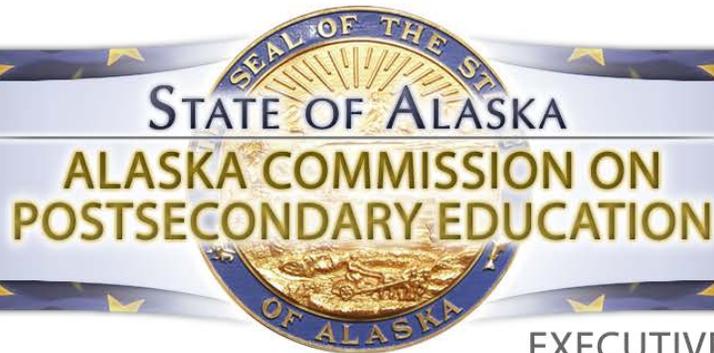


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Press Release

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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First Alaska Performance Scholarship Recipients Entering the Alaska Workforce

Juneau – *“My decision to attend college in Alaska was greatly influenced by the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS).”*

Karen Clement was among the first students to be eligible for an Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS), created by the Alaska legislature in 2010. Now she’s earned her degree and is a member of Alaska’s health care workforce, with her story illustrating how the APS is delivering on its goals.

Like many Alaska high school graduates, Clement initially attended college out-of-state. As college debt began to accrue, Clement soon realized her APS was something she didn’t want to pass up. She says: *“I had to make the decision of how much debt I wanted to graduate with and what I really wanted. I chose to come back to Alaska to work on my degree and I don’t regret it.”*

Clement returned to Alaska, enrolled at the University of Alaska Anchorage, and graduated with her Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Sciences in 2016. Clement is now working in Alaska as a medical assistant. She says she is confident she made the right decision and that her degree has prepared her well.

One goal of the APS is to encourage our higher education-bound recipients to stay in Alaska for college or career training, which in turn increases the likelihood of their remaining in Alaska after graduation and contributing to the Alaska workforce. Early indications are that APS is meeting both these goals. Stephanie Butler, Executive Director of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), which administers the APS, says the APS is a key tool in preventing an anticipated workforce crisis as Alaska diversifies its economy. *“Alaska is facing a shortage of 22,000 workers with career and college education. APS has a role in heading off that crisis by reducing the continued need to hire people from out-of-state for Alaska jobs,”* said Butler.

As reported in the 2016 APS Outcomes Report, 83% of APS-eligible students report the APS influenced their decision to attend college or training in-state.

Another goal of the APS is to inspire Alaska’s high school students to prepare academically for success in college and career training. Since inception, 14,674 Alaska high school graduates have completed the rigorous requirements needed to become eligible for the APS.

According to the Outcomes report, 74% of APS recipients enter college or training ready for college-level work, compared to just 43% of non-APS recipients. Better academic preparation makes students more likely to complete their degree within four years, as Clement was able to do. Clement says the financial assistance played a role in her ability to do so as well: *“This scholarship enabled me to finish my degree without having to work more than part-time. I was able to focus on my academics rather than stress about how I would pay for it.”*

Other key findings from the recently released APS Outcomes report include that APS-eligible graduates – even those who never received the award - were motivated by the APS to pursue positive behaviors:

- 67% to achieve better grades
- 64% to take placement exams
- 60% to seek out college/academic advising
- 56% to take more challenging courses

As Clement settles into her new career, she reflects on how the APS impacted her: *“Had I not had APS, I would have most likely gone to school out-of-state and then joined the workforce in another state. The APS is still making a difference in my life. I did not graduate with a discouraging amount of debt. I am able to work post-graduation, live on my own, and save money for my future.”*

Find the full 2016 APS Outcomes report on the Commission’s website at acpe.alaska.gov.



Karen Clement, Colony HS Graduate 2012, UAA Graduate 2016

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