

# Mala, UAA clash over institute

**by Holly F. Hallam**

**Tundra Times reporter**

Dr. Ted Mala, program administrator of the Institute for Circumpolar Health at the University of Alaska Anchorage, and top administrators at UAA are in the middle of a dispute over how to run the Institute for Circumpolar Health.

Mala said he is disappointed at "in-

terference" from the administration toward the institute's mission. UAA administrators say, however, Mala is not willing to work with them.

"I felt that our institute and our programs were not following the legislative mandate, and our mission was not being developed the way the Legislature founded us to work," Mala said.

The institute was established in the spring of 1988 and funded with \$250,000, and what the institute's mission is supposed to be is what the dispute seems to be about.

In general, the Legislature called for the institute to address common health problems faced by people living in the

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world's circumpolar region.

Mel Kalkowski, spokesman for the university, said this is what officials are trying to resolve — "exactly what the institute will include."

Mala, on the other hand, said the Legislature's intent is not being carried out.

"In the Aug. 3 letter I said I was concerned because we had no public advisory board or couldn't work with the press. I felt the institution was intolerable, with the administration the way it was," he said.

Mala wrote a letter to Chancellor Don Behrend Aug. 3 asking for comments and more support from the administration.

Mala said the only response was that he was asked to resign. Mala said he

refused, and added that administration officials said they had started proceedings for his termination.

Kalkowski said the administration has taken no such action against Mala.

"Mala is under the direction of the vice chancellor, Beverly Beeton. No action whatsoever has been taken regarding Ted Mala," Kalkowski said.

Beeton, of the Academic Affairs office, wrote a confidential memorandum Aug. 28, regarding Mala's letter to Behrend. It said the letter Mala wrote clearly demonstrated his unwillingness to accept the organizational structure as established, or work within that structure.

Beeton said the letter persuaded her to believe Mala was seeking to resign and invited him to formalize his resignation by 5 p.m. Tuesday last week.

Kalkowski said the issue is the basic disagreement over concerns such as organizing projects that the university doesn't have the ability to handle because it has no medical school.

"We have concerns about specific projects, how they're being handled. So do the Soviets," Kalkowski said.

In the mid-80s a program called the Alaska-Siberia Medical Research Program was established, in which Mala was the director.

Kalkowski said the Alaska-Siberia program was part of the old University of Alaska. He said today projects from the Alaska-Siberia program are still in progress under the new institute.

The most recent project the institute has been working on is 15 agreements with the Soviets.

"They were here about two weeks

ago. We had a press conference, and the Soviets said good thing after good thing about the program," Mala said.

Earlier this summer Mala and the institute were awarded the Honor Kempton Service to Humanity Award for the exchange program by the Baha'is of Alaska.

Neither Behrend nor Kalkowski could respond publicly to Mala's letter because it is marked confidential, not for publication.

"He was the one who marked it 'confidential and not for publication,' and we're going to honor that request," Kalkowski said.

Mala, an Inupiaq Eskimo from Kotzebue, was the first Alaska Native male to earn a medical degree as a physician in the state of Alaska. He's not licensed to have a private practice. He does medical research and teaches.