

# Community college seeks independent system

by the Kuskokwim Community  
College Council  
Position Statement

BETHEL — The Kuskokwim Community College Council in November 1986 unanimously adopted a position relative to the proposed restructuring of the University of Alaska.

This position was stated in three parts:

- First, the council opposed restructuring, believing that it would lead to an erosion of educational services to the residents of the Calista Region.

- Second, if restructuring of the university were to occur, the council favored the establishment within the university system of a strong College of Rural Alaska that would preserve the community college mission and enhance the delivery of educational services to Western and Interior Alaska.

- Third, if the creation of a College of Rural Alaska did not appear possi-

ble in a manner that we believed protected the long-term interests of the residents of the Calista Region, the council favored the separation of Kuskokwim Community College or of a College of Rural Alaska from the university system.

On Dec. 5, 1986, the University of Alaska Board of Regents adopted a motion relative to the restructuring of the university.

We were encouraged by their statements that preceded this motion, calling for the preservation within the university system of the community college philosophy and mission, individual college identities and active involvement of local/regional citizens in the governance of these institutions.

We have participated in good faith in subsequent deliberations with the university on the restructuring process.

However, we have found that once generalities are replaced with specific proposals for combining existing in-



stitutions, the community colleges and their mission cannot be maintained.

We find the resulting proposals confusing, conflicting and non-representative of community college council concerns and opinions.

Our own further deliberations have led us to the following conclusions:

- The successful merger of Alaska's community colleges and universities is not possible. The community college mission and that of a university are distinctly different, and the community college mission cannot survive as an incorporated part of a university.

- The implementation of the proposed restructuring will destroy the community college system and lead to a significant decrease in the educational services now provided to the students and communities served by community colleges.

- The State of Alaska needs community colleges to train its citizens for Alaska's present and future jobs, to assist in the development of the state's human and natural resources and to provide its citizens with both physical and psychological access to post-secondary education. These important tasks will not be accomplished within a university.

The Kuskokwim Community College Council on behalf of the residents of the Calista Region, thus renews its strong opposition to the restructuring of the University of Alaska as presently proposed and states its intention to support the separation of Alaska's community colleges from the university system.

We urge members of other community college councils to refuse to accept the dismantling of Alaska's community college system.

We request that the University Board of Regents seriously re-examine the proposed restructuring to assure that such a process would truly maintain their stated commitment to the state's community colleges and to consider additional alternatives to the present plan.

We petition the Alaska State Legislature to establish an independent community college system with Alaska as a commitment to post-secondary educational opportunities for all of Alaska's citizens.

We implore Gov. Steve Cowper to support the establishment of an independent community college system with Alaska as a firm commitment to the development of our state's human resources.

The council includes Chairman Gene Peltola of Bethel, Vice-Chair Diana Silimperi of Bethel; and members Sam George of Akiachak, Peter Tuluk of Chevak and David Cooper Jr. of Marshall.

***We urge members of other community college councils to refuse to accept the dismantling of Alaska's community college system.***

***—Kuskokwim Community College Council***