

ORAL HISTORY 00-00-179 PT. 2

Robert Hiatt speaks at a meeting on November 5, 1973

University of Alaska

Fairbanks, Alaska

Unidentified person talks about the main concern about changes in the university involve the drifting away of the administrative unit to the Anchorage campus.

Dr. Hiatt said this must be a rumor because no one had suggested providing any facilities in Anchorage for statewide administration yet.

Someone commented about an article in the school newspaper about turning away fifty students from the music department and Dr. Hiatt was not aware of the situation. This makes the reader to think that there is a diminishing and minimizing of the department. Dr. Hiatt said when he talked with the students he got the general idea that the students who were turned away were the ones who wanted individual instruction. He asked Earl Beistline to talk with the college dean and Chuck Davis to see what was behind this. Usually they can't make the decision to turn students away, but if they can't get individual instruction that is a different matter. Earl Beistline said on this point they have an overall budget and a series of programs they offer on the campus. They try to keep everything pretty much in balance throughout. The point was how far you can go to employ faculty for every individual student who wants individual instruction. The unidentified individual asked if they had any kind of idea about how many students they were to expect the following year. Beistline said there has been preregistration done on occasion. He said there is still the balancing of programs with the funds that you have available. If one department is beefed up then another would have to be eliminated. There is a certain amount of money. They try to keep a balance of programs. The unidentified individual thought there were student fees that paid for programs. Beistline said that doesn't come anywhere near what is required. It is the state that provides the budget for most of this. Fees are just a portion of the income. If every course was self-supporting then they could do this. Hiatt said he understood that this wasn't simply a class situation but rather individual instruction. You do the best you can with the staff you have. Dr. Burke said when they have pre-registration it is from the students who are present in the spring not all of those who will come in during the fall.

Mr. Carsons commented about the same appropriation problems in sculpture and art in the past year. There were sixty people turned away. He quoted Hiatt's comments about shift of functions of certain majors to Anchorage. He commented about the population of the state and not having enough students for the university. Hiatt said if the student numbers can justify a program they should have a program. He was indicating with the students available they can offer classes. Mr. Carsons commented about the small amount of students available and wanted to know if they can afford to put millions of dollars into Anchorage. Dr. Hiatt said he thinks they can. He said there has never been more than three hundred students coming from Anchorage. There were 175 this year. Mr. Carson talked about the goal of the university to provide a quality education with the least cost to the taxpayer. He talked about the cost of the administration. He thought there would be a tremendous cost to the taxpayer. Dr. Hiatt said they are concerned about where students go. The Anchorage students don't go here. The students can get

more money from the state to go outside of Alaska for their education. He would much rather see them up here.

Mr. Collins asked if dormitories would be built on the Anchorage campus. Dr. Hiatt said if they are he hopes it will happen after he has left. He said where there are dormitories there are problems. He views Fairbanks as the residential campus in the state. He would oppose residences on other campuses. He said if students want to reside on a campus then they should come to the Fairbanks campus. Mr. Collins commented on Tanana Community College replacing the first two years of college. Dr. Hiatt said it was a possibility. He said they would get the same quality of education. It is the developing system in all the other states. The senior colleges have gone into greater depth and greater programs. The first two years are the low cost years. He would like to see a graduated tuition system and make education open to everyone who wants it.

Mr. Rowley asked about fiscal and personnel concerns with the additional campus at Anchorage. He asked if Fairbanks would be losing personnel and budget. Dr. Hiatt said under their budgeting system they relate the teaching staff to the requirements – the students. They budget their personnel funds in this way. The Fairbanks campus like others has leveled off in population. They have dropped below the level of last year. He believes one cause of this is the popularity of community colleges. When the population is level then they can't get increased funds for staff. As student demands change the process is a little slower. They aren't in a growth situation at the moment and the staff turnover is going to be much slower. There was a growth in the 1960s and they moved new staff where they were needed. It isn't a matter of shifting positions between Fairbanks and Anchorage but rather where you can justify the positions based on how many students you have. Hiatt said you don't move staff around to different facilities. Mr. Rowley asked if the university could get dormitory costs lowered. Dr. Hiatt commented about the problems of room and board. There is debt service and upkeep costs. Someone commented that there was about ten million dollars of debt service.

Mr. Vace asked if there is a cost of living differential between the Fairbanks and Anchorage instructors. Dr. Hiatt said they don't. He said they have been trying to get the legislature to recognize this. Mr. Vace said when there is inflation then faculty may go to Anchorage and you won't be able to attract and keep students here.

Mr. Bork commented about the Anchorage campus and attendance figures. There are different types of courses offered in Anchorage and included in their statistics. It is a different standard here. Dr. Hiatt talked about the upgrades necessary for the Anchorage campus. They are not prepared to offer a full program in some departments. He talked about why students don't come to the Fairbanks campus. There is little recruitment.

Mr. Stoffiophyllos said he has heard Dr. Hiatt commit to a planning process. He said he is disappointed at the line of questioning. He said a lot of people don't understand the university system. He said reports in the newspaper have made people concerned. There will be some tough decisions.

An unidentified person asked what will prevent Anchorage legislators from trading off and getting the majority of the University of Alaska. Mr. Stoffiophyllos said having a planning process is the best ammunition for stopping this sort of thing. An unidentified person said they can't exclude a good educational system in Anchorage. He said a conflict will take them down quickly.

Laura Berg asked about who was represented on the ten-year plan committee. Dr. Hiatt said the committee is broadly representative of the state university system and talked about where they were from. They were chosen for their particular abilities. He talked about the primary purpose of the committee and goals. He commented about the Tanana Valley Community College progress. Someone asked about the purpose of the community college. Hiatt said principally it develops an open door college. Every person post high school can enter the community college. There is a technical and college route. It is important to relate to the community. Fees are paid and the course is paid for.

Someone asked about buildings and costs and the three-year building forecast. An unidentified person said they have asked for capital improvements. They have requested 16 million for the Fairbanks campus and 23 million for Anchorage and the rest of the state. He talked about marketing what we have here in Fairbanks.

An unidentified person talked about the feeling of community in Fairbanks. The performing arts is important. She believes that concentrating on one campus is more important.

An unidentified person talked about informing the community in advance. He said you want local citizenry to be involved. He talked about the need for communication.