

For Bering Straits Region--

NCC and Kawerak work together

Since fall '74, when the first Fly-In classes sponsored by Kawerak (non-profit arm of Bering Strait Native Corporation) went out to the Bering Straits villages, much progress has been made in taking college to the bush.

In fall, when the Northwest Community College was born in Nome, Robert Madden, Kawerak's director, and Donald Gatzke, the new college director, collaborated to extend the number of "Fly-In's." NWCC pays the instructor's salaries and Kawerak provides all the necessary student services including teacher and student travel, subsistence, allowances, tuition, and supplies. If students are not eligible for CETA funds, they may get assistance from BIA or from their employer agency, such as Norton Sound Health Corporation.

All of these Fly-Ins take place in a centrally located village, with neighboring villagers flying in. The class stays together for three days, then takes class assignments home for the following week. The third week they join each other again.

While in session, the class puts in long days, starting at 9 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m. (with breaks for meals).

In this way the necessary contact hours and homework assignments are completed to satisfy requirements for college credit in six weeks and no one has to fly into town, or be gone from their responsibilities long at a time.

So far, the classes which fly in are: Business Math, Business Communications, and accounting, each for three or more credits. The teachers for these classes are Jim Sullivan, Nancy M. Mendenhall and Francis Gallega. In addition a group of students have formed a cluster at Unalakleet for secretarial studies, using local instructors. So far 30 students earned credits last year, and approximately 45 to date this year.

In order to accomplish all the necessary organization of people, materials and travel schedules, super cooperation has been necessary between all the parties involved. A village person volunteers to be a liaison to set up housing, classroom, meals and so on.

The village contributes the

heated classroom, usually a community hall. All villagers who have students as guests in their homes get a stipend from Kawerak or other sponsoring agency. Working students may also pay their own way.

At this date, everything rolls along smoothly with the only frustration being plane scheduling held up by weather! The roughing out of the procedure and elimination of most problems was accomplished during the experimental period last year by Kawerak Educational Services when five instructors took the first college class (Village Management) to six villages, and awarded the first credits.

An informal cost analysis

done last spring by Kawerak indicated that this arrangement of classes was the cheapest way they could provide training to villagers. Only the university at Fairbanks, which has state subsidized fees, is cheaper, and of course it is too far away for many students with jobs or responsibilities in their villages.

Foster Aviation of Nome has been very cooperative in providing the elaborate transportation necessary with low-cost charters.

Meanwhile, in Nome, the new Community College is offering 18 other courses, all in the evening, ranging from Math to dog-sled building to Technical Writing. Each is worth three credits, on a pass-incomplete system. That is, no one flunks! If a person doesn't get the material the first time, they stay with it till they can pass.

Kawerak Educational Services, under Linda Ellanna's direction, is also sponsoring five full-time village students from Wales, Koyuk, Shaktoolik, and Savoonga in business at NWCC, and beginning O-J-T programs in media, counseling and auto repair, with more promised after the first of the year.

Plans for next fall at NWCC include more full-time clusters, one possibly in early childhood development. The director, Gatzke, encourages all regional residents to let him know what they can teach, and what classes they want. The purpose is to build a college sensitive to needs of the entire region.

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