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Ray Barnhardt, interviewee

Stephen Lay, interviewer

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Future Alaskan teachers and social worker professionals will be receiving a greater emphasis in cross-cultural education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Stephen Lay said Alaska is a multi-cultural society and its educational needs reflect the diverse cultural richness in the 49<sup>th</sup> state. To better meet these needs UAF has recently shifted its approach in teacher education. Ray Barnhardt is the acting dean of the new unit responsible for teacher education. Barnhardt said there will be a reorganization of what was the School of Education and the Department of Psychology and Sociology. The new college will be the College of Human and Rural Development. It will focus some of the resources of the university in areas dealing with professional training into a more cross-cultural and rural emphasis to address some of the issues and problems that exist unique to the state and develop as a focus of this campus. The College is asking for guidance and advice from outside the university. Barnhardt said part of the organizational plan presented to the chancellor was the creation of a policy advisory council for each of the three departments they have created. The departments are the Education Department, Human Services, and Rural Development. The councils will provide input and oversight by persons from outside the university community who are involved in the professional and applied fields that those departments will be addressing. Lay said members of the advisory boards will reflect the multi-cultural commitment of the university. Members will also be selected from different areas of the state. The new emphasis in cross-cultural education is designed to assist people in doing their job better in every district in the state – both urban and rural. Barnhardt said the urban setting in schools include large numbers of people from different cultural backgrounds originating from both inside and outside of Alaska. It presents a unique problem for the school system. They will be addressing those problems in particular, but still continuing to prepare teachers to work in an environment such as Fairbanks as well as out in the rural communities. Lay said the new cultural emphasis is not strictly just for teachers. Students preparing for social work employment will also benefit from this emphasis. Barnhardt said the approach they had had on some of their programs in the last few years when they tried to develop a cross-cultural emphasis has drawn heavily on other disciplines for methods and context. While they were dealing with some of those questions in the area of education some people in the psychology and sociology departments were also pursuing the development of programs such as social work programs and counseling programs that would have emphasis on the Alaskan environment. Lay said along with the reorganization there will be an internal evaluation of the programs and how they are meeting the identified needs of the state. Barnhardt said this coming year they will be involved with reviewing all of their current programs and curricula and determining where to place their emphasis with the resources they have. He anticipates there will be a shifting of emphasis to the point where there may be some existing offered degrees that will be phased out and new programs phased in.

Lay reported on activities on campus.