

# Bilingual College—

## *Bethel Is Setting of Community College*

By MARGIE BAUMAN  
(Courtesy of the Anchorage  
Daily News)

A bi-lingual community college for the predominantly Yupik Eskimo speaking population of the Bethel region will be a reality by autumn, with classes in Yupik via television and English as a foreign language.

The University of Alaska, having approved the idea at a recent board of regents meeting in Fairbanks, is actively seeking a director for the sprawling new Kuskokwim Community College, backed up by \$110,000 in appropriations by the 1972 Alaska

legislature.

Over 300 paraprofessional employees — mostly teaching and health aides — working in the 56 villages of the Bethel region, would make up the first student body, immediately establishing Kuskokwim as the third largest community college in Alaska in terms of full time equivalency of study.

The academic and vocational development of each of the students will be assessed and a bi-lingual curriculum developed to serve the needs of students on an individual basis. Educational radio and television will be used

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to bring instruction to the villages.

The UA is negotiating with Advocacy Planning Associates of Anchorage, who developed the innovative program to initially serve paraprofessionals employed in child care or related services, to complete organization and planning for the new school.

"It's one of the most promising ideas to meet the needs of the villages, particularly in the area of medical services," said Dr. Lewis Haines, provost of the Southcentral Regional Center of the university.

The campus of KCC will include the facilities of Bethel Regional High School, Bethel Broadcasting Corp., and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp., a private non-profit corporation funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity through a grant to the Alaska Federation of Natives.

"I'm very much encouraged and excited," said Haines. "I feel it's an opportunity for the university to establish a prototype for a school with programs not of the traditional type, but geared to serve these bush communities."

"This is going to be a community college that regards English as a foreign language, not Yupik," said consultant Jon Buchholdt, of Advocacy Planning. Buchholdt drew up the initial program over the past year, on request from the university.

"This will be a community college that regards the sociology of Eskimo people to be the sociology the people should be taught, not the sociology of Chicago, Illinois," he said.

"This community college will reflect back upon the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim area their own values and cultural traditions. This is going to be a college of relevance," he said.

Support for the new school came from many sources, including a local citizens advisory board at Bethel headed by Mrs. Diane Carpenter, State Rep. George Hohman-D-Bethel, Bethel Mayor John Guinn and Bethel City Manager Ed Benson.

Buchholdt and Haines threw considerable praise for the progress made in establishing the university to Hohman.

"Hohman carried the ball considerably and was instrumental in getting the appropriation this year," Haines said. It would not have been conceivable without him, Buchholdt said.

There is still much organization and planning to be done, however, and Buchholdt feels John Gray of Navajo Community College, Many Farms, Ariz.,

is the man to do it, along with Adrian Parmeter, a former chief counsel of the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education under Robert F. Kennedy.

Together they would develop a distinctly Yupik Eskimo curriculum and curriculum materials, he said.

Gray has had a successful experience in multi-media education programs in Arizona and elsewhere. He graduated with honors from Arizona State University in 1958, then did graduate work at three other schools before his appointment to the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education.

"Gray has successfully adapted use of television and educational radio to a regional community college program," Buchholdt said. "This has never been done in Alaska; never thought of. Yet it's been successfully done for the Navajo and we think these same systems can be successful in Bethel."

As things stand now, KCC stands likely to become a prototype through which people of rural Alaska can gain access to higher education and vocational and career development training, Buchholdt said in his proposal to university regents.

"It will be an essential part of the answer to the problems of a deficit in trained leadership in village Alaska," he said.

There is much work to be done before autumn.

Still to be determined are the needs of other individuals or groups to be served by Kuskokwim College, perhaps in such areas as fisheries management training or management training for those to be employed by regional and village Native corporations.

Work schedules of the Bethel area health, education, social service, management, and fish and game management professionals will have to be reorganized in some cases, so that they can serve as instructional staff for KCC.

And grant applications must be developed for federal assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, which was recently amended and passed by Congress to include aid to Indian community colleges.