



UAF news and information

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— By Anupma Prakash, provost and executive vice chancellor

One important element in leading a university is to keep up with larger national-level discussions as well as changes to policies and regulations that directly impact our university operations. I work with a large team of faculty, staff, and students that serve as my information funnel. The team taps into trusted news media sources, connects with relevant decision-making bodies, attends professional meetings to monitor the evolving landscape, and shares what they find to guide our planning.

Institutional accreditation updates: Today, four UAF colleagues and I are attending the annual conference of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, our Institutional accrediting body (learn more about [accreditation](#)). Vice Provost Trent Sutton, who serves as our accreditation liaison officer, participated in peer-evaluator accreditation training, while others covered parallel sessions on effective governance, planning and strategy, institutional data analysis, assessments, community partnerships, artificial intelligence, academic freedom, course learning outcomes, and student success. UAF just went through a mid-cycle accreditation review, and we will share the final feedback from the commission on our [accreditation website](#) as soon as we receive it. From the exit interviews, we know that we are on a great track with collecting and sharing disaggregated data for our [mission fulfillment indicators](#) and we need to continue focusing our efforts on student learning outcomes and using these data to close equity gaps in student success to demonstrate continuous improvement.



UAF members in attendance at the 2023 NWCCU annual conference. From left to right Trent Sutton, Jenn Pedersen, Anupma Prakash, Holly McDonald, and Rochelle Rodak.

Carnegie updates: Earlier this month, Carnegie announced updates to [Carnegie classification](#). The new classification system has shifted away from using the 7-factor complex algorithm to rate universities against each other. The new classification uses only annual research expenditures and Ph.D. awards as criteria to classify universities into the following three research categories:

1. R1 - Very High Spending and Doctorate Production: \$50M in research expenditure and 70 Ph.D. degrees awarded
2. R2 - High Spending and Doctorate Production: \$5M in research expenditure and 20 Ph.D. degrees awarded
3. Research Colleges and Universities: Research expenditure \$2.5M

Carnegie has also announced an opportunity to [provide feedback](#) by Feb. 15, 2024, for changes to their 2025 basic classification system which will use multi-dimensional criteria. UAF currently falls in the very top of the R2 category and aspires to move to the R1 category. A big thank you to Taryn Lopez and the many teams working on our strategy to achieve R1.

New federal financial accountability regulation: In late October, the U.S. Department of Education released new regulations on financial accountability and have shared two related factsheets on (i) [gainful employment](#) and (ii) [professional licensure and state authorization](#).

The gist of the gainful employment regulation is that all undergraduate and graduate certificate programs will be held to two requirements:

1. The amount of student loans must be equal to or less than 8% of annual earnings;
2. Half the graduates must have higher earnings than a typical high school graduate in their state's labor force who have never enrolled in higher education.

If a program fails either requirements in any single year, the university will be required to provide warnings to current and prospective students that their program is at risk of losing federal funding. If a program fails for two consecutive years, no federal aid will be available for the program. Graduate students with graduate certificates will be required to acknowledge any warnings before we can provide aid.

The gist of the professional licensure regulation is that we must satisfy the educational requirements for any program that leads to licensure or certification in a state where the student is located or is planning to seek employment.

Other developments: In other developments, our students are accessing education using multiple modalities. There is a greater prevalence of demand and offering of online courses with nearly half of our student credit hours coming from classes that are taught either completely online or in hybrid modality. The U.S. Department of Education has rolled out a requirement for all courses where the instructor and student are not in the same physical space to have ‘*Regular and Substantive Interactions*’. The UAF Center for Teaching and Learning has developed this excellent [RSI resource page](#).

There is also an escalation of the availability and use of Artificial Intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, in universities. Internal AI resource pages are available through the [Rasmusson Library](#) and the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#). The UAF administration is working actively with the faculty senate in both these areas. It is important that faculty keep themselves updated on these developments, build in regular and substantive interactions in their courses, and update their syllabi to include an AI statement that clearly communicates their approach and expectation of students with respect to the use of AI.

When you attend a conference or workshop, participate on influential boards and panels, or dive deep into a current issue, please share what you have learned with a larger group of peers so that collectively we can keep abreast of the changing landscape of higher education. Adaptation may require just a small change or disruptive transformation in our journey as leaders in higher education.

Friday Focus is written by a different member of UAF's leadership team every week.



#NanookNation

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