

Rural schools —

Study asks academic preparation

A study of college freshmen at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks has raised questions about the long-term consequences of the decreasing attention rural high schools are now giving to college preparation of Native students.

This exploratory study found college success among both Native and non-Native freshmen was strongly related to the students' prior academic preparation. A Native freshman who entered the Fairbanks campus in

1974 with low academic skills had less than a one-in-three chance of succeeding during the first college semester. A Native student who entered with moderate academic skills, however, had better than a four-out-of-five chance of succeeding during his first semester.

A Native student's level of academic preparation was found to be more strongly related to his college success than a number of other factors commonly

thought to be critical to college success, including whether he came from a remote village or a western background, whether or not he found the campus to be a friendly place, and whether or not he had clear career goals.

The study concludes, "To increase the chances for success of Native students, high schools must give serious attention to increasing the quality of academic preparation, especially for those

(See STUDY, Page 10)

● **Study asks**

(Continued from Page 9)

rural students interested in college." The small rural high schools emerging in rural Alaska have many educational benefits, but a problem of smallness is finding a way to prepare adequately those students oriented toward higher education.

Entitled *Alaska Natives and College Success*, the study was performed by Dr. Judith Kleinfeld, professor of psychology in the university's Institute of Social and Economic Research. The aim of the study was to examine the importance of three factors assumed to be related to Native student college success: (1) the level of pre-college academic preparation, (2) the degree of orientation toward clear career goals, and (3) the degree of ease in the campus social world.

To find the effect of these three factors on Native students' college success, Kleinfeld compared the college careers of 50 Native freshmen who entered the University of Alaska during the 1974 academic year with careers of 42 non-Native freshmen or a 25 per cent random sample of the non-Native class.

The study can be obtained from ISER at \$1 per copy.

From Now in the North