

88-49-17

President Hiatt, Al Hill

Levi Lott, interviewer

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Series: Potlatch series

Song by Peter LaFarge.

The Alaska Federation of Natives along with the Alaska Native Foundation recently proposed to the University of Alaska a new plan for higher education in rural areas. Under the plan the vice-president for rural education would direct from the Anchorage headquarters ten regional centers in the Bush. Levi Lott asked Robert Hiatt, president of the University of Alaska, to comment on the regional education plan. President Hiatt said the plan was prepared by the AFN Education Division in conjunction with the Alaska Native Foundation. It was presented to the university administration by Roger Lang, Emil Notti and Eric Ekbauld. The proposal presents a new scheme for education delivery in the rural areas in Alaska. It has an educational system which can be delivered while people are in place without removing them from their homes in the villages. Another feature is that there would be local policy councils to determine what kind of educational programs that they would want such as content and level of competence. A central office in Anchorage would serve as central administrative office and have staff confident in audio visual systems. The programs would then be sent out to several centers throughout the state. The centers distribute the material either in person or through television or radio. The university people would be advisors to the program. He thinks it is one of the most innovative programs and capable of achieving success than anything he has seen before. It is innovative in the sense that the level of education desired would not be based on traditional measures such as degrees, but rather on level of confidence desired by local needs. If people want to work towards a college degree they would equate what the courses would be compared to a college program. Everything would be developed as needed. President Hiatt said when Roger Lang presented the proposal to them he made it clear that they like what the university is doing for rural education. They needed to have additional programs. He talked about the rural teaching program. Some of the existing programs may eventually become part of the new program. He said they should provide the kind of education that is required and as much of the education will take place in the villages as can be. There may be times when people need to come into a campus setting for special programs in a certain block of time. The object is to not disrupt ongoing life in rural communities. The AMU campus may be utilized. There will be few correspondence courses. There will be individual study courses and classes offered over television. There are many ways to deliver education. The community college at Bethel has been offering courses like this. They have been making an effort to deliver educational courses to a very large area. He talked about examples of programs to be offered. He said almost anything can be delivered through a television program. He commented on learning centers in the Aleutian Island areas and requirements for community colleges designation. Many of the areas in Alaska are too small to support a community college. He would prefer to have

learning centers in some areas and current community colleges in Alaska. Dr. Hiatt commented on the Potlatch radio programs and asked for opinions on the radio program.

Song by Buffy Sainte-Marie.

Jeff Kennedy said a potlatch of Native arts will come to the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus during the first week of April. Ann Nicolai interviews Al Hill. Al Hill said the prime purpose of the potlatch is to give Alaska Native artists an opportunity to share a little bit about himself, culture and art with the Fairbanks and university community. It also creates educational materials and displays to be used in the classrooms. It gives the university student the opportunity to share in something meaningful about his culture. The festival is run by a central committee comprised primarily of students enrolled at the University of Alaska and staff associated with student orientation services. The bulk of the work is done by students. Money comes from a variety of sources. They charged for posters. They relied on grants and gifts from groups such as the university special events committee, the Alaska Humanities Forum, the ASUA, Alaska State Council of Arts, Atlantic Richfield Company, and the Alaska Association for the Arts. It cost money to bring the people to Fairbanks and put on the festival. Last year it cost a little over eight thousand dollars and this year they estimate it will cost 15 thousand dollars. They are trying to raise money now. He said all the different ethnic groups in Alaska are represented. Each day will represent one ethnic group. He talked about the different groups on different days. He said last year there were fifty performers and they expect the same number this year. He talked about support from the university for transportation and lodging. The festival was held in Wood Center last year and it was well attended. This year they are moving to the Great Hall. Ann asked about the program each night. Al said that depends on each committee for each day. Generally there is dancing, Native games, storytelling, lectures on the culture of each ethnic group, craft displays, and art displays. He said the festival last year was a success. It was a valuable experience for the students involved in the festival.

Song by John Angaiak.