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Robert H. Geiman

Fairbanks, Alaska

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Steve Lay

University Focus series

Recording starts after introduction of interview. Robert Geiman talked about the expansion of the Rasmuson Library. There will be an addition of 54,000 square feet on three and a half levels. There will be one level lower underground. This will house the technical services area as well as a high density storage area for some of the lesser used but important from a research standpoint materials. The next level will enlarge the capacity in the Alaska and Polar Regions Department to house the archives, rare books and manuscripts. The Alaska collection will be housed on that floor. The numbering of the floors will be changed with the addition of the lowest level. On the next level up will house the media materials area. This will be the Instructional Media Production and Communication Technology Department. He said as they envision the main level he said they will have a distribution unit. They will have the head end of the campus cable system, the Fairbanks node of the university computer network, an independent study center, an expanded reference section, and a collection development suite. He said they go to real lengths that what they acquire is needed to support the research and instructional programs of the university. The suite will house the new materials that are here for preview whether in print, 16 mm tape, video tape or video cassette.

Robert Geiman said this new space is badly needed. Students are often hunting for seats. They have no more space to expand the stacks. It allows the library to bring the media component from the Eielson Building. The facilities there are grossly inadequate now. He said this expansion has been referred to as phase one. Phase two will go up an additional three floors. They will complete level three. This addition is designed to accept three more levels. They are anticipating completing phase two after other critical space needs are met on campus such as dorms, West Ridge and instructional space.

Robert Geiman talked about the new section on the lowest level of the library. Until they have phase two the decision is to house the technical unit on the first floor. That will use one half of the space. The other half will use high density compact shelving. The major back runs of some of the periodicals will be housed down there. This helps keep the working collection more of a manageable size. They aren't sure about their cutoff point in the periodical collection yet.

They have a request as part of the 85 fiscal budget for an additional six and one half staff positions. He considers the positions essential for opening the doors for this type of facility.

Robert Geiman said the library like the rest of the university had a very humble beginning. President Bunnell solicited subscriptions for materials back in the 1920s. The first home of the library was in Old

Main. It occupied three rooms in Old Main. In 1931 the old museum was constructed and the lower level was the gymnasium. In 1935 the temporary roof was taken off and level two was built which served as the library facility. The Bunnell Building was built in 1958. In 1959 the library was moved over to the Bunnell Building. The groundbreaking for the current library was on May 3, 1967. They dedicated the library on May 3, 1970. The building at that time was 112,000 square feet. He said they have a very functional building and they are anticipating the opportunity to demonstrate what an information access program really is all about. He emphasized that this is in support of the academic and research programs here at the university. They are attempting to merge the best of the old and the best of the new in service to the University of Alaska campus. He said the emphasis in phase one was to expand the space for the Alaska and Polar Regions Department, to do justice to the Instructional Media Production and Communication Technology Department and to allow for the integration of previously separated functions. Many of the print functions belong integrated with the non-print materials and services. They are interested in materials without regard to format. The addition will allow them store additional materials on level one. This is storage of conventional materials. They will be getting an ever increasing number of volumes through electronic means as they have greater ability to search computer databases nationally and as they develop Alaska databases. He said the university is the heart of research and academic programs. The university needs a library because this is where the interaction occurs beyond what can happen in the classroom. They are concerned that they have precisely the data and information needed for this university. The data and information exists its knowledge on the part of the student that they are after. This bridging activity is needed to occur between the data or information and the knowledge. He likes to think that they play a major support role in that process here at the university.