



# UAF eLearning & Distance Education Annual Report

2012-2013



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In academic year 2012–2013 (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, and Summer 2013), UAF eLearning offered 529 sections of 266 distinct courses. We served 4,353 students, delivering a total of 26,367 student credit hours. During this period, student success rates increased by 4% over the previous academic year, continuing the positive trend of increasing student success in online courses.

In May 2012, the eLearning Council established a number of priorities for FY13. At the top of the list was the expansion of online degree programs. Effective Fall 2013, a bachelor of arts in Justice will be added to the list of available online degrees. Two other priorities identified by the council have also been achieved: 1) student credit hours are now attributed to the academic home for each course and 2) a consistent tuition and faculty payment model has been established for all courses offered via UAF eLearning.

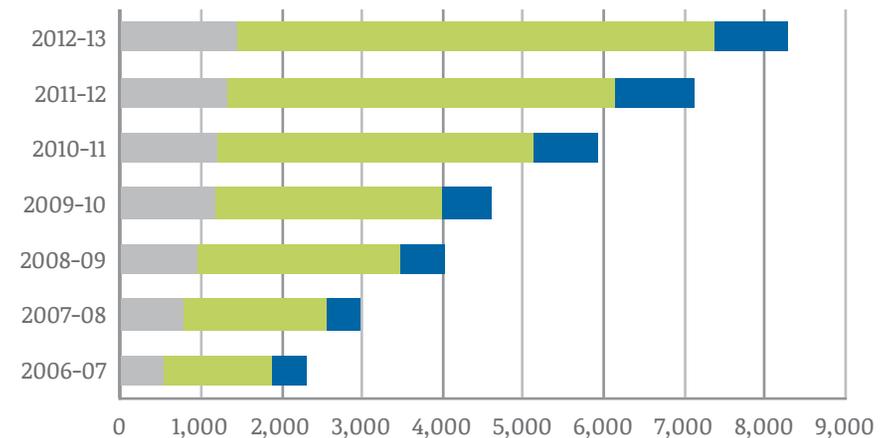
## GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In alignment with the University of Alaska (UA) Strategic Direction Initiative and with University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Core Themes, UAF eLearning is strategically focused on three key areas:

- **Access:** Making higher education available to more students
- **Achievement:** Empowering students to successfully complete coursework
- **Attainment:** Supporting students in degree completion

Data confirm that we've made significant progress in the first two areas, as shown in Figure 1. Tracking in the third area—student attainment of degrees, as supported by eLearning—is still in progress and will become a greater focus during the next academic year.

Figure 1: Growth and Success Patterns



### Success in online courses through UAF eLearning

From 2006 to 2013, enrollment in online courses increased by 256%. In 2006, 58% of enrollments earned a final grade of C- or higher. In 2013, 72% of enrollments earned a final grade of C- or higher

- Withdraw/No Basis
- Success (C- or higher)
- Non-success (D+ to F)

Data Source: PAIR, October 2013

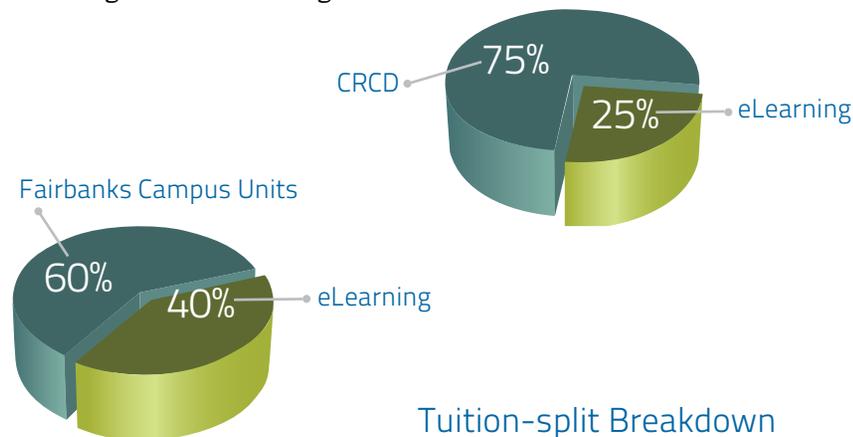
## Council Priorities

In May 2012, a newly formed eLearning Council set out a list of priorities for FY13. At the top of the list was expansion of online degree programs. When the Justice Department expressed interest in an online bachelor of arts, eLearning coordinated with their faculty to develop the required courses. Enrollment is available for Fall 2013.

The council identified the need for a consistent method of splitting tuition revenue between academic units and UAF eLearning. At the time of the inaugural meeting, multiple agreements existed, having been negotiated with individual units over time. The resulting revenue-sharing

process was both complicated and confusing, requiring multiple journal voucher transactions each semester.

The council also recommended that student credit hours be attributed to academic units rather than to UAF eLearning, thereby integrating eLearning courses into enrollment data for each school and college. This was not possible under former models; we were working under the constraint that credit hours should follow expenses, and UAF eLearning had previously covered the bulk of the costs of online course delivery.



Tuition-split Breakdown

We set out to resolve both of these council recommendations by developing a new model. This proved challenging. We needed a model that would shift more costs to the academic units while still encouraging schools, colleges, and extended campuses to partner with UAF eLearning for growth. Because UAF eLearning is primarily a self-support unit, we needed to ensure that the revenue to eLearning would remain sufficient to maintain services and to support innovation and enrollment growth. After several months of discussions with a variety of stakeholders, we settled on this revenue sharing model, which will be used for Fall 2013 and Spring 2014:

1. For Fairbanks Campus units: 60% to the academic unit; 40% to UAF eLearning
2. For CRCD campuses: 75% to the campus responsible for the course; 25% to eLearning

## Stronger Academic Oversight

Besides attributing student credit hours to schools and colleges, moving faculty costs to academic units has the strategic benefit of strengthening academic oversight for eLearning. Under this model, e-learning courses simply become another choice in the menu of options offered by an academic department. This change encourages deans to be more involved in scheduling eLearning courses, integrating eLearning into faculty workloads, and planning for development of new courses.

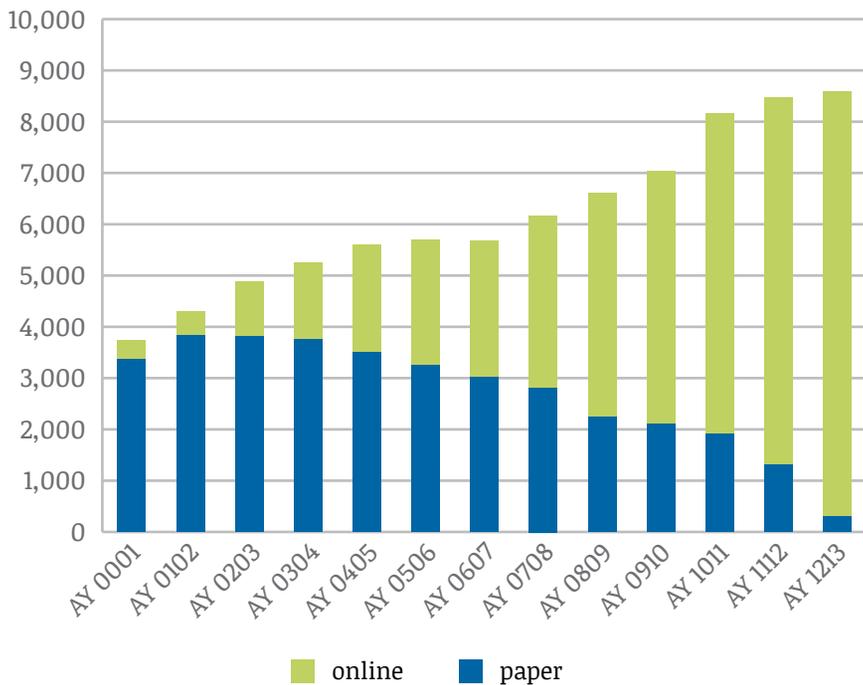
In further support of enhanced academic oversight, mid-course and end-of-course surveys were updated this year. New reporting functions are being designed that will provide better feedback for individual faculty and aggregated information for deans.

## Simplified Course Menu & Streamlined Business Process

UAF e-Learning began introducing online courses more than ten years ago as an alternative to print-based correspondence study. We also began to experiment with instructional design that emphasized student-to-student interaction. As we studied completion rates, we found

students were more successful in cohort-based online courses than in yearlong and print-based courses. Armed with that knowledge we focused our efforts on online courses and began to move away from paper-based independent learning.

Figure 2: Evolution of paper-based to online courses



### Paper vs. Online Enrollments in UAF eLearning Courses

Data Source: PAIR, Oct 2013

Parallel to the move away from paper-based courses and toward richer online environments, in fall 2009 we began to phase out paper-grading contracts in favor of models that more accurately reflect the duties of online instructors.

Fall semester 2012 began with a mixture of legacy and emerging models. We've made enormous progress this year toward simplifying our operation through elimination of old processes. These legacy systems are now in final stages of retirement:

Effective Fall 2013, we have a unified model with these characteristics:

- Online courses designed to facilitate learning community
- Faculty costs for development and instruction paid by academic units
- Tuition revenue shared with academic departments in a predictable, consistent way
- Use of Banner detail codes to accomplish real-time revenue splits at the point of student registration
- Yearlong, open enrollment courses
- Print-based courses
- Paper grading (with instructor pay based on number of lessons graded)
- Tuition-sharing based on individually negotiated agreements with academic units
- Tuition revenue JV'd to units weeks or months after registration
- Some instructors paid by UAF eLearning, others paid by schools and colleges

## PURPOSEFUL EXPLORATION AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY

UAF eLearning routinely explores new technologies for potential educational use. Our smaller scope, relative to the scope of the Office of Information Technology (OIT), gives us the agility to pilot promising technology before committing to enterprise-level support.

In response to interest from the Faculty Senate, we piloted nine courses on the Canvas, Moodle, and Desire2Learn LMS platforms.

Among new efforts this past year, we assisted the UAF School of Management with implementing Big Blue Button as a web conferencing tool for Homeland Security and Emergency Management courses. In recognition of our contributions to web conferencing services use and training, we provided representation on the statewide video and web conferencing committee.

Building on success from previous years, we continued to host a Kaltura server for video sharing and a WordPress Multiuser site for publicity. Many of our online

courses now use WordPress as a platform for group communication. Forty new WordPress sites were created this year; forty more were revised and updated from previous semesters.

We completed a new video/audio studio in our facility this year that will enable faculty to create high quality media products for their courses. The studio includes green screen (Chroma key) enabled software, as well as wirecast video and audio capture software.

For several years, we've pursued possibilities for a Customer Relations Management System. This year, in consultation with OIT, we settled on Salesforce as a platform. eLearning staff received training in Salesforce and then began a massive programming effort. OIT provided secure feeds from Banner to populate the dataset; the feeds continue to update our database routinely. We've just finished beta testing the results of our programming and will begin phasing in the new database for full-scale use this fall.

## POPULATIONS SERVED

### eLearning Students

Who are UAF eLearning students? Roughly 60% of the students enrolled in UAF eLearning courses list their primary address in the Fairbanks area (Fairbanks, North Pole, Ft. Wainwright, Ester, Eielson); 32% are located elsewhere in Alaska; 8% reside outside the state. More than 85% are degree students within the UA system, and about half are attending UA full time. UAF eLearning enrolls about twice as many women as men.

2X women  
enroll for elearning courses  
than men

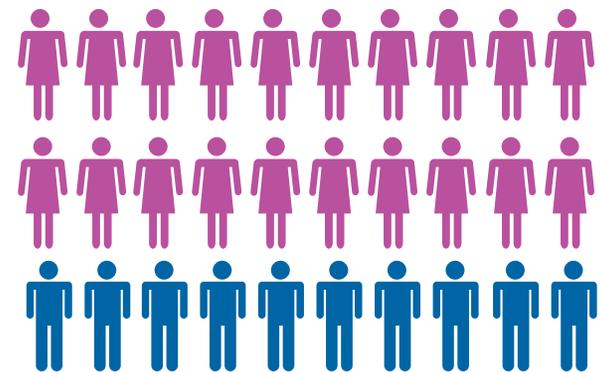


Figure 3: UAF eLearning Students

# FY 2013

# 2,394

## first-time eLearning students

2,394 students enrolled in a UAF eLearning course for the first time during the timeframe represented in this report (fifty-five percent of all students who enrolled this academic year were new to eLearning). New students were auto-enrolled into a Blackboard orientation course designed to foster student success.

### eLearning Faculty

We continued to grow our direct support for online instructors during this past year with a newly hired Faculty Services Coordinator position and the addition of two more instructional design positions.

125 instructors taught UAF eLearning courses in academic year 2013. Among those, ten UAF tenured or tenure-track faculty and 19 adjuncts taught eLearning courses for the first time. The overall ratio of eLearning instructors is roughly 40% regular faculty and 60% adjuncts.

A new Faculty Resource Guide for Online Instructors has been compiled and published. Our ongoing Quality Improvement Program was transitioned to an established set of eLearning Quality Guidelines.

### UAF Faculty

Faculty development resources provided by UAF eLearning are not limited to eLearning instructors. iTeach workshops and Teaching Tips Live hosted by UAF eLearning are open to faculty across UAF. eLearning's instructional designers routinely publish one-page teaching tips,

podcasts, and videocasts, and actively contribute to the teaching community through annual presentations at TechFest, faculty orientation, and other events sponsored by the Faculty Development Office.

This year, UAF eLearning served as host for three Faculty on TAP (Technology and Pedagogy) discussion sessions led by UAF faculty members.

### UA Faculty and Staff

UAF eLearning collaborates actively with instructional designers across the UA system. In June of 2013, UAF eLearning hosted the iDesign Summit, where thirty instructional designers from across the UA system met and worked together to create seven cross-institution projects and establish an ongoing online community.

Instructional Designers from UAF eLearning shared curricular content for iTeach with their counterparts at other UA locations. They collaborated to create curriculum for Anchorage, Juneau, and Sitka to partici-

pate in local delivery of iTeach sessions. eLearning's instructional designers participated as invited speakers for the EDET 674 Virtual Teaching and Learning MOOC, and for the Best Practices in Online Science Education Symposium.

### Beyond UA

UAF eLearning staff made presentations at several events beyond the UA system this year, including:

- [Open Education Conference 2012](#)
- [2013 ASTE Conference \(Alaska Society for Technology in Education\)](#)
- [Lilly Arctic Institute 2013](#)
- [Emerald City Comicon](#)
- [Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Homes Association](#)
- [Comics and the Multimodal World Conference](#)

Educational resources created by our instructional designers and published as iTeachU saw substantial use, with 12,425 unique visitors last year (<http://iteachu.uaf.edu>).

# ACTIVITY LEVELS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2012-2013

## Course Delivery

This academic year, UAF eLearning offered 529 sections of 266 distinct courses. We served 4,353 students, delivering a total of 26,367 student credit hours.

## Course Development

Over the past twelve months, 38 new online courses have been developed for delivery through UAF eLearning. Degree offerings have been expanded with the addition of a BA in Justice.

Our website provides a complete list of endorsements, certificates, and degrees currently available online through UAF eLearning.

In addition to the 38 new courses developed this year, 75 existing courses were revised. In total, 43% of eLearning's 266 courses were created or updated within the past year, ensuring fresh content for online students.

## Student Support

The front counter staff members at UAF eLearning serve as the point-of-contact for a variety of student needs. Over the past academic year they answered more than 3,300 requests for assistance. Additionally, our academic advisor logged 1,935 contacts with students and our registrar assisted students with more than 1,100 transactions requiring manual intervention in Banner (registrations, adds, drops, and withdrawals).

Over the past five years, eLearning has strategically targeted an increase in student success rates. We actively encourage faculty to track student progress and ask for staff assistance when students fail to meet prescribed deadlines. At the request of faculty, eLearning staff placed nearly 500 phone calls this year to students who were falling behind in coursework.

## Exams and Proctoring

Seventy UAF eLearning courses use proctored exams as a means of assessing student learning. Our exam center is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm, with extended hours available during finals weeks. In addition to 180 unique exams administered for UAF eLearning courses, our center is available as a secure proctoring location for UAA, UAS, and other universities. Over a 12-month period of time, 1,600 distinct students made use of our exam facility. More than 5,300 exams were taken in our center—an average of 22 per workday.

Students outside the Fairbanks area who aren't able to come directly to our local exam center must use a qualified proctor to

oversee their exams. During the past year, UAF eLearning screened and approved 515 proctors (225 within the state of Alaska and 290 outside the state) for use by 1,838 eLearning students.

## Faculty Support

UAF eLearning staff prepared 446 Blackboard course shells for online courses this year. Prior to the summer 2013 semester, we ran a "preflight" check on 150 online courses scheduled for summer delivery—reviewing them against an administrative checklist to ensure currency and adherence to standards. The summer preflight was so successful that we will be repeating it prior to each new semester.

**466**  
Blackboard  
course shells prepared  
by eLearning staff

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## Faculty Development

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In 2004, UAF eLearning initiated intensive hands-on faculty development clinics branded as iTeach. In 2012–13, this tradition continued, serving more than 140 faculty members across the UA system.

Full iTeach sessions (4–5 days):

- iTeach – October 2012 – 11 participants
- iTeach – March 2013 – 14 participants
- iTeach – May 2013 – 14 participants
- UAA iTeach – May 2013 – 12 Tech Fellows participants, plus “Train the Trainers” (5 UAA instructional designers)
- UAS iTeach – May 2013 – support for 13 participants
- UAS iTeach Sitka – June 2013 – support for 12 participants

Shortened, targeted seminars and workshops:

- iTeach seminar School of Management – May 2013  
25 participants
- iTeach seminar Foreign Languages – May 2013  
6 participants
- iTeach seminar Social Work – June 2013  
4 participants
- Workshop UAF Library – February 2013  
6 participants
- Workshop Tech Prep/CTM Teachers – April 2013  
6 participants

During this academic year, eLearning broadened the scope of faculty development through several additional avenues:

1. 47 weekly teaching tips were published in the UAF Cornerstone
2. 8 teaching tip presentations were delivered (available live and by web-streaming)
3. 21 podcasts and videocasts were produced
4. \$6,000 in awards and incentives were funded and distributed to faculty, along with instructional design consultation for innovative projects



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Instructional Designers from eLearning organized the faculty development track for—and presented 16 sessions at—UAF’s annual TechFest on topics such as iOS apps, curation, digital storytelling, open teaching and learning, pedagogy and technology, reaching approximately 80 UAF faculty members.

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Approximately 100 attendees at the 2013 ASTE Conference (Alaska Society for Technology in Education) benefitted from sessions presented by our instructional designers, and a large number of participants enjoyed the conference-wide augmented reality scavenger hunt designed by our team.

Online resources created by the eLearning Design Team were well utilized, with 12,425 unique visitors to the iTeachU web site (<http://iteachu.uaf.edu>). The UAF eLearning website (<http://elearning.uaf.edu>) had more than 40,000 unique visitors; 64% of visits to the web site came from outside Fairbanks.

**40,000**  
unique visitors to  
elearning.uaf.edu

**12,425**  
unique visitors to  
iteachu.uaf.edu

