

# UA Native Students Seek Orientation Information

Five University of Alaska native students departed Anchorage Friday, October 3, after attending the annual Alaska Federation of Natives Conference.

The students, accompanied by their advisor Robert Egan, are touring universities and colleges in Montana, Colorado, and Utah.

Elizabeth Charles, of Bethel; Helen Atkinson, Metlakatla; Dorothy Jordan, Tanana; Sam Towarak, Unalakleet; and Charlene Yacoff, of White Mountain. They are members of the university's Special Orientation Services Student Advisory Board.

Special Orientation Services was created this year by the university and is mainly concerned with the problems native students face in attending college.

Robert Egan, former director of the Upward Bound Project at the U of A is director of the new department.

The students described the purpose of the trip as a first hand look at programs on other campuses that deal with problems native students meet in school.

They planned to visit the University of Montana, at Missoula; Eastern Montana University, at Billings; Fort Lewis College, in Durango, Colorado; and Brigham Young University at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Elizabeth Charles, from Bethel, was asked to discuss some of the problems native students have:

"Many come to college unprepared. They don't know the mechanics of attending school, let alone adjusting socially. Spe-

cial Orientation Services, through tutoring, reaches them where their problem is unique.

"If native students had some idea of what college entails before coming, they would have a better idea of what college is, and of making it.

"Student involvement from the very start, unlike many other programs, is seen. Those concerned have a strong voice in development and expansion of the program.

"It's our problem; we are the ones involved. We feel that we should have this voice in starting the program."

The native students said one of the goals of Special Orientation Services is to inform prospective students and their parents about the university. They plan to sponsor meetings between other students and faculty to consider other views.

Although the program is only six weeks old, the level of native participation is increasing significantly. "The word is getting around," Miss Charles said.

The program is a result of a study made three years ago on the native student and his adjustment to college life. Last year, a proposal was written by interested students and faculty at the University of Alaska.

The members of the student advisory board feel that other programs at other colleges deserve exploration. One which they singled out was Fort Lewis College, a scheduled stop on their tour, where English is taught as a second language.

"Our ultimate goal is to do something about the high drop-

our rate among native students. Not a great many native students graduate from the university. Something happens between the time they enroll and before they are supposed to graduate," they said.

The native students returned from their trip last weekend.