Alaska Reads Big

Anna Bjartmarsdottir, UAA/APU Books of the Year
Rayette Sterling, Anchorage Reads, Alaska Reads
Patience Frederiksen, Alaska Center for the Book
Kari Sagel, Alaska Spirit of Reading
Jonas Lamb, UAS One Campus, One Book
Big Read | Common Reading | First-Year Book

Civic/community programs

Hybrid

School based programs
UAA/APU Books of the Year

“The Books of the Year program started in 2006 as part of a Ford Foundation Difficult Dialogues initiative - one of only 26 in the country - to provide a safe environment on campuses for discussions of challenging topics. UAA and APU are now national leaders in this area.

Because of our Difficult Dialogues beginnings, we’re different than other university common reading programs. Our goal is to select books that provoke serious discussion about serious issues, rather than providing ‘introduction to college’ exercises or a freshman class bonding experience.”
UAA/APU Books of the Year

Themes through the years:

Immigration & Otherness - 2006/07
Religion & Politics - 2007/08
Alaska’s Native People: A Call to Understanding - 2008/09
Responding to Climate Change in Alaska - 2009/10
Service in a Foreign Land - 20010/11
Money & Morality - 2011-13
Information, Ideas, Ideology: Shaping Your Reality - 2013-15

NEGO T IAT I N G IDEN T I T Y IN AM E R IC A

2015-2017
BOOKS OF THE YEAR

THE COLOR OF WATER: A Black Man’s Tribute to His White Mother
By James McBride

This memoir explores various aspects of personal identity through the stories of the author’s mother and of his own experiences growing up in Brooklyn’s Red Hook projects. Grappling with his own identity, McBride, as an adult, persuaded his mother to tell her story—of a Rabbi’s daughter, born in Poland and raised in the South, who fled to Harlem, married a black man, and founded a Baptist church, and put twelve children through college. The Color of Water is a tribute to a remarkable and determined mother, and a large, contentious family, and an exploration of the many ways to be an American.

HOTEL ON THE CORNER OF BITTER AND SWEET
By Jamie Ford

This historical novel is about the Japanese internment during WWII. Set in the Pacific Northwest, it is a story of loyalty—to one’s country and to one’s culture, traditions, and family. It is also a story of the immigrant experience, how politics and war can question and shape one’s identity, and the power that individuals have to create their own place in the world.

Everyone must “negotiate” and shape their identity as they grow up, age, and adapt to fate and circumstance. Together, these books offer timeless and relevant themes of individual and collective identity in America—themes that continue to be important to our communities, state, and nation.

BOTH BOOKS ARE 30% OFF AT THE UAA BOOKSTORE

Join the Conversation!

The UAA/APU Books of the Year program is a powerful partnership that brings faculty, staff, and community members together to understand common themes. The books serve as the catalyst for discussions of larger issues of local and international significance.
UAA/APU Books of the Year

University of Alaska Anchorage & Alaska Pacific University
Books of the Year

Join the Conversation!


Immigration & Otherwise  Religion & Politics  Alaska's Native People: A Call to Understanding  Responding to Climate Change in Alaska  Service in a Foreign Land  Money & Morality  Information, Ideas, Ideologies Shaping Your Reality  Negotiating Identity in America

www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year
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Publicity: listservs, flyer distribution, online community calendars, free Reader Boards in Student Union, and partner promotion.
UAA/APU Books of the Year

Website: www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year

Contains information about:

Faculty steering committee members, Reader’s Guides, Supplemental Materials, Faculty Resources, and Podcasts of past events.
Anchorage Reads

- ANCHORAGE READS 2007 - 2012
  The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read Project led the way to revitalize the role of literature in communities across the nation. Anchorage Reads is an Anchorage Public Library program to promote reading, literacy and community-building by encouraging people of different ages and backgrounds to engage in a shared reading experience and talk about one book.
Anchorage Reads

2012 - The Complete Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi
2011 - The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
2010 - Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley
2009 - The Trap by John Smelcer
2008 - To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
2007 - Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
Anchorage Reads

- 2013 - 2013 Same goals - APL driven book selection
  - Community focus
  - Local funding
    - 2013 - The Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey
    - 2014 - The Influencing Machine - by Brooke Gladstone
  - Partnership with UAA/APU Books of the Year
Anchorage Reads

- 2015 - 2016 Same goals - Expanded committee to include community partners
  - 2015 - The Raven’s Gift by Don Rearden
  - 2016 - Blonde Indian by Ernestine Hayes
    - In partnership with Alaska Reads

Programming developed by community

Broader themes from book used to create inclusive programming
Anchorage Reads

February 20 to March 20, 2015

**Book and Brew Rondy**
Friday, March 13, 8pm–Midnight
Anchorage Community Works
349 E Ship Creek Ave.

Join us at Anchorage Community Works as we celebrate Anchorage Reads with Book & Beer. Author Don Rearden will be on hand to share excerpts from his book *The Raven's Gift*. Live music, 21+ only.

February 20 to March 20, 2015

**Readers’ Theatre**
Thursday, March 12, 7PM
ZJ Loussac Library, 3600 Denali St.
Wilda Marston Theatre

Join us for a dramatic presentation of *The Raven’s Gift* adapted for reader’s theater by author Don Rearden.

February 20 to March 20, 2015

We Survived - Spring Equinox Party!
Friday, March 20, 6PM
Loussac Library Grounds
Corner of 36th Ave. & Denali St.

Come and celebrate the culmination of Anchorage Reads 2015!
Alaska Reads 2016

- Statewide book program for adult readers
- Held during February 2016
- Goal - pick a book by a living Alaska writer with a strong Alaska focus and with many facets to explore through programs of different types
- Project leader: Frank Soos, Alaska Writer Laureate
- Project team: Board members from Alaska Center for the Book and Erin Hollingsworth, Tuzzy Consortium Library
Alaska Reads 2016

Team helped Frank with:

- Book review and selection
- Grant from Alaska State Library
- Contacting libraries and bookstores
- Bibliography of Alaska Native memoirs
- Soliciting free print job for bookmarks
- Posting publicity materials on web page
- Serving as local travel guides and hosts for Ernestine
- Coordinating OWL events to extend Ernestine’s reach into towns she could not visit
Funding and support was drawn from various sources:

- Alaska State Library grant purchased and shipped 400 copies of *Blonde Indian*
- Alaska Humanities Forum grant for travel
- Rasmuson Foundation Harper Arts Touring grant
- Mousepad company did bookmarks for free
- Hosting libraries and bookstores arranged for housing and a driver for Ernestine
Alaska Reads 2016

Publicity was also developed by various supporters:

- Margot Soos created bookmarks and customizable poster
- Publicity materials on Alaska Center for the Book web page
- State Library mailed bookmarks to libraries and bookstores
- Frank Soos contacted APR and Alaska Dispatch News
- Heather Lende did article on Ernestine in ADN
- Ernestine appeared on Talk of Alaska early in February
- Able to reuse some of Juneau’s One Campus One Book materials on Ernestine on web page for Alaska Reads
Alaska Reads 2016

Impact - a little too soon to tell, but:

- Ernestine’s determination to visit libraries, bookstores, school, detention centers, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters in many towns
- Remarkable speaker with a resonant story to tell
- Strong emotional response to Ernestine’s story - letters, comments, conversations
Alaska Reads 2016

Lessons learned:

- Needed more time to organize all the players
- Publicity suffered due to time running out
- Perhaps too dense a travel schedule
- Not a lot of different types of programs other than readings and questions except in Anchorage
- There are limits to what an all volunteer and very small organization can do to support projects
- Do this program every other year
Alaska Spirit of Reading: Always Failing, Always Succeeding

2007/2008
- pilot a statewide book discussion in a bag program
- for school libraries/schools
- with a goal of evaluating the grant for its sustainability

2015/2016
- continue a statewide reading program
- for schools, school libraries, Head Starts, youth residential facilities, and community programs
- with a goal of expanding our reach through new media available in the state (Alaska OWL Project)
- highlighting the author, books, and program at the state library conference
What We Do
Budget

Spirit of Reading Budget in Dollars

By Granting Source

ILC Grant
AkASL
In Kind
SSD
Sites
Target Audience: The Underserved

- Schools
- School libraries
- Public libraries

Rural children
Youth in detention facilities
Children and youth in treatment
Children in Head Starts
Children in other schools: private, alternative

“This was the best day ever.”
Leadership

Kari Sagel
Blatchley Middle School

Ginny Blackson
Central Washington University
The Books: We Pick the Author, Not So Much the Book
A Move to Diversity and Inclusion

“I have three strikes against me.”

We are committed to representing the diversity of authors, artists, storytellers, stories, characters and our children.

Who is missing?
Events

Matt de la Pena teleconferences with YKSD main office, Minto, Allakaket, Koyukuk, Huslia, Ruby, and Central Washington University. YKSD students have their first author visit. Matt uses a document camera and teleconferencing for the first time.
We Fail, We Succeed

#SpiritofReadingSoMale

Alaska Spirit of Reading

Picture a child’s life in a place where death and dismemberment are routine, fields may be mined and at any moment there may be an explosion. That is the world Rukhsana Khan writes about. And she writes books for children. This renowned author and storyteller is in Alaska and will be on the radio on Talk of Alaska. KSUA: Tuesday, 3/26 at 10:00am
UAS One Campus, One Book

- Common reading initiative at the University of Alaska Southeast
- Considered part of the First Year Experience (FYE) array of programs/services
- Institutionally funded with the budget administered out of the library
- A steering committee of faculty and staff provide leadership
Target Audience | UAS One Campus, One Book

- UAS students
- Primarily first year students (but not exclusively)
  - Humanities 120: A Sense of Place, Alaska and Beyond (cohort of 40-70 students)
  - New Student Orientation attendees
- Faculty interested in exploring interdisciplinary topics & creating associated programs
- Other audience: community members
Goals | UAS One Campus, One Book

The UAS One Campus, One Book program will:

- Begin an exploration of interdisciplinary approaches
- Create opportunities for learning both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Foster student, staff and community participation and identification as contributing members of an intellectual community.
- Promote reading and "foster a page-turning togetherness".*

*based on DC We Read 2009
Leadership | UAS One Campus, One Book

- **Steering Committee**
  - faculty, staff and students (rep or intern)
  - Faculty receive university service credit toward promotion and tenure.
  - Lacking diversity and consistent student representation

- Meet 3-4 times semester. Fall=coordinate events, Spring=review and select titles
- A rocky, time-intensive process to review nominations and select title.
- Faculty Departmental Liaisons, FYE Advisor + Chancellor

Lisa Richardson, Assistant Professor in the School of Education
Richard Simpson, Assistant Professor of Humanities
Jonas Lamb, Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science
Funded as campus wide initiative
- Budget managed by library
- Many authors we contact ask for 10-20K per event + travel
- Will need to seek external grant or foundation funding to continue.
- Have requested additional departmental and Sitka campus support.
- Have partnered with JPL on programs and budget
Publicity | UAS One Campus, One Book

Materials:

- Postcards
- Bookmarks
- OCOB Stickers for book covers
- Big Book
- Vinyl Window Clings for Library entrance
- Book review & event previews in local papers
- Radio interviews with authors
- Digital signage

Web/Social Media | OCOB website, Facebook
Books | UAS One Campus, One Book

- 250-300 books (approximate freshmen enrollment) provided free to students. Costs shared.
- Distributed at Orientation, events, library circulation desk.
- Unlimited ebook licenses are available. Blonde Indian had over 900 views. Eliminates access barriers allows off-campus participation.
- If an ebook version isn’t available, talk to the publisher when you’re negotiating a bulk discount. It just might happen!
Events | UAS One Campus, One Book

- Author or Scholar visits to UAS classes
- Lectures/Reading
- Writing Workshops
- Film series
- Brown Bag Book Club
- Seminars for UAS students
- Faculty Development Seminar for Faculty (Writing Across the Curriculum)
- Associated programming

The Making of Never Alone: Native Voices and New Media

Colleen Flanagan: Environmental Art and Science

Finding True North: At the Mouth of the River of Bees

Katie Roger: Visiting Scholar, UC Davis
Impact | UAS One Campus, One Book

- 100-300 UAS students connect intimately with authors, scholars, artists.
- 3 Credit Student Internship
- Community Author Readings draw 150-200 attendees
- Advocate with publishers for ebooks!
- Honors Program student cohort host reception for visiting authors.

“I think it is really powerful when the book and events become focused and repair and strengthen our community.”
--UAS student evaluation form

“Ernestine you can come to my family’s fish camp and I’ll show you how to make dry fish.”
--UAS student during Ernestine Hayes class visit
Lessons Learned | UAS One Campus, One Book

- Get help
- Formalize processes!
- Assessment!
- Consider 2 year selection cycles.
- You will never afford the author of the book everyone wants and that’s ok.
- Read this book first, “Common Reading Programs: Going Beyond the Book”
- Don’t try and model your program off a huge civic project like One Book One Chicago