Bolson to Leave Kodiak College in May

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Kodiak College will see some changes in 2014. Long-time Director Barbara Bolson made the decision to retire this year and move closer to family in Washington.

Bolson leaves the college after more than 27 years in education, eight of those working here in Kodiak. When Bolson first moved to the island it was originally to take a job as an administrator at Kodiak High School, but after one year moved over to the college where she has served as director for seven years.

“I originally came to Kodiak for just a one year contract. But as many of us do, fell in love with the place, and one year led to another and this will be, I’m just finishing up my eighth year. So I stayed here a little bit longer than intended, but I have had a wonderful, wonderful experience. But it is time to get a little bit closer to family. I’m having a grand baby in May that I’m real excited about and so I want to be a part of that grand baby’s life. I had a real close relationship with my grandmother and she really had a huge impact on my life and I want to be that kind of grandmother to my grandchildren too.”

During Bolson’s time with the college, she and the staff helped the educational institution expand in many ways, including tripling the student enrollment and almost doubling the faculty.

“So I’m just really, really pleased. When I started we didn’t have a summer academy, which we now do. And offering distance classes, there were zero my first year, they increased over 400 percent in two years and so now we have a large component of our classes being taught via distance delivery. I think we’ve just done some amazing things and I’m very, very please and very happy. It’s the perfect time to leave and celebrate my successes and my friendships and turn it over to somebody else who can take it to the next level.”

As far as the Kodiak community goes, Bolson said it will be hard to leave such a supportive environment.

“I’ve learned so much, I’ve shared a lot with a lot of different people. I’ve made some of the best friends of my life and hope to stay in touch with them. I find this to be one of the most supportive communities for education and it’s just full of movers and shakers and people that care about the education of students. And I just couldn’t be happier with my experience.”

Bolson said she plans on leaving the college at the end of this academic year, in May. She said finding her replacement will be a nationwide search, and the committee for that is being identified now. Bolson said the search committee will most likely be made up of representatives from faculty, staff and support services of the University of Alaska.

“The committee is being appointed by the Chancellor and will be chaired by another community campus director. Gary Turner from Kenai Peninsula College has agreed to chair that search. And it will be open applications and will be advertised in local sources such as KMXT and Kodiak Daily Mirror and so forth as well as newspapers and periodicals that reach academic markets. So it will be a pretty broadly distributed application process.”)

Bolson said the hope is to have someone hired by fall semester, but there will be an interim director chosen until that time, or whenever someone is hired. Bolson said the interim director has not been identified at this point.