

# Regional Corporations Look to UA to Broaden Education

FAIRBANKS — The Alaska Native regional corporations have unique manpower needs

and are looking to the University of Alaska to broaden educational opportunity so that qualified persons might obtain university credit for work pursued in their home communities.

These points were made by Dr. Lou Jacquot at the recent meeting on the Fairbanks campus of the seven-member Policy Council for the Alaska Native Human Resource Development Program, financed by the Kellogg Foundation and carried on jointly by the university and Alaska Native Foundation.

Jacquot, executive director for the program received for the council a program outline developed after extensive consultations with native corporations and associations and individuals representing private, commercial corporations involved in banking, accounting, engineering, oil, construction and law.

If the program is able to determine, through the native regions, the needs and wants in the area of management training and then to provide such training, through the university's resources, it will have fulfilled the original objective of the program proposal, Jacquot told the council.

As for the development of accredited training programs in home communities, Dr. Don M. Dafoe, the university's executive vice president and a member of the Policy Council pointed out that a number of ways exist for obtaining university credit. An increasingly popular one for short-term educational experiences is the offering of "mini-courses." Such courses may be presented in a time period of one week, and participants completing a particular course and related assignments may earn up to one credit for these short-term experiences, he said.

Where a need is well defined, the university has the capability of offering such a program almost everywhere in the state, said Dafoe. Other processes under consideration by the

university are the concepts of continuing education units. These units are gaining acceptance across the United States as a means of documenting educational experience that does not meet credit requirements but that has value for a participant and may be a basis for establishing qualifications.

Upon the suggestion of Dr. Frank Darnell, director of the university's Center for Northern Educational Research, that the Policy Council determine whether its roll is in program delivery or broad program direction, the council reaffirmed the position that its role should be that of establishing central thrusts of educational programs for Alaska natives through a continuing process of assessing needs and defining resources. Major educational priorities sensed by the council as related to development of regional and village corporations appear to be in business administration, public administration and land and resource management.

Victor Fischer, director of the university's Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research and Policy Council member, outlined a framework of such priorities aimed at building competencies in management.

A broad array of training needs exist, particularly at the village level. Alaska natives with such needs working in regional corporation assignments appear to find more developmental opportunities than those in the villages. Consequently, the emphasis of the program must be to reach the villages, the council members agreed.

Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Native Foundation and also a Policy Council member, said such opportunities exist in the business community as well as educational institutions. However, lower mobility of village residents and high travel costs make it difficult for them to take advantage of these opportunities. Thus, broadening ways in which educational programs can be extended to Alaska natives in or near their home communities is an urgent need. Notti said that experience of the Alaska Native Foundation in providing programs indicated that needs must be assessed carefully and priorities of delivery clearly established to prevent excessive dilution of program resources.

Quality in programming must not be sacrificed in broadening delivery that limits the effectiveness of specific educational activities, said Dr. James Matthews, director of the university's Cooperative Extension Service. Rather, the intent of the Alaska Native Human Resource Development Program is to broaden delivery systems systematically and to seek ways to test and develop new patterns that eventually may become continuing programs in the university system, he said.

Fred Bigjim, director of intercultural studies at Alaska Methodist University and a Policy Council member, described Indian law and business education programs under way in New Mexico. Bigjim said several dimensions of these programs appear relevant to Alaskan needs, and discussion with New Mexico administrators is continuing.

The \$681,461 five-year grant by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation provides an opportunity for the university and the Alaska

native community to pursue such an objective systematically. Matthews said this support provides an opportunity to develop new processes within educational systems. The accelerating interaction of the Policy Council reflects a continually increasing

dialogue between universities and the Alaska native community. Besides being a key objective of the program, it is viewed as an essential process in building program relevancy by the University of Alaska, he said.