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Patrick O'Rourke

Karen Cedzo, interviewer

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Karen Cedzo said August 3 is the one year anniversary for Chancellor Patrick O'Rourke. When he first arrived at the University of Alaska Fairbanks he stated a number of goals. He has made some progress towards their realization. O'Rourke said the past year has been a transitional year. He said many of the goals go back to the previous administration and the existing faculty and staff. There has been an improvement on the governing process on campus. There has been a much better linking between administration, faculty and students. They have put issues before the assembly for their consideration. The major one was the FY 84 budgetary proposal which went through a very thorough review process by the assembly and the ASCA prior to coming to the executive council. O'Rourke stressed the importance of serving the students. Last year major steps were made to improve the campus. Better communication and a feeling that things are happening contributed to a defeat of a unionization of the faculty. Other areas of improvement include the summer sessions and Alaska Native Studies programs. O'Rourke would eventually like to see a trimester at the university, a consolidation of Native programs into a single program thrust and a restructuring of the School of Education into the College of Rural and Human Development which will reflect greater sensitivity to the Native population of the state. O'Rourke thinks the identity of UAF is becoming more defined. He said it has been a difficult transition from the time that this campus was the only University of Alaska to the standpoint where it is one of three universities. They will continue to put forth efforts in a number of areas. Cedzo said plans for the future suggest UAF will continue to move in new directions. O'Rourke said the overall future for UAF is positive. He said there is a growing acknowledgement that the three university campuses are somewhat different and have a different focus and have different qualities to their programs. When he came here he felt they cannot take a defensive posture toward development in Juneau or Anchorage but rather compete on their own merit. A couple of years ago a decision was made to open engineering programs in Anchorage. They have not seen a negative impact on the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The program is strong, the faculty is good and its reputation is growing and it is attracting students here on a continuing basis. O'Rourke has been with the University of Alaska system since 1971.

Cedzo reported on activities on campus.