THE IKKATAQ (Bridging) PROJECT

(A) NEED FOR PROJECT

The state of Alaska is unique in the nation with its collection of Native organizations that include regional corporations established under federal laws, health organizations formed to address the healthcare and wellness of Native populations, and diverse tribal organizations. A concern of all these organizations is what the Ikkataq Project proposes to help address: How Native residents, especially students leaving high school will be trained/educated to be eligible for employment and meaningful careers without moving away, physically and/or psychologically, from the context of their historical cultural communities and identities.

Compared to many places in the nation, recovery from the national and global recession is faring pretty well in Alaska. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate as of November 2011 was 7.3% as compared to 8.6% for the nation (Fried, 2012). Non-seasonally adjusted rates in rural areas were more typically 9-13%. Though not strong yet, job growth has been consistent and widespread for two years, and is projected to continue (Robinson, Fried, Shanks, & Abrahamson, 2012). However, this rosy picture stands in stark contrast to employment for Alaska Natives. By the first half of 2010, the unemployment rate for Alaska Natives jumped to 21.3%, the highest regional rate for any Native peoples in the United States (Austin, 2010).

One way to help address Native unemployment in Alaska is to offer high quality training/education programs available by distance delivery in fields where jobs for qualified workers are increasing across the state. An area of opportunity is the broad field of healthcare, which above all other job sectors, consistently generates the strongest job growth. For over two decades, percent of job growth in healthcare far outpaced overall percent of job growth in Alaska, and this trend is predicted to continue (Robinson, et al., 2012). Alaska's Department of Labor & Workforce Development Commissioner Click Bishop stated that the field of healthcare "provides jobs at every level of training and education, most with a clear path of advancement." He further noted, "Even in Alaska's smallest rural communities, where jobs are often scarce, health care offers year-round employment opportunities" (2011, pg. 3).

However, in spite of dramatic growth in Alaska's healthcare industry, it is not keeping up with demand, and job vacancy rates are high. All 29 of the 2010 Census areas within the state of Alaska are, or contain areas within them that are designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA - http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/) as Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (18-MUA, 11-MUP) or Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA: 79-Primary Care, 55-Mental Health). HPSA designations mean there are shortages of providers. MUA/P designations can reflect shortages of primary care providers, but can also reflect high infant mortality, high poverty, and/or high elderly population. In Alaska, many of the conditions that underlie these designations are attributed to an "inadequate pool of qualified workers, insufficient compensation package, and rural isolation" (Alaska Center for Rural Health, 2009, pg. viii). The main recommended solution is the expansion of existing training programs and effective recruitment/retention campaigns.

It is clear that the simple availability of high quality training/education programs that would qualify Alaska Native students to fill available jobs is not enough to increase their enrollment and successful completion of such programs. Graduation rates in higher education for Alaska Native students are persistently low, and thus Alaska Native people are highly under-represented in many professional workforces including healthcare (Erickson & Hirshberg, 2008). Among the broad challenges facing Alaska Native students, as identified by Alaska Native students at UAA: 1) Paying for college; 2) Overcoming pressure to use alcohol and drugs; 3) Balancing work, family, and school; 4) Finding role models in their families or communities; 5) Meeting academic challenges; and 6) Facing feelings of dislocation (Erickson & Hirshberg). Students had notable difficulties with admission and enrollment, financial aid, and getting the information they needed for all aspects of college requirements, policies, procedures, etc.

The Ikkataq Project proposes to address these kinds of challenges as well as others that are identified in the course of the project. The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Center for Human Development (CHD) and the Aqqaluk Trust, will work with members of the Alaska Native Corporation Shareholders (ANCS) Group to implement the project. The ANCS Group is

a consortium whose purpose is to share and discuss information about resources and programs available to aide in the employment growth and professional development of Alaska Natives and Shareholders of Native organizations. Chenega Corporation, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and NANA Development Corporation have already expressed their interest to participate as noted in letters of support. The Aqqaluk Trust will provide cultural expertise and its Interim President will participate as a member of the project's management team. The ANSC Group may identify additional cultural experts to review existing curricula and teaching methods with an eye toward cultural relevancy, identifying behavioral connectors to cultural values that can be used to guide teaching and evaluating Native students, as well as planning an orientation and a college survival skills training workshop. The Project will set up a system for student recruitment and support that utilizes community resources and is culturally appropriate. Project services will at a minimum include financial aid, academic and social support, access to courses of study using best practices in distance delivery, and guidance in job placement and career development.

Two training/education programs of focus for the Ikkataq Project are Occupational Endorsement Credential (OEC) programs in the healthcare/behavioral health field: *Direct Service Disability Specialist OEC* and *Children's Behavioral Health OEC*. Students in these programs will earn a minimum of 16 or 17 college credits, usually within 1-2 years. Many OEC courses will be able to articulate into related degree programs, however the OEC itself is a meaningful credential that will qualify students for long-term, stable health/behavioral health jobs, as well as some related jobs in education and community settings. CHD has worked with many Native students enrolled in college coursework. It has been our experience that it is often more successful to have a short-term training/education goal than a degree. Once accomplished, students not only have a viable option to enter the workforce at a higher-level job with a higher rate of pay, but they have also gained experience that will help them succeed in higher education in general. As long as funds are available, the project will continue to support any project student who in the course of earning an OEC decides to keep working toward a higher educational goal in a related program, such as an A.A.S. Degree in Disability Services or Human Services.

Direct Care Workforce Opportunities

The Health Workforce Planning Coalition (2010) identified "Direct Care Worker" as one of 15 occupational priorities to address the most immediately pressing workforce shortages in Alaska's healthcare industry. In their 2012-2013 Action Agenda, the Coalition described direct care workers as the "backbone of the health care and behavioral health delivery system" (2011, pg. 6). Direct care is a large and diverse workforce with specialties in areas such as developmental disabilities, seniors, long-term care, mental health, addictions, and traumatic brain injury. Career advancement opportunities in direct services are illustrated in Figure 1 with information from the Alaska Alliance for Direct Services Careers (aadsc.org).

Figure 1: Examples of Career Progression in Alaska's Direct Service Careers

Level	Salary Potential	Job Positions: Employees can move from any position in one level to any position in the next level.			
5	$$$$$	Executive			
4	$$$$	Program Coordinator	Registered Nurse	Clinician	Chemical Dependency Counselor III/IV
3	$$$	Activity Care Manager Specialist	Licensed Practical Nurse	Case Manager Mental Health Tech II	Chemical Dependency Counselor II
2	$$	Activity Therapist Employment Specialist	Certified Nursing Assistant	Mental Health Technician Residential Aide	Chemical Dependency Counselor I
1	$	Personal Care Assistant	Respite Care	Mental Health Aide	Intake Specialist

Direct service is most often provided in licensed assisted living homes, private residences, community settings, and nursing homes. Entry-level positions (Level 1) often do not

require more than a high school diploma or GED, with most training received on the job. An Occupational Endorsement Certificate (OEC) can make students highly competitive for these jobs or qualified to enter the workforce at a higher level. Alaskan stakeholders have put extensive work into creating the *Alaskan Core Competencies for Direct Care Workers in Health & Human Services* (Hoge & McFaul, 2010) and an associated set of Assessment Tools. These standards are at the heart of ensuring appropriate, high quality training/education, as well as providing high quality care in Alaska's Direct Care Worker System.

Occupational Endorsement Credential (OEC) Programs

There are several programs within the University of Alaska system designed to train entry-level workers for health and human service fields. However, these are generalist-type programs. The two OEC programs of focus in this project, built upon Alaska's core competencies, are uniquely specialized for employment in agencies serving children with emotional and behavioral issues or agencies serving persons with developmental disabilities, brain injury, or related disabilities. Either OEC is highly advantageous for Alaska Native students interested in healthcare, behavioral health, or health-related jobs/careers in any community in the state. However, the benefits are even more dramatic in smaller communities. Our experience has shown that when people with Native heritage develop any level of expertise in working with children or adults with special needs, they are suddenly in high demand.

The *Direct Services Disability Specialist OEC* is offered through a collaboration between the Center for Human Development (CHD) and Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC), both part of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) system. PWSCC is the granting institution. This OEC program allows students to choose a focus in one or more areas of disability services, dementia, geriatrics, recovery and rehabilitation, home and community-based services, restorative care, mental illness, autism, long-term care, traumatic brain injury, and/or employment supports. In addition to qualifying students for jobs in diverse healthcare settings, this OEC qualifies students for jobs in physical education and special education settings. There is

additional coursework available if students want to gain more expertise in special education and/or speech/language for more specialized jobs in education settings.

The *Children's Behavioral Health OEC* is offered through CHD with UAA as the granting institution. This OEC qualifies students for specialized higher-level jobs such as Mental/Behavioral Health Associate, Activity Therapist, Case Manager, Classroom Aide, Educator, Family/Child Advocate, and Residential Staff Member. It is also highly recommended for those who want to be Foster Parents. This OEC program was developed to help build community capacity to provide mental health and residential care so as to avoid sending Alaskan children out of state for this care, a situation particularly devastating for Native families and cultures. While this OEC is focused primarily on jobs in residential behavioral health settings, it also qualifies people for jobs in community health settings and in education settings.

(B) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

The Ikkataq Project is designed to bridge the gaps to successful training/education leading to long-term, stable employment in high demand occupations of the health and behavioral health field. The project is a **consortium** of the UAA Center for Human Development, the Aqqaluk Trust (Alaska Native Regional Nonprofit Organization), and organizations of the Alaska Native Corporation Shareholders (ANCS) Group.

Goals & Objectives of the Ikkataq Project

Goal 1: Provide training/education for 80 Alaska Native students leading to long-term, stable employment in high demand occupations of the health/behavioral health workforce.

   Obj. 1.1: Recruit Alaska Natives from all regions of the state to enroll in an OEC in Disability Support or Children's Behavioral Health.

   Obj 1.2: Provide face-to-face orientation, pre-course technology, and college survival skills training for enrolling students and mentors.

   Obj 1.3: Offer distance delivered OEC programs that train students as Direct Service or Children's Behavioral Health Specialists.

   Obj 1.4: Provide practicum and job placement support.

Obj 1.5: Provide career ladder opportunities through articulation into degree programs.

It is anticipated that the early months of the project will be dedicated, in part, to working with language and cultural experts on recruitment, administrative processes, student supports and reviewing curricula. That work will inform activities in Goal 1, such as recruitment of Alaska Native students (Obj 1.1), and the content and methods of orientation, training in technology, and college survival skills (Obj 1.2). There are funds allocated in the budget for travel in order to facilitate regional recruitment of students. The annual pre-training activities of Obj 1.2 will be conducted face-to-face to facilitate connections among students and project staff. It is anticipated the distance-delivered coursework of the OEC programs will be delivered in overlapping cycles (Obj 1.3) to allow for new students to enter each semester and increase the frequency of course offerings within each program. This will also allow full-time students to finish on a more accelerated schedule. It is expected that at least 80% of enrolled students will complete an OEC within the timeframe of the project. Practicum placement support is incorporated within the OEC programs and often leads to job placement (Obj 1.4). Job placement is also typically a role of Native organizations, and the ANCS Group will likely assist with that function for their shareholders. In addition, it is anticipated that a proportion of students completing an OEC will decide they want to continue their education in a related degree program in the University of Alaska system. They will be assisted to articulate their OEC coursework (e.g., OEC credits will count in total or in partial fulfillment of an Associate degree) (Obj 1.5), and the project will continue to support students' continuing education as long as the funding is available.

Goal 2: Create a bridge between the social/cultural demands of the community and the academic demands of higher education.

Obj 2.1: Ensure Aqqaluk Trust participation as a member of the project management team.

Obj 2.2: Enlist members of the Alaska Native Corporation Shareholders (ANCS) Group to assist the project to integrate cultural values and practices into recruitment, enrollment,

financial aid, academic and administrative processes and supports, curricula and instructional strategies, and mentor guidelines.

Obj 2.3: Participate in ANCS Group meetings to share information and resources.

Obj 2.4: Establish a student-mentor partnering process, guided by cultural values and practices.

Obj 2.5: Enlist members of the ANCS Group to participate in design and implementation of project evaluation tools and methods.

One of the first tasks of CHD and the Aqqaluk Trust will be to establish a management team meeting schedule and support the Trust's Interim President to attend meetings (Obj 2.1 – see Section C: Quality of the Management Plan). Travel support will be provided for her to meet with the team face-to-face twice a year, and to attend other meeting via videoconference or teleconference. Alaska Native representation also plays an important role in project evaluation (Obj 2.5 – see Section E: Quality of Project Evaluation). CHD and the Aqqaluk Trust will collaborate with the ANCS Group to identify organizations (Obj 2.2) who are interested in working with the project to integrate cultural values and practices into the program (e.g., recruitment, enrollment, instructional strategies, curricula, support) and/or helping their shareholders to access the education, services, and supports of the project. In addition to recruiting organizations to work with the project, CHD and the Aqqaluk Trust will participate in ANCS Group meetings to share information, help recruit students, and share resources (e.g., coordinate financial aid and job placement) (Obj 2.3). The project will have the language and cultural expertise of the Aqqaluk Trust at its disposal, but it is anticipated organizations from the ANCS Group engaged in the project will offer similar expertise so that cultural values and practices will be congruent with diverse Native cultures. To provide culturally relevant support for students, the project will recruit mentors from regions representing enrolled students (Obj 2.4). Mentors will assist students to adjust to the demands of higher education, assist them during practicum placements, and ultimately with employment. Mentors will be recruited from regional

health and behavioral health organizations. Mentors will contact and consult with student

mentees at least twice per month.

Goal 3: Facilitate student access by providing culturally relevant processes and procedures for

recruitment, enrollment, financial aid, academic supports, and administrative supports.

   Obj 3.1: Recruit regional student mentors.

   Obj 3.2: Train mentors regarding their role and providing effective student support.

   Obj 3.3: Provide student program of study advising, and assistance for financial support.

   Obj 3.4: Provide access to laptop computers for students who need this resource to access

   distance delivered classes.

   Obj 3.5: Provide financial scholarships to bridge resource gaps for students.

   A major support strategy of the Ikkataq Project will be to create and implement a

mentoring process (Obj 3.1). It is anticipated there will be at least 10 mentors functioning in year

one, 15 in year two, and 5 in year three. Mentors will have at least one year of successful

employment in a health or behavioral health agency that serves children, youth, or adults in a

region of the state where students reside. Mentors will have extensive training and experience in

their field, and written permission to be a mentor from a supervisor, if appropriate. Mentors will

provide informal academic and career support while students are in an OEC program of study.

They will provide a bridge to agencies for potential job shadowing, job exploration, or

employment. CHD has a distance delivered Mentor Training curriculum that as been vetted in

health agencies serving seniors and individuals with disabilities (Obj. 3.2). The Aqqaluk Trust

and organizations from the ANCS Group engaged in the project will assist to make sure a mentor

system and training is culturally appropriate, with guidelines and functions guided by cultural

values and practices. Student input and feedback will also be solicited regularly and is described

in Section E: Quality of Project Evaluation. Other important support services including program

of study and career advising (e.g., enrollment processes, program expectations, career

exploration) and assistance in obtaining financial aid (e.g., Native Corporation resources, Federal

student aid) will be provided and are related to student success (Obj. 3.3). Many students, especially in rural area, do not have computers that are able to efficiently access the distance delivery technology. The project will provide access to suitable laptop computers (Obj. 3.4) by allowing students to purchase them in the same system used for purchasing textbooks, and including them under financial aid. One of the major barriers for Alaska Native access to higher education is financial. The project will cover 75% of costs to fill gaps in tuition, fees, books, and computers (Obj. 3.5), and assist students to find and apply for other financial aid that can cover the balance of costs, and/or help with costs for continuing education after project funding ends.

Goal 4: Determine the effectiveness of the project through formative and summative evaluation processes that encompass the interests and requirements of the ANEP and collaborating Alaska Native organizations.

Obj 4.1: Track progress of project activities toward benchmarks over time to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

Obj 4.2: Obtain student input and feedback to identify ongoing needs for improvements in project services, teaching methods, and curricula.

Obj 4.3: Document increasing knowledge and skills of Alaska Native students to work with Alaska Native children and adults with disabilities, including mental illness.

Obj 4.4: Examine student success based on typical academic indicators and less conventional indicators, as well as post-certification employment and career advancement.

Note: Goal 4 and its Objectives are described in Section (E) Quality of Project Evaluation.

(C) QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Center for Human Development (CHD) at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) will have administrative responsibility for the Ikkataq Project. CHD is Alaska's only University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Services, and Research (UCEDD) and it is an independent interdisciplinary unit that reports to the Dean of the UAA College of Health. CHD has its own business office and routinely manages over

in Federal and State grants and contracts annually. CHD has over 40 full-time and part-time faculty and staff. Most experience a disability (19%) or are family members of persons with disabilities (62%). The Center's management team includes the Director, Dr. Karen Ward; Associate Director, Dr. Richard Kiefer O'Donnell; and Associate Director of Administration and Finance, Michela Spitz. CHD also has a Consumer Advisory Committee providing guidance and advice regarding important social, advocacy, family, consumer, and systems change issues. Alaska's largest regional tribal corporation, NANA Regional Corporation, Inc. holds a seat on CHD's Consumer Advisory Committee.

CHD has also operated as a Department of Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC) for the past 15 years developing and offering distance delivered course work in the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Disability Services, and the newer OEC in Direct Service Disability for the past 3 years. CHD has offered the OEC in Children's Behavioral Health for the past 6 years. CHD has extensive experience providing distance delivered courses to rural and remote Alaska. Typically anywhere from 65% to 75% of enrollments in the two OEC programs are from rural or remote, off the road system communities.

The **Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. Memorial Trust (the Aqqaluk Trust)** is a nonprofit organization founded in memory of one of the great leaders of the Inupiat Eskimo people. Its mission is to empower the Inupiat people of Northwest Alaska through language, culture, and education. The Aqqaluk Trust supports college/university and vocational/technical training for the shareholders, descendants of shareholders, or dependents of shareholders of NANA Regional Corporation, Inc. Today, NANA has over 12,900 shareholders. The region is about 38,000 square miles, encompassing 11 villages located in the Northwest part of the state. However, NANA shareholders can live in any part of the state, and many reside in Anchorage.

Robert Aqqaluk Newlin, Sr. recognized that education is paramount to succeeding to today's changing world and he was known for his tireless work to increase access to higher education. Thanks to his vision, the Aqqaluk Trust is the most important source of educational funding for the NANA region. The Trust has a priority to preserve Inupiat culture and language

and to transfer cultural values to youth. Among their staff, they have specific expertise in media, language, and cultural development. They will use this expertise in the proposed project to work with CHD to improve existing curricula and inform administrative processes and procedures. They will facilitate student recruitment and participate in project management and evaluation. They will play a key role in the development and functioning of the relationship between the project and the Alaska Native Corporation Shareholder (ANCS) Group.

Following are descriptions of CHD personnel who will work on the Ikkataq Project. Please see resumes for more detailed information.

Dr. Richard Kiefer-O'Donnell, Principal Investigator (15% FTE): Dr. Kiefer-O'Donnell will have overall responsibility for management of the project and ensuring the project is completed successfully, within budget and on time. He will supervise project personnel, hire for new positions, recruit and hire faculty for courses. He will organize and facilitate meetings of the project's management team and oversee project evaluation. He will be responsible for both written and verbal communications with the ANEP project officer, and he will prepare and submit all project reporting required by the ANEP/DOE.

Dr. Kiefer-O'Donnell holds a Ph.D. in Special Education (Severe/Multiple Disabilities) from the University of Utah, and a M.Ed. from the University of Illinois – CU in Special Education (Early education of children with multiple disabilities). Experience relevant to this project includes designing or co-designing four academic programs of study, developing or co-developing two undergraduate and three graduate degree programs, all preparing persons to serve children, youth, and adults with disabilities. Dr. Kiefer-O'Donnell currently serves as the Associate Director for the Center for Human Development, where he leads 11 federal and state projects, including two for expanded implementation of Positive Behavioral Supports, one preparing BCBA Autism Specialists, and a BCBA undergraduate-level program in Psychology. He is Core Faculty in Alaska's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program, in the areas of Special Education and Autism. On a personal note, Dr. Kiefer-O'Donnell raised child with special health care needs.

TBA, Project Coordinator (100% FTE): The Project Coordinator (PC) will serve on the project's management team and be responsible to manage marketing and recruitment processes and student registration processes. The PC will travel to three different places per year to learn about the people and resources of regions, promote the project, and recruit students. The PC will facilitate student orientations, manage course scheduling, and oversee the purchase, preparation, and distribution of course materials, and provide faculty training and support. The PC will recruit mentors, match them with students, and manage the project's mentor system.

The PI will recruit and hire for this position as soon as it is known funding is forthcoming. UAA is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer required to comply with all non-discriminatory recruitment and hiring practices. UAA has personnel policies to ensure equal-access to persons who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, or disability. CHD has been highly successful in recruiting employees from underserved populations. CHD's procedures to attract qualified applicants for employment include recruiting through the UAA Human Resources online website, organizational listserves (e.g., health and behavioral health agencies), and through its mailing list. Efforts to recruit an Alaska Native for this position will include working with the ANCS Group to advertise the position through their networks. Minimum qualifications for this position will include a bachelor's level of education, as well as experience in developing, coordinating, and presenting educational programs and services. A job description is included with project personnel resumes.

Dr. Susan Maley, Interdisciplinary Education Director (10% FTE): Dr. Maley will serve on the management team of the project and she will be the primary liaison between CHD and the Aqqaluk Trust. She will visit the NANA region to meet with the Aqqaluk Trust staff and to learn about the people and resources of the region, and she will continue to solicit and build relationships with the Native organizations of the ANCS Group to engage in the project. Dr. Maley will oversee integration of culture into curricula and manage annual course reviews. Dr. Maley is the Interdisciplinary Education Director at CHD. She has a Ph.D. from the University

of Queensland School of Social Work and Human Services and a Masters of Public Health from the University of Hawaii. She has extensive and diverse experience coordinating and directing research and model programs specializing in early childhood services, family services, classroom behavioral health services, health provider training, domestic violence screening, and public health services. Dr. Maley has decades of experience on cross-cultural projects with Native Hawaiian organizations and recently completed a Native Hawaiian program design and evaluation contract for a youth employment project.

Margaret Halloran, Student Support Coordinator (50% FTE): Ms. Halloran will serve on the project's management team. She will manage the project's financial aid program and provide financial aid advising and application assistance for students to secure additional funding to cover costs (e.g., Native Corporation resources, Federal student aid). Ms. Halloran will provide program of study advising and be available to students for assistance in maneuvering through university administrative structures and requirements. Ms. Halloran will also provide administrative support to the project's mentors and facilitate their training. Ms. Halloran has served as a Project Coordinator for development of a statewide Direct Support Specialist Apprenticeship program that partnered employer, university, and federal resources. In this position, she supported faculty and students with distance delivery technologies, managed student financial aid, and provided program of study advising for students. She is currently providing support services for PWSCC students in the apprenticeship program and in the complimentary OEC in Direct Service, as well as those enrolled in the disability specialty courses of the Associate Degree in Disability Services.

Chris Sturm, IT Support Coordinator (25% FTE). Mr. Sturm will create and implement technology training for students. He will manage student access to laptop computers, allowing students to immediately secure this resource if they need it. He will create and manage online course management system shells for each course, and facilitate synchronous online or videoconference class sessions with archived recordings for later student access (e.g., to review challenging content or missed classes). Mr. Sturm will also provide IT support to students and

faculty over the course of the project. Mr. Sturm holds a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is currently the Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) Coordinator for CHD. He also serves on CHD's IT Committee and has been instrumental in planning for and increasing the technology resources of CHD and providing technical assistance to CHD staff.

Roxann Lamar, Project Evaluator (20% FTE). Ms. Lamar will conduct formative and summative evaluation activities. These include tracking project activities against benchmarks, objectives, goals, and timelines; retrieving, analyzing, summarizing, and interpreting student data; collecting, summarizing, and analyzing feedback from students and mentors each semester, at program exit, and follow-up with student employment/career experiences. Ms. Lamar holds a master's degree in Clinical Psychology, including emphasis on research. She has 14 years professional experience at CHD, including Project Coordinator/Director of the ANEP-funded Project Success I/II that ran for 8 years and was considered a model project. She has worked on numerous evaluation projects, with particular skill interpreting results using both quantitative and qualitative data and writing reports for dissemination. She is currently the evaluator of a UAA program for persons with intellectual disabilities, and an external evaluator for several multi-year projects under Alaska's Department of Health & Social Services. On a personal note, Ms. Lamar was struck with Meniere's Disease at age 18, which caused profound nerve deafness in one ear.

The **Management Plan** (Table 1) on the following pages is designed to provide evidence and feedback to monitor and guide the project: (a) implementation and monitoring of project activities; (b) achievement of identified benchmarks; (c) achievement of intended objectives; and (d) quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Documentation of benchmarks will be gathered and tracked over the course of the project by the Project Evaluator who will summarize progress quarterly in order to inform the project's management team.

Table 1: The Ikkataq Project Management Plan

Objectives	Benchmarks	Documentation	Primary
Goal 1: Provide training/education for 80 Alaska Native students leading to long-term, stable employment in high demand occupations of the health/behavioral health workforce.			
1.1: Recruit Alaska Natives from all regions of the state to enroll in an OEC in Disability Support or Children's Behavioral Health.	FA 12: Develop Recruitment Materials FA 12 and ongoing: Conduct Recruitment activities	Recruitment materials Recruitment log.	Project Coordinator (PC)
1.2: Provide face-to-face orientation, pre-course technology, and college survival skills training for enrolling students and mentors.	SP13: Begin offerings each semester. SP&FA, 2013 40 new students; SP&FA, 2014 40 new students (80 students total)	Agendas Attendance records IT logs Student course evaluation	PC
1.3: Offer distance delivered OEC programs that train students as Direct Service or Children's Behavioral Health Specialists.	SP13: Begin series of concurrent course offerings in two OEC programs. Estimated course enrollments: SP13-40; FA13-80; SP14-110; FA14-110; SP15-70; FA15-30	Semester schedules Enrollment records	PC
1.4: Provide practicum and job placement support.	Students' 2nd semesters: Practicum placements Students' final semesters: Job placement assistance	Agency contact log Mentor log Practicum placement log	Halloran

Objectives	Benchmarks	Documentation	Primary
1.5: Provide career ladder opportunities through articulation into degree programs.	SP13: Articulation agreement with UAA Human Services Department FA13: Other potential articulation academic programs identified across UA system SP 14: Additional articulation agreements	Signed agreements	Kiefer-O'Donnell
	Tracking of student career trajectories	Student follow-up surveys	Lamar
Goal 2: Create a bridge between the social/cultural demands of the community and the academic demands of higher education			
2.1: Ensure Aqqaluk Trust participation as a member of the project management team	FA12: Conduct monthly management team meetings to review program implementation FA12: Provide travel support for the Aqqaluk Trust rep. to meetings 2 times per year face-to-face; others videoconference or teleconference	Meeting minutes; Progress reports Attendance	Kiefer-O'Donnell
2.2: Enlist members of the ANCS Group to assist the project to integrate cultural values and practices into recruitment, enrollment, financial aid, academic and administrative processes and	FA12: Members recruited FA13: Work Plan Implementation completed	Recruitment materials, procedures, and resources developed	Nelson (Aqqaluk) & Maley

Objectives	Benchmarks	Documentation	Primary
supports, curricula and instructional strategies, and mentor guidelines.			
2.3: Participate in ANCS Group meetings to share information and resources.	FA12: Meeting attendance ongoing	Report to management team	Maley
2.4: Establish a student-mentor partnering process, guided by cultural values and practices.	SP13: Students are linked with mentors	Mentor /student list Procedures defined	PC
2.5: Enlist members of the ANCS Group to participate in design and implementation of project evaluation tools and methods.	SP13: Recruit members FA13: Evaluation tools and methods developed	Evaluation tools	Lamar
Goal 3: Facilitate student access by providing culturally relevant processes and procedures for recruitment, enrollment, financial aid, academic supports, and administrative supports.			
3.1: Recruit regional student mentors.	SP13: 10 mentors FA14: 15 mentors FA15: 5 mentors	Mentor enrollment records Marketing materials Mentor training curriculum	PC
3.2: Train mentors regarding their	SP13: Begin offerings each year, or as needed.	Training agendas	Halloran

Objectives	Benchmarks	Documentation	Primary
role and providing effective student support.		Training attendance records Mentor feedback	Halloran
3.3: Provide student program of study advising, and assistance for financial support.	FA12: Begin advising and provide ongoing	Advising logs	
3.4 Provide access to laptop computers for students who need this resource to access distance delivered classes.	SP13: Provide laptop computers as needed	Inventory log # Returned # Purchased	Strum
3.5: Provide financial scholarships to bridge resource gaps for students.	SP13: Financial scholarships awarded through UAA financial aid department	Scholarship log	Halloran
Goal 4: Determine the effectiveness of the project through formative and summative evaluation processes that encompass the interests and requirements of the ANEP and collaborating Alaska Native organizations.			
4.1: Track progress of project activities toward benchmarks over time to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.	Quarterly activity tracking Quarterly student data summaries Quarterly student/mentor feedback summaries	Formative evaluation	Lamar
4.2: Obtain student input and	SP13: Student evaluations at the end of each	Student semester survey	Lamar

Objectives	Benchmarks	Documentation	Primary
feedback to identify ongoing needs for improvements in project services, teaching methods, and curricula.	semester SP14: Conduct exit interviews	analysis Student exit interview analysis	
4.3: Document increasing knowledge and skills of Alaska Native students to work with Alaska Native children and adults with disabilities, including mental illness.	Quarterly summaries of student data Quarterly student/mentor feedback summaries Annual report with analysis/interpretation of student data and student/mentor feedback	Formative evaluation Summative evaluation	Lamar
4.4: Examine student success based on typical academic indicators and less conventional indicators, as well as post-certification employment and career advancement.	Annual report with analysis/interpretation of student data and student/mentor feedback	Summative evaluation	Lamar

The project's **management team** will consist of Dr. Kiefer-O'Donnell (PI, Associate Director, CHD), Project Coordinator (TBA, CHD), Dr. Maley (Interdisciplinary Education Director, CHD), Ms. Halloran (Student Support Coordinator), and Erica Nelson (Interim President/Director of Operations, Aqqaluk Trust). The management team will meet quarterly to review project progress and student data summaries, identify and resolve problems, and decide on strategies for ongoing project improvements.

The organizations of the Alaska Native Corporation Shareholders (ANCS) Group that participate in project activities will be serving the interests of their shareholders. It is expected they will be motivated to assist with student and mentor recruitment. They may also be willing to be sources of information about cultural values and practices, and they may have ideas for strategies and supports that would help their shareholders to engage in learning at a higher educational level. Project representatives will attend a meeting of the ANCS Group soon after the project is funded to discuss their potential role and sharing of resources, and to identify organizations that are willing to help with specific project activities. CHD's Interdisciplinary Education Director will continue to liaison with the ANCS Group over the course of the project.

(D) QUALITY OF RESOURCES

The Ikkataq Project will **directly support 80 students** to complete an OEC program. In that process, the OEC programs will undergo continuous review/evaluation to greatly enhance their capacity to ensure the success of Native students. This learning will become a model to improve university programs. Most immediately, CHD will apply the model to courses and student support in an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Disability Services. It is expected faculty in other university programs who also want to increase Native student success will enthusiastically receive the model.

The Aqqaluk Trust has made a **firm commitment** to be a partner with CHD on this project as demonstrated in the Memorandum of Understanding included with letters of support. Several organizations that participate in the ANCS Group have expressed commitment to the project in letters of support. Dr. Maley was invited to speak at the May meeting of the statewide

Alaska Native Regional Corporations and Tribal Councils' Employment Development Action Group, and subsequently invited to join the group's listserv, which provides access to more Native organizations, and more resources for relationship building, recruitment, and networking.

The budget is reasonable and adequate for the activities of the proposed project. For existing personnel, it covers only portions of each person's time that will be allocated to specific activities of the project. A Project Coordinator will be dedicated full-time to the project, which is instrumental in keeping it moving forward and on track. A large area of expense is the financial aid for students. A purpose of providing financial aid is so that a large enough cadre of students can participate within the timeframe of the project, so that it is possible to learn what strategies make the most difference in student success. Many existing resources of the UAA system and CHD will be of assistance to this project even though project funding is not dedicated to them.

The **University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)** is Alaska's largest university. It is uniquely situated to serve well over half the state's total population in person, and reaches out to the rest of the state through distance modalities. UAA is fully accredited by the *Commission on Colleges and University of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges*. It is home to the state's largest and most state-of-the-art library system, including extensive online access to numerous publications and resource databases.

UAA has the appropriate infrastructure to provide general administrative support services for this project including accounting, grant oversight, personnel, procurement services, and technical support services. UAA Grants & Contracts staff assist with post award administration of sponsored programs in concert with the PI and departmental administrators. They help to ensure proper compliance with policies, university procedures, OMB Circulars, and financial accounting practices. Their obligation is to adhere to all terms and conditions of the award and to adequately document all expenditures in accordance with sponsor regulations. Their files are the repository of all auditable fiscal documentation for UAA restricted funds.

The UA Statewide Controller's Office manages, controls, and reports the status and use of financial resources utilizing the Banner financial accounting and reporting system. They

provide financial consulting services to all UAA fiscal officers. A Statewide Accounting Manual ensures consistency within the university system in the application of accounting principles, understanding of and utilizing the accounting system, preparing and processing accounting transactions, and summarizing accounting and related procedures for reference purposes.

The **UAA Center for Human Development (CHD)** is conveniently located in mid-town Anchorage, in an office building close to the UAA campus. CHD has computer resources in both PC and Mac platforms and the IT resources of UAA to maintain and service its computers, systems, and network. Software is kept up-to-date and includes standard program packages such as Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat. Data analysis software packages include programs such as PASW (formerly SPSS), Excel, NVivo, and Hyper-Research. CHD holds subscriptions to online survey services. CHD has an accessible website, TTY, and capacity to develop and deliver materials and interventions in multiple and accessible formats (e.g., large print, captioned texts, closed-captioned video, CD-ROM, synchronous and asynchronous online services, teleconferencing services). CHD has a toll-free phone number and a videoconferencing system.

(E) QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

Much of the same data will be used in both formative and summative evaluation activities of the project, but the distinctions lie in timing, depth, and purpose. The Evaluator will continually gather student data from project enrollment records and university databases, conduct student and mentor surveys each semester, student exit interviews when students leave the program for any reason (e.g., completing, dropping out, transferring, etc.), and student follow-up surveys looking at employment/career outcomes (at 1-, 3-, and 5-years post, some beyond the scope of the project). Exact methodologies and implementation will be under review in this project and could be modified to make them more effective in the context of culture.

Formative evaluation will involve a *quarterly* assessment of progress (Obj 4.1) as well as indicators of immediate and short-term impacts (Obj 4.2). The Evaluator will summarize all available student data each quarter and organize tracked information about project activities. The main purpose is to identify and resolve problems in a timely manner, to inform project or

program improvements, and to keep the project on track toward accomplishing its goals and objectives. Formative reports and data summaries will inform ongoing management and planning decisions, which ultimately involve the collective management structure of the project.

Summative evaluation will involve more extensive *annual* examination and documentation of project impact (Obj 4.2, 4.3, 4.4) and lessons learned. While summaries of data will be used in formative evaluation, summative evaluation is where data will be analyzed, interpreted, and formally reported. It will involve extensive examination of student progress, using both typical academic indicators and less conventional indicators, and it will examine student outcomes relevant to employment and career advancement. Summative evaluation will more deeply examine and interpret survey/interview data, including both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

All evaluation activity intends to answer the following questions. Please note questions are intentionally broad. It is expected cultural advisors will participate in formulating specific questions that will be used in surveys/interviews. It is possible cultural advisors will identify additional areas of investigation that are not anticipated here.

1. Did the project complete activities according to its Management Plan, benchmarks, and timelines? *Data sources:* Project records; Management/other meeting minutes; Project staff.
   a. Were activities initiated in a timely manner? If not, what were reasons for delays?
   b. Were activities completed in a timely manner? If not, what were problems encountered and how were they resolved?

2. Did the project serve the population it intended to serve? *Data sources:* Enrollment records; University databases.
   a. What were demographic characteristics of students utilizing the resources of the project?
   b. Where did the students live regionally? How many were rural versus urban residents?
   c. How did students learn about the opportunities of the project?
   d. What factors were most important in their decisions to enroll?

3. What community or cultural resources did students find the most useful in helping them to navigate postsecondary education? *Data source:* Student semester surveys.

4. How helpful were support strategies of the project (e.g., mentors, administrative assistance, academic assistance)? *Data source:* Student semester surveys; Mentor semester surveys.

   a. Which support strategies were most helpful and why?

   b. How could each support strategy be improved?

   c. What additional support strategies would be helpful?

   d. Did mentors feel they were able to carry out their responsibilities? If not, what prevented them from doing so and how could those barriers be overcome?

5. Did modifications to courses make a difference in the student experience? *Data source:* Student semester surveys.

   a. How did students rate the cultural relevance of each course?

   b. How did students rate the relevance of each course to their employment goals?

   c. How could courses be further improved from a student perspective?

6. How successful was student learning as measured by typical academic indicators? *Data source:* University databases.

   a. How many students were retained in the program, or in the institution?

   b. How many students completed courses with grades acceptable to the program?

   c. How many students completed OEC programs, or other degree programs?

7. How successful were students as measured by less conventional indicators? *Data sources:* University databases; Student semester surveys; Student exit interviews.

   a. How many courses were completed as a factor of how many were engaged?

   b. How many students successfully transferred to other training/education programs?

   c. Did students feel successful based on their own definitions of success?

   d. Did students feel successful in the context of their family and cultural community?

8. How successful were students in terms of employment or career advancement? *Data sources:* Student semester surveys; Student exit interviews; Student follow-up surveys.