UAA Centers and Institutes

A center or institute is created on approval by the University of Alaska (UA) president and Board of Regents for the promotion of advanced study, research, economic or business development, and/or instruction in specified fields. Generally, a center or institute will serve to coordinate the participation of several academic disciplines or programs in a unified endeavor. While centers and institutes may have varied missions, they may not offer degree programs.

Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce/Alaska’s Area Health Education Center (ACRHHW/AHEC)

(907) 786-6591

The Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/ACRHHW/aehr-hhec/) oversees Alaska’s Area Health Education Center (ACRHHW/AHEC) system and is housed within the College of Health. The ACRHHW/AHEC has an affiliation agreement with the School of Nursing in the College of Health and works closely with health programs across the UA system. The mission of ACRHHW/AHEC is to strengthen Alaska’s primary care workforce. It achieves this mission through an industry-university partnership that improves the distribution, supply and quality of healthcare personnel in Alaska. Activities span the workforce spectrum and focus on engaging high school students into health career pathways, broadening the experience of existing health care students, and helping to retain a quality health care workforce with continuing education and professional development opportunities that address the health needs of Alaskans. ACRHHW/AHEC also conducts applied research in the realm of workforce.

The Alaska AHEC program has six regional centers hosted by Alaska Primary Care Association, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, Foundation Health Partners, Ilisagvik College, Southeast Regional Resource Center, and Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation. In addition to partnerships with UA health programs, ACRHHW/AHEC works closely with several health associations and state agencies and participates as a core member of the Alaska Health Workforce Coalition.

Program activities include immersion experiences for potential and current health care students (both Alaskan and out-of-state), training camps for high schoolers, provision of a health care track in partnership with the ANSEP program, support to other UAA programs and industry trainers to develop and deliver Continuing Education and Professional Development training, and management of the Alaska CACHE: Clearinghouse for Alaska’s Continuing Health Education (http://www.akche.org/) and the Health Careers in Alaska website (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/ACRHHW/aehr-hhec/healthcareerswebsite/index.cshtml/).

Alaska Center for Conservation Science (ACCS)

(907) 786-6350

The Alaska Center for Conservation Science (http://accs.uaa.alaska.edu) is Alaska’s clearinghouse for information on plant and animal species of conservation concern, natural communities of conservation concern, aquatic ecology baseline conditions, and invasive non-native plant and animal species. The center collects, validates, and distributes this information, and assists natural resource managers and others in applying it effectively. The center is part of NatureServe, and its data are linked to similar programs in all 50 states, Canadian provinces and many Latin American countries.

The center’s fields of expertise include zoology, botany, aquatic ecology, vegetation and conservation planning.

The zoology program synthesizes information concerning rare and potentially endangered vertebrate species. The center conducts bird surveys, maintains a database on non-native animals and, through the U.S. Geological Survey’s Gap Analysis Program, is modeling the distribution of all birds and mammals in Alaska.

The botany program conducts inventories and ecological and evolutionary research on rare plants and lichens and non-native plants of Alaska. The center synthesizes and serves data from other collaborators to the public. The center maintains one of the largest, spatially explicit non-native plant databases in the country, with over 95,000 non-native plant occurrences from Alaska and the Yukon Territory, which is used to facilitate research and early detection as well as rapid response actions.

The aquatic ecology program investigates the influences of natural and human processes on the structure and function of freshwater ecosystems. The major focus of the aquatic ecology program has been the establishment of baseline biological conditions and the development of tools to monitor the biological health of Alaska’s streams.

The vegetation ecology program’s main objective is to describe the major ecosystems and plant communities within the state of Alaska. Field projects include land cover mapping, describing all plant communities and identifying those that are rare, and understanding ecosystem succession.

The conservation planning section addresses important management questions identified by land managers by developing distribution maps for key resource values, documenting potential impacts from environmental change agents, and providing baseline data for future management decisions.

In addition to serving conservation data to the public, the Alaska Center for Conservation Science also mentors, employs and provides scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, who work on a wide array of projects.
Alaska Small Business Development Center (Alaska SBDC)
(907) 786-7201 or toll free (800)478-7232

The Alaska Small Business Development Center (https://aksbdc.org) is a cooperative program of the Small Business Administration (SBA) accredited by the Association of Small Business Development Centers and hosted by UAA. The Center is housed in the Business Enterprise Institute.

The Alaska SBDC fosters, promotes and assists growth and development of small businesses in Alaska through a family of services. The Alaska SBDC provides Alaska’s businesses and entrepreneurs with in-depth, high-quality business counseling and training. The Alaska SBDC helps businesses with management, marketing, sales, finance, accounting and other disciplines required for small business growth, expansion and innovation.

The Alaska SBDC is represented throughout Alaska with regional offices and corresponding satellite locations. The Alaska SBDC also focuses on business growth in rural Alaska through the Rural Outreach Program for Entrepreneurs (ROPE). Three additional programs for Alaska businesses are also available. The Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) provides support for businesses seeking opportunities in government contracting. The Buy Alaska program offers free in-state sourcing for buyers and sales referrals through a comprehensive online site (http://www.buyalaska.com). The Technology Research and Development Center of Alaska (TREND) provides Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) proposal assistance and technical database searches.

All Alaska SBDC network services encourage involvement of the university within the public square and serve as a direct conduit from the University of Alaska to business communities throughout the state.

Business Enterprise Institute (BEI)
(907) 786-5444

The Business Enterprise Institute (BEI) (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/business-enterprise-institute/) links economic development programs across the University of Alaska System and supports businesses and entrepreneurial capacities across Alaska. BEI provides a platform for high-level consultancy between industries and UAA. Providing economic development-related research and technical assistance, high-level professional education, small business development services and economic ecosystem enhancement for Alaska, BEI serves as a bridge to expertise and talents throughout UAA.

The Business Enterprise Institute consists of the Alaska Small Business Development Center, the UA Center for Economic Development, the Alaska Procurement Technical Assistance Center, the Alaska Cooperative Development Center, the Alaska Minority Business Development Center, the Center for Corporate and Professional Development, the Applied Environmental Research Center, and the Center for Strategic Partnerships and Research.

Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR)
(907) 786-5494
CAEPR@alaska.edu

The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (http://www.iseralaska.org/CAEPR/) is a division of the Institute of Social and Economic Research. CAEPR addresses the need for Alaska-specific research through supporting, conducting and disseminating objective, non-partisan, rigorous research on critical issues such as: educational access; college and career readiness; teacher supply, demand and turnover; indigenous education challenges; and circumpolar education.

The center's work is conducted in partnership and collaboration with faculty from across the university system, key stakeholders and policymakers, and educators in Alaska and across the North and is aimed at making research accessible to multiple audiences.

Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies (CAAS)
(907) 786-6575
uaa_ichs@uaa.alaska.edu

The mission of the Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/institute-for-circumpolar-health-studies/) represents the University of Alaska’s commitment to address the problem of substance use and abuse in the state. The CAAS mission is to help alleviate the problem of substance abuse and its adverse impacts through the development and implementation of education, training, research, and public service programs.

CAAS has produced local and statewide reports related to substance abuse problems in the state, received numerous grants and contracts to undertake research and evaluation studies, and initiated workshops and training programs to help practitioners enhance their skills. CAAS serves as a resource for collaborative research and as a repository of information for health researchers.

Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services (CBHRS)
(907) 786-6381
cbhrs@alaska.edu

The Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services (https://iseralaska.org/cbhrs/) is a research center in the Institute of Social and Economic Research that has been in existence since 1999. CBHRS’ research is focused on improving the health of Alaskans through health behavior change interventions at the individual, healthcare, community, and policy levels. CBHRS’ multidisciplinary investigators, research professionals, and students include researchers, clinicians, and educators dedicated to the behavioral and physical health of all members of our community. Areas of focus include prevention of substance use disorders, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), and suicide; and promotion of healthy lifestyles across the lifespan. CBHRS conducts comprehensive evaluation work in these areas as well. To conduct its research and evaluation, CBHRS collaborates with diverse
partners and stakeholders including community members, state and national agencies, and other universities across the country.

CBHRS is funded through a variety of mechanisms, including grants and contracts from the State of Alaska and municipal government agencies, nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, private enterprises, and federal research and health services institutes such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health. CBHRS also houses the CDC-funded FASD Practice and Implementation Center and the SAMHSA-funded Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Professional Training Program.

In addition to conducting research and evaluation, CBHRS provides training and technical assistance on prevention of alcohol-exposed pregnancies, SBIRT implementation, and has expertise in process and outcome evaluation and translation of research into practice. CBHRS is approved by the American Psychological Association to offer continuing education.

Center for Community Engagement and Learning (CCEL)
(907) 786-4062
uua.ccel@alaska.edu

UAA’s Center for Community Engagement and Learning (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/engage/) connects academic programs with community needs, enables the university to effectively carry out its community engagement mission, and serves as the center of engaged academic activities on the campus. It uses scholarship and action for the mutual benefit of the university, the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. The center uses proven pedagogies and high-impact educational practices to support community-engaged curriculum, community-based research projects and creative activity of students and faculty. For faculty, annual mini-grants and awards, student support, and training and technical assistance provide opportunities to develop new community partners and enhance longer-term community-engaged projects. An Urban in Alaska program engages students through a competitive application process in a leadership program for community engagement and brings faculty and community members into forums of interest and importance to the community. CCEL also has an Undergraduate Certificate in Civic Engagement, which encourages students’ active engagement in civic dialogue and action for the good of the community and complements their major disciplinary focus.

Center for Economic Development (CED)
(907) 786-5458

The University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/business-enterprise-institute/center-for-economic-development/) is one of nearly 60 university centers designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). In this role, CED leverages the resources of the UA system to improve local economies and the economic development capacity of Alaska by providing technical assistance for public and private sector organizations. The Center is housed in the Business Enterprise Institute.

The ways in which the center engages in economic development are broad, flexible and guided by the needs of the university, its partners and Alaska communities. CED offers technical assistance and provides information, data and know-how to evaluate, shape and implement specific projects and programs that promote economic development, with a focus on economically distressed regions, as defined by the EDA. Current areas of emphasis include:

- Providing business and community planning, feasibility studies, and market analysis project support;
- Promoting entrepreneurial capacity building through special initiatives, workshops and courses;
- Delivering economic development courses that lead to professional designations; and
- Linking the university and organizations engaged in economic development, such as Alaska regional development organizations, Native organizations, the Denali Commission and the State of Alaska.

In addition, CED houses several other programs:

- Alaska Cooperative Development Program—organized to foster development of cooperative business enterprises in rural Alaska, and to help Alaska producers and consumers to use cooperatives to provide economic base activities that can spur economic development.
- Alaska Native American Business Enterprise Center—serving businesses in the areas of procurement, market access, capital and matchmaking; eligible businesses must be 51 percent or more minority owned and have $1 million in revenue.
- AmeriCorps VISTA — an umbrella of volunteers in nonprofits and governments across the state working to build economic development capacity.
- AKSourceLink — a statewide collaboration of nonprofits, government and university programs combining to create a free community referral network of more than 120 resource partners.
- Lemonade Day Alaska — a youth entrepreneurship program designed to teach young people about business planning and financial literacy.

Center for Economic Education (CEE)
(907) 786-1916
prjohnson@alaska.edu

The Center for Economic Education (https://business.uaa.alaska.edu/departments/economics/cee/) is sponsored by the College of Business and Public Policy. CEE promotes and improves economics curricula throughout Alaska by sponsoring workshops and college credit courses for teachers and high school students, providing educational materials, and offering other assistance to educators and school districts.

The center is also charged with the task of helping Alaskan citizens better understand the role of economics in their lives and in the future
of the state. To this end the center sponsors workshops, speakers and courses that promote economic literacy in the general public.

Additionally, CEE is focused on designing software and other classroom technologies for improving economic instruction. This includes the creation of web resources that allow teachers to simulate complex economic environments in their classrooms and provide students with a dynamic classroom experience.

Center for Human Development (CHD)
(907) 272-8270 or toll free (800) 243-2199
info@alaskachd.org

The Center for Human Development (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/center-for-human-development/), a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service, is an interdisciplinary unit under the College of Health. Faculty and staff represent a variety of disciplines, including psychology, social work, special education, sociology, adult education, nursing, public health and human services. The center has a variety of projects that provide paid work experience for UAA students.

CHD is authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 1999 as a Center for Excellence to build state and community capacity to respond to the needs of individuals who experience developmental and other persistent conditions requiring long-term or specialized support, and to the needs of their families. CHD serves as a liaison between the academy and the service delivery system. It collaborates with state agencies and community providers to support the independence, productivity and community integration of people who experience developmental and related disabilities by:

- Providing interdisciplinary pre-service and continuing education of students;
- Providing community service through demonstration and model services, training and technical assistance for individuals requiring long-term support, their families and support staff;
- Conducting formal and applied research, evaluation and analysis of public policy in areas affecting individuals requiring long-term support and their families; and
- Disseminating information about disabilities, long-term support and professional best practices.

Environment and Natural Resources Institute (ENRI)
(907) 786-4909

The Environment and Natural Resources Institute (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/programs/environment-and-natural-resources-institute/) conducts applied and fundamental scientific research and collects, synthesizes, archives and distributes natural science data, specimens and knowledge. This is accomplished by conducting field and laboratory studies, participating in data and sample archiving and synthesis activities, and providing electronic outlets and Internet portals for public access. ENRI also supports two analytical facilities: the UAA Stable Isotope Laboratory (SIL) and the Applied Science and Engineering Technology (ASET) Laboratory. These facilities are designed to serve the research, teaching and service mission of the College of Arts and Sciences and are central to advancing the integrative science theme at UAA.

ENRI is organized into two main research focus areas: natural resources and environmental health. Within each focus area, the research activities comprise multiple principal investigator-led programs.

- Natural Resources: ENRI continues to serve its mandated mission of providing scientific information for resource managers, policymakers, the scientific community and the general public. Data, research findings and discoveries are furnished to these user groups in order to increase the understanding of relevant natural processes and to ensure that prudent decisions regarding Alaska’s natural resources are made. Researchers in the Natural Resources Research Focus Area (NR-RFA) examine the ecology and population health of biological resources and the ecological impacts of resource extraction. ENRI faculty fellows and research scientists have active research programs in the following areas: physiological ecology; population biology of plants, animals and microbes; and ecosystem biogeochemistry and geology, with a focus on Alaska and high-latitude systems. Many of their research projects examine the effects of large-scale environmental changes such as those that accompany climate change and extractive land uses.

- Environmental Health: The Arctic acts as a “cold trap” and is a hemispheric sink for persistent organic pollutants (POPs), which are transported by the atmosphere through a well-documented process known as global distillation, as well as via oceanic currents from warmer regions. The Arctic has accumulated significant levels of legacy chemicals — POPs that have been banned or restricted — as well as emerging chemicals of concern. Arctic wildlife and people are also exposed to high levels of POPs from local sources such as toxic military waste and solid waste dumps. Also, people in the Arctic are exposed to longer periods and higher levels of chemicals in household dust because of more time spent indoors in sealed homes. The ENRI Environmental Health Research Focus Area (EH-RFA) studies the effects of POPs on Alaskans.

Ethics Center
(907)786-4677

The mission of the UAA Ethics Center (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/philosophy/ethics-center/index.csh.html/) is to promote research and dialogue, inform debate, and engage the community on ethical issues relevant to the people of Alaska and its diverse communities. The center aims to serve the communities, businesses, professions and universities of Alaska by providing training, workshops, white papers, consultation and continuing education.

Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies (ICHS)
(907) 786-6575
uaa_ichs@uaa.alaska.edu

The Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/institute-
for-circumpolar-health-studies/) is a health research and policy research institute that provides support, coordination, information and training for health research that serves the needs of Alaskans and other residents of the circumpolar north. Since it was created by the Alaska Legislature in 1988 (AS 14.40.088), the ICHS has been a leader in addressing a wide variety of health problems and issues facing Alaskans. Alaska’s rural and multicultural environment calls for a multidisciplinary approach to defining health problems and identifying appropriate solutions. ICHS research activities include epidemiologic studies of population health problems; studies of health services need, access and utilization; and evaluation of health policy and the effectiveness of new programs.

ICHS works closely with faculty throughout the UA system, providing technical assistance and support to increase the health research capacity in Alaska through conferences, guest lectures and other teaching activities. ICHS also encourages student involvement through internships and research assistantships. The institute maintains collaborative relations with other universities, state and federal agencies, Alaska Native health organizations, and Alaska communities to provide relevant health information, support local planning, and inform the development of health policy. Cooperative activities in research, instruction and service link Alaska and the university with international health research and practice. ICHS provides professional development and training through conferences and workshops for public health and medical professionals, and informational services and educational programs for the general public.

**Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER)**

(907) 786-7710
uaa_iser@alaska.edu

The Institute of Social and Economic Research (https://iseralaska.org/) is the state’s oldest and largest public policy research organization, established by the Alaska Legislature in 1961. Today it has a staff of about 30 to 35, including faculty, research associates and support staff. ISER’s faculty and research associates are multidisciplinary, analyzing social and economic change primarily in Alaska but also in other northern regions. Over the past half century ISER has examined virtually every major public policy issue in Alaska. Hundreds of studies since 1961 document effects of natural resource development—including development in the petroleum, seafood, mining, timber, and tourism industries—as well as fiscal policies of state and local governments, transportation and energy requirements of developing regions, effects of change on Alaska Native peoples, and the growth and evolution of Alaska’s education system.

ISER’s non-partisan research is widely used throughout the public and private sectors in Alaska, and the faculty and staff make sure research findings are disseminated broadly—through hundreds of online reports and other information on ISER’s website; through electronic mailing lists that notify Alaskans and others about new research findings and public talks at ISER; through presentations to a wide range of public and private groups inside and outside the state; through seminars, workshops, and conferences; through testimony to the Alaska Legislature and other government bodies; and through interviews with the press.

ISER is part of the College of Business and Public Policy (CBPP). ISER faculty teach in CBPP as well as other UAA colleges, and the institute provides opportunities for student involvement through internships and research assistantships. ISER also forms research partnerships with other universities, Alaska Native organizations, school districts and community groups.

**Justice Center**

(907) 786-1810
uaa.justice@alaska.edu

The UAA Justice Center (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/justice-center/), established by the Alaska Legislature in 1975, has a mandate to provide statewide justice-related education, research and service. The center is an interdisciplinary unit that provides undergraduate, graduate and professional education; conducts research in the areas of crime, law and justice; and provides service to government units, justice agencies and community organizations throughout urban and rural Alaska to promote a safe, healthy and just society.

Through its work, the center promotes understanding of the justice system throughout rural and urban Alaska.

The Justice Center offers courses in the areas of crime, delinquency, legal studies, and police, judicial and correctional policy and administration. Students may choose from among seven academic credentials: a baccalaureate degree or minor in justice, or one of five legal studies certificate and degree programs approved by the American Bar Association. Two honor options are also available to students: Justice Honors for those undergraduate students who develop exceptional social science research skills and Pro Bono Service Honors for students who volunteer significant time with legal aid organizations.

The Justice Center conducts research in the areas of crime, law, law enforcement, corrections and the administration of both civil and criminal justice. This research contributes to the development of the UAA academic curriculum and serves as the underpinning for center work in community education and public service. Since its establishment, the center has been particularly committed to research on cross-cultural issues as a means for improving Alaska justice administration and for broadening education opportunities for the Alaska Native community.

The Justice Center includes the Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC), a program under the aegis of the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The AJSAC assists Alaska criminal justice agencies, as well as state and local governments and officials, with the development, implementation, and evaluation of criminal justice programs and policies through the collection, analysis, and reporting of crime and justice statistics. It is a member of the Justice Research and Statistics Association, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to policy-oriented research and analysis. The Justice Center also includes the Alaska Justice Information Center (AJIC). The mission of AJIC is to compile, analyze, and report on criminal justice topics to policymakers and practitioners in order to improve public safety, to increase criminal justice accountability, and to reduce recidivism.
Justice Center products include books, papers, reports and presentations for practitioners and policymakers. Justice Center faculty and staff provide legislators and other public officials with assistance in the organization and preparation of materials for public policy formulation. In addition, center-sponsored events and a quarterly research publication, the Alaska Justice Forum, permit the exchange of ideas on justice and legal issues in Alaska.

**Montgomery Dickson Center for Japanese Language and Culture**

(907) 786-4038  
www.facebook.com/MDCJLC (http://www.facebook.com/MDCJLC/)

The Montgomery Dickson Center for Japanese Language and Culture (https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/programs/montgomery-dickson-center/) is committed to developing Japanese language education at UAA and throughout Alaska, as well as to promoting mutual understanding between the U.S. and Japan in honor of UAA alumnus Montgomery Dickson, who perished in the 2011 Tohoku Great Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan. The center is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The center’s mission is to assist with UAA’s ambition to further enrich and deepen mutual understanding and appreciation between Japan and Alaska by providing high-quality Japanese language education at UAA. The center’s main objectives are to encourage, complement and expand Japanese language instruction within UAA and throughout the state of Alaska; to provide opportunities for Alaskans to experience, appreciate, understand and enjoy high-quality, significant and culturally meaningful Japanese programs and events; and to serve as a locus within the university for facilitating student and faculty exchanges, programmatic collaborations, and enhanced cooperation between Alaska and Japan.

**Psychological Services Center (PSC)**

(907) 786-1795

The Psychological Services Center (http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/psychology/psychological-services-center/index.cshtml/) is the UAA on-campus training clinic for graduate students in the MS Clinical Psychology program and the joint Ph.D. in Clinical-Community Psychology with a Rural and Indigenous Emphasis. Student trainees at the PSC provide a range of psychological services under supervision by licensed psychologists. Services are available at affordable, low fees and on a sliding fee scale. The clinic is open to students and to members of the community.

Therapy and assessment services are provided in a confidential atmosphere sensitive to diversity and with respect for the individual. Individual, group, family and child therapy are offered for a range of needs, from exploration of one’s potential to anxiety, depression, stress, loss, test anxiety and relationship difficulties. Because the PSC is a training clinic that is closed on weekends, holidays and school breaks, it is not a resource for individuals seeking help for an immediate severe crisis. For an appointment or information, please call (907) 786-1795.