Secretary	355 hrs	\$1,626
Medical Administrative Assistant	620 hrs	\$1,488
Medical Coding and Billing	586 hrs	\$1,651
Medical Transcriptionist	240 hrs	\$1,549
Motorcycle Repair Technician	295 hrs	\$1,514
Occupational Therapy Aide	90 hrs	\$1,558
Paralegal	300 hrs	\$1,651
Pet Groomer	182.5 hrs	\$1,466
Pharmacy Technician	388 hrs	\$1,410
Physical Therapy Aide	90 hrs	\$1,530
Professional Locksmithing	213 hrs	\$1,664
Residential Electrician	888 hrs	\$8,257
Small Business Management	160 hrs	\$1,530
Small Engine Repair	290 hrs	\$1,530
Teacher Aide	135 hrs	\$1,460
Travel and Tourist Specialist	440 hrs	\$1,524
Veterinary Assistant	337.5 hrs	\$1,598
Wildlife/Forestry Conservation	245 hrs	\$1,524

### Penn Foster Programs

GSCLC offers Penn Foster online programs with on-the-ground support to those students seeking training with the goal of obtaining employment or those students already employed who seek continuing education options. Students can use the GSCLC computer lab to access their courses, which is helpful for those students without access to a study space or computer at home. Both GSCLC and Penn Foster issues certificates of completion and both keep copies of student records. GSCLC, as the Authorized Institution, is responsible for refunds and resolving student complaints.

### CDL Program & NIT Partnerships

The commercial driving license program was paused during 2018. GSCLC struggled to find an instructor to offer the program, however, GSCLC would later collaborate with Northern Industrial Training (NIT) to restart the CDL program. GSCLC and NIT also collaborate in offering an Administrative Assistant Program Level One and Two.

At the October 2018 Commission meeting, NIT's CDL program was approved under the Institution's Renewal of Authorization. Students are enrolled as GSCLC students and follow all guidelines found in GSCLC catalog.

It is noted that if NIT makes any changes that depart from their approved program, or if there are changes to NIT’s institutional status, it may have an impact on GSCLC to offer its program. Minor changes may be eligible for Administrative Approval by Commission Staff, however, significant changes may require an application for Amendment of Authorization to the Commission. NIT is currently in good standing and is Authorized until October 31, 2023.

Updates since July 2023 Renewal of Authorization

At the July 2023 Commission meeting, the Commission Renewed GSCLC’s Authorization for three months due to Commission staff being unable to access a number of records for the Institution to comply with regulations. Commission staff were informed by the Institution that the records were on site, but located in a different space due to a transition in record keeping processes.

The missing records as required under 20 AAC 17.110, included:

- A legible copy of the government-issued photographic identification presented by the student for identity for verification before enrollment;
- Final grade and date of completion or date of completion or discontinuance of each course;
- The date the certificate or diploma was issued, and a copy of the certificate or diploma;
- Actual attendance with dates and hours present; and
- Documentation of compliance with AS 14.48.165(Meningitis Form)

Commission staff gave the Institution the ability to collect and demonstrate compliance with the above records, per 20 AAC 17.110. However, prior to the July Commission meeting, no institutional response was received to demonstrate compliance.

The Institution was given a three month Renewal of Authorization to allow the Institution the opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the adequacy of student record keeping by submitting a corrective action plan of student record keeping processes, submission of a corrective action plan regarding timely correspondence with Commission staff and delivering required materials, and paying for another site visit inspection.

Annual Report 2022 Data

Program Name	Number of Students	Completion Rate	Placement Rate
Administrative Assistant Level One	12	100%	83%
Administrative Assistant Level Two	1	100%	100%

Child Development Associate	14	100%	100%
First Aid/CPR/AED	21	100%	100%
Pro Truck Driver 160 TD/107	2	100%	100%

*Some students were already employed at time of enrollment. Completion rate does not include students still enrolled.*

Materials Review and Recent Site Visit

GSCLC submitted its corrective action plan of student record keeping processes and the corrective action plan regarding timely correspondence with Commission staff prior to the August 1, 2023 deadline, as defined by the Commission’s actions at the July 2023 meeting.

This quarter, Commission staff have noted regular and consistent communication with the Institution, with any requested materials being delivered by the assigned deadline by Commission staff.

Commission staff traveled to the Institution to evaluate the newly implemented record keeping system and evaluate records under the new system. Commission staff did not find a lack of compliance of record keeping practices, however, staff shared with the Institution that the new system must be uniformly and consistently applied moving forward.

Evaluation

Minimum Standards Component - AS 14.48.060	Staff Evaluation/Comments
1. Program and courses meet stated objectives	NIT’s CDL program meets FMSCA standards, CDA meets Council for Professional Recognition standards, and Penn Foster programs are accredited through Distance Education Accrediting Commission.
2. Adequacy of space, equipment, and resources	Trucks inspected by DMV through NIT, Reviewed at Site Visit
3. Appropriateness of staff/faculty credentials	Compliant licenses
4. Catalog/brochure compliance	Compliant
5. Credential compliance	Certificate awarded
6. Adequacy of records	Compliant
7. Compliance with applicable laws	No observations of non-compliance with other applicable laws
8. Financial soundness	Meets regulatory soundness requirements
9. Advertising and sales	Compliant
10. Administrators are of good reputation	Background check-no adverse findings

11. Student housing, if any	N/A
12. Refund policy compliance	Reviewed and documented
13. Costs and charges compliance	Reviewed and documented

Recommendation:

Staff recommends an Authorization for one year for Generations Southeast Community Learning Center, through October 31, 2024. The basis for this recommendation is to allow the Institution the opportunity to continue to demonstrate compliance with the adequacy of student record keeping and timely communication with Commission staff.

Motion Needed:

*“Move to approve authorization for Generations Southeast Community Learning Center for one year, through October 31, 2024, based upon staff recommendations.”*



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**Staff Report  
Northern Industrial Training  
Renewal of Authorization**

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Summary

Northern Industrial Training (NIT) is a family-owned career and technical education Institution that offers programs primarily to prepare for employment in the oil, gas, trucking and construction trades. Programs include courses regulated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and construction courses accredited by the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER). NIT is accredited by the American Welding Society (AWS), another national professional organization, as a Test Facility. This designation allows NIT students who pass the AWS welding exam to obtain AWS Certification. NIT also offers a variety of short courses in First Aid, Safety and North Slope Training. Their main location in Palmer holds offices and classrooms, and the welding and mechanical trades shop is next door. NIT operates their driving and heavy equipment operator training range at the Alaska State Fairgrounds. NIT also has offices and classroom spaces in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and an auxiliary location for truck driving instruction at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson.

NIT has representatives on boards representing industry groups such as the North Slope Training Council and the Alaska Industry Support Alliance and is continually collecting feedback on the skills and knowledge desired by employers.

Chief Administrator	Joey Crum, CEO	Financial Statements	Financially Sound
Address	1740 N. Terrilou Ct Palmer, AK99645	FY22 Tuition Revenues	\$5,437,582
Year Founded	2003	Enrollment Data	351
Authorized Since	2003	Complaints since last Authorization	0
		Surety Amount/Type	\$350,000/Bond

## 15. Institutional Standards and Evaluation

Program name	Program length	Cost
Administrative Assistant Level One	320 hrs	\$4,000
Administrative Assistant Level Two	160 hrs	\$4,250
Administrative Assistant Level Three	160 hrs	\$4,250
Advanced Carpentry	320 hrs	\$6,500
Advanced Welding	320 hrs	\$11,500
Aluminum Welding	160 hrs	\$8,000
ATV Mechanics	240 hrs	\$6,000
Construction Equipment Training (CET)	160 hrs	\$6,775
Construction Equipment Training (CET)	240 hrs	\$10,000
Construction Equipment & Pro Truck Driver (5/6 Week)	240 hrs	\$8,750
Construction Equipment & Pro Truck Driver (8 Week)	320 hrs	\$12,000
Construction Equipment & Pro Truck Driver	486 hrs	\$17,720
Elite Combo (Construction Equipment, Truck, Welding)	640 hrs	\$19,100
Fabrication Welding	160 hrs	\$5,000
Heavy Duty Mechanic (Service Oiler)	320 hrs	\$10,000
Health Safety and Environment Technician (HSET)	160 hrs	\$6,000
Industrial & Construction Skilled Laborer (ICSL)	160 hrs	\$5,000
Major Combo (Welding, Construction Equipment)	480 hrs	\$14,500
NCCER Carpentry Level One	225 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Carpentry Level Two	215 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Carpentry Level Three	172.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Carpentry Level Four	186 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Electrical Level One	185 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Electrical Level Two	145 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Electrical Level Three	155 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Electrical Level Four	180 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Plumbing Level One	217.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Plumbing Level Two	175 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Plumbing Level Three	145 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Plumbing Level Four	146 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Pipefitting Level One	152.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Pipefitting Level Two	162.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Pipefitting Level Three	132.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Pipefitting Level Four	185.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Project Management	115 hrs	\$4,000
NCCER Welding One	377.5 hrs	\$8,000
NCCER Welding Two	187.5 hrs	\$5,000
NCCER Welding Three	370 hrs	\$8,000
NCCER Welding Four	192.5 hrs	\$5,000
Outboard Motor Repair	240 hrs	\$6,000



Pipe Welding	320 hrs	\$10,000
Pro Truck Driver 3-Week	120 hrs	\$5,775
Pro Truck Driver TD107 4-Week	160 hrs	\$9,200
Pro Truck Driver TD107 4-Week(Fairbanks)	160 hrs	\$9,500
Pro Truck Driver TD108 6-Week	240 hrs	\$11,500
Pro Truck Driver TD110 8-Week	320 hrs	\$13,500
Pro Truck Driver TD112 4-Week	160 hrs	\$9,200
Pro Truck Driver TD112 4-Week (Fairbanks)	160 hrs	\$9,500
Project Management & Heath Safety and Environmental	400 hrs	\$10,500
Project Manager	160 hrs	\$5,000
Roustabout	160 hrs	\$5,000
S/E Welding (Safety, Construction Equipment)	640 hrs	\$17,300
Service Oiler 6-Week	240 hrs	\$7,000
Service Oiler 4-Week	160 hrs	\$5,500
Structural Welding (Nights & Weekends)	320 hrs	\$10,500
Structural Welding Level Two , 4-Week	160 hours	\$5,000
Ultimate Welding, 16-Week	640 hrs	\$23,000
Welding/Service Oiler Combo	640 hrs	\$17,600

Updates since Last Renewal of Authorization

NIT received its last Renewal of Authorization in October 2018, which was for five years. This was in part due to the Institution being institutional accredited by the Council on Occupational Endorsement. However, in 2019, NIT decided to withdraw its membership as an accredited institution.

Since 2018, NIT has added three levels of Administrative Assistant programs to meet the demand from employers who observed a need for entry level training in basic administrative assistant skills. Additionally, NIT has added the Industrial and Construction Skilled Laborer training, moved Anchorage locations, added a Fairbanks location, and added distance education modalities to a number of programs. This would include a host of simulators for commercial truck driving, welding and construction equipment that have been purchased and on site, or will be incorporated as a training resource.

NIT also has established itself as a vendor for K-12 Homeschool Agencies in Alaska, offering opportunities for short course learning and exposure to the trade industry. NIT thusly needed to expand one of its buildings to accommodate training, storage, and office space needs.

Annual Report 2022 Data

Program Name	Number of Students	Completion Rate	Placement Rate
Pro Truck Driver 160 hr	98	89%	85%
Pro Truck Driver 240 hr	65	100%	78%
Pro Truck Driver 320 hr	15	100%	63%*
Ind. Cons. Skill Laborer	14	64%**	100%
Heavy Duty Mechanics	13	100%	88%
Advanced Carpentry L1	4	100%	100%
Admin Assistant L1	17	94%	55%*
Admin Assistant L2	13	90%	0%***
Structural Welding L1	43	69%	42%*
Advanced Welding	15	100%	63%*
Ultimate Welding	5	100%	50%*
Pipe Welding	4	100%	50%*

*Completion rate does not include students still enrolled.*

*\*Provided explanation for placement rates under 70%.*

*\*\* Provided other explanation.*

*\*\*\* Majority of students who completed did not respond to Institutions request for information.*

Site Visit & Student Experience Survey

Commission staff conducted a Site Visit, which observed no violations or concerns regarding life and safety matters and space, equipment, and resources. Commission staff also visited the Alaska Raceway Park, which served as a temporary location to all Pro Truck Driving behind the wheel components while the Alaska State Fairgrounds were in use for the Fair, as well as the Anchorage office. Commission staff will visit the Fairbanks location during a future trip.

Commission staff conducted a Student Experience Survey with 13 students participating from three programs. The survey indicated positive levels of satisfaction and demonstrated the Institution's compliance with enrollment contract and catalog regulations. The students' survey results also indicated no themes regarding what the Institution could do to improve the student experience.

Materials Review

Materials were submitted in a timely manner and follow up requests were responded to appropriately.

Evaluation

Minimum Standards Component - AS 14.48.060	Staff Evaluation/Comments
1. Program and courses meet stated objectives	Industry-recognized curriculum that prepares students for immediate employment
2. Adequacy of space, equipment, and resources	Trucks inspected by DMV and subject to FMSCA rules. AWS Accredited Test Facility. Reviewed at Site Visit by Commission staff.
3. Appropriateness of staff/faculty credentials	Compliant licenses
4. Catalog/brochure compliance	Compliant
5. Credential compliance	Certificate awarded
6. Adequacy of records	Compliant
7. Compliance with applicable laws	No observations of non-compliance with other applicable laws
8. Financial soundness	Meets regulatory soundness requirements
9. Advertising and sales	Compliant
10. Administrators are of good reputation	Background check-no adverse findings
11. Student housing, if any	N/A
12. Refund policy compliance	Reviewed and documented
13. Costs and charges compliance	Reviewed and documented

Recommendation:

Staff recommends an Authorization for three years for Northern Industrial Training, through October 31, 2026.

Motion Needed:

*“Move to approve authorization for Northern Industrial Training, through October 31, 2026, based upon staff recommendations.”*



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**Staff Report  
Charter College  
Program Amendment**

Summary

Charter College currently offers programs through its Anchorage and Wasilla campuses. Most degrees are offered online, but there are a variety located in Alaska that are delivered via blended delivery. The College is owned and operated by Prospect Education, LLC, of Reno, Nevada, with 13 additional campuses located in Washington, California, Montana, New Mexico, and Utah. The College is nationally accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) with the Nursing program accredited through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Charter College is an NC-SARA participant through the state of Washington, however, Alaska residents are enrolled through Charter College Anchorage. The Institution is seeking Authorization to amend adding a new program.

Chief Administrator	Joshua Swayne, CEO, Prospect Education		Addresses	2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Anchorage, AK 99508
Local Administrator	Norman Beasley, Regional Campus Manager			5911 Old Seward Hwy Anchorage, AK 99518
Year Founded	1985		Authorized Since	1985
Surety Amount/Type	\$250,000 / Bond \$750,000/ Cash Deposit		Fee Paid	\$750
				721 W. Parks Hwy Wasilla, AK 99654

- New Programs

Program or degree name	Program length	Tuition/Fee Cost
Diploma in Certified Nurse Aide	168 clock hours/ 11.6 quarter credit hours	\$1,508.00

Review

The Diploma in Certified Nurse Aide program is to be offered as an Anchorage based residential weekend program with didactic, lab, and clinical classes all offered over a 15 week period. The weekend offering is to accommodate working students, who will learn to provide or assist with basic care or support at a health or nursing facility. This would include performing duties such as monitoring of health status, feeding, bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, or ambulation of patients. Students would be placed in local health and nursing facilities for completion of their externship.

The State of Alaska Board of Nursing oversees the certification of nurse aides. Licensure as a certified nurse aide is obtainable either through completion of a Board of Nursing approved program or via examination. The College has submitted its Nurse Aide Training program application to the Board of Nursing and it has been placed on the Board’s November agenda. If the program is approved at the meeting, it would be provisional, allowing for training to be conducted and an on-site review to occur, before full Board approval at a future meeting. The College would additionally seek approval from its institutional accreditor (ABHES) if approved by our Commission, however, the Board of Nursing would oversee the curriculum requirements.

The required application and supporting materials were reviewed by Commission staff and comply with statutes and regulations.

Anticipated Enrollment:

The College anticipates starting enrollment with 41 students in its first year, starting enrollment in early 2024.

Certified Nurse Aide Job Outlook, State & National:

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Data:

Mean Wage	Wage by Percentile				
Mean	10 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	Median	75 <sup>th</sup>	90 <sup>th</sup>
\$21.35	\$17.79	\$18.30	\$20.34	\$23.56	\$26.10

Alaska Occupational Forecast							
2020	2023	Growth	Percent Change	Annual Labor force exits	Annual Transfers	Total Annual Separations	Total Annual Openings
2040	2325	285	13.97%	140	124	264	293

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Data:

Mean Wage	Wage by Percentile				
Mean	10 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	Median	75 <sup>th</sup>	90 <sup>th</sup>
\$17.19	\$13.47	\$14.79	\$17.19	\$18.88	\$22.08

National Occupational Forecast			
Employment, 2022	Projected Employment, 2032	Change, 2022-2032	
		Percent Change	Growth
1,361,300	1,417,800	4%	56,500

Comparative Programs

As of the most recently provided list from the Board of Nursing, there are four Certified Nurse Aide programs in Anchorage. There are 30 active programs which are offered primarily by the University of Alaska system or nursing/health care facilities at cost or as an on-the-job training.

Staff Recommendation Action:

Staff recommends amending Charter College’s Authorization to add the Diploma in Certified Nurse Aide program, contingent upon obtaining provisional approval from the State of Alaska, Board of Nursing and approval by ABHES.

Motion Needed:

*“Move to amend Charter College’s Authorization to add the Diploma in Certified Nurse Aide program, contingent upon staff recommendations.”*



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Alaska Commission on  
Postsecondary Education**

INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORIZATION

P.O. Box 110505  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0505  
Phone: 907.465.6741  
Tyler.eggen@alaska.gov  
acpe.alaska.gov

**Staff Report  
The Esthetics District**

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Summary

The Esthetics District, operating out of the Midtown Mall in Anchorage, was first Authorized in October 2016. The Esthetics District was later sold to Annisa and Scott Eastep, who purchased it from Heather Harvey. In addition to purchasing the Institution, there was the purchase of the affiliated business Brow Chica Brow Bar, which generates additional revenue through services and sales from products. Eastep was licensed to instruct Esthetics, which was the only program of study at the Institution. The Institution and affiliated business were also regulated by the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers. Classes were kept to four students and the program cost was \$8,000 for the 350 hour program.

CEO & Program Director	Annisa Eastep		Address	600 E Northern Lights Blvd, #130 Anchorage, AK 99503
Surety Amount/Type	\$40,000/Bond			

2022 and 2023 Authorization Activities

The Esthetics District was granted Initial Authorization under Eastep in April 2022 for one year. In February 2023, Commission staff conducted a site visit of the Institution as a part of its Renewal of Authorization Application. At the April 2023 Commission Meeting, the Institution was granted a two year Renewal of Authorization through April 2025.

Summer 2023

In late June and early July, Commission staff heard from the previous owner that students were unhappy with their experience at the school and wished to file complaints. Commission staff visited the Institution and interviewed students separately as well as Owner Annisa Eastep.

Commission staff advised the students of the Institution's grievance policy as outlined in the catalog, which is the first step used in resolving institutional grievances. When Commission staff asked the students if they were aware of the grievance policy, students responded they were not. Commission staff sent a follow up email to all students and the Institution regarding this policy and provided contact information to the students if they wished to submit a formal complaint with the Commission.

In early August, Commission staff heard from another student who withdrew from the program and again from the former owner regarding the quality of programming at the Institution. Commission staff attempted to contact the Institution regarding the concerns but was unable to make contact through the last known email addresses and phone numbers. Commission staff visited the Institution and met with Annisa Eastep to discuss the one student's dissatisfaction and obtain new contact information. Reminders were given to the Institution regarding Board of Barber and Hairdresser requirements for turning in appropriate forms in a timely fashion, including documentation for students who recently graduated in late July. Additional reminders regarding the regulatory requirements for refunds were also provided.

On August 25, 2023, Commission staff heard from the previous owner that the Institution was behind in rent payments and that most of the staff of the affiliated business had left without paychecks being processed.

Commission staff attempted to contact the Institution and Annisa Eastep with no success. On August 28, 2023, Commission staff proceeded to visit the Institution and discovered a sign indicating that they would be back the next day. Additional attempts were made to contact the Institution with no success.

### Institutional Closure

On August 29, 2023, the Institution and affiliated business did not open for business at its regularly scheduled time. Commission staff met with currently enrolled students and provided them Commission staff contact information. Subsequently, the Institution was barred from entry by the Midtown Mall management company due to delinquent rent payments, as confirmed by the management company.

Commission staff spoke with the Institution, who expressed a desire to continue operations, if there was a possibility for the Institution to regain access to the facility. The Commission's Executive Director initiated a complaint on behalf of students who were enrolled at that time. As such, Commission staff began an investigation as to whether the Institution was meeting the minimum standards under AS 14.48.060.

On September 11, 2023, Commission staff received notice from the surety bonding company that the \$40,000 bond on file would be canceled due to a non-payment of premium as of October 21, 2023.



On September 19, 2023, the Institution gained access to facility to retrieve business assets and personal belongings. This included student records, both paper files and electronic on a computer.

On September 21, 2023, The Esthetics District voluntarily discontinued operations as an Authorized Institution. On September 25, 2023, student records were surrendered to Commission staff at the residence of the Eastepps. The Institution indicated that at least one student file was missing, and several were water damaged, as they were being stored at an unapproved offsite storage facility. Of the records surrendered, upon initial visual inspection, 52 recent records were in good condition having come from the Midtown Mall location and 31 records were water damaged from being stored at the storage facility.

Commission staff also provided the Institution with copies of the Board of Barber and Hairdresser Monthly Grade Report Forms, the Completion of Training Affidavits, and Notice of Termination of Training forms to be completed for student training hours and practical operations to be completed and resubmitted for the missing files.

Upon closer inspection, Commission staff reviewed the 83 records and identified that a significant portion of the records were still missing, incomplete, and/or damaged. Commission staff requested a list of all students who had enrolled at the Institution from the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers, in which a list was provided. Commission staff identified thirty student files from students enrolled between 2020-2021 were missing, however, all students had either become licensed or have the ability to sit for the professional licensing examination.

Commission staff, with permission from the Midtown Mall management company and the Institution, entered the Institution's facility in the Midtown Mall to look for additional student records. No further records were found. Shortly thereafter, and as of the writing of this report, Commission staff have been unable to contact the Institution.

Since late August, Commission staff had inconsistent communication with the Institution; phone calls made to the Institution were not answered or returned, the Institution did not respond to any emails, and all certified mail sent to the Institution and the owner's residence was unclaimed and returned to the Commission. The only known phone number in use at the time of the Institution being barred from the facility was a prepaid phone number. Calls to this number have not be picked up.

Commission staff have been interviewing recent graduates, currently enrolled students, and future students regarding the Institution's closure. At the time of closure, and subsequently thereafter, Commission staff identified two cohorts of impacted students:

- Recent graduates needing official Board of Barber & Hairdresser Monthly Grade Report Forms or Completion of Training Affidavits in order to sit for professional licensure examination. A review of surrendered records with Commission staff provided no meaningful documentation to recreate the necessary documentation. Commission staff have been in communication with the Board of Barber & Hairdressers regarding this

specific cohort to remedy the situation, as students completed their studies in mid-July 2023.

- Recently enrolled students, who began their training in early August 2023, are in need of a full refund of deposits and payments. Additionally, students who submitted a deposit to start training in November are entitled to a refund. Per regulations, a full refund can be provided when non-collegiate institutions do not provide 60 days formal notice of a pending closure.

Commission staff are obtaining the necessary information for filing a claim on the surety bond to provide refunds to impacted students.

In accordance with Alaska Statute 14.48.120(c), formal notice was sent to the Institution that the Authorization will be canceled on October 25, 2023. By Alaska Statute, the Institution has thirty days from the date of cancellation to file an appeal with the Commission.



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Members, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

**THROUGH:** Sana Efird, Executive Director

**FROM:** Julie Pierce, Chief Finance Officer

**DATE:** October 19, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Finance Report

**FY2024 Operating Budget**

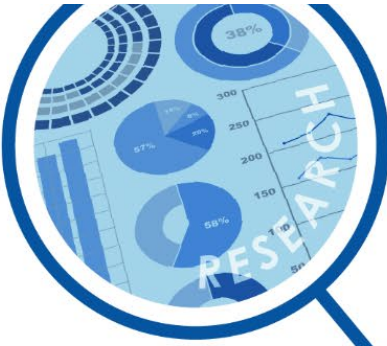
Following is a summary of the Commission’s approved FY2024 operating budget with minor changes from the last time the Governors Proposed budget was presented.

Budget Line	Interagency (ASLC Receipts)	Designated General Fund - AHEIF	General Fund Program Receipts	Statutory Designated Program Receipts	Total
Personal Services	7,027.6	.0	26.6	.0	7,054.1
Travel	64.4	16.6	3.5	.0	84.5
Contractual	2,857.8	499.5	30.2	150.1	3,537.6
Supplies	108.2	.0	.0	.0	108.2
WWAMI	.0	5,140.1	.0	.0	5,140.1
AEG	.0	5,841.8	.0	.0	5,841.8
APS	.0	11,750.0	.0	.0	11,750.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,057.9</b>	<b>23,248.0</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>150.1</b>	<b>33,516.3</b>
Positions	54.74	-	0.26	-	55

**Alaska Student Loan Corporation**

The next Corporation Board meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2023 to review the annual audited financial statements and the annual dividend to the State of Alaska.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this report further, please do not hesitate to contact me at 907-465-6757 or at [julie.pierce@alaska.gov](mailto:julie.pierce@alaska.gov).



# PROGRAM OPERATIONS

## *Quarterly Report*

**Program Operations Report:  
July 2023 – August 2023**



## DIVISION OF PROGRAM OPERATIONS-QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

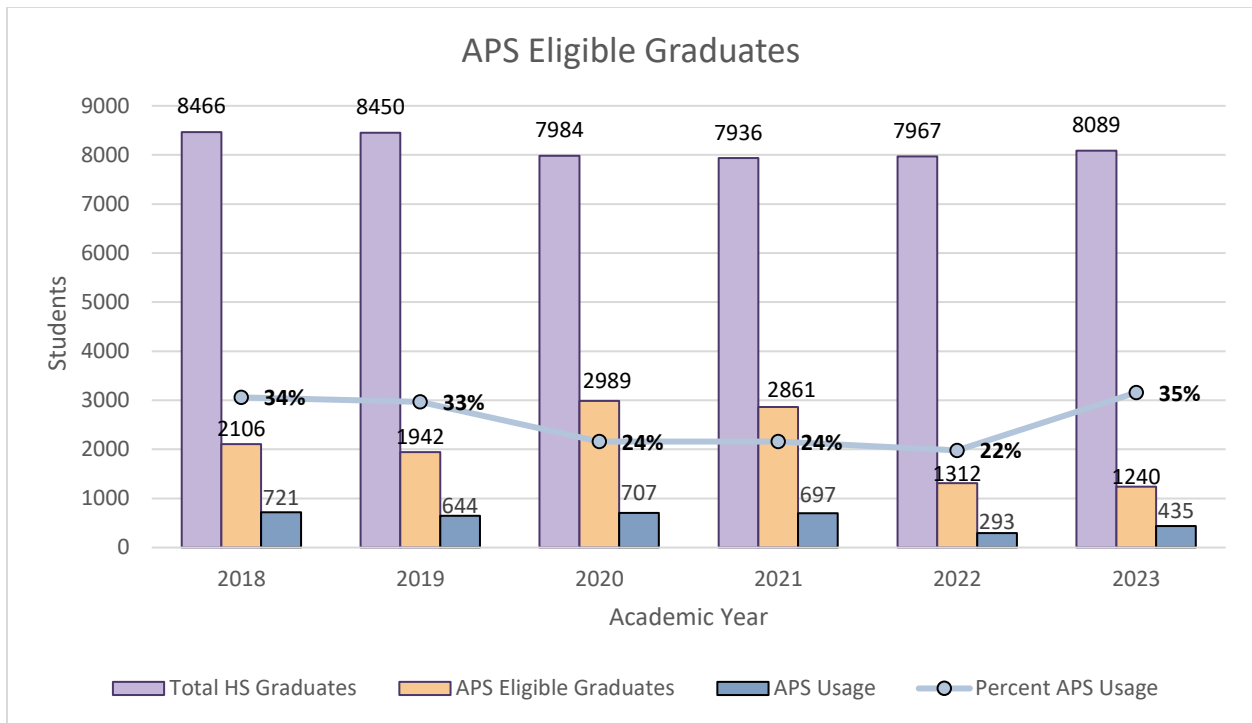
### Financial Aid Updates

Starting with the 2023-2024 academic year, higher loan amounts are available to students borrowing to attend school. The Alaska Student Loan Corporation approved higher limits of \$24,000 per year, up to the amount of unmet need as certified by the financial aid office. Early loan data shows that about 20% of students are taking out loans at the higher amount and over 40% are borrowing at the previous limit or below. This change was implemented based on feedback from schools and students that the prior loan limits were not meeting student’s financial needs and they were borrowing higher rate loans from other lenders as a result.

Overall loan volume is up compared to this time last year but the number of loans issued has decreased. This change is due to the increase in loan limits and borrowing at higher levels than last year.

Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) disbursements are lower this year compared to this time last year but we expect that to change over the next month or so. Early in the semester disbursements are not requested from many schools until after the add/drop date passes, and data included in this report only goes through August. Next quarters report should provide a better understanding of what annual APS disbursements will be.

The table below shows APS eligibility as a percent of the total number of public high school graduates over the last five years. The class of 2023 has the lowest eligibility rate of 15% since inception of the program in 2011, followed by 16% for the class of 2022. We are concerned about this decline in eligibility and are working with schools and families to ensure the program requirements are understood, and are hopeful that the pending legislation is adopted to address some of the known program challenges.



**Project Updates**

Restructuring

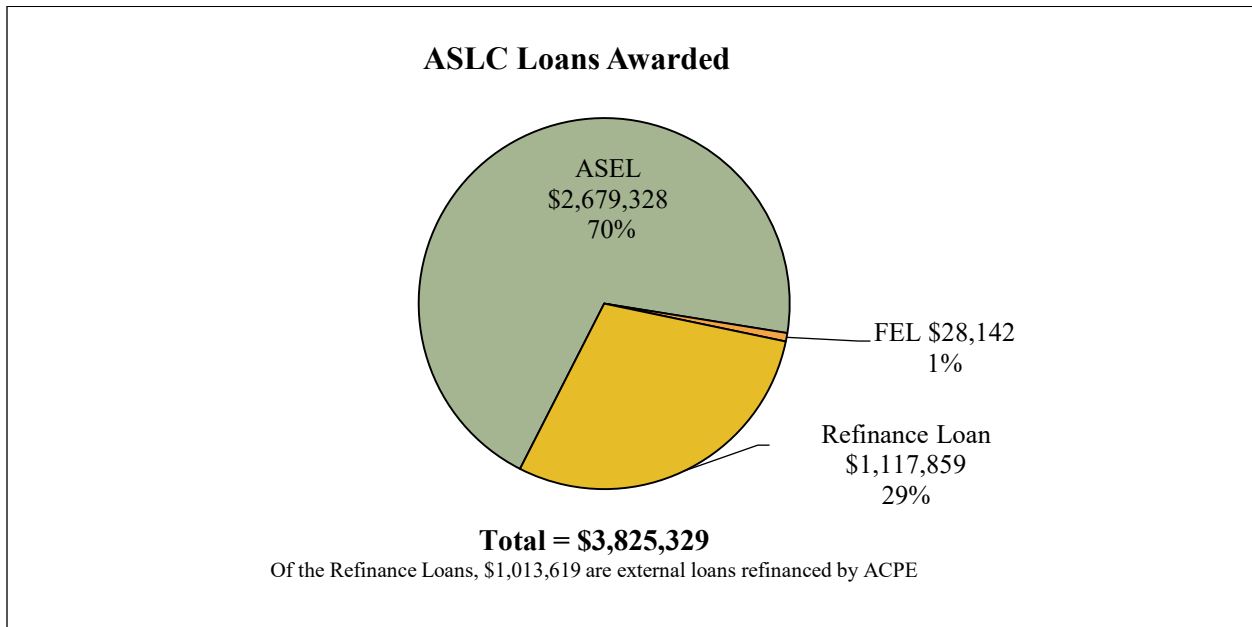
The Program Operations team is wrapping up a division restructuring project resulting from changes due to outsourcing. All positions descriptions, job titles, duties, and supervisory structures were reviewed and updated to reflect the structure needed to meet future business needs.

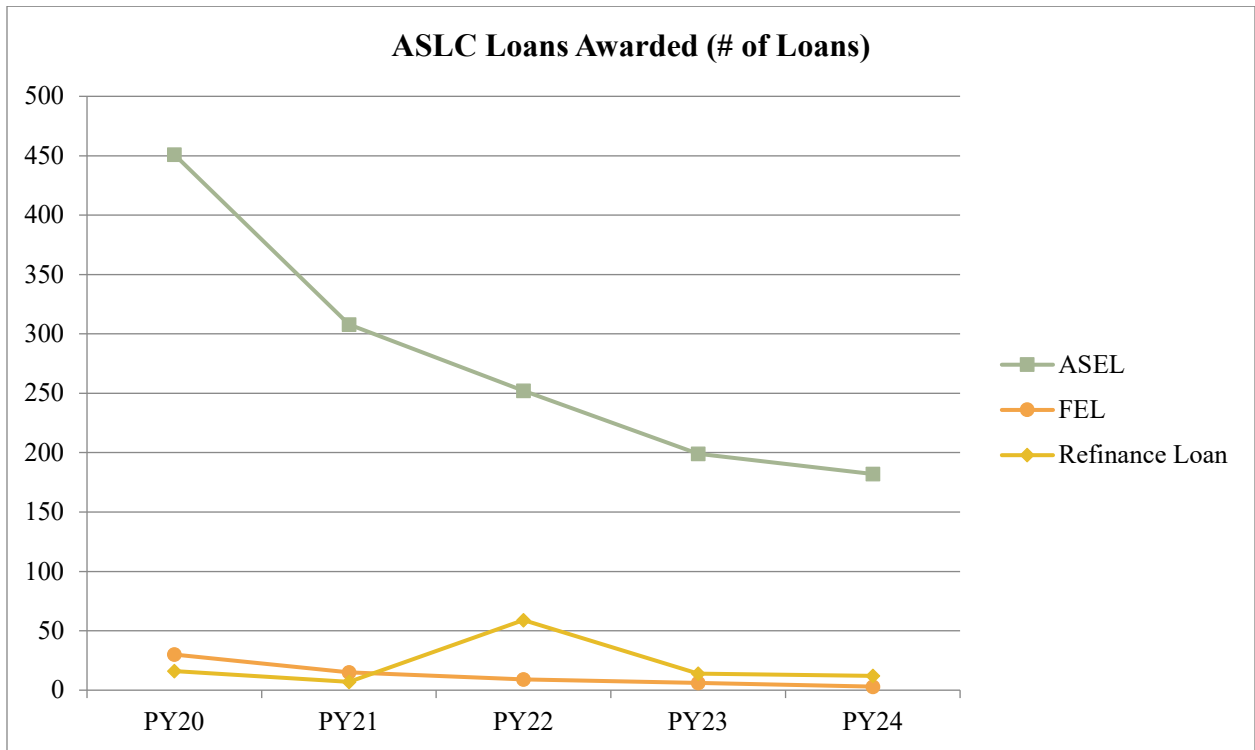
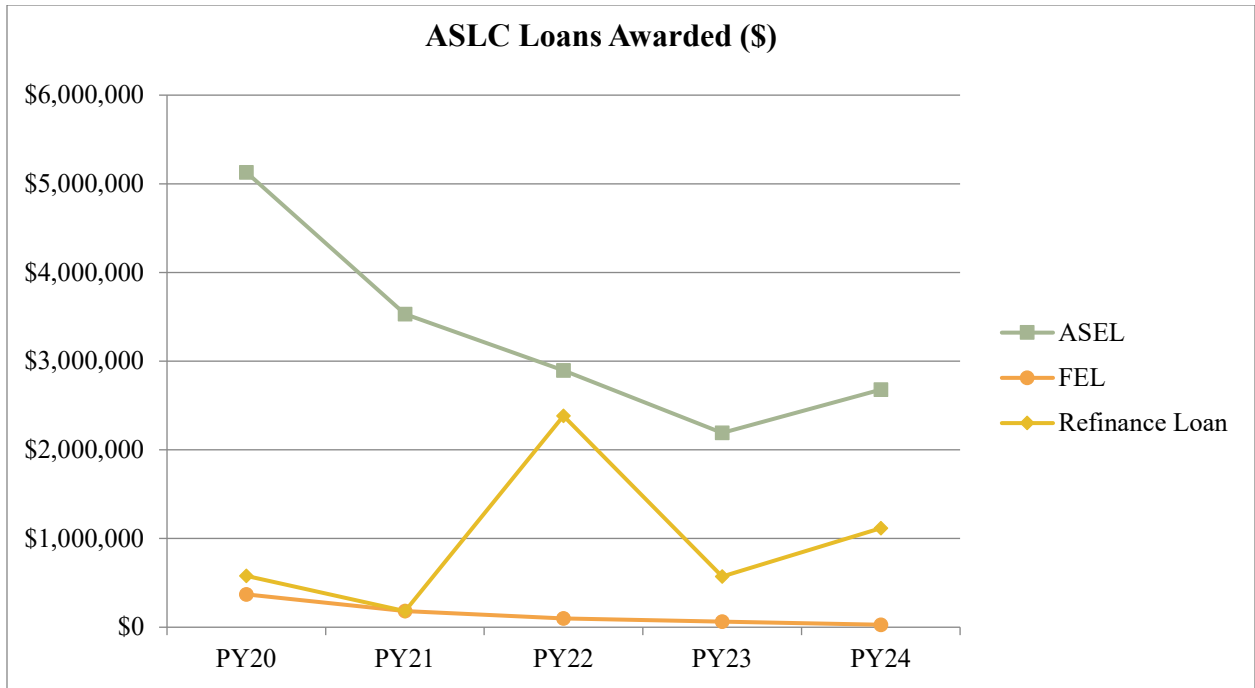
Oversight and Monitoring

We are focused on developing and implementing strong oversight and monitoring processes for our third party vendors including Transworld Systems, Inc. for collections, CampusDoor for loan originations, and American Education Services for loan servicing. This work includes developing a high level structure and creating the processes and procedures needed to ensure we are achieving the high level objectives. It is a big change for staff to transition from doing the day to day work to overseeing a third party’s performance of that work. Our goal is to ensure contractor compliance and that our customers are cared for and receiving quality services.

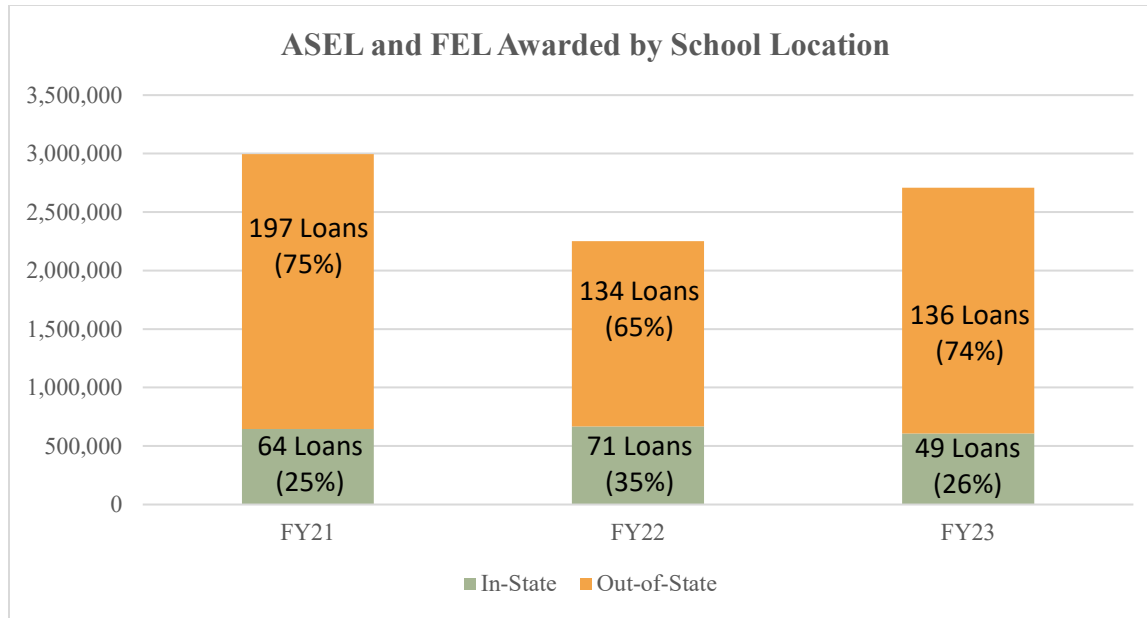
**LOAN ORIGINATIONS**

**Program Year 23/24 through August 2023**









### Loans Awarded

Loan Type	2023-2024		2022-2023		% Change	
	# of Loans	Amount Awarded	# of Loans	Amount Awarded	# of Loans	Amount Awarded
Family Education Loans	3	\$28,142	6	\$61,400	-50.00%	-54.17%
AK Supplemental Loans	182	\$2,679,328	199	\$2,191,245	-8.54%	22.27%
Refinance Loans	12	\$1,117,859	14	\$570,338	-14.29%	96.00%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>\$3,825,329</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>\$2,822,983</b>	<b>-10.05%</b>	<b>35.51%</b>

### Loans Awarded – by Enrollment Intensity<sup>1</sup>

Intensity Level	2023-2024		2022-2023		% Change
	# of Loans	Percentage	# of Loans	Percentage	
Full-Time	179	96.76%	190	92.68%	-5.79%

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment intensity statistics reflect only ASEL and FEL loan programs.

Half-Time	6	3.24%	15	7.32%	-60.00%
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### Special Programs

Loan Type	2023-2024		2022-2023		% Change	
	# of Loans	Amount Awarded	# of Loans	Amount Awarded	# of Loans	Amount Awarded
Winn Brindle	1	\$25,827	1	\$51,017	0.00%	-49.338%
WWAMI Medical Education Loan	0	\$0	0	\$0	0.00%	0.00%
WICHE PSEP Loan	0	\$0	0	\$0	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$25,827</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$1,533,979</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>-49.38%</b>

### ACPE Loans Serviced by AES- FFELP

	# of Loans	Principal Amount	Interest Amount	Total Loan Amount
In-School	7	\$42,672	\$17,587	\$60,259
Grace	4	\$16,708	\$10,026	\$26,734
Repay- Current	3,204	\$13,844,171	\$860,060	\$14,704,230
Repay- Past Due	494	\$1,998,319	\$85,766	\$2,084,085
Claim	28	\$134,922	\$18,884	\$153,805
Forbearance	398	\$1,863,987	\$108,382	\$1,972,368
Deferment	289	\$1,207,394	\$145,737	\$1,353,131
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>\$19,108,173</b>	<b>\$1,246,441</b>	<b>\$20,354,614</b>

### ACPE Loans Serviced by AES- Alternative Loans

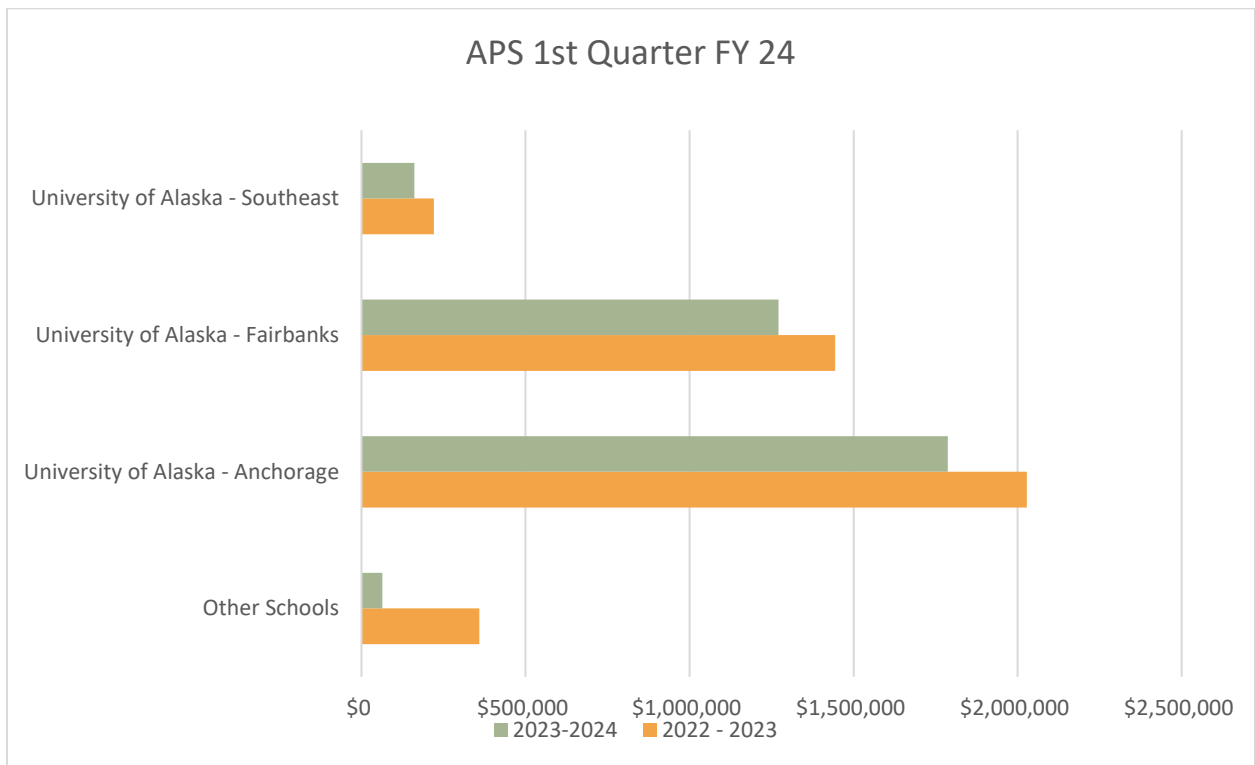
	# of Loans	Principal Amount	Interest Amount	Total Loan Amount
In-School	992	\$12,953,423	\$808,130	\$13,762,545
Grace	430	\$5,899,594	\$426,889	\$6,326,913
Repay- Current	4,577	\$41,375,765	\$202,809	\$41,583,151
Repay- Past Due	431	\$3,293,698	\$71,066	\$3,365,195
Forbearance	169	\$2,426,188	\$48,774	\$2,475,131
Deferment	515	\$4,460,798	\$445,923	\$4,907,236
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,114</b>	<b>\$70,409,466</b>	<b>\$2,003,591</b>	<b>\$72,420,171</b>

**AES Complaints**

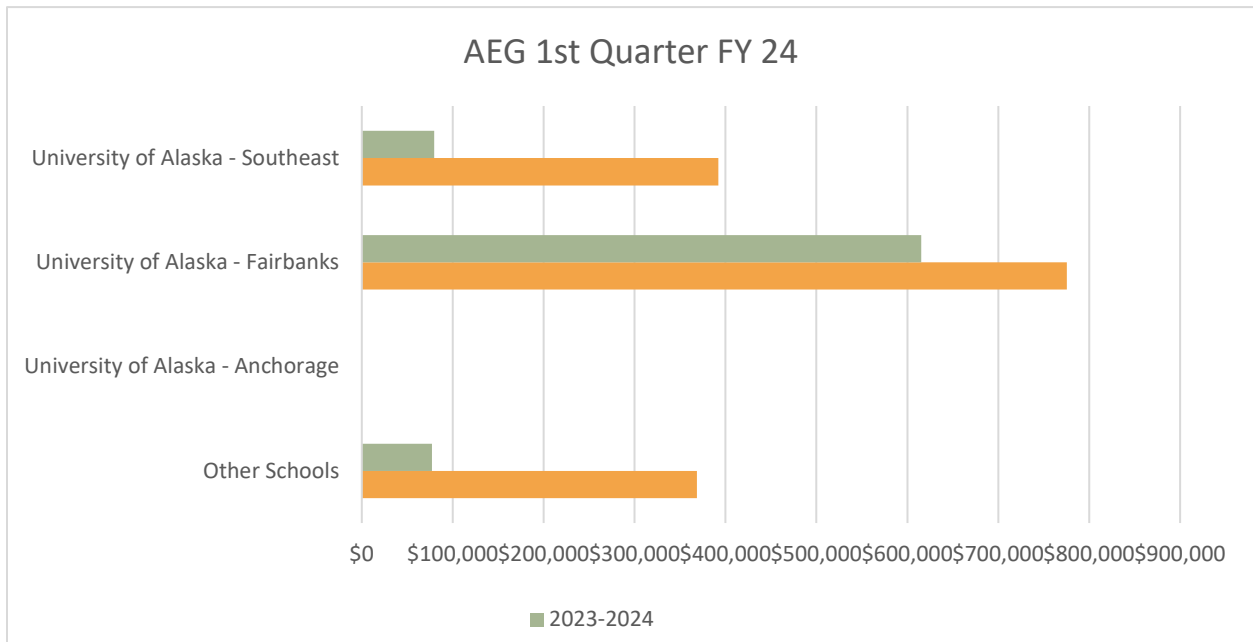
# of Complaints	1
Complaint Descriptions	Limited options to reduce payment

**ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP & ALASKA EDUCATION GRANT**

**Program Year 23/24 through August 2023**

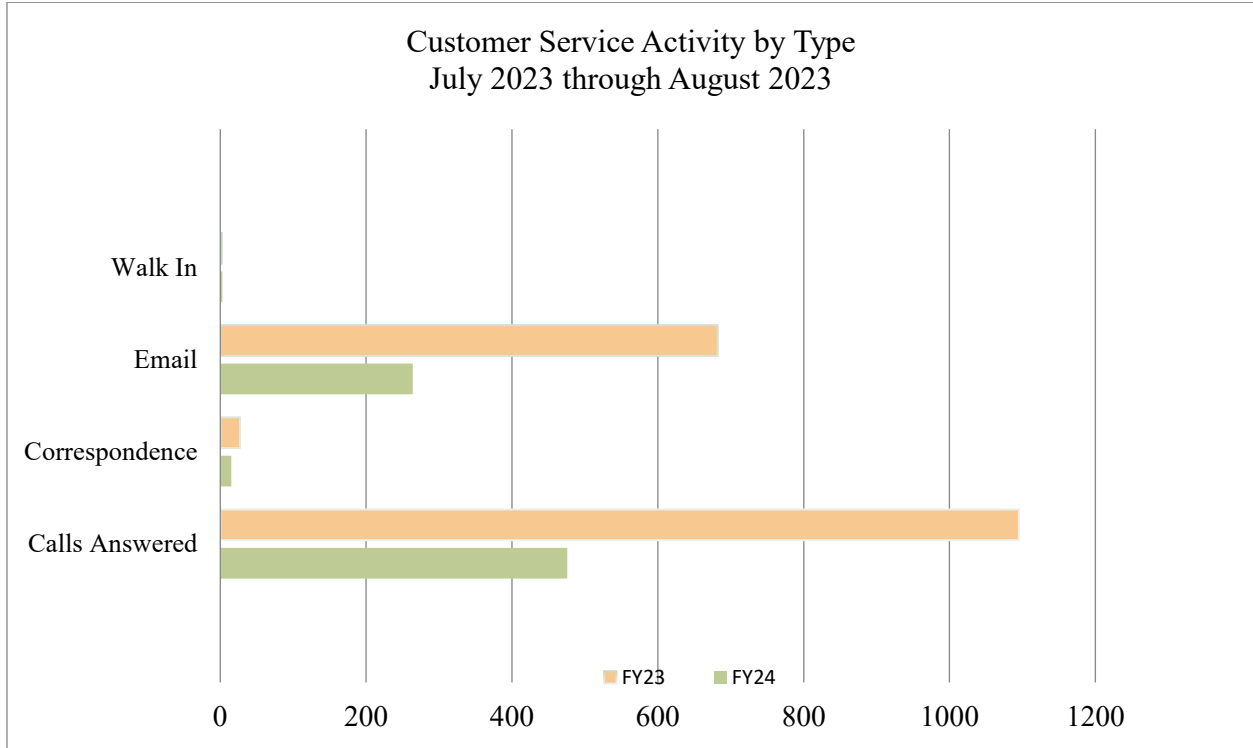


Other Schools	2023-2024	2022 - 2023
Alaska Bible College	\$9,513	\$18,132
Alaska Christian College	\$1,783	\$5,944
Alaska Pacific University	\$0	\$63,013
AVTEC	\$52,312	\$33,884
Charter College	\$0	\$793
Ilisagvik College	\$0	\$4,755
Metroasis Advanced Training Center	\$0	\$2,378
Northern Industrial Training	\$0	\$1,189
Trendsetters	\$0	\$8,322
Wayland Baptist University - Anchorage/Fairbanks	\$0	\$221,137
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63,608</b>	<b>\$359,547</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,283,851</b>	<b>\$4,052,724</b>



<b>Other Schools</b>	2023-2024	2022 - 2023
Alaska Bible College	\$12,000	\$8,250
Alaska Career College	\$0	\$80,000
Alaska Christian College	\$63,500	\$66,500
Alaska Pacific University	\$0	\$62,000
AVTEC	\$0	\$27,500
Charter College	\$0	\$40,515
Wayland Baptist University - Anchorage/Fairbanks	\$1,500	\$83,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$77,000</b>	<b>\$368,515</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$771,755</b>	<b>\$1,536,254</b>

### CUSTOMER SERVICE



#### Call Center Activity – July 2023 through August 2023

	2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023	% Change
Calls Received in CS Queue	525	1,173	-55.24%
Calls Answered by CS	476	1,095	-56.53%
Hold Time in CS Queue	2:39	2:54	-8.62%
Calls Received in IVR	994	2201	-54.84%

**Payment Information – July 2023 through August 2023****Payments Processed**

Method	Amount Received	% of Total Dollars
Borrower/Cosigner	\$1,625,131	88.49%
Garnishments (AWG, PFD)	\$110,789	6.03%
External Consolidation	\$100,520	5.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,836,439</b>	



## Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

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Anchorage, Alaska 99515-2049

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TTY: Dial 711 or (800) 770-8973  
Fax: (907) 269-7991  
acpe.alaska.gov

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
**THROUGH:** Sana Efird, Executive Director  
**FROM:** Kate Hillenbrand, Director of Communications & Outreach  
**DATE:** September 29, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Communications & Outreach Report

The ACPE Communications & Outreach division delivers postsecondary awareness and financial literacy resources in support of ACPE’s mission to *promote access to and success in education and career training beyond high school*. From July 2023 to the date of writing this report, ACPE Outreach connected with students, families, and ACPE stakeholders through 257 telephonic or virtual service sessions; organized and/or presented in 56 work sessions, trainings or webinars; and reached 805 Alaskans through these efforts.

### COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Service Interactions	July – Sept. 2023
Telephonic & Virtual Service Interactions*	257
Virtual/In-Person Sessions, Webinars, Trainings**	56
Virtual/In-Person Session Attendees***	805

\*Includes Success Center phone calls, Zoom sessions (1:1 & group), AKCIS Helpdesk, etc.

\*\*Includes group/school presentations, FAFSA Time Alaska, AKCIS trainings & webinars, I Know I Can, Kids2College, etc.

Top Reason for Service Interactions	Topic Distribution
FAFSA & Financial Aid	45%
APS/AEG/ACPE Loans	30%
Other/Not Sure	25%

\*\*\*Total number of attendees in Virtual Sessions section – does not include Telephonic & Virtual Service Interactions totals

ACPE Outreach made substantial progress in the development of two endeavors: establishing the Kids2Careers program and planning the first Alaska FAFSA Summit. Through ACPE’s agency-wide strategic planning efforts and feedback received from stakeholders, we identified the gap in programming around postsecondary support for middle school and early high school. These are critical years/ages for students and families to gain the knowledge and awareness of how to plan and prepare for education and career training after high school. As a result, ACPE Outreach pivoted some of its early outreach efforts into creating programming to fill this gap. Recently launched, the Kids2Careers program provides resources, activities, and variety of resources for students, families, and educators for grades 5-12.





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acpe.alaska.gov

Increasing FAFSA completion rates in Alaska is an ongoing goal for ACPE, with many efforts in recent years focused on this objective. Through support from the University of Alaska, ACPE is hosting the first Alaska FAFSA Summit on October 26-27 at the Anchorage Downtown Marriott. The intent of the Summit is to bring together education stakeholders to develop strategies to increase FAFSA completion through statewide initiatives and/or policies. Current registrants include Alaska-wide representation from: secondary administrators, teachers, and counselors; postsecondary administrators, Alaska Native Education Foundations, Alaska Native Corporations, and the State of Alaska.

### **Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS)**

AKCIS is a cost-effective online platform for comprehensive career, education, and financial aid information. It is an interactive planning tool with a personal, portable online portfolio. ACPE makes AKCIS available across Alaska at no cost to sites through a single statewide license.

- Activation & Fee Waiver Agreements, submitted annually by AKCIS sites, are in peak renewal season. To date, 214 received; 36/54 school districts currently renewed, most of the districts not renewed serve fewer than 400 students district-wide.
- AKCIS transitioned to the new AKCIS PLCP 360 version, highlighting ACPE Financial Aid, FAFSA Completion, Alaska schools and training programs, and Alaska-specific employment opportunities through interactive Personal Learning & Career Planning (PLCP) activities.
- The Alaska Performance Scholarship curriculum requirements are shared through the Course Planner for every public middle and high school student in Alaska to monitor their progress toward the APS award. ACPE staff offers school districts the opportunity to have their full course lists and courses in pathway added for deeper 4-year academic plans.
- The AKCIS landing page is redesigned for quick access to resources to assist specific audiences: Students, Parents, Administrators, and Job Seekers.
- PLCP activities listed by development levels in AKCIS PLCP 360 are customizable. Examples of customized plans include: Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District's 4Cs Course (Credit, College, Community, and Career), Yukon-Koyukuk School District's annual list of district-wide activities, and Alaska WIOA grantee organizations use of the Quick Plan in the Adult Workforce site type.
- AKCIS Partnership Coordinator provided workshops for: AK DOLWD Job Centers; multiple Alaska school district trainings for faculty and counselors; Hiland Mountain Correctional Facility; NACTEC Staff; Nine Star Employment Services; Wasilla DVR; CITC Staff; and ACAC Training. AKCIS Partnership Coordinator has conducted 23 training sessions for 340 educators and training providers both in-person and virtually.
- On Demand training sessions are posted to the new AKCIS.org webpages and are available to participants to review and share with colleagues; additional videos and resources are included in the AK DEED CTE Rural Career Counselors Course shared across Alaska on the Alaska Education Exchange (AKEE).
- AKCIS login sessions have been steady with 9,400+ Portfolio logins, 11,900+ login sessions, and 199,000+ page views.



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TTY: Dial 711 or (800) 770-8973  
Fax: (907) 269-7991  
acpe.alaska.gov

### **EARLY COLLEGE & CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAMS**

#### **Kids2Careers – 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Postsecondary Planning Resources**

- Kids2Careers offers a variety of resources for 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to explore and plan for education and career training after high school. Kids2Careers is designed to help students uncover enrichment opportunities, dual credit programs, and career and technical options. In addition to the Kids2Careers curriculum (formerly known as Kids2College) geared toward 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students, Kids2Careers delivers grade-level planning tools such as: Student Success Steps and Family Guiding Steps, a Senior Checklist, Alaska-specific digital education planning calendar, College Prep Overview, and even helpful tips for pursuing college or career and technical pathways.
- Schools will now have the option to sign up for grade level Postsecondary & Career Preparation Panel Discussions and/or Postsecondary Pathway Presentations to help students better understand important steps and where to access pertinent resources and information. The newly created Kids2Careers website and materials are slated to go live by the end of September, 2023 for use by educators, students, families and youth-serving programs.

#### **Early Career Explorers (ECE) – PK-4<sup>th</sup> grade Classroom Resources**

- Early Career Explorers are ACPE's downloadable educational resources available for PK- 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. Each resource set includes Teacher Guides and student activities. The I Can Be...Series and Careers Build A Community resources are also available in Cup'ik, thanks to a teacher in Chevak. These resources are available year round.
- ECE resource sets include the I Can Be...Series, Careers Build a Community, and Career Heroes. Collectively, these resources introduce students to 56 career opportunities and offer hands-on/independent learning activities to connect and inspire students to learn, dream, and plan for their future.

### **Alaska College & Career Advising Consortium (ACAC)**

The annual ACAC Training is a free professional development opportunity that equips individuals with knowledge, resources, and tools to better support and guide students and adult learners in their planning and preparation for postsecondary education and career training programs in Alaska.

The ACAC Training fosters partnership development, and encourages engaging in statewide efforts to improve the lives of Alaskans through access to postsecondary education and career training.

The ACAC Training is designed for representatives from Alaska's educational institutions, state agencies, Alaska Native Corporations, Alaska Native Tribal Organizations, and local non-profit organizations whose shared mission is to serve, inspire, and empower every Alaskan to dream, plan for, and achieve career training and/or college credentials.



## Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

800 Dimond Blvd., Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99515-2049

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This year has seen another high registration (200 individuals) from the following institutions/organizations:

- AASB
- Ahtna, Inc.
- Alaska 529
- Alaska AHEC
- Alaska Career College
- Alaska DEED
- Alaska DOLWD
- Alaska DOLWD DVR
- Alaska Literacy Program
- Alaska Military Youth Academy
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Pacific University
- Alaska Primary Care Association
- Alaska Technical Center
- Alaska Works Partnership
- Anchorage School District
- Association of Village Council Presidents
- AVTEC
- Bering Strait School District
- Bering Straits Native Corporation
- Bristol Bay Borough School District
- Bristol Bay Region Career Technical Education
- Calista Corporation
- Calista Education and Culture, Inc.
- Charter Apprenticeships
- Charter College
- Chugach Heritage Foundation
- Connections Home School
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Don Young Alaska Job Corps Center
- Education Trust of Alaska
- Find A Way Consulting, LLC
- Haines Borough School District
- Hydaburg City School District
- IDEA Homeschool
- Iisagvik College
- Juneau School District
- Kawerak, Inc.
- Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
- Kodiak Island Borough School District
- Koniag Education Foundation
- Kuspuk School District
- Lake and Peninsula School District
- Lower Kuskokwim School District
- Mat-Su Borough School District
- McLaughlin Youth Center
- Nanwalek School
- Native Village of Noatak
- Ninne Star Education and Employment Services
- Nome Beltz Middle High School
- North West Arctic Borough School District
- Northern Industrial Training, LLC
- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC)
- Organized Village of Kake
- Polynesian Association of Alaska
- PWSRCAC
- Raven Homeschool
- Renewable Energy Alaska Project
- Rural Alaska Community Action Program
- Sealaska
- Sealaska Heritage Institute
- SERRC
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- Tanana Chiefs Conference
- The Aleut Foundation
- The Faithful Few



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### ACAC Annual Training – Participating Organizations Continued:

- UAA Kodiak College
- UAA Mat-Su College
- UAF Kuskokwim Campus
- UAS Sitka
- University of Alaska
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- University of Alaska Fairbanks eCampus
- University of Alaska Southeast
- University of Alaska Workforce Development
- Whaley School
- Wrangell Public Schools
- Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
- Yupiit School District
- Yuut Elitnaurviat



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
**THROUGH:** Sana Efird, Executive Director  
**FROM:** Jamie Oliphant, Director of Information Support Services (ISS)  
**DATE:** 10/3/23  
**SUBJECT:** ISS activities

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This past quarter ISS focused our attentions to post alternative loan servicing conversion activities. Much of the activity related to re-writing programs in a post Higher Education Loan Management System (HELMS) environment. ISS is currently in the process of reviewing, re-coding and enhancing the following:

- Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) Garnishments
- Alaska Wage Garnishments
- Cohort Default Rate Reporting
- Loan Correspondence Processing

The team has also been focused on automating and enhancing manual processes that were implemented with the initial conversion. Automation includes some of the following areas:

- Campus Door reporting
- American Education Services (AES) reporting
- File transfers

Along with enhancements ISS worked on the following projects:

- Immediate Repayment Option - Analysis and design of a new loan offering the ability to pay a flat payment amount while in the in-school period. Expectation is the construction and testing phase to start next quarter.
- Alaska Student Aid Portal (ASAP) Modernization and Enhancements – worked with GoldBridge Inc. (GBPI) on continued maintenance and routine updates along with implementing a new look and feel for students using ASAP.

- HELMS Decommission – project includes maintaining historical data for retention and auditing along with decommissioning the final mainframe storage, resulting in a cost savings to ACPE
- Strategic Planning and Project Prioritization support

The network team continues to monitor state initiatives, maintain and evolve our infrastructure that best fits ACPE needs. This past quarter we focused on the following:

- Active directory user, PC and security group audits
- Server upgrades and enhancements
- Updating Anti-virus software
- Microsoft windows operating system updates
- Juneau and Anchorage office moves
- User and contractor support
- Cyber Security training with State of Alaska Office of Information Technology (OIT)

As part of the ISS and ACPE culture we continue to embrace Lean and enhance systems and processes. Every decision made is based on our continued effort to ensure the IT infrastructure, systems and processes are operating in an accurate, secure and efficient manner.

It is a pleasure and honor serving the commission. Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions or need for additional information.

**Fall Quarter Commission Meeting – October 19, 2023****Human Resources Update:**

Staff changes over the last quarter resulted in the separation of one employee, Student Intern, Krishna Sanguni, and the placement of one employee, Suzann Phillips, into temporary acting status to fill the role of Accountant V, Loan Portfolio Accountant. There are a total of four (4) employees eligible to retire in calendar year 2023.

Currently, there are eleven vacant positions: one (1) in the Executive Office, two (2) in Finance, one (1) Outreach, one (1) in Information Support Services, and six (6) in Program Operations. Recruitment efforts have begun for an Administrative Assistance in Operations and a Program Coordinator in Operations. Management continues to review all vacant positions for future need including possible deletion or reclassification to retain the flexibility needed to provide support for agency initiatives. At present, ACPE has 44 positions filled: 10 in Anchorage, 34 in Juneau. The breakdown of those positions by divisions is as follows: ISS-10, Finance-12, Program Operations-13, Outreach-6, and Executive Office-3.

**Administrative Action Log**  
(1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2024)

**Appeals and Complaints**

DATE	DESCRIPTION	ACTION TAKEN
	None	

**Executive Director Decisions**

DATE	DESCRIPTION	ACTION TAKEN
7/09/2023	Medical Cancellation	Denied, offered Special Payment Arrangement of \$50/mo. for 6 months plus 2023 PFD.
8/22/2023	Medical Cancellation	Approved for Administrative discharge.
8/30/2023	Medical Cancellation	Approved for Administrative discharge.
7/14/2023	Settlement Offer	Approved offer of \$80,000 for borrower to settle their loans and have obligation removed from cosigned loans.
7/24/2023	Settlement Offer	Countered for lump sum of \$10,000 to settle.
8/14/2023	Settlement Offer	Denied settlement offer of \$3,000 to settle.
8/18/2023	Settlement Offer	Approved offer of \$80,000 to settle.
8/23/2023	Settlement Offer	Approved counter offer of \$75,000 to settle.
7/25/2023	Exception Request	Approved request to amend terms of Special Payment Arrangement to not garnish 2023 PFD.



## Commissioner Affiliations

Member	Current	Former
Dr. Barbara Adams	Nenana City Public School – School Board, Advisory North Seat American Educational Research Association – Member American Evaluation Association – Member National Rural Education Association – Member National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – Member Mixed Methods International Research Association – Member Fairbanks Retriever Club – Member, Formerly Treasurer Nenana Community Church – Member	Board Member, Education Northwest Board of Directors, September 2009 – December 2016 Elected Secretary/Treasurer, 2012-13; Elected Vice Chairperson, 2013-14; Elected Chairperson, 2014-15; served as Ex-Officio Sep. 2015-Dec. 2016.
Joshua Bicchinella	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education- Chair Charter College- Program Manager Logans Janitorial- Owner Anchorage, Wasilla, Palmer, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce- former affiliation Wasilla Government Affairs Committee- former affiliation Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network Director- former affiliation Pi Alpha Alpha & Golden Key Society Member- Walden Chapter Meadow Lakes Community Council Member- former affiliation Special Olympics of Alaska- Volunteer	
John Brown	Alaska School Administrative Certificate Alaskans for Palmer Hayflats (APH) Alaska School Teaching Certificate BodhiAK Consulting (owner/operator)_ Building Design Committee of Mat-Su Central School	Academic Advisory Council of Mat-Su Central (AAC) Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals (AAESP) Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP) Mat-Su Principal Association (MSPA) Wasilla Chamber of Commerce (WCC)
Justina Hamlin	Student Union President of Kenai Peninsula College Member - Coalition of Student Leaders	

## Commissioner Affiliations

Member	Current	Former
Karla Head		
Representative Julie Coulombe	Alaska State House of Representatives	
Trish Zugg	Association for Career & Technical Education – Region V Policy Committee Alaska Workforce Investment Board Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education Alaska Teaching Certificate/CTE Program Administrator CTE Consultant	Alaska Association for Career & Technical Education (Past-President)
Senator Löki Tobin	Alaska State Senate	
Paula Harrison		
Karen Perdue		
Lorri Van Diest		
Donald Handeland	American Society of Civil Engineers Alaska Professional Civil Engineer	Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development Alaska Association of Student Governments State Officers Compensation Commission
Keith Hamilton	Alaska Christian College, President Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Commissioner Board of Education and Early Development, First Vice Chair Certified-Christian Non-Profit Leader, Azusa Pacific University Evangelical Covenant Church Ministerium, Member Kenai Peninsula Alaska Ministerial Association, Member Kenai Peninsula Executive Directors Association, Chair North Park University, Board of Trustees Alaska State Personnel Board,	Alaska Children’s Trust Steering Committee; Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Council; Arctic Barnabas Ministry, Board Member; Covenant Bible College Midwest, Board Vice Chair; Evangelical Covenant Church, National Board of Christian Formation; Faith Based and Community Initiatives Advisory Council, Member; Mission Springs Conference Center, Scotts Valley, CA, Board Member; New Hope Counseling

Commissioner Affiliations

Member	Current	Former
	Member Soldotna Chamber of Commerce Seattle Pacific University, Board of Trustees Cascades Camp and Conference Center, Board of Directors, Board Treasurer	Center, Ex-Officio Board Member; Sexual Abstinence Curriculum Task Force, Rocklin Unified School District, Member; Task Force on Postsecondary Education, Member

## ACPE 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

Winter Quarterly Meeting	January 11, 2024
Spring Quarterly Meeting	April 17, 2024
Summer Quarterly Meeting	July 11, 2024

2023

# Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education Acronyms

Sana Efir  
Executive Director

Updated 03-2022

**ACRONYMS AND TERMS FOR ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY  
EDUCATION (ACPE)**

65 by 2025	Initiative of the Alaska Postsecondary Access & Completion Network, funded by a Lumina grant, to increase the percentage of working-age Alaskans who will have a postsecondary credential to 65% by the year 2025.
Accreditation	Accreditation is a peer review process that examines competency, authority, or credibility of a higher education institution. Alaska requires that colleges and universities operating in the state be accredited by a body recognized by the Secretary of Education. The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality and that credits are transferrable.
Alaska Education and Workforce Outcomes Database (Outcomes)	Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) developed to manage, analyze and evaluate outcomes of educational programs and services. Outcomes is a partnership between the University of Alaska, Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development and ACPE. Outcomes replaces the ANSWERS system.
American Education Services (AES)	American Education Services. (AES) is a Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and private (alternative) student loan national servicer, owned by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). AES services ACPE's legacy FFELP portfolio.
Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS)	AKCIS is a web-based statewide service offered by ACPE to provide comprehensive, interactive and user-friendly career and postsecondary education/training information to help youth and adult users explore and plan for careers, with emphasis on careers within Alaska. AKCIS is offered in all 54 school districts.
Alaska College and Career Advising Corps (ACAC)	Designed under a federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG), ACAC provides training and information resources to partners and volunteers across the state who are committed to developing a postsecondary education culture and helping Alaska's students access and benefit from postsecondary education and career training. The program includes mentoring through the FAFSA Time Alaska, Apply Now Alaska and Decision Day Alaska programs
AlaskAdvantage	The trademarked name of a now-discontinued suite of ACPE education loan programs and services that offered benefits or outreach to Alaskans and to the organizations that serve Alaska's students. This program ended when the Department of Education

	discontinued the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP).
Alaska Education Grant (AEG)	A state need-based grant ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 per academic year for qualifying Alaska residents attending participating Alaska postsecondary institution. AEG awards are funded by the Alaska Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF), and operating costs are absorbed by ACPE.
Alaska Navigator: Statewide Workforce and Education-Related Statistics (ANSWERS)	ANSWERS is the State of Alaska's P-20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System. ANSWERS was developed to link existing Alaska K-12, higher education and employment data to deliver critical information to Alaska's policymakers, educators, and general public about the state's education continuum. In 2012, the state received a \$4 million federal grant over 3 years to develop the system. The system has been rebranded and is now known as the Alaska Education and Workforce Outcomes Database (Outcomes)
Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS)	Alaska's state performance-based scholarship to incent Alaska's students, parents and educators to strive for excellence in education. Awards may be used at participating colleges, universities or approved career and technical education programs in Alaska.
Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network (Alaska CAN or The Network)	The Network, is a non-profit organization originally created by ACPE under a federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG). The Network focuses on increasing postsecondary access and success in Alaska and promulgated the state's 65 by 2025 attainment goal. Board members represent secondary and postsecondary education, business, rural and urban areas, and community nonprofits. It establishes a network for members to share best practices, tools and resources relating to college access and success.
Alaska Presence Benefit	A legacy annual credit to qualifying borrowers' loan principal balances to reduce their costs. Borrowers qualify while living in Alaska. The ASLC Board approves the offering of benefits annually based on cash flows and costs estimates. This benefit is not offered on new loans.
Alaska Student Aid Portal (ASAP)	ACPE web portal to provide students with secure access to real-time grant and scholarship account information regarding their eligibility, award level, remaining terms available, remaining years in which to use available terms, and ability to change record of school of attendance.
Alaska Student Loan Corporation (ASLC)	The state corporation that funds the student loan programs and ACPE's operating budget. Created in 1987 to provide a means of alternative financing in the form of tax-exempt bonds. ASLC is governed by a board of directors appointed by the governor (two

	from ACPE and the Commissioners of Revenue, Administration and Community & Economic Development).
Alaska Supplemental Education Loan (ASEL)	Alaska's state education loan program to provide supplemental financial assistance if the federal loan program is insufficient to cover the costs of attendance or if the borrower does not qualify for financial aid under the federal student loan program.
Annual Percentage Rate (APR)	The Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is the yearly cost of borrowing a loan, shown as a percentage of the amount borrowed. Because APR is calculated the same way on different loans from different lenders, the APR also allows applicants to compare loans with different terms and conditions.
Apply Now Alaska	An initiative coordinated statewide by ACPE and based on the American College Application Campaign model, to assist first-generation and low-income high school students as they navigate the complexities of the admissions process to postsecondary institutions. The event season runs from November to February.
Ascendium Education Group (AEG)	ACPE's federal loan guarantor, located in Madison, Wisconsin. Formerly known as Great Lakes Higher Education Guarantee Corporation.
Award Letter	An official document issued by a school's financial aid office that lists the financial aid offered to the student through the school. It provides details of a borrower's financial need and the breakdown of the financial aid package according to amount, source and type of aid. The award letter (also called a Financial Aid Notification/FAN) includes the terms and conditions for the financial aid and cost of attendance.
Administrative Wage Garnishment (AWG)	State statutes and regulations provide ACPE the authority to garnish wages of a borrower who has defaulted on their state loan, without the need for a court order. Limitations are structured in state and federal law.
Award Year	The academic year for which financial aid is requested (or received).
A.W. "Winn" Brindle Education Loan (WB)	This program, which is no longer funded, was funded by private donations and offered forgivable loans to full-time students in a fisheries-related degree or certificate program.
Borrower Benefits	Interest rate reductions and account credits that reduce the overall cost of borrowing. ASLC benefits are variable and are evaluated and approved annually based on cash flows and costs estimates.



Campus-Based Aid	Financial aid programs administered by the student's school. The federal government provides the school with a fixed annual allocation, which is awarded by the financial aid administrator to qualifying students. Programs include the Perkins Loan, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work-Study. Note that there is no guarantee that every eligible student will receive financial aid through these programs because the awards are made from a fixed pool of money.
Capitalized Interest	Unpaid interest charges added to the principal balance of an educational loan thereby increasing the size of the loan. Interest is then charged on the new balance, including both the unpaid principal and the accrued interest. Capitalizing the interest increases the monthly payment and the amount of money ultimately repaid. Interest is generally capitalized when there is a change in the status of the loan at a time when there is unpaid interest outstanding, such as going from deferment to repayment status. Borrowers can significantly reduce their costs by paying interest each month, even if a payment is not due.
Clearinghouse (or National Student Clearinghouse (NSC))	A non-profit association that maintains a comprehensive electronic registry of postsecondary student records provided by the participating schools. Over 2,700 colleges, 91% of the nation's enrollment, participate. The Clearinghouse process identifies those borrowers who withdraw from school and need to begin repayment; transfer from one school to another; return to school and may be eligible for a deferment; continue in school and are eligible for deferment or in-school extension.
Cohort Default Rate (CDR)	<p data-bbox="574 1381 1406 1703">A measurement of loan cohort performance that identifies the percent of the cohort that is in default at a given time. Cohorts may include schools, states, or calendar groups. Alaska loan cohort rates are calculated annually based on loans entering repayment between January 1 and December 31 of the cohort year, which are greater than six months (180 days) past due at the end of the first 12 months of repayment and have not previously defaulted. These calculations differ from the federal cohort default rate calculations.</p> <p data-bbox="574 1728 1406 1902">The US Department of Education cohort default rate is calculated as the percentage of borrowers who entered repayment on Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans between Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> and Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> of a given year and subsequently defaulted prior</p>

	to Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup> two years later (for example, the 2016 CDR is calculated on student loans entering repayment between Oct 1, 2015 and Sept 30, 2016 and subsequently default prior to Sept 30, 2018).
College Access Challenge Grant (CACG)	A federal grant program to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local governments and philanthropic organizations through matching challenge grants aimed at increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.
Consolidation Loan	A loan that combines several student loans into one bigger loan from a single lender. The consolidation loan pays off the balances on the other loans. ACPE no longer offers a consolidation loan; however, federal consolidation loans are still available.
Cosigner	A cosigner is responsible for loan repayment if the borrower fails to repay it. Borrowers who do not meet ACPE's credit requirements must provide a cosigner who meets those requirements. Also called an endorser.
Cost Of Attendance (COA)	Also known as the cost of education or budget. The total cost for the student to attend school, including tuition and fees, room and board, allowances for books and supplies, transportation, and personal and incidental expenses. Loan fees, if applicable, may also be included in the COA. Childcare and expenses for disabilities may also be included. Schools establish standard budgets for students: living on-campus and off-campus, married and unmarried, and residents and nonresidents.
Credit Rating or Credit Score	Credit ratings or scores are calculated by credit bureaus based on an individual's past debt and repayment history. Credit bureaus and credit reporting agencies provide this information to banks and businesses to determine if an applicant meets the applicable underwriting standard to qualify for a loan. Credit scores generally range from 300 to 850, with the 2019 Alaska average score being 675.
Credit Reporting	ACPE reports the current status of all accounts to national credit bureaus monthly, which impacts the borrower's credit rating. Accounts that are 60 or more days delinquent are reported past due.
Dear Colleague Letter (DCL)	An official communication to schools and lenders that explains and clarifies the federal Department's guidance regarding federal regulations and statutes. Also known as a Dear Partner Letter.
Decision Day Alaska	An initiative, derived from the national College Decision Day, to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary educational plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare

	early for postsecondary education. The event season runs from May to June.
Default	Failure to make monthly payments on the loan as agreed, or failure to abide by terms and conditions of a loan promissory note (PN). ACPE borrowers who default may be subject to wage and PFD garnishment and transferred to a collection agency, among other consequences.
Default Rate	The general definition of default rate is the measure as a percentage of borrowers who failed to make scheduled payments in a specified date range. See also Cohort Default Rate CDR.
Deferment	A period of time during which a borrower is allowed to postpone repaying the loan. With the exception of federal subsidized loans, interest continues to accrue during deferment periods. A borrower can postpone paying the interest charges by capitalizing the interest, which increases the size of the loan. Most loan programs allow students to defer their loans while they are in school at least half-time. A borrower who defaults on a loan loses eligibility for a deferment on that loan.
Dependent	For purposes of completing the FAFSA, a dependent student is generally one who is unmarried and under 24 years old. Federal need-based aid to dependent students is awarded based on their parents' income.
Direct Loans (DL)	The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (AKA the Direct Loan Program) is a federal program through which the federal government makes student loans. Loans may be subsidized for students considered high need under the FAFSA formula, meaning that the loans have very low rates and the federal government pays the interest during the in-school period and during certain other deferments.  Generally, ACPE's interest rates are the next lowest option for Alaska students, after subsidized loans.
Direct Payment (ACH)	Automatic electronic debit from borrower's bank account each month for loan repayment. Borrowers making direct payment at ACPE receive a 0.25% interest rate reduction. The benefit is reviewed annually by the ASLC Board.
Disclosure	A written statement of the repayment terms of the loan sent to the borrower at the time the loan is scheduled for repayment. It identifies the principal balance, the estimated interest to be paid over the life of the loan, annual interest rate, annual percentage rate, the number of payments to be made and the monthly payment amount. A new disclosure is sent to the borrower if the repayment schedule changes, for example if the student receives a deferment. A disclosure may also be called a truth-in-lending statement or a statement of loan terms.

Due Diligence	The process of exercising a servicer's responsibility for collecting on a loan.
(ED) U.S. Department of Education	An acronym sometimes used for the Department of Education. Executive Branch of the federal government that establishes policy for, administers, and coordinates most federal assistance to education.
Electronic Signature (E-SIGN)	An electronic symbol or process attached to, or logically associated with, a record and used by a person with the intent to sign the document or record. Established under the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act on 6/8/2000.
Education Finance Council	The Education Finance Council is an association representing the nation's nonprofit and state-based student loan and finance organizations. These public purpose organizations are dedicated to the single purpose of making college more affordable.
Education Loan Management Resources (ELM)	Education Loan Management Resources created a uniform data exchange network for student loan processing. This technology platform allows lenders to exchange critical loan data with schools efficiently.
Expected Family Contribution (EFC)	The amount the family is expected to contribute to paying for a student's education, as determined by the FAFSA Federal Methodology. The EFC includes parent and student contributions, and varies according to the student's dependency status, family size, number of family members in school, taxable and nontaxable income and assets. The difference between the student's costs and the EFC is the student's financial need, and is used in determining the student's eligibility for need-based financial aid.
Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act 2003 (FACTA)	Federal act allowing consumers to obtain each year, free of charge, a personal credit history report, requiring that merchants omit from sales receipts all but the last five digits of a customer's credit card number, and requiring that procedures for government oversight and financial institution notification of ID theft and fraud be implemented. Amended the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)	The Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1681, is U.S. federal law enacted to promote the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of consumer information contained in the files of consumer reporting agencies.
Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)	The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, Pub. L. 95-109; 91 Stat. 874, codified as 15 U.S.C. § 1692 –1692p, designed to eliminate abusive practices in the collection of consumer debts, to promote fair debt collection, and to provide consumers with an avenue for

	disputing and obtaining validation of debt information in order to ensure the information's accuracy
Fair Isaac Credit Score (FICO)	A statistical model developed by the Fair Isaac Corporation, which is used by credit bureaus, and banking institutions to calculate and determine an individual's credit score.
Family Education Loan (FEL)	ACPE's FEL program provides low interest loans to families to assist in paying the costs of education for family members. Borrowers may be parents, grandparents, foster parents, or spouses.
Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP)	FFELP was terminated in 2009. Through FFELP, ACPE offered federally-guaranteed low-cost loans to students and parents. FFELP loans included Stafford, PLUS, Consolidated, all of which are now offered directly by the federal government.
Federal Methodology	The need analysis formula used on the FAFSA to determine the EFC. The federal methodology takes family size, the number of family members in college, taxable and nontaxable income and assets into account.
Federal Work-Study (FWS)	Program providing undergraduate and graduate students with part-time employment, usually at the school of attendance, during the school year. The federal government pays a portion of the student's salary, making it cheaper for departments and businesses to hire the student. For this reason, work-study students often find it easier to get a part-time job. Eligibility for FWS is based on need. Money earned from a FWS job is not counted as income for the subsequent year's need analysis process.
Finance Charge	The estimated amount of interest that will be paid over the life of the loan.
Financial Aid	Money provided to the student and the family to help them pay for the student's education. Major forms of financial aid include gift aid (grants and scholarships) and self-help aid (loans and work).
Financial Aid Administrator (FAA)	A staff member at an eligible school who is charged with the administration of financial aid programs.
Financial Aid Counseling	Students with federal loans are required to meet with a financial aid administrator or participate in a distance education-counseling program before they receive their first loan disbursement and again before they graduate or otherwise leave school. During these counseling sessions, called entrance and exit interviews, the FAA reviews the repayment terms of the loan and the repayment schedule with the student.

Financial Aid Office (FAO)	The college or university office that is responsible for the determination of student financial need and the awarding of financial aid.
Financial Aid Package	The complete collection of grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study employment from all sources (federal, state, institutional and private) offered to a student to enable them to attend the college or university.
Financial Literacy	The ability to understand and effectively apply various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting, and investing. Financial literacy helps individuals become self-sufficient so they can achieve financial stability. ACPE incorporates financial literacy education into the loan application process.
Forbearance	During a forbearance period, the lender allows the borrower to temporarily postpone repaying the principal, but the interest charges continue to accrue, even on subsidized loans. Forbearances are granted at the lender's discretion, usually in cases of extreme financial hardship or other unusual circumstances when the borrower does not qualify for a deferment. Typically, accrued interest is capitalized.
Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	Form used to apply for a broad category of federal and state student aid programs. No fee is charged.
FAFSA Time Alaska	FAFSA Time Alaska provides FAFSA-specific resources and training to site coordinators volunteering to host FAFSA completion events around the state. The event season runs from October to April. (Previously known as College Goal Alaska)
Federal Student Aid (FSA)	Aid offered to postsecondary education students by the federal government in the form of grants, loans, work-study programs, and other forms of assistance.
Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)	A widely accepted set of rules, conventions, standards, and procedures for reporting financial information, as established by the Financial Accounting Standards Board.
Gift Aid	Financial aid, such as grants and scholarships, which does not need to be repaid.
Grace Period	The time that begins when a borrower leaves school (whether because of graduation or withdrawal) or drops below the required enrollment level, and ends the day before the repayment period starts. The length of the grace period is stipulated in the promissory note that the borrower signed. Payments are not due during the grace period.

Graduate PLUS Loan	A federal loan made to a graduate or professional student, defined as a student enrolled in a program or course above the baccalaureate level or enrolled in a program leading to a professional degree at an eligible school.
Graduated Repayment	A repayment schedule where monthly payments are smaller at the start of the repayment period and gradually become larger.
Grant	A type of financial aid based on financial need that the student does not have to repay.
Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation (Great Lakes)	ACPE's former federal loan guarantor from 2018 through early 2019 when it transitioned to Ascendium Education Group AEG as part of corporate restructuring.
Guaranty Agency or Guarantor	A state or private nonprofit organization that has an agreement with the U.S. Secretary of Education to administer a loan guarantee program under the Higher Education Act, and enforces federal and state law regarding student loans. It is responsible for overseeing the student loan process, and insures them against default for the lender.
Health Education Assistance Loan (HEAL)	A low interest loan administered by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It is available to medical school students pursuing medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, podiatry, clinical psychology, health administration and public health. Undergraduate pharmacology students are also eligible.
Higher Ed Loan Mgt System (HELMS)	Loan servicing software used by ACPE since 1996.
Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF)	Fund established in statute for the purpose of making grants and scholarships. This fund was established to endow the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and the Alaska Education Grant (AEG).
Income-Based Repayment (IBR)	IBR is a federal loan repayment option with payment caps based on income and family size. After 25 years of qualifying payments and/or economic hardship deferments, the US Department of Education repays the outstanding balance and accrued interest on eligible loans. IBR is available for all federal student loans, except parent PLUS loans.
Income-Sensitive Repayment	A repayment plan for federal loan programs available to borrowers whose standard monthly loan payment (10-year repayment term) exceeds a percentage of their discretionary income. The monthly payment amount is based on a percentage of gross monthly income, and must at least satisfy monthly

	interest accrual. The plan is designed for borrowers who have a low initial income but anticipate it to increase over time.
Independent	A student is considered independent for purposes of not including parent income on the FAFSA if the student is at least 24 years old as of January 1 of the academic year, is married, is a graduate or professional student, has a legal dependent other than a spouse, is a veteran of the US Armed Forces, or is an orphan or ward of the court (or was a ward of the court until age 18), homeless or at risk of being homeless. A parent refusing to provide support for their child's education is not sufficient for the child to be declared independent.
Institutional Authorization	<p>All postsecondary educational providers in Alaska, and the programs they offer, must be authorized in accordance with law as set forth in AS 14.48, or be formally determined by ACPE to be exempt from authorization. ACPE's authorization process is designed to ensure postsecondary education providers and programs meet minimum standards set out in law, relative to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional financial soundness</li> <li>• Ethical business practices</li> <li>• Educational program</li> <li>• Administrative capacity</li> </ul> <p>Authorization is a separate process from accreditation.</p>
Institutional Student Information Report (ISIR)	The electronic version of the Student Aid Report (SAR) delivered to schools. It is sent by the US Department of Education to provide information about students who completed a FAFSA and indicated they might attend that school. This report includes the EFC and is used by the school to determine eligibility for financial aid.
Interest	Amount charged to the borrower for the benefit of using the lender's money. Interest is usually calculated as a percentage of the principal balance of the loan. The percentage rate may be fixed for the life of the loan, or it may be variable, depending on the terms of the loan.
Interest Cap	The maximum interest rate that can be charged on a loan. Not to be confused with capitalized interest.
Institutional Standards & Evaluation Committee (ISEC)	Five commissioners appointed by the Chair to meet at the call of the Chair to consider matters of initial authorization, program changes, and institutional compliance, and make recommendations for final action to the full Commission.
Lender's Interest and Special Allowance	An accounting mechanism that a lender uses to report to the Department the loans that it has made and to request from the



Request and Report (LaRS)	Department interest benefits and special allowance that it has earned, or to report payments the lender owes to the Department.
Lumina Foundation	An independent private philanthropic foundation focused on increasing success in higher education.
Master Promissory Note (MPN)	A promissory note that authorizes the lender to disburse multiple loans during multi-year terms upon request and the school's certification of loan eligibility.
Medical Cancellation	In the event the borrower is permanently disabled, and therefore unable to be gainfully employed, a loan may be eligible for medical cancellation. Cancellation eligibility is, in part, determined by the loan contract the borrower signed. Alaska statute does not entitle a borrower to medical cancellation; therefore, contract law and Alaska Education Loan Regulations govern this process.
Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA)	Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority is one of several Direct Loan Servicers in the country. The ASLC is a signatory sub-contractor of MOHELA for federal Direct Loan Servicing. MOHELA services Direct Loans allocated to the ASLC, and the ASLC receives a share of the servicing fees paid by the US Department of Education.
National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)	A private nonprofit organization whose expertise is assisting higher education policymakers and administrators bridge the gap between research and practice.
National College Access Network (NCAN)	National non-profit organization that assists local communities initiate, develop and sustain college access programs designed to increase the number of students who pursue education beyond high school through advising and financial assistance.
National Council of Higher Education Resources (NCHER)	An organization which represents a nationwide network of guaranty agencies, secondary markets, lenders, loan servicers, collection agencies, schools, and other organizations involved in the administration of FFEL portfolios.
National Disbursement Network (NDN)	A central disbursing agent affiliated with Education Loan Management Resources (ELM) that ACPE uses to disburse loan funds to schools that request this method of receiving disbursements. NDN electronically debits an ACPE account and disburses the funds to the school either by electronic fund transfer or by check, depending on the school's preference.
National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)	The U.S. Department of Education's central database for information about a student's financial aid.

Need Analysis	The process for determining a student's financial need using financial information provided by the student and his or her parents (and spouse, if any) on the FAFSA.
Need-Based	Financial aid based on student's ability to pay. Most government sources of financial aid are need-based.
Northwest Ed Loan Association (NELA)	ACPE's former federal loan guarantor. NELA became affiliated with USAFunds in 2004.
Non-Subsidized Interest	Interest that accrues and is to be paid by the borrower.
Office of Management & Budget (OMB)	Budget office in the Governor's office.
Origination Fee	Administrative fee paid to the lender and charged as a percentage of the loan amount as it is disbursed.
P-20W Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)	Abbreviation and acronym for the statewide longitudinal data system, which links K-12 education data to postsecondary education and workforce information.
Parent Loans For Undergraduate Students (PLUS)	Federal loans available to parents of dependent undergraduate students to help finance the child's education. Parents may borrow up to the full cost of their children's education, less the amount of any other financial aid received. PLUS Loans may be used to pay the EFC. There is a minimal credit check required for the PLUS loan, so a good credit history is required.
Pell Grant	A federal grant to undergraduates that provides funds based on the student's financial need. The amount of the grant for 2020-21 is \$6,345.
Perkins Loan	Formerly the National Direct Student Loan Program, the Perkins Loan allows students to borrow up to \$5,500/year maximum of \$27,500 for undergraduate school and \$8,500/year maximum of \$60,000 for graduate school. The Perkins Loan has one of the lowest interest rates and is awarded by the financial aid administrator to students with exceptional financial need. The student must have applied for a Pell Grant to be eligible. The interest on the Perkins Loan is subsidized while the student is in school.
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA)	Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) is a national provider of student financial aid services, including loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, outreach, and other student aid programs. It conducts its student loan servicing operations nationally as FedLoan Servicing and American Education Services (AES).

Premiere Credit of North America, LLC (PCNA)	Premiere Credit of North America, LLC (PCNA) is the collection agency contracted to collect on defaulted state education loans.
Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP)	A WICHE program that provides access for Alaska students to enroll full-time in eligible health-related degree programs that are not available in this state. Alaska pays a support fee to reserve seats in these programs, and the Alaska program participants are required to repay the support fee paid on their behalf.
Promissory Note (PN)	Legal contract between borrower and ACPE describing terms and conditions of loan.
Program Participation Application (PPA)	An institution must enter into a program participation agreement with ACPE in order to be eligible to offer state financial aid programs. The agreement sets out the requirements for compliance with state statutes and regulations governing these programs.
Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)	The Public Service Loan Forgiveness program forgives the remaining balance on federal student loans after borrowers have made 120 qualifying monthly payments under a qualifying repayment plan while working full-time for a qualifying employer. Qualifying employers include a US federal, state, or tribal government or not-for-profit organization.
Refinance Loan	A loan that combines several student loans into one loan from a single lender. The refinance loan is used to pay off the balances on the other loans.
Skip Tracing	Skip Tracing is the process by which a lender attempts to obtain corrected borrower address or telephone information when the current address and/or phone is no longer valid.
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)	Institutional requirements for satisfactory academic progress to continue receiving federal or state aid.
Student Aid Report (SAR)	Record of information from a student's FAFSA provided to the student by the U.S. Dept. of Education (DOE), which includes the calculation of the student's expected family contribution (EFC). The electronic version sent to schools and ACPE is called an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR).
Servicer	An organization that collects payments on a loan and performs other administrative tasks associated with maintaining a loan portfolio. Loan servicers disburse loan funds, monitor loans while the borrowers are in school, collect payments, process deferments and forbearances, respond to borrower inquiries and ensure that the loans are administered in compliance with all applicable state and federal requirements.

Special Allowance Payment (SAP)	A percentage of the daily average unpaid principal balance, paid to a lender by the Department on an eligible Federal Stafford, PLUS, Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS), or Consolidation loan. The special allowance rate is set by statutory formula. Currently the rates paid by borrowers on the loans are higher than the relevant market index and lenders are required to rebate the difference back to the federal government.
Stafford Loans	Federal loans that come in two forms, subsidized and unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are based on need; unsubsidized loans are not. The federal government pays the interest on the subsidized Stafford Loan while the student is in school and in certain deferment periods. The Subsidized Stafford Loan was formerly known as the Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL).
State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)	The national association of higher education leaders of statewide coordinating and governing boards and other state policy agencies for higher education. SHEEO serves its members as an advocate for state policy leadership, as a liaison between states and the federal government, as a vehicle for peer collaboration, and as a source of information and analysis on educational and public policy issues. In Alaska, the SHEEO role is shared between the Executive Director of ACPE and the President of the University of Alaska.
Success Center	Located in ACPE's Anchorage office, Success Center staff assist students and parents through the financial aid process and postsecondary education or career training preparation.
Subsidized Loan	With a subsidized loan, such as the Perkins Loan or the Subsidized Stafford Loan, the government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school, during the six-month grace period following qualifying enrollment and the beginning of repayment, and during any deferment periods. Subsidized loans are awarded based on financial need and may not be used to finance the family contribution.
Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG)	Federal grant program for undergraduate students with exceptional need. SEOG grants are awarded by the school's financial aid office, and provide up to \$4,000 per year. To qualify, a student must also be a recipient of a Pell Grant.
Teacher Education Loan (TEL)	The TEL was created to provide an incentive for rural high school graduates to pursue teaching careers and return to teach in rural communities; school boards award teacher education loans with preference given to applicants from rural schools, to attend a bachelor's degree program in elementary or secondary education or a teacher certification program. Borrowers who teach in a qualifying school may be eligible for forgiveness benefits.

	Legislation passed in 2014 made the awarding of TELs to new borrowers subject to the availability of funding from the State. Absent such funding, effective fall of 2014, only continuing borrowers will receive additional loans, which are funded by ASLC.
Truth-In-Lending (TIL)	See Disclosure
Truth in Lending Act (TILA)	The Truth in Lending Act (TILA) of 1968 is United States federal law designed to promote the informed use of consumer credit, by requiring disclosures about its terms and cost to standardize the manner in which costs associated with borrowing are calculated and disclosed. It requires publication of the Annual Percentage Rate (APR) on a loan.
Unmet Need	Any negative difference between the amount a student/family has the capacity to pay and the cost of education as certified by the institution's Financial Aid Office is considered to be their "unmet need".
Unsubsidized Loan	A loan for which the borrower is responsible for the interest on an unsubsidized loan from the date the loan is disbursed, even while the student is still in school. Students may avoid paying the interest while they are in school by capitalizing the interest, which increases the loan amount.
Variable Interest Rate (VIR)	In a variable interest loan, the interest rate changes periodically. For example, the interest rate might be pegged to the cost of US Treasury Bills (e.g., T-Bill rate plus 3.1%) and be updated monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually. ACPE does not currently offer any variable rate loans.
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)	WICHE is a regional organization created by the Western Regional Education Compact, adopted by the Western states. WICHE was created to facilitate resource sharing among the higher education systems of the West. It implements a number of activities to accomplish its objectives. Alaska participates in three WICHE student exchange programs administered by ACPE. Alaska has participated in the WICHE compact since 1955.
Western Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE)	A WICHE program, WUE allows Alaska residents to enroll at two-year and four-year institutions in participating states at reduced tuition level applicable only to WUE students. Over 100 colleges and universities participate in this exchange program.
Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)	A WICHE program that enables Alaska residents to enroll at reduced tuition rates in certain graduate programs in other western states.

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The Washington, Wyoming Alaska, Montana, Idaho Program (WWAMI)	Provides access to graduate medical education not otherwise available in Alaska. State residents compete only with other Alaska residents for 20 positions reserved at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSM) for Alaska students. Alaska pays to UWSM the contractual costs of the program not covered by tuition, but fifty percent of that cost is a loan for the participant if they fail to return to the state and become employed in the medical field for which support was provided. After acceptance by UWSM, the student attends the first year of school at University of Alaska Anchorage.
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