



Sitka Campus comes alive as high schoolers from across the state filter in and out to use the facility as a study and hang-out hub. The visitors traveled to Sitka for the Alaska School Activities Association basketball tournament at Mt. Edgcumbe High School, March 6-8. (See story below.) Photo by: Angie Hilsman

High school basketball tourney makes way for successful Sitka Campus outreach

6-8 March

The University of Alaska Southeast Sitka Campus welcomed hundreds of visiting students this month in a new outreach attempt.

Students from across the southeast region arrived in Sitka for the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) Region V Basketball Tournament, held at Mount Edgecumbe High School.

Sitka Campus staff not only organized an outreach table at the tourney itself, but also opened the campus to the more than 1,000 attendees in the area.

UAS staff manning the table promoted Sitka Campus programs, handed out Sitka Campus swag, and surveyed students, parents, and staff. Communities represented at the event included Haines, Craig, Petersburg, Wrangell, Metlakatla, Ketchikan, Juneau, and Sitka.



“Because both the Mt. Edgecumbe students and the visitors were from all across the state, it was a good opportunity for us to conduct a needs assessment, to see where students were at in terms of college readiness. It was also a good opportunity for us to check in with their stakeholders and see where they were at in terms of their own experience, or lack of, in regards to college,” explained Program Support Specialist Michael Mausbach.

Staff did this by encouraging visitors to participate in a five-minute survey that covered bandwidth obstacles in their area, as well as financial literacy, education levels, and familiarity with the University of Alaska system. Mausbach added that the information gathered from surveys and in-person interactions will help university staff map out future outreach opportunities to these respective communities.

On the Sitka Campus, community members were encouraged to use study spaces, access WiFi, tour the building, and indulge in the cookies and other treats provided.

“We were able to share our resources with them and open our campus to them, and let them know we’re an option,” said Mausbach. “It was an excellent opportunity to get ahold of students and stakeholders from across Alaska without having to leave Sitka.”

He said because of its success, administration is considering continuing such outreach in the future.

Bridge program ties native and adult education

18 March



Title III's Bridge program has the goal of making space in higher education for people who have traditionally been alienated from that space.

With the state goal of getting 65 percent of Alaskans a post-secondary credential, it's important to recognize that a lot of those people aren't going to be 18-year-old high school graduates. They have varied life histories and educational achievements.

Cue Consultant Rain Van Den Berg. Van Den Berg and her team are working to create a free, low-stakes preparatory course that introduces new or returning students to the culture, skills, and knowledge required for college study. More simply speaking, the objective is to demystify college and remove barriers.

Van Den Berg and Title III's Leah Mason are developing approximately 25 modules focused on subjects from the University of Alaska College Readiness Indicators. They include online learning, placement testing, college writing, using technology, study habits, among others. To do this, the project will include an adaptive learning software that recognizes when students are in need of greater support.

The program also uses indigenous learning principles such as storytelling, visuals, and activity-based learning; these principles align with adult learning best practices. The team is also including the faces and experiences reflective of students it hopes to engage. For example, participants can meet an Alaska Native mother and son who are both starting a degree; a Filipino woman returning to college in another country; and a veteran who wants to extend skills he learned while serving.

The pilot program is expected to launch this summer. The project team would love for faculty and staff to try it out during the pilot phase and provide feedback.

Van Den Berg's background ties together distance education, cultural responsiveness, and health literacy. Ilarion Mercurieff and Libby Roderick are advising on how to apply indigenous learning principles in the program. Laura Revels, an instructional designer of Tlingit Heritage, will contribute expertise from her recent Alaska Native Medical Center online learning modules project. For more information, contact Van Den Berg via rainvandenber.com.

AmeriCorps volunteer recognized at librarians' conference

28 February-3 March



Before attending the 2019 Alaska Library Association (AkLA) Conference in Juneau, UAS AmeriCorps Volunteer Will Ortiz had never attended a large academic event and wasn't quite sure what to expect. He had the good fortune of attending on the AkLA Conference Attendance Scholarship and said the week was one of the best professional experiences of his career thus far.

Ortiz is from Los Angeles, where he worked full-time as a STEM teacher in a women's prison. He relocated to Sitka last July to serve as an AmeriCorps Academic Coach in Sitka Campus' Student Success Center. This change provided Ortiz with an opportunity not only to reflect on his professional experiences, but also to reaffirm his pedagogy of promoting education in traditionally disenfranchised communities, he said.

"It was so refreshing to meet so many respectful and kind-hearted AkLA professionals who share similar goals, and to become acquainted with the association's leadership and the wonderful work they do," said Ortiz about the Juneau trip. "Networking and socializing have never felt so seamless."

Ortiz credits UAS Librarian Jonas Lamb and Sitka Public Library Director Kathryn Hurtley with connecting him to the event. "Without their support and guidance, I would not have been able to attend the conference," he said.

Ortiz is currently pursuing a master's degree in library and information science through San Jose State University's online program.

Care packages mailed to 600 online students

31 March



Enrolled students will receive a "We care" message from UAS Sitka this month. Title III staff mailed care packages to both Sitka and distance students to promote wellness and student success.

University of Alaska Southeast Sitka
1332 Seward Ave, Sitka, AK 99835
1+ 800 478 6653
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“The grant has the objective of delivering the same high level of service to online and campus-based students. The care package is our way of extending the De-Stress Fest to distance students,” said Instructional Designer Leah Mason.

The mailer focuses on wellness and resilience supports, and includes a student services directory, a door hanger promoting study time, a get-well-and-stay-well kit with tissues, lip balm, and vitamin supplement, financial literacy resources, microwavable popcorn, and a guide for stretching and avoiding eye strain.

Door, security updates slated for summer

21 March



It’s not everyday that an entire door falls straight out of the wall, but that is one of many structural issues Sitka Campus has faced within the past two years.

Not only did that door have to be reinstalled, but functional issues with the automatic doors and corrosion have also been problematic, said Operations Supervisor Greg George.

“I found one exterior door rusty to the point [that] I could push a wooden pencil through it,” said George. He explained that much of the damage is the product of Sitka’s maritime climate.

Construction will start this summer, following graduation ceremonies, and will finish before the Fall 2019 semester begins, said George. Competitive bidding will open to contractors on March 21.

The approximately \$200,000 budget will include updates to the exterior doors and jams at the front entrance, ballfield entrance, walk through welding, and two hangar doors, according to university officials. Additionally, upgrades will also include new open buttons for handicap compliance, key fobs for employees, and electronic scheduling to automatically lock and unlock doors.

The updates and repairs are long overdue, explained George. He said a contracted architect and UAS project managers visited Sitka a year ago and created a plan to replace failing and aged doors and entry systems, and add new awnings. While that project was originally slated for completion by Fall 2018, short staffing in the Juneau-based office and a laundry list of Juneau Campus projects created more delays.

Even the automatic opener that broke two years ago caused issues because the original manufacturer was no longer in business and attempts to find a compatible 'new' model proved difficult and ultimately failed, said George.

Other updates will include changing the swing of the ballfield door to reduce the possibility of damage during windy conditions, and replacing the opaque panel outside that door with a clear one to increase visibility.

The outside kiln shed doors will be modified to allow emergency egress instead of a gate latch with a padlock. Concrete surfaces around the doors will be regraded to divert rainwater, and other corrosion mitigation work around the doors will be carried out as needed.

An electronic entry system will be added to the ballfield entry, main entry, art room hall entry, and the red hangar entry doors. The upgrades will allow for automatic locking and unlocking, as well as remote access to lock doors immediately in case of an emergency.

"The system will serve as a security upgrade comparable to and recommended by the Juneau campus," George said.

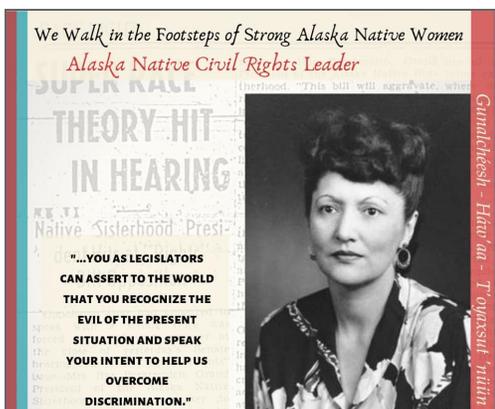
Key fobs or similar devices will be programmed for employees to enable them building access during "closed" hours, just like employees' keys do now, said George.

A second phase of the project would add awnings outside the construction lab emergency exit, over the exterior welding door, and over the red hangar door to the entry of the outside kiln shed. All of these doors are subject to falling snow and ice hazards when Sitka gets snow, said George.

For more information, contact Greg George at ggeorge1@alaska.edu.

Elizabeth Peratrovich social media campaign reaches more than 50 thousand Facebook users

26 February



Nearly 20 years before the U.S. Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Alaska Natives challenged state legislators to oppose discrimination.

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Leading the charge was Elizabeth Peratrovich. Her petition and testimony as a Tlingit leader to Governor Ernest Gruening to introduce the Anti-Discrimination Act secured the 1945 legislation.

Despite being granted American citizenship in 1924, Alaska Natives still faced segregation; native children were banned from public schools, while their parents were barred from buying homes in well-off neighborhoods. Signage from Juneau to Anchorage warned “No Dogs, No Natives,” “No Natives Allowed,” and “We cater to White Trade only.”

February 16, the day the 1945 Anti-Discrimination Act was signed, is now recognized as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day in Alaska. In an effort to recognize the accomplishments of both Peratrovich and native women, Sitka Campus staff Crystal Duncan and Leah Mason designed a social media campaign that encouraged community members to follow in her footsteps.

The pair published 13 posts honoring 26 women from tribes across the state. Tlingit, Haida, Alutiiq, Yupik, Inupiaq, Athabascan, Aleut, Ho-Chunk, and Pueblo tribes were represented.

“We wanted these women to know that they are seen and valued. It was an invitation for students to engage with these posts and see alternative models of success,” said Duncan.

Honoring Peratrovich via social media allowed the team to engage distance students and connect with a nationwide audience — successfully. The posts were shared by 27 organizations, including the U.S. Indian Affairs, First Alaskans Institute, San Francisco Tlingit & Haida Community Council, and the Alaska Native Studies Network.

In total, the posts crossed the screens of 54,569 Facebook users. On average, 303 people engaged with each post, meaning they either shared, liked, or commented on it. It is not yet clear how many Instagram users were reached or engaged with similar posts.

The idea stemmed from a civil rights post made on January 21 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, said Mason. The post honored King and Peratrovich for their contributions to the civil rights movement.

“We wanted to honor [Peratrovich’s] contribution to the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945, but this connected us to so many other strong Alaska Native women. It just evolved into something bigger,” said Duncan.

Recognized in the social media posts were Elizabeth Peratrovich, Katie John, U.S. Congresswomen Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland, Rose Albert, Valerie Davidson, state representatives Debra Xixchi See Lekanoff and Tiffany Nasgwaq Zulkosky, Flora Jane Harper, Tara Sweeney, Georgianna Lincoln, Alberta Schenck Adams, University of Alaska Board of Regents Gloria O’Neill and Sheri Buretta, Liz Medicine Crow, Rosita

Worl, Dr. Mildred Sparks, Dr. Delores Churchill, Dr. Esther Shea, Dr. Ellen Hays, Dr. Nora Dauenhauer, Dr. Erma Lawrence, Dr. Marlene Johnson, Dr. Teri Rofkar, Dr. Ruth Demmert, and Dr. Marie Olson.

Additionally, Duncan and Mason connected each woman's success to classes at Sitka Campus or at other UA campuses. "To follow in her footsteps, you may find these areas of study relevant in forging your path," the pair wrote on each post. Suggested classes included wildlife biology and conservation studies, literature and writing degrees, business and public administration degrees, Northwest Coast arts degrees, and education degrees.

The team hopes to replicate this campaign's success with similar posts in the future. They are considering opportunities for annual campaigns, profiles that can be used by educators and community leaders, stories that highlight resilience instead of trauma, and a video series, said Duncan.

English class doubles as 'therapy,' student says

25 March



When Katie Evans enrolled in "The Art of the Love Letter" for Spring 2016, she never expected that she'd write emails to her cat, or that he'd write back.

"Did you notice that you left my food dish only half full this morning? ...If I starve to death, I may not reply to your next email," Evans wrote in the voice of her then four-year-old Tabby cat, Sir Walter Mittens.

Though the English 461 course at the University of Alaska Southeast Sitka is geared for fourth-year English students, Instructor Dr. Math Trafton aims to challenge their everyday assumptions as well as their creative limits.

The class examines the intersection of love and language, and the inevitable distance both create, Trafton explained. "Our cultural understanding of love tries to ignore that gap, but love letters acknowledge that this gap exists," he said.

That's why he requires students to buy 14 stamps. They'll mail 14 handwritten letters.

"It's a little more meaningful to get something handwritten from someone," said Trafton. "It's harder. It takes longer. There's no cut and paste. There's a lot more cognitive awareness. It does command more attention."

The class isn't solely love letters though. It's also comprised of discussion boards, peer critique, and literature reviews. The weekly handwritten love letters inspire the four polished letters required, as well as the two epistolary assignments (one examines text messaging).

"The text epistolary is a lot of fun because I think students never really think of their everyday texting practices as creative or academic," said Trafton. "It's fun to see them put it into a new context."

While Trafton said some students have created conversations between goblins and elves, Evans took a different approach. She wrote letters to her deceased grandmother. She wrote letters to an abusive ex. She wrote letters to herself as a child. She exhausted her list of people who would never receive her letters before finally writing to someone alive and well.

"This is going to sound crazy, but it was more than a writing class. It was therapy," admitted Evans. "[My great grandmother] was totally my best friend for most of my life. Being able to write to her in this letter and tell her how my life turned out... It was a lot of emotion. They were all a lot of emotion. It was so freeing."

Trafton recognized the class as not only a way to engage with different genres (poetry, memoir, fiction, theory, and even obituaries, to name a few), but it also allows for character development both in literature and in person.

Students learn that love is an interpersonal connection, and they see how that translates to their texts and emails, Trafton explained. "They can think about other humans in their own life, and what love means... not to harm people," he said. "I hope that they can take that into their lives beyond [this course]."

Evans said she still handwrites letters, and has even borrowed some of the class prompts to inspire her own students. She currently teaches English to middle and high school students in Kenai and is pursuing a master's degree in communications through Tiffin University in Ohio.

Trafton is teaching "The Art of the Love Letter" for the third time this spring. He has been teaching English and writing at UAS Sitka since 2013.

Upcoming Events & Deadlines



Job Applications Workshop

March 27, 6-7 PM

Continuing the monthly career development workshops, the Title III team will host a free training on landing a job. The session will cover resume tips, cover letters, interview practice, and LinkedIn profiles. The training is open to all community members, and will be accessible online.

Head to Room 226 (Student Success Center). Snacks included! Contact Angie Hilsman (aeihlsman@alaska.edu) for more info.



Academic Deadlines

March, April

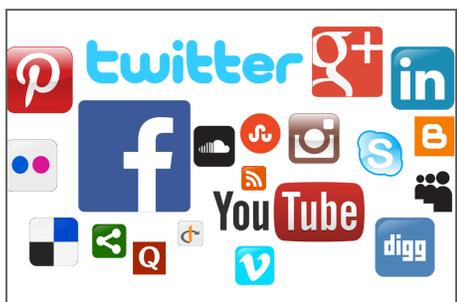
March 18: Fall class schedule available to view on UA Online.

March 29: Deadline to withdraw from Spring 2019 full-term classes. Withdrawal will not affect a student's GPA, but students will not get refunded the tuition or fees for that class either.

April 1: Fall registration begins for all UAS program students. Registration opens to all students on April 15.

April 30-May 4: Finals week for students.

News & Announcements



Follow us on social media!

@UASSitka

Stay up-to-date with campus happenings, tips, and fun by following UAS Sitka on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Have something you want shared on social? Contact Angie Hilsman (aeihlsman@alaska.edu) to collaborate.



Make your office a SafeZone

Download and post the attached SafeZone marker.

UAS Sitka is working to create a safe space for its LGBTQIA community. Stop by the Student Success Center and pick up SafeZone signage to hang in your office. If you have questions, please contact Michael Mausbach (mwmausbach@alaska.edu).



Have announcements to share?

Send in your news for the February 2019 newsletter.

The Social Media Team hopes to keep Staff & Faculty in the loop by sending a monthly newsletter via email. Contact Angie Hilsman (aehilsman@alaska.edu) for more info.