

Editorial Comment—

Proposed plan for AMU

A group of Community College teachers have proposed a plan to Juneau legislators to turn the Alaska Methodist University into a "center for the preservation and enrichment of Native culture." The plan would incorporate the financially struggling private college into the state's community college system rather than retain it as a four-year liberal arts institution or as a part of the University of Alaska system.

On the surface this sounds like a fantastic idea but when you begin to think of the implications it turns out to be a different story. My first question is who is going to support the system? Where will the money come from? And then we turn to the management side of the plan. If the idea is to hire Alaska Natives to manage the new program where will the expertise come from? Already, there is only a small amount of Native educators, professors, and instructors in the present system. Taking people from what is already established will only put our educational systems another step backwards.

Another question concerns enrollment in Alaskan college institutions. Can the state afford to take one of its universities and turn into a culture center? If it does will there still be space within those remaining to fill the demand for educational facilities in Alaska? Perhaps a study should be done to see that if AMU were turned over to the U of A would there be more people benefiting from it than there would be benefiting from the culture center. What sort of benefits would the culture center have to offer students, residents of the community, and the educational systems of Alaska? I think that somebody ought to do some investigating before a decision is made either way. Alaska's educational systems cannot afford to be experimenting with their facilities when they have a responsibility to the people of Alaska to provide the best educational opportunities possible.