

Shortened School Year Give Students More Off

By MARC OLSON

A shortened school year which allows students more time at home in the spring and fall is the major feature of Tanana Valley Community College's new Winter College in Fairbanks.

Also known as Winter Studies, the program offers associate degrees and many credits applicable to a four-year college

program in its shortened format.

The great advantage of month-and-a-half- shorter semesters is for those, especially from rural areas, who sometimes find it difficult to attend regular university sessions. Many are obligated to help support their families, hunt, fish, and do other work in their home areas, and usual university semesters take a large bite out of the short summer.

The Winter Studies fall semester begins on October 15 and goes until December 23, and spring runs from January 19 to March 31.

Nancy Hidden, a counselor at TVCC, emphasises that the shorter semesters allow those who have jobs, family obligations, or other reasons for needing more time at home, to fulfill those obligations and still continue their education.

Because the semesters are shorter, an associate degree, 60 credits, takes three years instead of the usual two. The course load is about 10-11 credits rather than the usual 15 or so.

Hidden explained that the program is "not less work, just less classes."

The total weekly class time will be a little longer in a "regular" program, because it is concentrated over a shorter time period.

The Winter Studies program will offer vocational and applied as well as para-professional courses.

Three year programs include: electronics technology, professional piloting, air traffic control, fire science technology, mineral and petroleum technology, business administration, construction technology, aviation administration, office occupations, food service technology, accounting, and construction supervision (1 year).

A number of para-professional courses are now being worked on, including para-professional counseling, general agriculture, electronics technology, and

drafting technology. Certification is also available in a number of areas.

The office occupations segment of Winter Studies is in a modular format. This is an individual study arrangement, using workbooks, tapes and other aids. Office occupations classes may be begun at any time and completed as soon as the student can finish the work. According to Dr. Walt Taylor, of TVCC, eventually all winter college classes will be done in this

modular manner.

A complete schedule for Winter Studies is still being put together, said Dr. Taylor, and will be ready for a booth at the Tanana Valley Fair in August, where students will also be able to enroll.