

ORAL HISTORY 01-83-05-13

Vince Haneman

Fairbanks, Alaska

Steve Lay, interviewer

Series: University Focus series

Vince Haneman talks about the shortage of engineering faculty at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He said the national shortfall has not improved in the past year. Vacancies still exist and the upper administration has said that the vacancy will be withdrawn after two or three years. The impact is pretty disastrous. Up to now there has been a shortfall of faculty and now there are shortfalls of engineers in general. There are problems with public works designed in the past century need to be replaced. There is a concern that there aren't enough engineers to do the redesign. He discussed how engineering has changed.

This shortfall is affecting the state of Alaska. The schools producing engineers are reducing the number of students. Enrollments have been cut and class size has been increased. Dr. Haneman said the results are shown in the accreditation rate. There has been a significant increase of three year accreditations. The schools have had to reorder their priorities. There have been five vacancies in the engineering departments in the past year and he has been able to fill three of the vacancies with Dr. Lee, Dr. Hill, and Dr. Glomm. They have three more faculty this year than last year. They now have 400 students and their student faculty ratio has not improved. They are still ahead of the national average as far as quality. This fall they will go through their accreditation. Steve asked if there has been much growth over the last decade. Dr. Haneman said they have had a tremendous growth. In the past year they have increased enrollment by 210 percent. The facilities are no longer adequate. The Legislature and the upper administration have recognized this need for improvement. This spring they will be starting the construction on the first wing of the Duckering building. He hopes that the legislature will approve funds to complete the Duckering building. They are preparing to go to the Board of Regents for approval of an engineering research facility. Steve asked about the engineering student population. Dr. Haneman said there has been an increase of women enrolling in engineering programs. Minority enrollment is increasing but needs improvement. He talked about preparing students before they arrive at college. Steve asked about the faculty shortage and how it affects the University of Alaska. Dr. Haneman said the faculty must stay current in their profession. This includes research and especially research that improves the quality of life in Alaska. He said there must be time for the faculty to do research. He said increasing the student faculty ratio means advising and personal attention is decreased.

Steve asked about trends in engineering education. Dr. Haneman said they are trying to do something about the trends. They are trying to convince bright young minds that one of the options in engineering is becoming a faculty member. They are an extension of a profession. You must be able to practice a profession as well as to profess it. He hopes some of his graduate students will return to teach at the university.