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Orientation program for incoming students with Dr. Steve Roth and Fred Baker

1980s

Stephen Lay, interviewer

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Series: University focus

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Stephen Lay said for the first time the University will be offering an orientation program for new students. Orientation programs are not new to UAF according to Dr. Steve Roth who is the coordinator for Academic Support Services. It is the scope of this year's orientation that makes it different. Roth said in the past they have had smaller orientation programs aimed at specific groups of students. They finally felt they were missing certain numbers of students particularly freshmen who were not fitting into those special groups. They decided by combining resources they could offer a stronger program that would reach more students. Lay said another reason for offering orientation to all students is a change in the UAF body according to Fred Baker, director of Rural Student Services. Baker said they are finally getting to a point where the freshman students are eighteen years old and just out of high school. He said in the past most of the freshmen students coming to the university have been older students who had a certain amount of maturity who didn't require as much orientation as new students. That is changing slowly. This year they are going to full-fledged student orientation composed of things like some get together and instruction on university academic requirements. Lay said the program is designed to help students in a variety of ways. Roth said orientation involves a number of different programs combined together with different goals. We want students to quickly feel at ease on campus. One part of orientation is simply to make them familiar with different buildings and offices on campus, where the classrooms are, how one gets to the computer center, or how one finds a faculty advisor. Another part of orientation is help reduce a sense of loneliness. A certain part of it is social and getting to meet other new students. The final part of the orientation program they feel is very critical is learning about the academic programs at the university. This will help them so they will have some plan by the time they go to registration. Lay said this year the orientation program is being offered to the more than 700 new students. It starts on Saturday September 3rd and ends with the chancellor's barbeque on Labor Day. Rural and other targeted students will continue to enjoy the specialized support services such as Rural Student Services offered by UAF. Baker said the Native Student Organization will be doing a big brother, big sister kind of thing where the new freshman will be identified with an older upper classmen who has had some success at the university. Hopefully they will be getting their wise guidance and counsel. He said their role will be to be there to create a helping environment.