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MEASURING STUDENT SUCCESS IN NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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Students enrolled as Natural Resources Management (NRM) majors at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) enter their college careers with various levels of preparation and experience. Many NRM majors at UAF are transfer students from 2 or 4 year institutions. With traditional first time freshmen and transfer students coming to UAF seeking preparation in the management of natural resources, our program has sought to enhance the success of all students. Moving beyond administrative mandates to assess student outcomes, our program has enhanced existing procedures to connect with students at various stages of program completion. Our program continues to build on our campus reputation of providing outstanding advising and guidance to create a “home” for our majors. Some students have excellent study skills and motivation to succeed, regardless of academic ability. However many new students, freshman or transfers, have unique circumstances requiring advising beyond academic suggestions. A new course titled “Orientation to Natural Resources Management” was developed to attract and assist students uncertain about careers in resource management. Student progress is documented throughout the program by course embedded assessment of the selected required courses. Assessment instruments track progress in attaining knowledge, synthesis and evaluation of information, and oral and written communication. A senior thesis presentation, exit interview with the Dean, and a comprehensive exam are other integral components in our plan to review and enhance student success.