

ORAL HISTORY 00-00-179 PT. 1

Robert Hiatt speaks at a meeting on November 5, 1973

University of Alaska

Fairbanks, Alaska

An unidentified person said he hopes to have everyone return to campus for similar meetings. It is the first of many events planned for Fairbanks. He would like to get community input about the campus. He said Charlie will open the North Star Borough meeting after lunch.

[background noise]

An unidentified person said there was a good representation from the borough and city council present. He told Dr. Hiatt that it was a good idea to have a luncheon meeting. He introduced Dr. Hiatt and asked people to identify themselves if they have a question.

Dr. Hiatt said he would like to put their program for the next five to ten years in some kind of perspective so they can understand details a little better. There is a statewide system for higher education which includes eight community colleges, their campus (UAF), the Anchorage campus, and the Juneau campus. In the next ten years they are going to have two full-fledged campuses, one in Fairbanks and one in Anchorage. In each college they will have up to the baccalaureate level the common programs that lead to a baccalaureate degree and a few specialized programs relating to Alaska in particular. At the graduate level they have to be more selective since these are more expensive programs to run. They have to determine which programs are best for the Fairbanks and the Anchorage area. In order to develop the four and two year concept in relation to the graduate programs they have embarked on developing an academic development plan for the statewide system which will cover the next ten years. The plan will probably cover the next five years with a projection for another five years. The academic development plan will cover all aspects of the statewide system except the actual physical layout of the campus. They won't be involved in a campus plan, but rather the teaching program, research, extension, community college, and the regional community college programs. They will develop a set of purposes for the existence of the University in Alaska. They will develop a set of purposes for each specific campus. The various units in each campus (research units, libraries, etc.) will plan their functions in relation to the purposes established. This will give an opportunity to let them know where they are going in the next ten years and definitely plan for the next five years. Each of the plans will be involved with how to meet the needs of the state and the particular locations of the campus. They will have to develop a good deal of information such as the changing social structure in the state. They will have to determine what the job opportunities in the developmental process both rural and urban and impacts of such things as pipelines and the construction industry. It will give a key about how to develop the academic programs.

Hiatt said he will talk about the Fairbanks area. They will have to plan on how to meet the requirements of the vocational/technical area beyond the high school. Fairbanks has been deprived compared to areas that have community colleges. They need to determine how to meet some of the adult interest groups in the community. They need to address the whole process of upgrading or renewing skills of

many of the adults in the community who need to upgrade skills which will be in greater demand. The university has not related to the community in that area. They are working on the development of the Tanana Community College. It will be located in part on this campus. Up to this time there haven't been these kinds of things offered. They are also going to plan a summer school which is unique in Alaska. With the accommodations they have there is no reason that it can't be used in the summer. It would bring in 2-3000 students from out of state each summer. He said these are some of the things that can be done with proper planning to make full use of the facilities on the campus and relate to the needs of the community. For students at the Tanana Community College anticipating going beyond an associate's degree this program may possibly replace the first two years of the academic program presently used on this campus. The trend throughout the country is for community colleges to be the usual mode of entrance to higher education. They can plan a good two year entry program in the academic area to function alongside the vocational/technical and cultural/human interest programs that can be offered at a community college. They can then develop the depth and quality in their junior/senior and graduate programs on the campus which has not been developed for its fullest extent.

For 50 years or so the University of Alaska Fairbanks was the only public higher education institution in Alaska. The university tried to do a great deal for everyone in the state and spread itself thinly in many areas. He thinks they can improve those programs that will be decided for this campus by providing greater depth and faculty to attract students from the state and outside the state. The development of the Tanana Community College should improve the quality of the third, fourth and graduate years on this campus. Anchorage is already a model for this. They will be building up their academic program. To implement the planning program they will need a great deal of information. The established committee will help to get this information. They will need population projections and student population projections. This will enable them to develop population curves for every campus and with other information determine what they will be needing for faculty and space requirements. For every year for the next ten years they will come up with a cost figure. At the same time they will have another group analyzing the state's tax revenues over the next ten years. They will compare what the state is doing now in relation to supporting higher education, what percentage of the tax revenues are being given to higher education. They will compare that with a number of peer states. They should know how much the programs will cost for the next ten years and relate that to what the state can afford to play. It will be a responsible plan. They hope to strengthen every unit in the system. If they are doing a good job then every unit will stand to improve. One question that has come up is will you shift programs as Anchorage develops. They do not see any reason for shifting programs. Every campus needs to have certain programs in order to be a full fledged programs such as liberal arts, music, philosophy, etc. Anchorage will also have these programs up to the baccalaureate level. Duplication will occur which isn't bad if there are the numbers of students available. He sees two centers of higher education in the state - each one doing its job with the natural resources it has to work with. He does not see having duplication in such things as the expensive research institutes. He doesn't foresee moving programs one place or another. He sees development of programs being different for each location. The program will be tested many times. They will take their program plans to the different areas. They will present this to the legislators. He hopes this will be the state's plan and the legislators' plans for the development of the educational system. He looks for a strength in the program, but also a program that is much more responsive to the community. They have accomplished this in Anchorage and Juneau.

Questions from the audience

Mr. Carson commented about the future of Alaska and the mission and goals of the college. He asked for the revision of their plans to expand the Anchorage campus, cease facility construction and channel all expansion efforts to Fairbanks. There is underutilization of existing facilities on the Fairbanks campus. He gave several examples of underutilized facilities. He said any expansion activities should be channeled to the Fairbanks campus. A member of the Board of Regents said he would like to respond to the comments. He said this is the first time that the university and elected representatives from the community have met. He sees that the community is concerned about a campus that has been considered separate in the past from the community. He said there were threats in the past to have multiple systems for higher education.

[Name can't be heard]

Someone from the audience said she is glad to have the opportunity to meet with people at the university. She feels they are meeting with the wrong people. She said the ultimate future of the university lies with the legislature. The decisions will be made with the legislature. She doesn't expect much from meeting at this time