



Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

Alaska Student Loan Corporation

UPDATE

COLLEGE & CAREER PLANNING • FINANCIAL AID • CONSUMER PROTECTION
Promoting Higher Education & Training for Alaska



REFI – MAKING A DIFFERENCE 2
A new option for borrowers to lower costs



LEAN 4
Small changes add up to make a big impact



WWAMI
Future doctors of Alaska

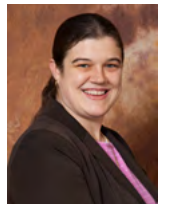


COLLEGE GOAL ALASKA
the 13th year of helping students with the FAFSA

BALLOT MEASURE 2
a proposed constitutional amendment to try to lower the costs of Alaska student loans.



FAMILIAR FACES NEW ROLES
Get to know the people on to the ACPE team



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ACPE UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP



ACPE's new executive ready to lead the agency forward

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REFINANCE PROGRAM TO HELP ALASKANS WITH STUDENT LOAN DEBT

ALASKA HAS A NEW OPTION FOR RESIDENTS STRUGGLING TO REPAY HIGH-INTEREST STUDENT LOANS



The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) is now offering the new state Alaska Education Loan Refinancing Program, financed by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation (ASLC), for qualifying Alaska residents seeking to reduce costs on student loans they or their family members borrowed to pay for higher education or training.

The Alaska Refinancing Loan offers a fixed 5.2% interest rate for the life of the loan, and borrowers can choose a 5, 10, or 15 year repayment schedule. With some federal loan interest rates as high as 7.9% and the average private loan variable rate around 7.8% – this program offers an opportunity for substantial savings.

The Alaska Refi also allows borrowers to roll multiple education loans, including federal loans, state loans, and loans from private lenders such as Sallie Mae or banks, into one fixed-rate loan. “This program offers a cascade of benefits to borrowers struggling to manage multiple loans and to Alaska in general,” said Stephanie Butler, ACPE Executive Director. “The program is

designed to lower costs for existing borrowers who have been working hard to repay their debt on time. It is also intended to also enable ASLC to realize servicing efficiencies, with a long-term goal of providing across-the-board cost reductions, including for new borrowers, increasing their ability to afford to go to college or participate in career training.”

“Student loans can be a good investment when they lead to a degree and a career. The University of Alaska encourages students to borrow only what is needed, and I am pleased to see ACPE’s new program to help students lower their costs,” said Saichi Oba, Associate Vice President, and University of Alaska.

The Alaska Refi has just one fixed interest rate with the credit requirement (720 FICO) disclosed right up front. Applicants who don’t meet the credit requirement may use a cosigner to qualify.

The Refi Loan is available to help former student borrowers with their own loan debt, and:

- Parents who borrowed on behalf of multiple students may refinance all the loans for multiple children into just one loan
- Former students who are repaying parents who borrowed for them can refinance the loans in their own names
- Cosigners who are managing loans for their borrowers can refinance the loans in their own names •

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More information about the loan, including the application, is available online at http://acpe.alaska.gov/Alaska_Refi. The online application includes an instant pre-approval.

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ACPE NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Stephanie Butler has been named executive director of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. Butler first joined the Commission in 1997 as the institutional authorization program coordinator. In 1998, she was promoted to Director of Institutional Relations, and, in 2001, was appointed by the Executive Director to the position of Director of Program Operations. In April 2016, the Commission appointed Ms. Butler to serve as the Interim Executive Director following the retirement of the Commission's long-standing Executive Director. She was permanently appointed to the position later that summer.

Butler remains committed to ACPE's mission in service to Alaskans and is focused on ensuring effective and efficient programs and services will continue to provide Alaskans with access to the higher education and training needed to create a skilled workforce and strong economy. Commission members are confident in Butler's capacity to successfully lead the organization on to its next chapter. Butler will also serve as the executive officer for the Alaska Student Loan Corp.

Prior to joining the commission, she worked in a variety of higher education roles in government and in higher education institutions. Butler is a Certified Internal Auditor, and her education credentials also include a master's degree in business administration and management from Boston University and a bachelor's degree in English from Barry University. ●



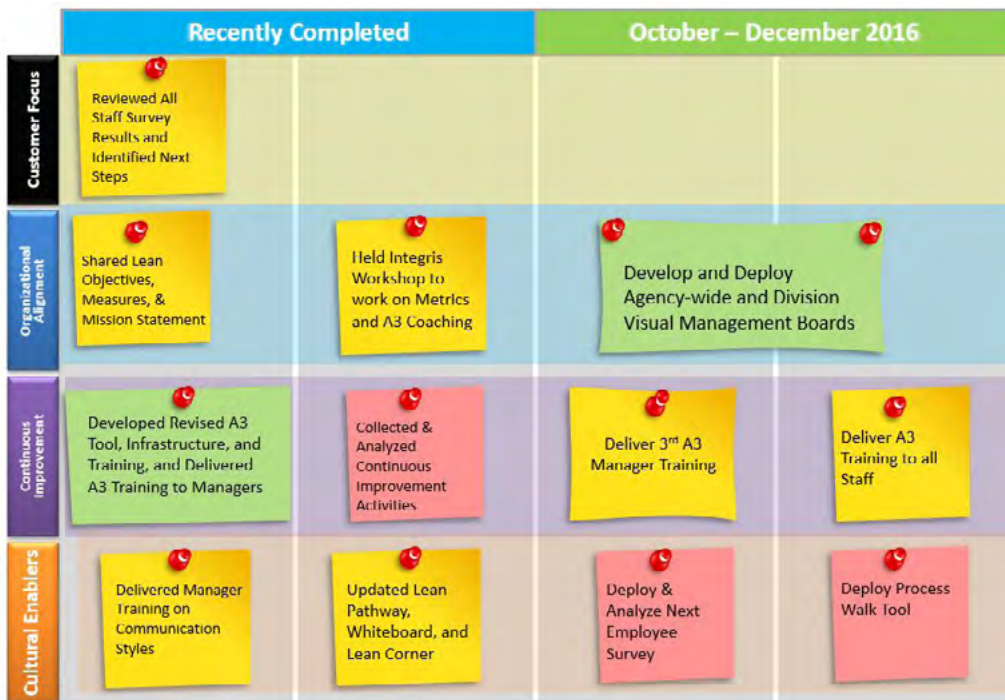
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MAKING THE LEAN TRANSFORMATION

STREAMLINING THE EVERYDAY PROCESSES

An agency’s ability to adapt to change and continuously improve often leads to a new level of success. This is the goal of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education’s project to integrate Lean process improvement culture at the agency.

Lean management is about asking the right questions, exposing problems, learning from them, and developing countermeasures- all in an effort to eliminate any wasted time or money. This often occurs by identifying each step in a business process and then revising or eliminating steps that do not add value.



THE LEAN CORNER: *Everyone at ACPE understands, supports and is empowered to continuously improve processes to maximize the quality and value of services delivered to customers.*

Organizational Alignment (OA) – Think systematically and create constancy of purpose

Senior managers mapped the organization’s business lines, identifying key deliverables, customers/ stakeholders, and measures for each. Each unit reviews how the work by their staff aligns with the agency’s mission, vision and high level goals, and identifies how these activities should be measured.

Continuous Improvement (CI) – Assure quality at the source and embrace scientific thinking

New Lean resources are being deployed to support continuous improvement. ACPE’s 5s Guide relates to workspace organization and assists employees in maximizing efficiency. The Lean team is also developing an A3 problem solving tool. Managers are being trained in using the A3 to problem solve and to coach their staff through the problem solving process.

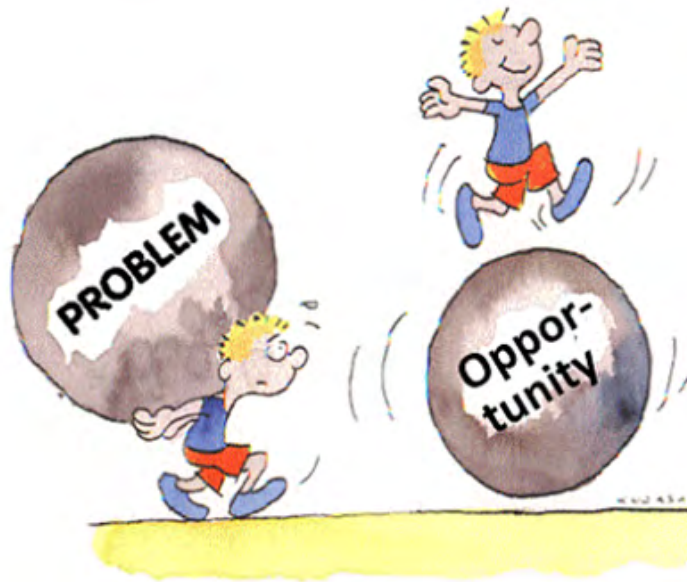
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ACPE Director of Program Operations, Kerry Thomas, estimates ACPE has realized savings in excess of \$200,000 over the past 2 years, which includes direct cost reductions and staff time savings. Examples include the implementation of online program applications for early college awareness programs. Efficiencies include reduced data entry, simplified reporting, and more accurate budgeting, saving over 100 hours annually. Time is also being saved with a new process for calculating the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for Income Based Repayment (IBR) applicants, saving 20 minutes per application. Other efficiencies include using online resources over printed pages – saving at least 1,500 pages monthly - printing double sided, and changing printer defaults to grey scale color to reduce paper and ink costs.

While some solutions may be quick and simple, Lean management is about going through a thinking process to investigate, analyze, and understand challenges and accomplishments in an effort to learn and approach business in a “lean” way. ●

Cultural Enablers (CE) – Lead with humility; respect every individual

Managers and staff who communicated an interest in leadership development attended a leadership excellence course provided by the State of Alaska. The course provided an overview of evidence-based leadership best practices. Staff feedback about the value of this course in their daily work has been positive. Additionally, employee engagement surveys looked at staff satisfaction in three areas: change, culture, and engagement in the organization. More than 80% of ACPE employees participated in the survey, with more than 90% of participating employees being proud to be a part of the organization.

Customer Focused Results (CFR) – Do those things that add value for the customer

The Lean team and senior managers are working on measures that will provide important information on existing and needed customer feedback sources. Once these sources (and any gaps) have been reviewed, ACPE will look at additional ways to use customer feedback to prioritize continuous improvement efforts.

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Spotlight on the WWAMI program

ALASKA DOCTORS IN PROGRESS

Alaska resident Meganne Hendricks always dreamed about becoming a doctor in Alaska. Following graduation from A.J. Dimond high school in Anchorage, Meganne participated in the WWAMI program, first attending the University of Alaska Anchorage.

WWAMI is a collaborative medical school among universities in Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (thus the acronym.) The program began in the early 1970s to train and prepare physicians to care for patients throughout the communities they represent. The Goal of WWAMI is to

- provide publicly supported medical education
- increase the number of primary-care physicians
- provide community-based medical education
- expand graduate medical education (residency training) and continuing medical education
- provide all of this in a cost-effective manner

In Alaska, students apply for the WWAMI program through the University of Washington School of medicine – a top medical school that currently sets aside 20 spots each year for Alaska students, because of the state’s participation in the program. Alaska students begin by taking the Foundations Phase - an 18-month equivalent of the first two years of medical school - at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The third and fourth years are composed of



Meganne Hendricks, AJ Dimond graduate and WWAMI success story

“clerkship” rotations in various specialty areas. Students can take clerkships in any WWAMI participating university of their choice.

The WWAMI program has been recognized by the Association of American Medical Colleges with the Outstanding Community Service Award and has been identified as the nation’s top primary-care, family medicine and rural medicine training school by U.S. News & World Report for the past 23 years.

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**"I ALWAYS
KNEW I WANTED
TO BECOME A
PHYSICIAN IN MY
HOME STATE. IT
BECAME REAL WITH
HELP FROM THE
WWAMI PROGRAM."**

MEGANNE HENDRICKS



In addition to having dedicated spots in one of the nation's top medical schools reserved for Alaska students, participants benefit from the WWAMI program by having a portion of their WWAMI cost obligation paid for, and by being eligible to receive forgiveness on a portion of their remaining WWAMI obligation if they return to Alaska and work full time as a physician.

From 1971 until 2007 the Alaska WWAMI program allowed 10 students a year to enroll in the program. Now up to 20 students can enroll. Through 2007, with students attending 4 years of medical school, up to 80 students per year benefited from the WWAMI program. The goal is that the program to

bring trained doctors back to the state of Alaska following their training.

Although Alaska continues to face a shortage of medical professionals, that goal has become a reality – contributing to reducing the shortage. Of the 80 students that participated in the WWAMI program from 1999-2006, 44 have already returned to Alaska. Dr. Meganne Hendricks is one of them. Meganne is an emergency room physician at Alaska Providence Medical Center and says that she may not have been able to become a doctor, if not for the WWAMI program. "I always knew I wanted to become a physician in my home state. It became real with help from the WWAMI program". ●

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*Learn more about the
WWAMI Program
visit: [https://www.
uaa.alaska.edu/
wwami/](https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/wwami/)*

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ACPE LAUNCHES 13TH ANNUAL COLLEGE GOAL ALASKA TO HELP STUDENTS WITH FAFSA

In October financial aid experts began volunteering at locations throughout Alaska to help college-bound students and their families open the door to financial aid during College Goal Alaska (CGA). Events will continue through April 2017. The free program assists Alaska students in filing the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is required for students to be considered for federal and state grants, scholarships, and student loans at most colleges and vocational/technical schools nationwide. Prior to attending a CGA event, students can go to fsaid.ed.gov and apply for a Federal Student Aid ID. Students and their parents need an FSAID to electronically sign the FAFSA. For CGA dates and times visit www.collegegoalak.org. College Goal Alaska has been coordinated by ACPE since 2005. The program is facilitated by volunteers from Alaska's postsecondary institutions, schools, and other organizations which, over the years, have helped thousands of Alaska students and families complete the FAFSA properly and on time. ●

BALLOT MEASURE 2 REJECTED

Alaska voters rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow the Alaska Student Loan Corporation to issue state general obligation bonds to fund postsecondary student loans. The measure only was very narrowly defeated, with 55 percent of voters voted against ballot measure 2. The measure, put on the ballot by the Legislature, was authored by Eagle River Republican Sen. Anna MacKinnon. The measure could have reduced Alaska's student loan interest rate by about 1 percent without any cost to the state. Executive Director Stephanie Butler said: "It's disappointing to learn that we will not be able to access what would have been a powerful and very low-risk tool for lowering interest rates for our student borrowers. While we won't be able to access this particular tool, we will continue to pursue other options to reduce interest rates for our customers, such as the new Refinance program".

Comments from constituents who voted against the measure indicate that the timing of the election with negative media reports about the state's credit rating in general was a likely reason for the rejection. Despite our disappointment that the measure was not approved, the Legislature's strong support for reducing student loan interest rates was a very positive message. ●

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CONTINUED SERVICE

DEDICATION IN LEADERSHIP FOR ACPE AND ASLC



Patricia Jacobson

Public Seat, ACPE and ASLC

Patricia Jacobson of Kodiak was named to the Commission by Governor Bill Walker in April 2016. The following month, the Governor appointed her to the Alaska Student Loan Corporation. Ms. Jacobson taught various elementary grades, primarily gifted classes, for twenty-five years in Kodiak. She has written and received numerous grants, including the Christa McAuliffe Fellowship for Alaska in 1992. Ms. Jacobson graduated from the University of Arizona in 1969 with a B.A. in elementary education, and from the University of Alaska in 1972 with an M.A. in elementary education. In 2015, she completed eight years of service to the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education as a representative of the University of Alaska Board of Regents. She currently sits on the Commission in a General Public seat. Term Expires March 2020



Kerry Thomas

ACPE, Director of Operations

Kerry Thomas has been promoted to the position of Director of Operations. Thomas joined the Commission in June 2007. Previously she was an Accountant IV with the Department of Health and Social Services. She also worked in the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities as an Accountant IV and Accounting Supervisor, and was a Staff Accountant and Auditor with Walsh, Kelliher & Sharp APC of Fairbanks, Alaska. Ms. Thomas graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a bachelor of business administration with a concentration in accounting, and later attained a Master's in business administration in service management from the University of Alaska Southeast.

A NEW FACE FOR THE COMMISSION



Eric Ash

Private Higher Education Seat

Dr. Eric Ash was appointed to the Private Higher Education seat of the Commission by Governor Bill Walker in June 2016. Dr. Ash is the Executive Director and Campus Dean of Wayland Baptist University-Alaska. He arrived in Alaska in 2007. He holds a Bachelor's of Science from the United States Air Force Academy; Masters of Science from Gonzaga University; Masters of Arts from California State University; a Masters of Social Science from Air University; and a PhD from the University of Calgary.

Dr. Ash is a retired Air Force Colonel with more than 28 years of service and held a command four times. He was the department chair at three different institutions, and holds more than 20 years' college teaching experience. Dr. Ash has published numerous articles, book reviews, journal volumes, one book, and was a professional journal editor for three years. His education background also includes graduate study from Fuller Theological Seminary. Dr. Ash's academic interests and specializations include military history, ethics, leadership, and management.

He also enjoys skiing, running, climbing, hunting, fly-fishing, sailing, wind-surfing, mountain biking, painting, playing the violin, and leading Bible study. He is married to his wife, Dawn and has two sons, Austin and Andy.

Term Expires March 2020



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IMPORTANT DATES:

Commission Meetings

Thursday, April 6, 2017
Tuesday, July 25, 2017
Tuesday, October 24, 2017

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 higher education success
- 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

ACPE.alaska.gov

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