

Students complete pre-law program

By LOUISE DONHAUSER
Tundra Times Staff

Ten students have just completed a four-week special class to prepare minority students who are interested in a career in law.

The program, sponsored by the University of Alaska, Anchorage Justice Center, offered 10 students preparatory classes to help them cope with the rigors of law school and with the difficult and important Law School Admission Test. The LSAT is required of all students applying for law school and a good grade on the test is tremendously important.

According to Louise Sanborn, program coordinator for the intensive pre-law program, the program is offered because "The LSAT is a biased test

which is geared toward white, middle-class males. Minorities consistently get lower scores.

"We're trying to alleviate this program and the course is primarily focused on minorities who would have a hard time getting admitted to law school."

The LSAT emphasizes language skills which also are necessary in law school. The test also has sections on deductive reasoning, logic, and mathematics.

Although the UAA course is focused on minorities, it doesn't exclude non-minority students and two of the 10 students attending the session were non-minority.

The importance of the program in Alaska is evident when statistics about the Alaska Bar Association are revealed. Of 1,300 total members in the ABA, six are Native.

One of those Native members, Patrick Anderson, was one of two judges at a mock court which was held to help the students show off the fruits of their studies.

Also presiding at the court were Alaska Superior Court Judge Daniel A. Moore and Anna Lee McConnell. All three practice law in Anchorage.

The mock court was the final section of the law course which included constitutional law, a study of equal protection

under the law, and legal brief writing.

The students spent two days analyzing the LSAT to learn test-taking techniques and methods of study.

The students also attended a weekly luncheon where they listened to featured speakers from the legal community in Anchorage.

Students participating in the program were Carlene John, Juneau; James Stevens, Eagle; Agnes Griffith, Fairbanks; Kimberly Martus, St. Marys; James Grace, Anchorage; Christeen Williams, Anchorage; James Cutting, Ft. Yukon; Kubrah Razawi, Anchorage; Grace Cross, Anchorage; and William Naning, Hooper Bay.

The law program is based on similar programs originated by the National Council on Legal Education Opportunity. Students develop basic analytic, oral, reading, and writing skills that are crucial to successful law school performance.

If there are potential law school students the UAA law faculty will assist in placement and maintain follow-up support. Sanborn said, "If students determine they have what it takes the instructors will do everything they can to get them in law school."

The program is limited to 15 students. The purpose of



limited enrollment is to maximize individual attention.

Funding for the program comes from extra money that was taken out of the Justice Center's budget. Last year the program was funded through

House Bill 60. John Angel, Justice Center director, there isn't funding for next year but "There's certainly a need for program like this," and he said he would do everything he could to keep it funded.