

# University of Alaska Southeast Business and Public Administration



## Strategic Plan 2023-2026

The University of Alaska Southeast –Business and Public Administration (BPA) programs have embarked on a six-month engagement to explore and develop new opportunities for building our strategic foundation for long-term sustainability. Our approach has facilitated discussions with engaged stakeholders, empowered students and rallied program leaders around a shared vision to prioritize strategic growth. This strategic plan has been developed in alignment with the BPA mission and overall UAS core objectives. Each strategy within was evaluated against these directives that are central to the identity and delivery of education within this department.

**Mission:** The mission of the Department of Business and Public Administration (BPA) is to facilitate student learning of core business and public administration concepts which can be applied in the real world, providing a solid foundation for success in the public or private sectors.

UAS has five core objectives: (1) To provide access to higher education for all students; (2) Deliver academic excellence through instruction, scholarship research and creative expression; (3) Increase student success; (4) Be a great place to work for all employees; and (5) Maintain relevance through productive relationships within Southeast Alaska.

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The **guiding principle** underscoring everything contained within this strategic plan is to position BPA for strategic growth, long-term stability & sustainability, and increased visibility within the Southeast Alaska community and beyond.

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# BPA

# Strategic Plan

2023-2026

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## Message from the Chair

*Kristy Smith, DM, SPHR, SHRM-SCP*

Strategic planning is *the art* of creating, implementing, and evaluating business strategies (Corporate Finance Institute, 2023). As business faculty we know the importance of not just creating a plan but creating a path to get us to our overall goal of growing BPA programs and student enrollment. All roads lead to that goal and all steps we will take will get us to that goal. The implementation is the critical component of this plan, getting us results we can see in short timeframes, building foundations for longer-term goals and growth. The engagement of our faculty, staff, students, external stakeholders and leadership has been invaluable in creating a living, breathing document to shine a spotlight on BPA and grow enrollment and programs over the next few years.

## Support from the Business Advisory Council

*Julie Hamilton, Former Council Chair*

Education is the foundation for successful enterprise. Communities depend on successful enterprises in order to function. As a lifelong resident of Alaska, I've been involved with both sides - the education and the business. I've seen the struggles and the triumphs of each. Bringing enterprise and education together to plan and develop the future, as is done through UAS's Business Advisory Council, is paramount in solving for the needs of both sides of the equation. **The BAC was thrilled to engage with the strategic planning process and know that we will continue to see growth and progress in the programs within BPA.**

## Strategic Plan Focus Areas:

With the guiding principle, mission and core objectives in mind, Business and Public Administration has committed to focusing on four key areas over the next three years. The focus areas developed within this strategic plan include:

### 1. Leading with a student-centric approach that prioritizes flexibility for both traditional and non-traditional students

The Department of Business and Public Administration has been a leader in online / distance education since the early 2000s. UAS consistently sees students transferring from UAA/UAF and other institutions to ensure they can complete their degree online without losing credits in a program. In both the undergraduate and graduate programs, we see and celebrate adult-learners coming to BPA to find their next step up on the career ladder. We seek to lead with them in mind and know that the flexibility we create for them, is valued by and benefits traditional undergraduate students as well.

### 2. Promoting faculty excellence, passion, expertise and commitment

The faculty within BPA show a strong commitment to their students and the delivery of a world class educational experience. They seek to stabilize their ranks, find ways to retain long-term members and continue to advocate for the addition of new faculty members to their department to energize their efforts moving forward and lessen the burden of lost faculty lines. The long-term health of an academic department rests on maintaining a well-qualified and talented pool of professional faculty.

### 3. Marketing for growth & differentiation

We want our story heard. We believe that the most direct pathway to growth is through effective story-telling and marketing ourselves by showcasing our strengths and the pieces that make us unique and different. Today, this story is often overshadowed or hard to find. This is a critical initiative to achieve our broader goal and better connect with current and prospective students.

### 4. Leveraging internal and external partnerships

The partners both at UAS and in the broader community are invaluable to our success. We are thrilled to nurture their excitement and support of us, and seek to find new collaborations to enhance our strategic endeavors and build our student experience



## Our Strategic Priorities (2023-2026)

|          |   |        |               |
|----------|---|--------|---------------|
| <b>1</b> | Leading with a student-centric approach that prioritizes flexibility for both traditional and non-traditional students. |        |               |
|          | Tactics   | Timing | Team Lead(s)  |
|          | 1A. Increase outreach and finding new pathways to campus (i.e. Dual Enrollment)   | Year 1 | Michael Boyer |
|          | 1B. Build online connection, community and support beyond coursework  | Year 2 | Shayla Sulser |
|          | 1C. Finding ways to connect students to faculty advising earlier  | Year 2 | Team          |

|          |   |        |                 |
|----------|---|--------|-----------------|
| <b>2</b> | Promoting faculty excellence, passion, expertise and commitment   |        |                 |
|          | Tactics   | Timing | Team Lead(s)    |
|          | 2A. Add on tenure track faculty                                   | Year 1 | Colleen McKenna |
|          | 2B. Spotlight and bolster current undergraduate curriculum        | Year 2 | Team            |
|          | 2C. Highlight graduate programs and explore curriculum innovation | Year 2 | Kathy DiLorenzo |

|          |   |        |                 |
|----------|---|--------|-----------------|
| <b>3</b> | Marketing for growth and differentiation  |        |                 |
|          | Tactics   | Timing | Team Lead(s)    |
|          | 3A. Work with marketing firm to design branding strategy                          | Year 1 | Kristy Smith    |
|          | 3B. Hire and build a sustainable plan for outreach coordinator                    | Year 1 | Kathy DiLorenzo |
|          | 3C. Examine options for micro-credentials and certificates                        | Year 1 | Kristy Smith    |
|          | 3D. Assess how current organizational and leadership structure impacts visibility | Year 2 | Team            |
|          | 3E. Maintain and highlight accreditation as a differentiator                      | Year 2 | Team            |

|          |  |        |                                   |
|----------|--|--------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>4</b> | Leading with a student-centric approach that prioritizes flexibility for both traditional and non-traditional students.                |        |                                   |
|          | Tactics  | Timing | Team Lead(s)                      |
|          | 4A. Seek out opportunities for internal curriculum collaborations that employ existing expertise (i.e. mine training/personal finance) | Year 1 | Colleen McKenna                   |
|          | 4B. Explore new articulation agreements  | Year 1 | Paulette Schirmer<br>Kristy Smith |
|          | 4C. Prioritize initiatives for veterans and other key groups such as offering Hyflex courses to improve access to VA benefits.         | Year 1 | Paulette Schirmer                 |
|          | 4D. Develop pipeline initiative with local and state government  | Year 2 | Team                              |

# Strategic Planning Process

## Steering committee membership

Kathleen DiLorenzo      Paulette Schirmer      Kristy Smith, Department Chair

The steering committee (or portions of it) met both online and in person between January & September, 2023 a total of eight times. The role of the committee included:

1. Reviewed and revised the objectives for the engagement
2. Identified key stakeholders and background data to inform process
3. Agenda and timeline setting for planning process
4. Communication of the project
5. Advocacy and championing of the process



## BPA Department Objectives for Strategic Planning

1. Gather local data, impressions and recommendations from key stakeholder groups about the current state and future opportunities within the Business and Public Administration programs.
2. Engage and empower student leaders to learn about and facilitate pieces of the planning process to provide a strong experiential learning opportunity and gather more authentic insight from peers.
3. Develop of a series of events to ignite conversation & create sustainable dialogue for organizational cultural shift. While the types of shifts are not predetermined, we can expect that through a process like this, some amount of change may occur and benefit from intentional planning and process to include all parties.
4. Provide a set of recommendations, (rolling) 3-year plan and description of resources needed that integrate data gathered and benchmarks from peer institutions/industry.
5. Ensure implementation plan is outlined in a way that has time to completion, outcomes, metrics and lead/champion and required resources.
6. Set agreements/plans for how to evaluate/re-assess/measure success and evolving needs
7. Examination of departmental resources: internally and externally controlled, and potential new areas (financial and non-financial).

# Closing Thoughts

The work to develop this plan was comprehensive and strived to engage many diverse and thoughtful voices from across the BPA – including students, staff, faculty, and other key stakeholders. We are eager to continue to engage with this work and use this as a foundational tool to move us toward our vision for a strong future.

For questions about the strategic plan:

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