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Patrick O'Rourke at a Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce luncheon

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Series: University focus

University of Alaska campus in Fairbanks, Alaska

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Karen Cedzo said Chancellor Patrick O'Rourke recently spoke at a Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce luncheon. In recognition of the 60th anniversary of the University of Alaska the Chamber of Commerce held its regular luncheon meeting on the Fairbanks campus. Chancellor O'Rourke provided an overview of the institution, its present status and future direction. He cited the period between 1973 and 1977 as one of the most difficult. O'Rourke said he thinks Cutler, his immediate predecessor, had the most difficult task facing the institution in its recent history and that is breaking out the distinctiveness of the University of Alaska Fairbanks from its sister institutions and the system itself. It involved the establishment of its own management system, stabilizing and rebuilding of the enrollment during the pipeline downtime, and the addition of a number of new program elements. As a result of Cutler's efforts O'Rourke believes the University of Alaska Fairbanks today is a much more able institution, able to compete on its own merits with other institutions throughout the state and we have begun to establish a mark of excellence for their sister institutions and other institutions throughout Alaska to emulate. Cedzo said enrollment although a record this year, fell short of projections. Chancellor O'Rourke said the housing crunch caused many students to go elsewhere when they weren't assured of a place to live on campus. O'Rourke said they began a couple of new programs this year which they hope will benefit the state. They began the first Master of Science program in petroleum engineering. The Bachelor of Science degree in this discipline has only been around for two years so they are pleased to embark on the masters so rapidly. The School of Management has begun a new program in economics. The College of Arts and Sciences has established a program in applied linguistics. The School of Engineering has over the past year pioneered the delivery of engineering science courses to the North Slope by videotape. This past year they have taken steps to improve the quality of their program in education, social and behavioral sciences. They are attempting to build their summer and evening programs. Their summer enrollment increased by 55 percent over the previous summer. They hope to have increased numbers by the summer of 1983. In addition to three and six week sessions and they are set to embark on a full time semester system. O'Rourke estimated the 1982 economic impact of the university activities at 91.6 million dollars. He said they are trying to look at their role in international education. They are looking at exchange programs. He talked about the support for capital projects. They had a relatively successful season with the legislators. The Alaska Legislature approved two projects but they were vetoed by Governor Hammond. Cedzo said UAF commemorated the first day of instruction at the University of Alaska (September 18, 1922) with a week-long celebration.

Karen Cedzo reported on activities on campus and in Fairbanks.