KPC embraces speaking, teaching, learning, celebrating Native cultures

By Janice Maloney High
KRC associate professor of English

As the number of Alaska Native students at KPC increases, so does awareness and appreciation of this college's demographic. Events that have just concluded, and those about to occur, are reflective of this growth.

At October’s Alaska Federation of Natives convention in Anchorage, more than 600 people visited the KPC information booth, and more than 260 of those visitors requested more information. Also, KPC was covered by the “Exploring Alaska” television show. A five-minute video features KPC Rural and Native Student Services coordinator Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart, KRC faculty counselor Chris Kuive, and three KRC students—Michael Kunuk and Paul Pingayak, both in the welding certificate program, and Zoia Stuive, in the human services program. The video can be accessed on YouTube, with the search phrase: “KPC at AFN.”

Also representing KPC at the convention—as well as the AFN Elders and Youth Conference—were KRC IT technician Don Eide and KPC process technology coordinator Sandie Gilliland.

In November the KRC Learning Center hosted several events for Alaska Native/Native American Heritage Month. The Fry Bread Social kick-off event at the McLane Commons drew about 200 people from the college and the community, according to Learning Center coordinator Diane Taylor.

“Food brings people together. For some, eating fry bread was a new experience. For others, it brought back fond memories of their rural childhoods,” Taylor said. The Learning Center also hosted a screening of the Sundance-featured film, “This May Be the Last Time,” as well as a Talking Circle presentation from Shaginoff-Stuart’s Dena’ina Language students, at which the KRC Student Union provided smoked salmon. Another highlight was the beadwork and fish skin basket demonstrations by Gwich’in Athabascan artist Rochelle Adams.

Adams will teach two KRC classes spring semester: “Beginning Alaska Native Art” and “Elementary Gwich’in Language.” In addition, Jane Haigh, KRC assistant professor of history, will offer “Alaska Native Perspectives.”

By Suzie Kendrick
KPC advancement programs manager

The general public began registering online for next semester at 12:01 a.m., Nov. 24. Students are highly encouraged to seek advising to be sure they are on course for graduation in the least amount of time possible. Early planning helps students ensure they are on the right track to reach their goals in the shortest, most economical timeframe possible. Students are also encouraged to take at least 15 credits each semester to earn associate’s degrees in two years and bachelor’s degrees in four.

The spring 2015 schedule is accessible from the homepage of the KPC website, featuring more than 400 course sections, including 145 high-quality online classes for the convenience of students who aren’t able to travel to a campus or an extension site. The schedule is searchable in a variety of ways to allow students to filter results appropriately. Students should check the schedule for changes before registering at UAOnline https://uaonline.alaska.edu/from the KPC homepage.

KPC continues to see steady growth in enrollments across its system of campuses and extension sites. Classes fill rapidly, and students are aware that it’s to their advantage to register as soon as they’re eligible.

With the addition of the KRC Residence Hall, students now have the option of living on campus while attending KPC.

Spring semester classes begin Jan. 12, 2015, at all KPC locations. Late registration will be available through the first week of classes. Students must visit a campus or an extension site to complete a late-registration form and sign up for classes. Students who wish to register for a course after Jan. 16 must receive instructor approval and signature.

For more information about the registration process or to schedule an advising session, contact KRC Student Services at 262-0330 or KRC Student Enrollment Services at 235-7743. Either location can be reached through toll free at 877-262-0330.
Damon Memorial Fund endowment continues to support KPC students and programs

By Gary J. Turner
KPC director

When the Damon Memorial Fund Council, which oversees a major KPC endowment, had its annual meeting on Oct. 29, council members reviewed last year’s budget and endowment fund earnings and approved this year’s budget.

This $804,855 endowment (as of FY14 end) was created by Clarence and Anna Goodrich when they established the Damon Foundation in 1973 to provide scholarships to KPC students and humanities grants to the college. The Goodriches donated their daughter Frances’s estate, consisting of a 160-acre homestead, to the college, and funds from sales of this land support this endowment in perpetuity.

The foundation is in memory of the Goodriches’ daughter, Frances Helen Damon, and grandson, Lawrence E. Damon, who were killed in a tidal wave off the coast of Whittier following the Alaska earthquake of 1964.

Each year, the foundation provides scholarship support and funding for humanities proposals. This year they approved funding for the following:

- Two full-year scholarship awards, capped at 13 credits/semester.
- $2,000 to the Anna Goodrich Humanities Program for support of the KPC Showcase Series.
- Council members include: Faith Hall, granddaughter of Clarence Goodrich, and her husband, Martin; Amber Chatham, daughter of Faith and Martin, and great-great-granddaughter of Clarence Goodrich; Hal Smalley, College Council representative; Mike Frost, First National Bank of Alaska representative; and Curt Wallace, KPC administrative services director, and myself.

Those interested in establishing a KPC endowment or donating to KPC should contact Suzie Kendrick, Advancement programs manager, at 262-0320.

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KPC scholarship winners will express thanks to generous donors

By Suzie Kendrick
KPC advancement programs manager

Beginning next semester, KPC scholarship winners will be required to write a thank-you letter to the donor(s) of the scholarship they received.

Scholarship donors are generous and caring people who unselfishly give to support the educational endeavors of students. They typically ask for nothing in return, but receiving a well-written thank-you letter from a student lets the donor know that his or her scholarship was greatly appreciated. A well-crafted letter reminds donors why they gave in the first place and often can help secure continuing gifts for future students.

Many scholarship recipients write thank-you letters without being required to do so. For instance, Mitchell Ogden, who lives in the KRC Residence Hall and is pursuing an associate of applied science degree in process technology, applied for and was selected to be the first student to receive the Tim Jolley Memorial Scholarship.

Jolley was a committed KPC process technology student who passed away suddenly last year. Jolley’s parents, while reeling from their loss, felt strongly that they wanted to honor their son’s memory with a process technology scholarship to the college where Tim had found his place.

When asked what compelled him to write the letter, Ogden said, “Money is a very useful tool. It was really gracious of them to gift me money for school. Writing them a letter was the least I could do. I thought about the love my parents have for me, and what they would desire if they had set up a scholarship of some sort as the Jolleys had. I was very grateful and tried to find some way to show that appreciation.”

The letter that Bruce and Carol Stuart (Tim Jolley’s father and stepmother) received touched them deeply: “Our initial thoughts were of surprise, honor, and gladness. We were so pleased to know more about the person who received the funds and is carrying on Tim’s dreams,” said Carol Stuart.

“Because we had kept in touch with the school, we knew the scholarship had been given out and the name of the recipient. We so appreciate knowing more! The committee selected just the right person for Tim’s scholarship. We feel confident that he will maintain his grades and will receive the second $500. It sure made us feel good to know someone actually got the money and also a little bit about him,” she said.

For information about setting up scholarships at KPC, contact the Advancement office at 907-262-0320 or email wskendrick@kpc.alaska.edu.

KRC’s YouTube contest winner has dream-come-true experience

By Clark Fair
KPC Connection coordinator

Earlier this fall, 18-year-old KRC freshman Jamie Fenton transformed her love for the musical Les Misérables into a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, winning a YouTube competition promoted by the Anchorage Concert Association and earning a chance to perform onstage with the cast of the Broadway show in Anchorage.

Fenton, who is currently taking general education science courses at KRC, auditioned for the role of Peter Pan in the Kenai Performers’ production of Peter Pan, and received the role. “I was shocked, but I was also very excited to be able to perform in a Broadway show,” she said.

However, the role came with its own challenges. “I was nervous at first, but then I got over it and felt like I was just a normal person again,” Fenton said.

Fenton’s performance was so impressive that she was invited to join the cast and participate in the final Broadway production. “It was really amazing to be able to perform on stage with the cast of the musical Les Misérables,” she said.

In addition to her role as Peter Pan, Fenton also performed in the musical’s finale, “One Day More,” which has become one of her favorite songs. “I loved performing with the cast of Les Misérables,” she said.

Fenton’s experience with the musical Les Misérables was life-changing. “I have always loved the musical Les Misérables, and being able to perform in it was a dream come true,” she said.

The musical Les Misérables has touched the hearts of many people, and Fenton’s performance was no exception. “I loved being able to share my love for the musical with others,” she said.

Fenton’s experience with the musical Les Misérables was an amazing journey that will be remembered for a lifetime. “I will always cherish this experience and look back on it with fond memories,” she said.
A Day in the Life: Paul Vaona, KRC freshman
Man of action seeks academic achievement

By Janice Maloney High
KRC associate professor of English

Forty-seven-year-old Paul Vaona of Chugiak is a first-semester college freshman taking a variety of UA eLearning courses, including KRC algebra and literature classes. His goal is to graduate from the UAA/University of Washington Physicians’ Assistant Program. While taking the first step toward attaining a degree can be challenging, this father of two is likely to be successful if his past record of goal attaining is any indication.

This former marine has 25 years’ experience as a paramedic and firefighter. Before settling in Alaska, he spent more than a decade working overseas in various positions for governmental and non-governmental organizations at what he calls “all the vacation spots,” such as Jordan, Bosnia, Croatia, Chechnya, Angola and Zaire. At one point Vaona served as one of six paramedics for the King of Saudi Arabia.

Upon his return to the United States in 2001, he took his professional skills to New Jersey. “But after Sept. 11, I needed to move on,” he said. After a stint as a dive medic for the hyperbaric chamber in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, he was offered a flight paramedic posting in Alaska. Currently, he works as a weather observer at Anchorage International Airport.

After one semester under his belt, Vaona is pleased with his scholastic experience. “I am thoroughly enjoying my return to academia. So much has changed in the years I have been away, and I really appreciate the assistance from the professors,” he said.

With his new commitment to college education, Vaona has pulled back on some of his other activities, such as serving as a pilot with the Civil Air Patrol and as an EMT and fire instructor. What he has not cut back on is his commitment to his family: his wife,

Olivia Vaona helps her father study.

Increasing Safety: Poppy Lane paved path to connect KRC with KBeach Elementary

By Gary J. Turner
KPC director

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly unanimously approved a resolution Oct. 28 allowing the borough mayor to accept $463,100 in funding for a four-tenth-mile extension of the paved pedestrian path along Poppy Lane from Kalkofsky Beach Elementary School to KRC.

The borough will next draft a Memorandum of Agreement with the Alaska Department of Transportation, and then scoping and design of the project will begin. The UA Facilities and Land Management office will be involved in the process since it has yet to be determined on which side of Poppy Lane the path will be located. The north side is on borough property. The south side belongs to UA and that location could require an easement from the university. A timetable for the project has not yet been determined.

The effort to extend this path began in 2011 when KPBSD Superintendent Steve Atwater, Alaska Christian College President Keith Hamilton, and KPC Director Gary J. Turner recognized that an increasing number of students and local residents were using the road to walk to KBeach businesses and for recreation. They believe that building a paved path would greatly enhance the safety along this high-traffic road.

Over the course of three years they emailed Kenai Peninsula legislators asking for their support, and in the spring of 2014 the Legislature and governor approved the funding. During that time, resolutions supporting the project were approved each year by the Kenai Peninsula College Council, KPBSD Board of Education, ACC Board of Trustees, and Soldotna City Council. The borough and City of Soldotna also included it in their annual Capital Improvement Projects priority lists.

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Word on Campus:
“If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?”
Compiled by KPC advancement department

Shannon Reid, KBC, associate of arts
“Italy, to work on my friend’s horse ranch!”

Jesse White, AES, associate of applied science, process technology
“If I could go anywhere in the world it would be New Zealand! The warm weather and fly fishing sounds really awesome in New Zealand!”

Ashley Bell, KRC, associate of arts and bachelor of arts, psychology
“If I could travel anywhere in the world, it would be to Italy. I have always wanted to be immersed in the culture, speak the language with the locals and travel the waterways.”

Kasey Miller, AES, associate of applied science, process technology
“If I could go anywhere in the world my first pick would be Japan because I really like their culture.”

Stacy Schneider, KBC, associate of arts
“To a fun tropical island.”

Richard Burroughs, KRC, associate of applied science, industrial process instrumentation
“I would like to travel to Siberia because I want to see how cold it is.”

Brian Rowe, KBC, associate of applied science, industrial process instrumentation
“I would travel to the Bahamas because I like white sand beaches, relaxation, and the sun.”

Tobin Sworts, KRC, pre-nursing
“I would travel to Norway or Australia. I would go to Norway because I have relatives there and I think it’s really beautiful and I would go to Australia because they have lots of strange, poisonous animals there.”

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Also included are the books “The Flora of South Central Alaska,” by Boyd Shaffer, and the fifty-year history of KPC titled, “Keeping the Fire Burning,” by Tony Lewis and Clark Fair.

Standard: $99
Two-coin set of KPC coins, one copper and one silver, that honor Clayton Brockel, KPC’s founding director and both books referenced in the deluxe package.

Proceeds from the sale of the collectable coins are slated to benefit a KRC art scholarship.
For more information, call 262-0312.
KRC introduces new staff and faculty members

Anastasia Monyahan
KRC assistant professor of nursing

1. What are your duties?
I prepare nursing students with lectures, clinical experiences, and skills needed to obtain their associate’s degree in nursing.

2. What was your last position? Where?
I worked as an emergency room RN at Central Peninsula Hospital. I still maintain a per diem position there.

3. Where did you go to school?
I attended Thomas Jefferson University, School of Nursing, in Philadelphia, Pa., graduating in 1991 with a bachelor of science in nursing. I am currently completing a master's in nursing.

4. What brought you to Alaska?
After my husband’s retirement from the U.S. Navy in 2000, we made Alaska our permanent home. We have lived on the Kenai Peninsula for the past 14 years and can’t imagine a better place to raise children and enjoy the outdoor activities this great state has to offer.

5. What are your long-term goals at KPC?
The nursing program has a new classroom/lab this year. One of my long-term goals is to utilize this room to expand the educational resources in order to keep up with current changes in medicine. I also look forward to learning more about KPC and becoming more involved where needed.

Sara Frick
KRC Education Technology Team lead instructional designer

1. What are your duties?
Mainly I support faculty and staff in campus-based, distance and hybrid courses leading to student academic success through the use of appropriate educational technology.

2. What was your last position? Where?
I am coming to KPC from the Anchorage Campus, where I have been an instructional designer and the assistant director of professional development in the UAA Academic Innovations and eLearning Department since 2012. I also teach Guidance 150 online as a UAA adjunct. I have been an instructional designer in the UA system for six years, starting at UAF in 2008.

3. Where did you go to school?
I received an M.S. in instructional design and technology from UAA (2012), a graduate certificate in eLearning from UAA (2010), and a B.S. in visual communications-interactive multimedia from Ohio University (2002).

4. What brought you to Alaska?
I moved from Ohio straight to Kodiak in 2002 with an adventurous spirit and a drive to make a new home in a place with more space. I lived in Kodiak only for a working summer, followed by Fairbanks for seven years and Anchorage for five. I am proud to call Alaska home and am ready to say farewell to the lovely big city of Anchorage to make roots for my family on the beautiful Kenai Peninsula. I have traveled most of the state fishing, snowboarding, camping and playing music.

5. What are your long-term goals at KPC?
I want to strengthen KPC’s distance education programs, focus on exceptional service, and infuse innovative methods of professional learning for faculty and staff around effective teaching practices. My main goal is always to encourage and empower those around me to be self-sufficient, innovative and centered on student success.
Typical Day at KPC Res Life: Talent show dazzles

By Timothy Alsobrooks
KRC residence hall student

On the night of Nov. 21, clouds blanket the sky above KRC; the ground is damp, and the air smells of petrichor. Along the horizon, the northern lights dance numinously amid breaks in the cloud cover.

At KPC Res Life, however, everyone's attention is directed toward an equally dazzling spectacle: the first-ever KPC Res Life Talent Show.

“We've been planning this for about two months,” explains Leslie Byrd, coordinator of KPC Res Life. “I'm really happy with the turnout.”

Rightly so. The common area is packed with spectators and performers. The conversation among those in attendance is equal parts giddy and anxious. Ashley Bell, host of the talent show and resident advisor for KPC Res Life, approaches the stage to announce the first performer.

The excited chatter gives way to a pregnant silence.

“Welcome to the first KPC Res Life Talent Show! Please welcome Josh to the stage!”

Joshuah Rutten, a second-year KRC associate of arts candidate who plans to study theater, approaches the stage and sets the bar high with a fervent performance of a Japanese song. “It's the theme song to Kamen Rider X,” he explains. “I took Japanese here at KPC.”

Next up is Jim “The Guardian” Walker, the security guard at KPC Res Life. His poignantly wistful performance of Neil Young's “Old Man” captivates the audience.

“My daughter played that song for me when I retired from the Navy,” he says.

“That's going to be tough act to follow,” concedes Taylor Evans, a freshman in the psychology program at KRC, as he takes a seat at his keyboard amid the residual applause for Jim's performance. Taylor's original compositions don't disappoint, however. Ever modest, he explains, “I don't play these for an audience very often, so I wasn't sure if people would like them.”

With the proverbial final curtain drawn, Leslie Byrd asks the audience: “Do you want to do this again next semester?”

Unsurprisingly, the response is a unanimous “YES!”

KPC introduces new international exchange student

Christoph Sebastian Barmetler from Kempten, Germany

1. Why did you choose to participate in the Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) program?
To learn about another culture and learn more about Americans. It's hard to learn about the culture when you're just on a holiday or vacation. It's nice to meet other people and make friends in other countries.

2. What are you studying at KPC, and what are you majoring in?
No major, but I'm studying English and Welding. I have worked as an industrial mechanic in Germany for the past six and a half years with three years of education and training during those years.

3. What have you done for fun since you arrived?
Too much! Highlights include seeing New York City, visiting the Harley Davidson museum in Milwaukee, going on the beach in Venice, Calif. Here in Alaska, a boat trip on Skilak Lake into the Kenai River. Every time when you see the nature here, it's really nice! I have purchased a car, and now have a job with the Maintenance Department at KRC.

4. What has surprised you the most about the United States and Alaska?
United States: The distance between the cities and how large the country is. Alaska: The nature when you fly over and look down, it's really nice to see the white snow mountains and the green forests and many lakes.

5. What are some of the most noticeable differences (in customs, environment, people, etc.) between home and here?
Customs: There is more paperwork for some things like getting a driver's license, a Social Security number, etc. Environment: Working here has been easier than the work I had in Germany. Here I'm on campus, and at home I worked for a company which wasn't on a campus. Where I went to school there was no work on campus. People: Americans seem to have more time to talk to one another; you can talk with everyone whether you know them or not. In Germany, people are busy and in a city they may say hello but keep going. Other differences: Nightlife is a difference. My city with 65,000 people has more to do at night. Also, Americans like to shop every day; in Germany you wouldn't find a shop open on Sunday.

6. What do you want to accomplish while you are here?
To see a lot of the country as well as Alaska, celebrate the American festivals, and share my experience and life in Germany with American people. I hope to do a road trip with another student from this CBYX program, and travel around the U.S. this summer before I return to Germany. This exchange is like a big family; I'm also making friends with other German students whom I wouldn't have met otherwise, and American friends as well!

7. What are your plans after leaving KPC?
The road trip, as mentioned. The entire group of 75 exchange students from Germany who will have spent the year here in the U.S., will come together in Washington, D.C. this summer to provide a closing and recap of the program. After that (two months later), we will all come together again in Berlin to share our experiences with a representative of the Bundestag (like a U.S. Congress representative), and the headquarters of the German partner agency that assisted with this exchange program.

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Travelogue:

KRC student eschews strict planning in Great Britain adventure

By Gwendolyn Nelson
KRC history student

When planning a big trip, an overarching urge may be to plan out every little detail. My advice: don’t.

The best trips have a small amount of structure and a bunch of room for adventure. My trip to Great Britain would have been completely different if I hadn’t had the room to change plans, to decide not to stay at the sketchy hostel, or to spend the $500 dollars on a few extra days here or there instead of on a Channel ride.

As “the doctor” once said, “A straight line may be the quickest way to a point, but it is never the most interesting.” I hold with that statement. Breathe. Don’t spend your entire time looking through a camera trying to capture everything, and listen. Sit and listen; you will see and experience more than many.

As a history major, with an English minor, I wanted to see certain things. And in the interest of experiencing more, even when seeing less, I visited only England and Ireland. During the spring semester I had worked on a paper describing Stonehenge—its dimensions, its origins, the works. I thought I would compare Google maps to the real thing. Decision: Definitely giants were involved. Pictures or even Google maps can never replace standing 20 feet away from Stonehenge. Until you do, you truly do not understand why Stonehenge is a world heritage site or the significance it really holds.

The same goes for places such as the Cliffs of Moher, located on the western coast of Ireland. The cliffs are majestic and beautiful (and a filming location for The Princess Bride) with harp players scattered across the three miles of rugged stone faces. Standing at the edge of the cliffs, with the wind bringing the harp music closer, I yelled, “THE CLIFFS OF INSANITY!” (Unfortunately, I think I may have added some negative views to the stereotype of Americans.)

Not only were the places I visited fascinating, but also the people. Because I stayed in hostels the entire four weeks of my trip, I had the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Often congregating in the hostel’s kitchen when food was prepared, friends and strangers alike sampled everything. “Where did you get that ingredient?” “What the heck is that?” Conversation thrived, music played and garlic burned.

Throughout the month of May, I stayed in hostels and traveled mainly by foot or bus. I traveled to Bath and tasted the waters at the Roman baths. I visited Oxford and sat and read under the same tree where J.R.R. Tolkien was reputed to have sat and read. I walked through Beatrix Potter’s house and took a walk through the country of Windermere in the Lake District of northern England.

All of these places have had a huge effect on me, but I believe what made the biggest impact on the entire trip was that I never felt rushed. I was able to take in so much, to enjoy, to explore, to throw on my backpack and hop on a bus where there wasn’t another tourist in sight. I would encourage all my fellow students to travel and see the world; skip the tourist traps and have an adventure.