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## News from Alaska EXCEL

first quarter of the 2019-2020 school year!



One of our biggest news features is our move to the Alaska Pacific University (APU) campus! We are now housed in the South Atwood Hall. We occupy the entire unit, both for administrative offices as well as dorms and classrooms for our students when we have sessions. We are very happy with our new accommodations and love to show it off. If you're ever in the area, we would be happy to give you a tour!

Another big news item is our new logo! You may have noticed it, just above. In honor of our students' stamina, our new mascot is the barred godwit, a stealthy little bird in the sandpiper family, whose annual migration takes it from New Zealand to Alaska (over 7,000 miles) every spring, without stopping and back in the fall. Some of you may know it as the "cenairpak," a Yupik word meaning "big shore bird."

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Did you know? "Alaska EXCEL saved my life and allowed me to see more opportunities and options to be ready for college" - EXCEL student (anonymous)

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## GEORGE RIVER INTERNSHIP

July found EXCEL staff and students on the George River collecting data for the fourth year of the 10-year longitudinal

study of the river system. Each year the data is turned over to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. Students were tasked with collecting, compiling, and analyzing data for the nine reference sites on the main channel, the east fork, and the north fork. Data collected included channel cross-sectional profile, water velocity, fish depletion, macro invertebrates, water quality, Woleman pebble count, and riffle stability.



Students could earn one half high school credit in either statistics or river systems ecology, but every bit as important, this valuable work-based learning experience has lead participants to seasonal **jobs with ADF&G**, such as fish counters on some of the region's rivers.

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**Did you know? Many of our students find seasonal jobs with ADF&G as fish counters!**

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## DAVID HOELDT



We would like to welcome and introduce our newest staff member, David Hoeldt! As you know, we like to "grow our own." David is a 2018 graduate of Aniak Junior/Senior High School and is a former EXCEL student who joined us for sixteen sessions. Yes, you read that right, 16!. David went on to utilize the education he got with us to work for Knik Construction on the Aniak airport revision for two consecutive summers. David claims we are a lot more fun to work for and he likes EXCEL "from the

other side."

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**Did you know? David is one of six exceptional EXCEL students who have gone on to be one of our own employees!**

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## MATH SCIENCE EXPEDITION

The Math Science Expedition was extremely successful. Alaska EXCEL, in partnership with the Kuspuk School District, the Native Village of Napaimuit, and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, hosted 28 students from the Lower Kuskokwim School District, Yupiit School District, and Kuspuk School District. Staff members and community volunteers collaborated to share knowledge about the different fish species inhabiting the Salmon and Aniak rivers, as well as affording the students an opportunity experience leadership skills and outdoor wilderness safety. Low water from high summer temperatures were challenging at best, but the sense of accomplishment and experience of team building made it all worthwhile.



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**Did you know? Often, the Math Science Expedition is a student's first session with EXCEL?**

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## NYCP SUMMIT AND MORE

This year, we combined our community and teacher Native Youth Community Program (NYCP) Summit meetings and met here at our new location on the Alaska Pacific University campus to plan the year. Our community events have been so successful, we chose to model the classroom events in a similar fashion. All the teachers and community members in attendance worked diligently to plan what they will be doing in their respective villages as well as in classrooms.

Already things are happening; our communities are planning Qaspaq making, story telling, fish trap making and more! In

the classrooms, the students are learning about careers they might be interested in doing someday when they enter the workforce.

Check out the NYCP Facebook pages for regular updates!



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**Did you know? Through the NYCP grant, community members like Lena and Charity of Akiak are sharing their knowledge with other community members so they, too, can know how to make a qaspeq!**

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## IN THE NEWS



Alaska EXCEL is making the news!  
KTVA featured us on the evening news.  
If you missed it, [please click here.](#)



Also in the news, Alaska EXCEL was in the October issue of the Alaska Miner Magazine. [Click here](#) to read a digital copy.

Did you know? Arnold applied for and landed a job at Kendall Motors in Anchorage as a tire technician!

## HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATIONS CAMP



Our first session in our new home was the 14-day Heavy Equipment Operations Camp (HEO), in partnership with **Northern Industrial Training (NIT)**. Students attended this session from several

different school districts, including Kuspuk School District, Kashunimiut School District, Yukon-Koyukuk School District, and Yupiit School District.

In the HEO camp students not only trained, but earned certificates. All of the 16 students who attended earned the following:

- Loader training
- Dozer training
- Excavator training
- Grades training
- Trenching and Shoring
- Forklift training
- First Aid/CPR Certification
- Traffic Control Flagger Certification

Additionally, each student earned a half high school credit in *Introduction to HEO*.

One of Alaska EXCEL's mantras is "work hard and play hard." Our wonderfully creative staff provided outstanding leisure time and the students attended Alaska Native Brotherhood Cultural Night (hosted by APU), Extreme Fun Center, Totem Movie Theater, swimming, rock wall climbing, and viewing Anchorage from Flattop. As with all our camps, you can see photos and more daily on Facebook.

All leisure time is earned, of course, but these students worked very hard to earn their "play time." EXCEL uses a sliding scale, all the students self-assess their performance from day to day. For five days in a row, students earned perfect scores of 10. The HEO students earned an average score of 9.3 throughout the camp, their final reward was a trip to the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mall.

We truly appreciate these amazing students and thank their school districts for sending them.

EXCEL 11 is just now over, but EXCEL 12 starts next week. We are amped and ready!

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Did you know? You, too, can be a part of the life-changing work we do at Alaska EXCEL. [Donate today!](#)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- EXCEL 12 - November 6th - 16th
- Credit Recovery - December 4th - 13th
- EXCEL 10 - January 14th - 21st
- EXCEL 9 - January 27th - February 1st
- EXCEL 8 - February 10th - 14th
- EXCEL 7 - February 25th - 28th



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