

APU program offers Native students a view of college

by Barbara Crane
for the Tundra Times

When you're 17, the possibilities are unlimited.

Roberto Aceveda believes in keeping his options open, enjoying the present and taking advantage of whatever experiences come his way.

But Aceveda, about to enter his senior year at Juneau-Douglas High School, is beginning to wonder what will come next.

To get an idea of what college will be like, he spent four weeks recently at the Alaska Pacific University's Alaska Native Institute in Anchorage.

The program there offered Native students from all over Alaska the chance to take college preparatory courses and see what it's like to live on a college campus.

"I liked working with their computers," Aceveda said. "I'm very interested in them.

"And it's been great to meet people from all over Alaska. I've learned that what people do and how people live way up north in places like Wales is different from the way we live in Juneau."

Aceveda, who has lived in California and New Mexico, enjoys seeing new places.

"I'll probably take my freshman year of college in Alaska," he said, "But then I'd like to go someplace else just to try something different.

"After I get out of college, though, I will come back to Alaska. I like it here."

One of his favorite places in Alaska is the Southeastern village of Kake.

"I lived there from about the time I was 4 until I was 8," he recalled.

"It's a small place, but when I was small, I thought it was big.

"Everybody knew everybody there. It was like one big family. It was fun

to grow up there. I could go fishing every day and do pretty much whatever I wanted."

Aceveda hasn't decided what he wants to study or what sort of a job he would eventually like to have.

"I'm not sure yet, but I think I would like to have a business of my own," he said. "It would be great to make a lot of money, too!"

Because of his interest in business, Aceveda follows the activities of his Native corporations, Sealaska and Goldbelt.

"They send us brochures and reports telling us how they are doing. I'm happy they are making money for us."

Aceveda feels he still has time to make the big decisions that will set the pattern for his life. Right now his goals are to finish high school and make the finals with the Juneau-Douglas football team.

"I play tackle and guard on the defense," he said. "The team was pretty good last year, but I think this year we'll do even better."



photo by Barbara Crane

Roberto Aceveda hopes to make the finals on the Juneau-Douglas football team.