

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
Alaska Student Loan Corporation

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Alaska Commission on
Postsecondary Education

Alaska Student
Loan Corporation

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, funded by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, promotes access to and success in education and career training beyond high school.

The Commission provides:

- ◆ programs creating early awareness of the importance of preparing for success in higher education
- ◆ 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

While primarily distributed electronically, *ACPE Update* is available in paper format upon request. Each issue is available online at AKAdvantage.alaska.gov. Check out the Website, or call my office at 465-6740 with your comments.

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NEWS FLASH!

2011-2012 APS Application Window Extended to December 15, 2011



The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education will accept 2011-2012 [Free Applications for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSAs\)](#) for Alaska Performance Scholarship award consideration through December 15, 2011, contingent upon:

- funding availability after awards are made to students who applied by the original June 30 deadline; and
- the applicant having met all other APS academic eligibility requirements prior to July 2011.

During this time period, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development will continue to process [2011 Eligibility Determination Applications](#) for private school graduates or privately home-schooled graduates of 2011 who met initial eligibility requirements.

Public school graduates of 2011 also may use the [2011 Eligibility Determination Application](#) to submit SAT/ACT scores directly to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for tests taken June 2011 or earlier that were not received by their public school.

For more information, visit APS.alaska.gov.



Alaska Performance Scholarship—Off and running!

Preliminary statistics indicate that APS is clearly off and running:

High School Graduates Preliminary Scholastic Eligibility as of June 30th:

Level	# Initially Eligible	% Initially Eligible* of all eligible/of total
Level One	925	39% / 12%
Level Two	680	29% / 9%
Level Three	749	32% / 9%
Subtotal	2,354	30%
No eligibility	5,547	70%
Total Initially Reported	7,901	100%

*First percent shown is relative to 100% of initially eligible; second percent is relative to 100% of 2011 high school-graduate population.

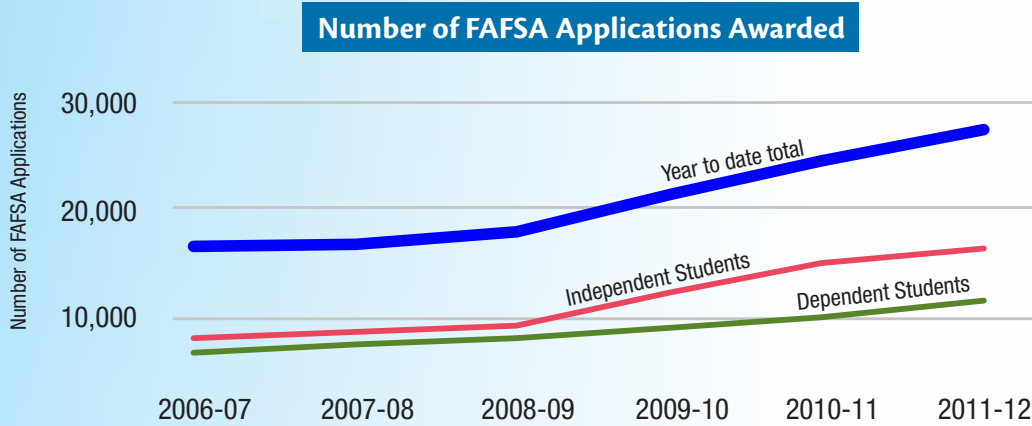
Scholastically Eligible Students Who Completed Applications:

Level	Initially Eligible	Filed FAFSA by June 30 th	% Filing FAFSA
1	925	745	81%
2	680	521	77%
3	749	481	64%
Subtotal	2,354	1,747	74%

As of the initial APS filing deadline, June 30th, approximately 3,500 Alaska public high school 2011 graduates had completed the 2011/12 FAFSA, and one graduate has completed the alternative application for non-Title IV schools. Also by June 30th, the Department of Education and Early Development had received 40 requests to determine eligibility of private/home-schooled students (36 approved) and one request for approval of a grace period to complete the required curriculum

Of particular interest to program managers was the phenomenal growth Alaska has experienced in annual FAFSA filings. The number of Alaska FAFSA filers has increased almost 60% over the past six years, a rate of change which is attributed to extensive statewide outreach accomplished via partnership among ACPE, the University of Alaska, the ANCSA Education Foundation, and the Alaska Association of Financial Aid Administrators.

Alaska FAFSA Data 2006-2011
Quarter 2 (04/01 - 06/30) YTD Totals



ACPE Mission and Programs in Relationship to APS

The Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) is fundamental to ACPE’s mission and programs, touching all major ACPE program delivery areas:



For the most recent APS statistics and up-to-the-moment APS information, visit APS.alaska.gov.

ASEL—Still the BEST deal in supplemental loans

ACPE's Alaska Supplemental Education Loan (ASEL) is a low-cost source of additional funds for Alaska students who have exhausted their federal aid but still need gap financial aid for college or postsecondary training.

With a fixed rate of 7.5%, and cost reductions for borrowers in Alaska and borrowers who sign up for automated payments, the ASEL provides supplemental funds to Alaska residents and to non-Alaskans who choose to invest their education dollars at one of Alaska's institutions of higher education. More information on rates/benefits is at: http://akadvantage.alaska.gov/Loans/Borrower_Benefits.aspx.

Alaska Supplemental Education Loan

The Alaska Supplemental Education Loan (ASEL) provides funding to cover educational expenses for qualified students attending postsecondary institutions in Alaska, and qualified Alaska residents attending postsecondary institutions outside Alaska.

Origination fee - 5%

2011-2012	
Rates and Borrower Benefits	Interest Rate
The base note rate is fixed, but borrower benefits are variable and may change annually. ¹	
Base note rate	7.50% (APR) 7.66% ²
Alaska presence benefit	-0.50%
Recurring online payment ³	-0.25%
Lowest rate for qualifying term	6.75%

2011-2012		
Loan Limits ⁴	Annual	Aggregate
Career Training (Vocational)	\$6,500	\$42,500
Undergraduate	\$8,500	\$42,500
Graduate	\$9,500	\$47,500
Combined	N/A	\$60,000

To qualify, borrowers must meet minimum credit standards or apply with a qualifying co-signer, and there is a 5% origination fee. The loans are serviced by ACPE right here in Alaska.

Tips for borrowers

Consumers should shop for education loans just like they shop for a car loan to ensure costs of financing their education is as low as possible. ACPE offers the following advice:

- Always choose grants and scholarships before loans
- If you must borrow, seek federal loans first. They have low interest rates and a variety of excellent repayment options, including potential options for loan forgiveness in qualifying situations.
- If you need a non-federal loan, check out your state agency before you borrow a private loan. State loans usually have better rates, more repayment options, and local servicing.
- Compare costs when you look at loan options. Costs include origination fees, interest rates, frequency of capitalization (how often accumulated interest is added to the outstanding principal balance), and loan fees or other charges.
- Don't sign a loan promissory note until you fully understand all its terms and conditions. If you don't understand, keep asking questions until you get the answers you need.
- Pay interest while you are in school. It's usually only \$20-\$30 per month, but can save you thousands of dollars over the life of the loan.
- Most important, borrow only the absolute minimum that you need. You may have to cut back now, but you'll be really glad you did when you get that first loan repayment statement!

Tech Prep in Alaska

At its July 29th meeting the Commission hosted Cathy LeCompte of the Alaska Program of Study Task Force, who provided a presentation on tech/prep in Alaska. Cathy provided detailed information on what makes education tech/prep distinct from just general education, and an overview of tech/prep in Alaska.

What Makes It Tech Prep?

Tech-prep education in Alaska is characterized not just by the presence of a career and technical education curriculum, but also by articulation agreements with a common core; joint in-service trainings, including specific training for counselors; equal access of special populations, and services to prepare students for the world of work—in short it is a clear, expedited pathway from secondary to postsecondary education and into a career .

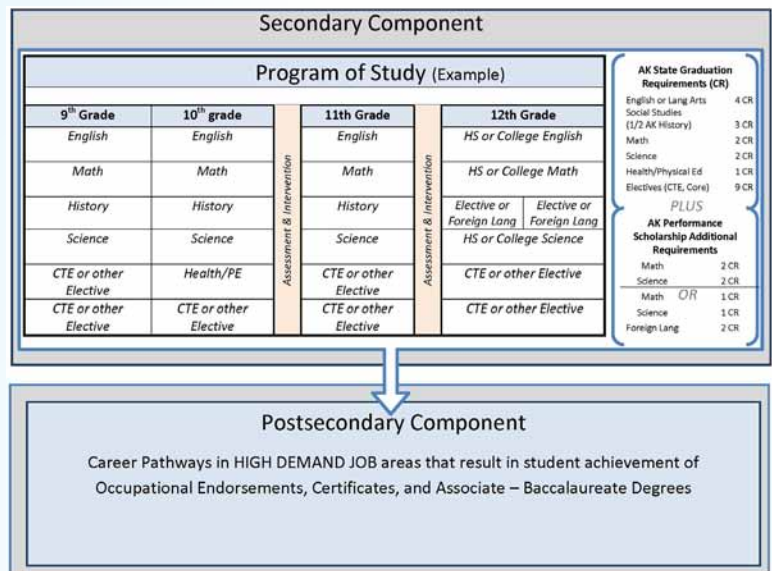
Growth Of Tech-Prep

In Alaska tech-prep has grown in astonishing leaps, from a consortium in 2004 with 13 members (seven school districts, four postsecondary institutions, and two industry partners) to a 59-member consortium in 2011, including 35 school districts, 12 postsecondary providers, and 11 industry/business partners. The first 2004 members served roughly 300 students in six districts through 29 articulation agreements and two FTE university staff. In 2011, 1,850 students are being served in 44 districts via 273 articulated courses and 10 FTE university staff and three FTE consortium staff. Key partners in providing tech-prep education are the University of Alaska, the Department of Education and Early Development, and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board.

With that growth, however, has also come some drifting from the original tech-prep vision, with new emphases on programs such as dual enrollment, STEM tracks, e-learning, and advanced placement. The result is that students face a sometimes daunting array of choices and must make challenging enrollment decisions, often without a planned sequence of study or critical associated guidance. To address these deficits, the consortium is advocating for a three-stage sequence of study:

The components of such a program of study would include:

- Secondary education —then assessment
- Postsecondary education— intervention
- Career transition



1. Legislation & policies;
2. Partnerships;
3. Professional development;
4. Accountability & evaluation systems;
5. College and career readiness standards;
6. Course sequences;
7. Credit transfer agreements;
8. Guidance counseling and academic advisement;
9. Teaching and learning strategies; and
10. Technical skills assessments.

An example of a program with these components is the health program of study, which grew out of the consortium's challenge to develop a career and technical program of study framework with an emphasis in health that includes the ten federally recognized components, best practices, and focus on statewide implementation by September 15, 2011.

To meet this challenge, implementation of the career and technical program of study in health in three pilot schools will begin in spring 2012 enrollment season and run through the academic year 2015 (fall 2014- spring 2015). Benefits will include aligning planning with resources and ensuring industry input into program design to ensure training meets Alaska-specific industry needs, to the benefit of employers who will have a local pool of trained, ready-to-work talent, and to the benefit of students who will be poised for economic success through career preparation.

The Commission expressed strong interest in supporting the tech-prep consortium in making Alaskans aware of the related benefits and in seeking the resources necessary to provide access to these programs of study for Alaska students.

Higher Education and Career Readiness Task Force Report

Executive Director Diane Barrans presented the Commission with a summary of recommendations from the April 2011 Final Report of the Alaska Advisory Task Force on Higher Education & Career Readiness (HECR) —*A Plan for Increasing the Number of Alaskans Prepared to Enter the Workforce or Postsecondary Programs of Study and Improving School Completion*.

The HECR task force was established in SB221 as a temporary task force to:

- Compile research on reducing remediation, and improving retention and graduation rates;
- Define remediation to ensure consistency in reporting related data;
- Identify likely causes for inadequate readiness for college/career leading to high remediation rates;
- Identify best practices for increasing student readiness for college;
- Assess broadband capacity to deliver education programming;
- Review postsecondary education program completion rates in Alaska; and
- Submit related assessments and recommendations to the legislature by April 1, 2011.

The Process

The HECR report development was guided by a single overarching theme to identify: 1) factors contributing to Alaska's poor performance education outcomes; and 2) policies/strategies to produce improved college and career readiness. Guided by Co-Chairs Senate President Gary Stevens and Speaker of the House Mike Chenault, HECR members convened in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome, Sitka and Juneau, and meetings were streamed via the Web for public consumption.

Members heard from state and national subject-matter experts who presented on such relevant topics as: remediation, assessment, completion, and financial aid, as well as capacity and infrastructure needs for statewide delivery of program via the Internet. Opportunities for oral and written public comment were provided at multiple meetings. As the fact-finding process concluded, members were asked to make written recommendations relative to critical areas needing attention, and to identify promising strategies or policies.

In response to that request, ACPE crafted recommendations to address two specific needs: 1) increased efficiency and functionality in longitudinal data reporting; and, 2) student financial aid to be funded in a reliable and predictable fashion so students can depend on assistance being available from year to year.

The group worked through preliminary report recommendations which were re-crafted until relative consensus was reached.

Final Report

Multiple recommendations were organized in four focus areas:

- Student Success
- Career Path Guidance
- Strengthening Schools
- Predictable and Sustainable Funding

Student Success Recommendations

- ◆ Fund Alaska's Career/Tech Education (CTE) plan for statewide delivery (2012-17)
- ◆ K-16 should collaborate to widely deliver bridging programs similar to the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) (2012-17)
- ◆ School districts should enhance relevancy of education through summer academies and theme-based academic content delivery that relates to local life and culture (2013-14)
- ◆ Support programs such as APS that promote academic rigor in secondary education (2011-17)

Career Path Guidance Recommendations

- ◆ Improve and increase secondary school counseling to students related to academic/CTE guidance (2012-17)
- ◆ UA should ensure academic advisors are servicing all students in a student-centered manner (2012-17)
- ◆ Governor/EED should run public messaging campaigns promoting college and career readiness (2011-13)
- ◆ Alaska PTA should continue/increase efforts to facilitate parent engagement in every aspect of their child's educational development (2011-17)

Strengthening Schools Recommendations

- ◆ ACPE/EED/Labor/UA should develop a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) proof of concept prototype in FY2012
- ◆ Improve effective communications between and among Legislature, EED Board, AWIB, ACPE, and UA around SLDS reporting and using shared data (2012-17)
- ◆ EED/UA should collaborate to institute skill and knowledge assessment to ID and address readiness deficits early on to ensure college preparation can be accomplished while still in secondary education (2012-17)
- ◆ Identify and fund ways to deliver online curriculum without dependence on broadband availability (2011-13)

- ◆ Fully fund statewide teacher mentoring services (2012-17)
- ◆ Incorporate more Alaska cultural relevancy skills using Alaska cultural leaders in teacher mentoring services (2012-17)
- ◆ Expand optional routes for teacher certification to increase minority teachers and technical content experts (2012-14)
- ◆ UA BOR should work to ensure UA developmental level courses comport with best practices and are cost effective in moving students into college-level courses (2012-13)
- ◆ EED should review its teacher certification exam to ensure its efficacy and value for determining teacher quality, and confirm it covers Alaska cultural relevance and is culturally sensitive (2012-13)

Predictable/Sustainable Funding Recommendations

- ◆ Establish a grant funding program for community-based voluntary pre-K education and early literacy programs (2012)
- ◆ Create and fund an Emerging Pedagogies Fund (2012)
- ◆ Fully fund, in a reliable and predictable manner, merit scholarships and needs-based grants to allow students to financially plan for postsecondary training goals (2011-17)

Additional miscellaneous policy areas were the subject of considerable and spirited discussion; however, consensus was not reached and related recommendations did not appear in the final report. These policy areas ranged from child nutrition to exit exam strategies, to postsecondary tuition, and included many areas in between.

Conclusion—next steps

The task force leadership has called for a *plan of action...to ensure every Alaska student completes high school with sufficient skills to enter the workforce, or a course of study at a postsecondary institution, without the need for remedial coursework ...by 2017*. To that end, stakeholders are requested to implement proposed recommendations. The Department of Education and Early Development is requested to annually provide a progress report to the Legislature beginning June 30, 2012, and continuing through 2017.

ACPE's Alaska College and Career Advising Corps (ACAC Program)

Since its inception in 2009, ACPE's Alaska College & Career Advising Corps (ACAC) has assisted more than 3,300 students through its College & Career Guide program. By placing recent college graduates in high schools as College & Career Guides, ACAC offers a near peer mentor who students can look to for assistance. College & Career Guides offer one-on-one advising, classroom presentations, and workshops encouraging students to explore, apply to, and enroll in a college or career training program.

With initial efforts starting at Service High School, the College & Career Guide program expanded to Bartlett High School in the fall of 2010 and has continued its growth since. As of May 2011, ACAC opened its first rural site at Bethel Regional High School where the College & Career Advising Corps aims to meet the unique needs of rural Alaskans. ACAC has also recognized that facilitating postsecondary

success does not happen at the high school level alone. With that in mind, a new postsecondary completion component has been introduced.

Through relevant partnerships with postsecondary institutions, the Completion Coordinator will assist Alaska's students to not only enroll in, but successfully complete their postsecondary goals.

Based on recent postsecondary enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse, Service and Bartlett high schools have seen a 6% increase in postsecondary enrollment each year that ACAC has been there. With its new rural site and Completion Coordinator, ACAC looks forward to the future and will continue to seek out ways to better serve Alaska students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education, and their move into a career field.



For more information on the Alaska College & Career Advising Corps contact:

Greg Monrad, Program Manager, at greg.monrad@alaska.gov or (907) 269-7971

Or, for questions directed to the Postsecondary completion component, contact:

Misty Klodt, Completion Coordinator, at misty.klodt@alaska.gov or (907) 269-6553