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Success Stories

The American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC)
Harvard Kennedy School is a place where ideas meet practice and where passionate debate never ends. At the Kennedy School an outstanding faculty is actively engaged in the affairs of the world and highly accomplished students from across the globe enroll in degree programs that meet their distinct needs.

The Harvard University Charter of 1650 which is still the governing document of Harvard today, calls for “the education of English and Indian youth,” making it the first University to offer an education to Native Americans. Caleb Cheeshshahteaumuck of the Wampanoag Tribe, Class of 1665, was the first Native American to graduate from Harvard. The Native students who attend Harvard each year are an incredibly talented, motivated, and diverse group of people from communities all across North America. Their dreams have carried them to one of the most unique and challenging educational institutions in the world.

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

AIGC will, once again, be attending the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, October 2–10, 2010.

We welcome sponsors, volunteers, donations for the silent auction, artists and performers who would like to assist us with this event.

If you would like to help out, please call the AIGC Development Department at (505) 881-4584.

Watch for updates on our web site (www.aigcs.org)

**The American Indian Graduate**

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A
as the President of the American Graduate Center
Board of Directors, I am encouraged and excited
to be a part of this dynamic organization that
has made, and continues to make, such a difference in
the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native stu-
dents all across the country. Since 1969, the American
Indian Graduate has provided scholarships and fellow-
ships, totaling over $44,000,000, to talented Native
students pursuing degrees and careers in all academic
disciplines, including medicine, law, science and engi-
neering. We view these scholarships and fellowships as
an investment that will ensure the future survival, pros-
perity and advancement of American Indian and Alaska
Native communities. Having been a recipient of funding
from AIGC (many years ago), I have personal knowledge
of how much of a positive impact higher education can
affect an individual.

Historically, American Indian and Alaska Natives
have been the least represented group among minority
students attending college in the United States. Many of
our students are the first in their family to go to college
and obtain their degree and are the role models for their
brothers, sisters and generations to come. These students
are the future of American Indian and Alaska Native
communities.

Donations to charitable causes in the United States
reached an estimated $307.65 billion in 2008. While
this may seem an outstanding amount of funding (larger
than the gross domestic product of some small coun-
tries), there is wide disparity among the foundations
receiving the funds. The primary source of philanthropic
donations remains individuals, estimated at 84% of all
gifts, with foundations accounting for 10% and corpo-
ations trailing with a mere 6%.

One public research organization recently reported
an analysis of national foundation grants awarded, by
ethnicity. Of the 1,238,201 charitable organizations
in the United States, only 7.7% of these organizations
were multi-cultural, receiving 2.7% of all charitable
donations; this group was followed by African Ameri-
can organizations with 1.7%. Latino-led organizations
followed with 1.6%, Asian organizations received 1%
and, in last place, were Native American organizations,
receiving a mere 0.7% of grants received. Of that .7%,
only a very small percentage was specifically designated
for higher education.

As information on our programs continues to reach
more and more students, the number of applicants need-
ing financial assistance has dramatically increased. We
have made considerable progress in recent years but we
have a great deal more work to do. Although AIGC’s
growth and development is a major challenge in these
days of economic uncertainty and shrinking budgets and
programs, we are committed to the higher education of
tomorrow’s Native leaders. ✦

Historically, American Indian and Alaska Natives have been the least represented
group among minority student attending college in the United States.
I don’t know that I have a suitable rant this issue; more likely, I can’t decide which rant to inflict on those with so little to do that they would read these columns. But, I do have a couple of things worth mentioning.

First, I want to thank Kate Shanley and Joann Sebastian Morris for their service to AIGC. They were part of the AIGC Board of Directors when I came to the organization and were very helpful to me in my first few years, and now have fallen to that mixed blessing—term limits. They leave a legacy of independence, experience, knowledge and rectitude. They didn’t always agree with me and that’s good. But, it all worked out and I know they will be watching if I misbehave in their absence. In addition, I want to welcome Governor William Anoatubby, of the Chickasaw Nation, and Danna Jackson, of Confederated Tribes of Salish & Kootenai descent, as our new board members. We look forward to benefitting from the experience and insight of these two very well-known and respected members of the national Indian community.

Second, I want to mention that AIGC is the beneficiary of a bequest from the late Jeanne Avegno of Hoboken, New Jersey. Ms. Avegno was a schoolteacher, the daughter of a sea captain, of all adventurous and romantic things, and, when she prepared her will, she asked her lawyer to find organizations emblematic of certain interests she had. So, unbeknownst to us, we were selected and just received her most generous gift in the neighborhood of $875,000. We will be saying more about Ms. Avegno in future issues.

Third, my wife (Vivian Arviso) and I went to the Indian Studies conference in Tucson put on under the auspices of our friend, Robert Warrior. The agenda alone was daunting and we approached the prospect of going to the conference with some anxiety, or at least I did. I have been something of a skeptic of Indian studies, having had over 30 years of redirecting the Indian studies-generated rage of a number of Indian students who were trying to calm down enough to enter law school and compete successfully. So, I must admit I was expecting the worst—more of that pathetic “Indians are superior to everybody else” stuff that we all hear too often. Instead, the sessions I attended were scholarly, thoughtful and sometimes even boring, in the way that scholarly sessions should be from time to time. Vivian is much more of a scholar than I, so she might not have been as surprised.

I did think that perhaps the inordinate attention to the thoughts of Gerald Vizenor and Leslie Silko might indicate that we need more serious writers to pore over (“more” in the sense of “additional”; who is more serious than Vizenor and Silko?). And, while I am not one who thinks that scholarly endeavors need to show a direct practical payoff, I did think that our Indian Studies peo-
people seemed, judging by the terrifically complicated agenda, a bit disconnected from the lives Indian people who live in the cities and in our communities. I hope some day Indian Studies can make more of a contribution to challenging—or validating—the working assumptions underlying both Federal Indian Policy and Indian Policy. I know I’m probably missing some good work being done, but I would like to see more challenges to orthodoxy coming from the academy instead of perpetuating outdated orthodoxy.

Finally, I want to thank the people who submit articles to our magazine, those that are published and those that are not. We want to highlight certain features of the world we live and work in, and occasionally raise provocative questions. In this issue particularly, I want to call attention to the work of Dr. Barbara Smith and her colleagues. A number of people worked together on an excellent and comprehensive report called, “Pathways for Native Students: A Report on Washington State Colleges and Universities.” This report provides the kind of baseline program information that is absolutely essential if we are to make the educational system more effective and responsive to the students we serve.

I urge, strongly, everyone to get a copy of this report and to do something like it in each state, so that we can have national baseline data and can interest people throughout the system in the quality of the educational programs they administer. The importance of the Pathways report is not just in the data, but in the broad base of people who got involved in the process and, hence, have a stake in the outcome. Who is next? Arizona? South Dakota? Montana? ♦

Footnote: in my last column I talked about a meeting with the Secretaries of Education and Interior, and ended by saying that if nothing comes of that meeting, it will be our fault. I have heard nothing since that meeting, which doesn’t mean that nothing came of it, but does mean that I don’t know what came of it. Probably my fault.

Sam Delaric
Nelson Locklear – Getting the Most from Your Education

by Duane Tobias

The Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) was founded in 1968, as a non-profit project of the ABA Fund for Justice and Education, expanding opportunities for minority and low-income students to attend law school. In 1998, Congress passed the Higher Education Amendments Act, creating the Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program, which is administered by the Council on Legal Education Opportunity.

CLEO is committed to diversifying the legal profession, by expanding legal education opportunities to minority, low-income and disadvantaged groups. Over the past 40 years, more than 8,000 students have participated in CLEO’s pre-law and law school academic support programs, successfully matriculated through law school, passed the bar exam and joined the legal profession. CLEO alumni, many of whom had less than traditional academic indicators of success, yet were given an opportunity to attend law school, are represented in every area of the legal profession; private law firms and corporations, law schools, federal and state judiciaries, and legislators across the country. Currently, three CLEO alumni are members of the United States Congress. The influence of CLEO alumni in the legal profession, throughout the country in general, is an indication of the important role CLEO has played in helping to provide a voice for underrepresented groups.

Nelson Locklear, a CLEO Associate and second-year law student, recently sat down with us to discuss his pursuit of higher education, as a Native American student, and the benefits he has received from the CLEO Program. Nelson, a member of the Lumbee Tribe, which is primarily located in North Carolina, has aspirations of becoming an attorney so he can help champion the rights of his people. The Lumbee are descendants of the Cheraw and related Siouan-speaking tribes of Native Americans, originally inhabiting the coastal regions of the state of North Carolina.

Q: What college did you attend and in which law school are you currently enrolled?

A: “I obtained a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Nursing, from North Carolina Central University, in December 2000. I am currently pursuing my Juris Doctorate, at the University of North Dakota School of Law. My anticipated date of graduation is May 2011.”

Q: What made you interested in pursuing law?

A: “After working as a registered nurse for several years, in the Army Nurse Corps and various civilian hospitals, I decided to pursue a graduate degree. Initially, because of my previous nursing experience, I was interested in obtaining a Master’s Degree in Public Health. However, after attending a Minority Recruitment Day at Wake Forest University School of Law, I became exposed to the vast opportunities a law degree could provide. I spoke with current students and faculty, and attended a first-year law course. This experience had a profound effect on me. I was motivated by those I had spoken with and what I had discovered about the flexibility of a law degree. My ultimate goal is to use my skills as an advocate for patients in the healthcare system. This realization began my process of researching various law programs. Incidentally, this is how I also discovered the CLEO program.”
Q: What steps did you take to prepare for law school?

A: “I registered with the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC). Through the LSAC, I was able to find information on various law schools and attend a LSAC Recruitment Fair, where I met school representatives and gained valuable information regarding specific application requirements. In addition, JAG Officers with whom I worked gave me advice regarding the application process and what I could expect from the law school experience. I also visited law schools throughout the Carolinas and Virginia to get a realistic expectation of how classes are conducted in the first year.

In preparation for the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), I found a relatively inexpensive prep course offered by a local law school. This course gave me the skills and practice I needed to successfully achieve the score I wanted on the LSAT.”

Q: What challenges did you face as a Native American student seeking a higher education?

A: “Higher education has always been a top priority in my tribal community. Thus, I have always felt supported in seeking further education. My experiences as a minority officer in the Army Nurse Corps also helped to enhance my self-image as a professional. I also expected that my Native American heritage to be a benefit in the admissions process because of the contribution I could make toward diversity.

However, during my first year of law school, I faced many challenges. Although there is a large Native American population in the region, I soon realized that I was one of very few minority students in my law school class. Many of the local population seemed amazed by my accomplishments (military, education, travel). Due to the rigors and time constraints of being a full-time student, I really do not have much interaction with the local tribes. However, my limited experiences have shown me that, among those tribes, I’m viewed as an “outsider”, because I am not from the local area. Knowing that I am the only member of my tribe in the school and within the local area has been frustrating at times and was difficult to overcome the first year of school. However, I have learned to embrace living in a different region of the country. Had I not been pursuing a higher education I would not have moved here or ever even considered visiting this part of the country. I have also made many close and lifelong friendships here.”

Q: Elaborate on how you discovered the CLEO program?

A: “I discovered the CLEO program by talking with other participants at the Atlanta LSAC Recruitment Fair. Once I was able to research the organization even more, I knew it was a program that would greatly benefit me both during and after law school.”

Q: What benefits did you receive by participating in the CLEO Program?

A: “Prior to beginning law school in August 2008, I attended the CLEO ‘Attitude is Essential’ seminar that was held in Atlanta. At that seminar, I attended lectures that introduced me to fundamental skills that every first-year law student must understand and implement. It allowed me to get a “sneak peek” of what it would actually be like to attend a law school class. I also learned the importance of networking and have made long lasting connections with other law students across the country.”

Q: What other CLEO seminars have you attended or plan to attend?

A: “I attended the CLEO ‘Mid-Winter Academic Enhancement’ seminar that was held in Washington D.C. That seminar allowed me to evaluate my first semester of school and pinpoint how I could improve my studying and exam-taking skills.”

Q: How have you been able cope with the stress of law school?

A: “Both having a strong social and family support system, and maintaining interests outside of law school, have been crucial to my success. For example, in addition to being a law student, I am also a Captain in the Army National Guard. Working as a Nurse Corps Officer one weekend a month keeps me focused and rejuvenated when I return to my studies. Taking a mental break from studying also allows me to keep everything in perspective. If I can make it through nursing school and through 10 years in the military, I know I can succeed in law school.”

Q: Now that you are actually a law student, what do you know now that you could not find written in books?

Continued on page 23
I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, as a result of relocation job training and assistance programs that my parents attended. They were introduced to one another by their job training counselor. My parents were far away from their home communities when they met. My mother left Pinon, Arizona, to attend Brown- ing Business School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and was sent to Salt Lake City for her first job experience. My father had left Aneth, Utah, to attend the American Technical Institute in Akron, Ohio, and had returned to Utah to begin his career. My father worked as a structural draftsman and my mother was a clerk for the telephone company. After they met, fell in love and married, I was born in 1974.

Eventually, my family relocated to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to explore job opportunities. I grew up in Albuquerque in a small apartment in the southeast part of the city. Our family expanded when my sister was born. My mother and father worked tirelessly at their jobs to support us, always trying to “make ends meet”, as my mother would put it. My father also did his best, but battled alcoholism throughout our childhood, which impeded his ability to maintain prolonged employment. It was often a stressful family environment with the challenges alcoholism brings.

My sister and I both attended Albuquerque public schools. My mother tried her best to become involved in our schooling and attended the Parent Advisory Committee meetings. The Indian Education Department staff members became familiar faces to our family. It was through these social connections that my mother obtained the educational resources we needed to succeed. I took advantage of them as often as I could. Early on, I realized that school could provide me with opportunities, as long as I took advantage of them. As I got older, I began to assist my mother in navigating the school system.

Each year, I spent the summer with my maternal grandparents in Pinon, AZ. There I could escape the stressful environment of the city. I was surrounded by family and exposed to the summer ceremonies that my grandparents religiously attended. My grandfather has been, and continues to be, an important figure within our community. He is a traditional healer specializing in Beauty Way ceremonies. During summer, my grandfather was often chosen as the healer for Enemy Way ceremonies within the surrounding communities of Pinon.
As my grandparents valued clan relations and the responsibilities that are inherent in those bonds, my cousins and I were also expected to participate in reciprocal relationships as members of the Many Goats clan. Therefore, we followed my grandparents as they offered support to clan relatives within our community. We were exposed to the importance of maintaining social ties within our community in this manner.

My clan sisters and brothers and I all became immersed in the Navajo language and culture during these summer retreats. We strengthened our ties to our grandparents and, with their stern but loving ways, learned life lessons that would never leave our hearts and minds. We were taught the importance of the Navajo language and maintaining reciprocal relationships with family. These important teachings would guide us into adulthood.

By the time I began high school, I was well aware of the importance of education and began to possess a desire to succeed. I worked hard and performed well academically. I also became involved in the Native American clubs at our high school. Due to my high involvement and academic achievement, I was asked to participate in the peer tutoring program at my high school. In the summer, I became a tutor to Native American youth attending summer school. At one point, I assisted in the classroom of my first grade teacher. It was rewarding and I enjoyed my involvement with young children. I was very successful and began to see my talent as an educator. It was at that point that I decided to attend college to become an elementary school teacher. I took advantage of an early admissions program with the University of New Mexico and was accepted during my senior year of high school.

At this point, I began to create long-term goals that I would work towards each year. I would envision myself accomplishing these goals and always knew I’d succeed. I never really had a doubt in my mind that my goals wouldn’t be reached. As I continued to pursue my long-term goals, I created short-term goals. I learned to view my life as a series of long-term goals with several series of short-term goals imbedded within. These goals ranged from assignments on the syllabus, scholarship application deadlines, appointments with advisors and other important dates.

I always tried to remain self-disciplined regarding work and school. As a result, I was able to complete my undergraduate degree without incurring any debt. The Navajo Nation funded me each year, without exception. I maintained my grade point average and did so while working 32 hours a week as the manager of a locally-owned educational toy store. My life was a very full schedule and I enjoyed every minute of it! My forward thinking resulted in my acceptance to Harvard University for graduate study during my senior year at the University of New Mexico.

Along the way, I received continual support from my family. At the beginning of each school year, I’d return to the home of my grandparents to receive protection prayers. Before I left for Harvard, I took part in the Beauty Way ceremony. Prior to sending off any important scholarship or school applications, I always returned home to make offerings with my grandfather. We made offerings to ask for assistance and, each time, I was supported. I have always greatly valued this special type of support and continue to believe that it is, no doubt, a large part of my success. To this day, I look to my grandfather for support in my educational endeavors. My mother has always encouraged and reminded me to maintain this type of spiritual guidance. My extended family has also played an important role by contributing to prayers for me, providing necessities for ceremonies and merely being present and thinking positively on my behalf. This is one of the most important types of support that my family has provided.

After I completed my graduate study at Harvard, I accepted an elementary teaching position within a rural community on the Navajo reservation. I had finally real-

---

We were taught the importance of the Navajo language and maintaining reciprocal relationships with family. These important teachings would guide us into adulthood.
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The U.S. Small Business Administration

Native American Small Business Resources

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created, in 1953, as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. The SBA recognizes that small business is critical to our nation’s economic recovery and strength, to building America’s future and helping the United States compete in today’s global marketplace. The agency has grown and evolved, but the mission remains the same. SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses.

The SBA provides services through a network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. In the finance arena, SBA acts primarily as a guarantor of bank loans. It also works to get government procurement contracts for small businesses and assists businesses with management, technical and training issues. SBA also makes loans to victims of natural disasters, not only small businesses but also homeowners and renters.

SBA specifically addresses the needs of Native American small businesses through the Office of Native American Affairs (ONAA) located in Washington, D.C. The Office of Native American Affairs ensures that American Indians, Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiians seeking to create, develop and expand small businesses have full access to the necessary business development and expansion tools available through the Agency’s entrepreneurial development, lending and procurement programs. Outreach activities include tribal consultations, development and distribution of promotional materials and attendance and participation in national economic development conferences and initiatives.

One such initiative is the SBA Emerging 200 (e200) Initiative, an executive-level training opportunity that has been expanded into 12 communities and, this year, will focus on Native American business owners. E200 has been a medium for developing opportunities for those firms that have been negatively impacted in this challenging economy.

The nine-month training includes approximately 100 hours of classroom time, per participant, and provides the opportunity for small business owners to work with experienced mentors, attend workshops and develop connections with their peers, city leaders and the financial community.

Listed below are the 2010 Native American e200 communities:

- Denver, CO
- Phoenix, AZ
- Albuquerque, NM
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Gallup, NM
- Tulsa, OK
- Portland, OR
- Santa Ana, CA
- Milwaukee, WI
- Seattle, WA
- Tucson, AZ
- New Orleans, LA

The SBA, through its Office of Native American Affairs, in cooperation with the Office of Veterans Business Development, is implementing a new Veteran’s Native American pilot project that will provide the Native American veteran community with outreach and education. The project will also assess and determine the need for further targeted outreach.

Information on SBA programs and services is available at: http://www.sba.gov. The Office of Native American Affairs website is located at: http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprogams/naa_NM. Contact information:

John C. Woosley, District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration, New Mexico District Office, 625 Silver Avenue, SW, Suite 320, Albuquerque, NM 87102
Telephone: (505) 248-8225 or (505) 248-8238, Fax (505) 248-8246, Website: www.sba.gov/nm
The Revival of Minority and Endangered Languages, Using Māori Language as a Case-Study

by Professor Tania Ka’ai

In February 2010, Professors Tania Ka’ai and John Moorfield, from the Institute of Language Revitalisation for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages, at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, were hosted by several of the Pueblo nations in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During their short visit, they shared their experience and knowledge of the work that they have been doing embracing modern technologies to ensure the survival of the Māori language.

The Institute of Language Revitalisation for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages builds on the foundation of Te Ipukarea — The National Māori Language Institute, established in July 2008, and is being hosted by AUT University on behalf of a collaboration of seven partners. The partnership includes four universities, one polytechnic institution, one wānanga (Māori tertiary institution catering to Māori learning needs nationwide) and Te Ataarangi, a community-driven Māori language program operating in many parts of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The Institute of Language Revitalisation for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages comprises three interconnecting entities:

1.0 Development & Training Programme for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages Resource Development

This is a training centre for language communities to develop Language Revitalisation Plans, as well as print and digital resources, using the Te Whanake model as a framework, to populate their own languages and build cultural knowledge. Groups can purchase a license for the templates, to begin populating them with their own languages.

2.0 Postgraduate Studies and Research Programme

This is the “hub” and centre for postgraduate students looking to increase their knowledge of topics associated with language revitalisation — pertaining to their own languages. Currently, we have Māori students in this hub. Some of these students also work on projects in Te Ipukarea. Our hope is to attract students from the Pacific and Pacific Rim, such as First Nations/Aboriginal/Native peoples, into the hub to work on projects that include the development of print and digital resources for their own languages.

3.0 Te Ipukarea — The National Māori Language Institute

The development of print and digital resources in Te Ipukarea and research into Māori language revitalisation strategies will continue, as this will add to the

Time out with organizers from ILIA after a presentation in Sante Fe.
Māori language case-study feeding the curriculum and content for the Development and Training Programme for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages Resource Development. Postgraduate students in Māori language and culture will continue to work on projects, while pursuing their higher degrees (see www.teipukarea.maori.nz and www.tekaharoa.com).

The goals of the The Institute of Language Revitalisation for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages are to: build capacity and grow a critical mass of emerging indigenous scholars committed to language regeneration and the revitalisation of their own languages, develop and help implement long-term language revitalisation plans and guide others to create language resources using Te Whanake as a model and case-study.

Indigenous organisations/communities/nations can send individuals or groups, for any length of time, to AUT University to learn about the model and receive training on how to utilise the model to help in the revitalisation of their own languages. They may also elect to send postgraduate students to study aspects of their respective languages as part of their long-term revitalisation plans. Attendees will be hosted by the two professors and the staff.

For the past 30 years, the Te Whanake Collection of Māori language resources has been developed by Professor John Moorfield and is being used as a foundation model for the Development and Training Programme for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages Resource Development. The Te Whanake series and its attendant digital resources are the largest single set of teaching and learning resources for the Māori language. The digital resources that are part of the series are probably the largest set of ‘free to access’ resources for the teaching of any minority language in the world (see www.tewhanake.maori.nz). The homepage is for seven different websites containing a range of different Māori language resources. The homepage explains the purpose of each of the seven websites.

The Te Ipukarea team is compiling resources that are relevant to a modern world. Not only are there print resources, but the expansion into digital means that learning Māori language has now become mobile, thus keeping it real, relevant and fun.

Staff and students involved in the work of Te Ipukarea.
For the last 20 years, Professor Moorfield has also been working on a new Māori language dictionary; first published in 2005. Written on new principles, the *Te Aka Māori-English/English-Māori Dictionary and Index* has encyclopedic entries and language items important to communicating in a Māori context. There are also explanations of key concepts central to Māori culture. Comprehensive explanations for grammatical items are included, with usage examples, as are idioms and colloquialisms with their meanings and examples.

At the end of 2006, the dictionary was placed online for free access. Since then, many new headwords, meanings, example sentences, photographs and audio clips have been added to the online dictionary. The work continues. Meanwhile, the number of visits to the Te Aka Māori dictionary website has steadily increased and, currently, more than 100,000 visits are recorded each month. You can try out the dictionary at [www.maori-dictionary.co.nz](http://www.maori-dictionary.co.nz), to see the potential for your own Native languages by searching for ‘bellbird’, ‘Huirangi’, ‘mana’...
or any English or Māori word. Where photo or audio icons appear, you can click on them to see some of the advantages to access of an online dictionary.

A special interface has been built for the online dictionary that is designed for mobile phones with Internet access. This version is selected automatically. An app for the iPhone and iPod Touch is also available. Installing the app on these devices means that the dictionary can be used without being online.

Professor Tania Ka’ai is the Director of the Institute. She is of Māori heritage on her mother’s side, affiliating to Ngāti Porou and Ngāi Tahu, and Hawaiian (from the island of Maui) on her father’s side. Professor Ka’ai grew up in a family shaped by a cultural landscape drawn from both her Māori and Pacific heritages. As an Indigenous scholar teaching and researching in a university, Professor Ka’ai uses the cultural values transmitted to her by her elders and mentors, from both her Māori and Pacific families, as an epistemological framework that informs her own academic writing and teaching within the university academy.

Professor Ka’ai’s research is primarily in the field of Māori language revitalisation initiatives, strategies and developments; Māori epistemology and the transmission of Indigenous knowledge; Indigenous peoples as agents of change in the transformation of institutions, organisations and their communities and biographies of Māori repositories of knowledge.

She has worked in tertiary education for 23 years; 14 of those in university education as a Professor. Her experience as a Dean of School, Director of Te Ipukarea and now of the new Institute, coupled with her ability to bring people together from language communities and look after them appropriately, provides the right style of leadership required for the Institute of Language Revitalisation for Community, Minority & Endangered Languages.
In an unprecedented step, a small group of colleges recently produced a report, *Pathways for Native Students*, describing what nearly all the colleges and universities in Washington State are doing in Native education. Supported by The Evergreen State College, Northwest Indian College, Grays Harbor Community College, Antioch University-Seattle and Muckleshoot Tribal College, the report was funded by grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education. This unusual partnership of a tribal education center, a private college, a public community college, a tribal college and a public, interdisciplinary liberal arts college came together out of a common commitment to serve Native students and create seamless pathways between their degree programs.

One of the first things the group recognized was a need to better understand the state of Native education in Washington. Thus began the research and eventual publication of the Pathways for Native Students report. It was the first step on what they hope will be a continuing statewide journey to raise awareness and improve Native student success in higher education.

The 138-page *Pathways* report offers a concise but comprehensive look at academic programs, public service initiatives and student support services at 44 of the state’s colleges and universities, both two and four-year, and public and private institutions. It also describes pathways from high school programs designed to encourage students to continue into higher education.

Usually, diversity reports are put together by a state education agency, covering only one educational sector (K-12 or Higher Ed, two or four-year public institutions). As valuable and important as they are, these reports typically have very limited scope and circulation. The *Pathways* report, produced by the institutions themselves, is very different. The report authors say it was important to not produce a dry, faceless list of programs, numbers and contact people. “We wanted,” they said, “a richly textured description of Native education efforts in this state, a vivid description of what’s working and worth emulating, and an honest, hard-nosed account of what needs improvement.”

Looking at the higher education system across the different types of institutions is unusual, but connecting to K-12 is even rarer. All of this makes sense from the standpoint of answering the big questions about overall Native student educational success. Recognizing the importance of creating seamless pathways from high school to college, the *Pathways* report was purposely written to connect with a recently (2009) published study commissioned by the State Legislature, *From Where the Sun Rises: Addressing the Educational Achievement of Native Americans in Washington State*, on the K-12 Indian achievement gap. Together, these two reports offer an unprecedented look at the whole education system and the systemic issues that need addressing, if Native college attainment levels are to rise.

In addition to detailed profiles written by the 44 institutions, the Pathways narrative describes enrollment trends, trouble spots and best practices. Vivid portraits are included of powerful initiatives already underway,
A Sample of Innovative Programs to Support Native Student Success

- Building the pipeline for college through K-12 programs that increases college awareness and readiness such as GEAR UP, Talent Search, Upward Bound, MESA, Native Early College High Schools, summer academies for high school students and dual enrollment programs
- Tribal Administration and Tribal Enterprise Management ATA degrees, at Everett Community College, supporting tribal enterprise and economic development
- The Cultural Resource Management program, at South Puget Sound Community College, supporting cultural preservation and resource management efforts
- Reservation-based programs, such as the 20-year effort at The Evergreen State College, for working adults and other place-bound Native students
- The Grays Harbor Reservation-based program that offers a high-touch, high-tech hybrid distance learning AA degree to students at a half dozen rural reservations
- Undergraduate programs preparing students for graduate and professional school, such as the Fairhaven College/Western Washington University Law and Diversity program and the Native health sciences programs at University of Washington and Washington State University
- Culturally relevant first-year experience learning communities, at NorthWest Indian College, that attack trouble spots in the curriculum such as developmental education
- Graduate programs tailored to tribal needs, such as the American Indian Entrepreneurship MBA at Gonzaga University, the Tribal Masters in Public Administration program at Evergreen, the Creative Change Masters degree at Antioch University and the two education degrees offered through Heritage University
- Robust professional and graduate programs at the University of Washington aimed specifically at Native students, such as the Native Voices Masters program and exemplary efforts in the Law schools at all of the law schools in the state

with hope that many will learn from these rich examples and replicate them.

How was it accomplished?
The Pathways report was developed over a period of about one year. It began with gathering information from all the colleges in the state related to what they are doing in Native education. The institutions were essential to making this happen. When asked to participate, a few said they had nothing to report and several others never responded despite repeated efforts to reach them. But, most of the colleges and universities were delighted to join the initiative and devoted substantial time and energy to producing robust profiles of their efforts to serve Native students. It was amazing how widespread and varied these efforts were.

Institutions were sent a common template, along with a completed profile as a model. They were asked to provide descriptions of their academic programs, public service initiatives and student support programs serving Native students and communities. The profiles that the 44 participating colleges developed became Part 2 of the Pathways report. To speed data collection, IPEDS data was used for baccalaureate institutions and the authors relied on the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) for data on all 34 public, 2-year institutions. In retrospect, more complete demographic data on Native students in baccalaureate institutions could have been gathered, if institutions had been asked individually and if they had also been asked to identify, as Native American, those students who reported themselves as Native American/white, Native American/African American and Native American/Asian-Pacific Islander. IPEDS reports as Native American only those who do not report other race groups as well, which seriously undercounts this population. The SBCTC data for community and technical colleges included all these students.

Two of the lessons learned in securing these institutional profiles were about the importance of repeated follow-up and the need to contact the right office. Approaching the institutions through the President's office was usually the best strategy. When that approach was used, the President usually delegated the task to an appropriate person with the authority to cross internal institutional boundaries to secure the information. When individuals lower in the organization were approached, they had more difficulty securing buy-in from others in their institution. It was not easy for many

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2009 State Supported Community and Technical College Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American &amp; White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American &amp; African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American &amp; Asian Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
institutions to gather the comprehensive information, since it was scattered in many places. Most found it illuminating once they brought all of their institutional data together. When the authors realized that a few were under-describing their work, additional questions were asked and more information came forward.

After receiving the institutional profiles, site visits to institutions that looked especially noteworthy were scheduled. The plan was to feature distinctive programs at these institutions in more extensive profiles in the report narrative, Part 1, of the report. It was surprising how very seriously the institutions took these visits. The site visits were valuable in helping flesh out the descriptions. The report development team came away from the visits with a deep appreciation of the extensiveness and commitment behind their efforts.

The report development team itself was a critical component in making this report possible. We were a voluntary team of four. Each of us brought different things to the project. Barbara Leigh Smith was the report lead, overall point person and official “nag” on the many details of gathering the information and navigating the report production process. A 35-year veteran and longstanding leader in higher education, Smith had an intimate knowledge of Washington’s colleges and universities. In the mid 1980s, Barbara created the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education at Evergreen State College, which became a center for various undergraduate reform efforts, especially around learning communities and diversity. One of the formative experiences that she carried into this project was from the Minority Student Success Project in the early 1990s. That experience showed her how important it was to triangulate information on diversity efforts, across many different offices in colleges and universities, to get the complete picture.

Nadine Bill (Upper Skagit), from Northwest Indian College (NWIC), brought years of experience, with Indian education and the tribal colleges, to the report team. As Director of Institutional Research and Planning, she also brought an empirical eye to the work, coupled with careful attention to including tribal perspectives and the considerable innovative work going on within tribal colleges. Her NWIC colleague, Dean Justin Guillory, also generously shared his rich dissertation information on what works in Native student success strategies. This gave the report solid grounding in the larger literature on Native student success.

Without the participation of Kayeri Akwes (Mohawk), Policy Associate, and Loretta Seppanen, retired Director of Research and Analysis, on our team, the report could not have been written. They provided access to the State Board for Community and Technical College rich databases and reached out repeatedly to develop the profiles for Washington’s community and technical colleges that, in the fall of 2008, served 4,632 Native American/Alaskan Native Students (FTEs), with Native American / Alaskan Native Faculty & Staff percentages as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of College or University</th>
<th>Native American/Alaskan Native Students (FTEs)</th>
<th>Percentage of Native American / Alaskan Native Faculty &amp; Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-year public</td>
<td>4,632</td>
<td>1.6% Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-year public</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>0.8% Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-year private</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.7% Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal College (NWIC)</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>57% Faculty + Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pathways Report Recommendations

There are 29 federally-recognized tribes in Washington. While 26% of the U.S. population is under the age 18, the Native American population under the age of 18 is 33%. The percentage is even higher on many reservations in Washington. In 2005, 13% of the overall Native American population, age 25 and older, in Washington, had bachelors degrees - compared with 23% of the white population. An alarming piece of information found is that the number of Native American high school graduates, who go directly to college, has decreased, from 52% in 1998 to 37.8% in 2003. High school completion rates...
Many current efforts in Washington State institutions reflect what the literature suggests as best practices for Native American student success. Some of these strategies are: consulting and engaging tribal communities, providing connections to family and culture, supporting positive Native American identity, finding Native American role models or mentors in the student body and the faculty and staff, providing comprehensive and integrated student support services, using culturally relevant curriculum and teaching, and tailoring programs to fit student schedules and other specific personal needs.

An Overall Change Strategy
There was a larger goal than just to write and publish a report. As Lummi Tribal Chair, Henry C. Cagey, noted at the press conference held to launch the report, “there’ve been many reports on the need to improve Indian education. A report is only a report unless something is done with it.”

One of the important aspects of this “report” is that it is being planned and managed as more than a report. The intent is to promote learning, dialogue across and within institutions and action. There is an overall change agenda, with detailed dissemination and communication strategies, to build momentum. We are determined to make the most of this opportunity. At a time when many programs are on the chopping block due to the economy, this effort couldn’t be more timely.

Carefully distributing the report to the colleges and universities, Indian leaders and agencies and organizations is an important part of our strategy. When the report was first published, a press conference was held at Daybreak Star Indian Center in Seattle. The four presidents of the sponsoring institutions convened the press conference. In addition to media representation, important leaders of tribal organizations and local tribes attended. Shortly thereafter, each of the participating institutions received multiple copies of the report for internal distribution. The mailing was sent to college and universities president’s offices with suggestions on where they might want to distribute the report. Key leadership offices such as the Provost, VP for Student Affairs, Multicultural Offices, Student Programs and...
Instruction were suggested, along with copies for the Library and the Office of Institutional Research.

“Institutions varied in the way they responded to the initial mailing,” said report author, Barbara Leigh Smith. “Some institutions distributed the report quickly and widely, but this was not always the case. Institutional attention to the initial report mailing seemed to be highly correlated with their response to the dissemination conference and the institutional discussions held (or not held) afterward.”

The Dissemination Conference

We organized a conference in conjunction with the report’s publication, bringing depth and networking to the dialogue and learning to the issues, with strategies for improving Native education. A one-day dissemination conference was held at the most central location (Seattle–SeaTac Airport) about a month after the report was sent to the institutions. Participants could also attend a one-half day pre-session with longer workshops. The conference quickly filled up. Originally planned for 150 people, the conference was expanded to accommodate 260 attendees. The audience was broad and included more than 30 colleges and universities and representatives from more than a dozen tribes, as well as hefty representation from the K-12 sector. We were delighted to have both upper administrative leaders such as deans, vice presidents and presidents, as well as Native student recruiters, faculty and others who directly serve Native students. All participants received copies of the Pathways report and the K-12 Achievement Gap study, From Where the Sun Rises.

The conference began with the presidents of the sponsoring institutions giving a combined keynote address “Leadership Matters”, with each president responding to the Pathways report. The gathering was structured around the report, with sessions featuring distinctive programs, solutions to identified trouble spots (hiring & retaining Native faculty & staff, developmental education, under-representation of Native students in certain fields, etc.) and organizational approaches that enhance planning for Native student success. In addition, highly participatory sessions were offered where the participants brainstormed actions to move forward.

Responses to the Pathways Report

Fifteen hundred copies of the Pathways report were printed. The first printing ran out shortly after the dissemination conference; the report is now in its second printing.

A follow-up survey indicated that 98% would share the report with others. In terms of its overall value, respondents gave the report a 4.8 value on a 5 point scale. 88.1% said the report was “very valuable”, with an additional 7% saying it was “somewhat valuable.” Respondents noted that the most valuable aspects of the report were:

- Having all this information in one place. The report’s comprehensiveness was repeatedly mentioned as highly valuable, since so much of this information is scattered and unavailable elsewhere.
- The statistics.
- Information on best practices.
- Information on the cultural issues facing Native students. Insights into the dynamics of education in tribal communities.

Conclusions about What Works in Washington State

- Leadership and data-driven planning
- A long-term commitment to Native student success
- Tailoring educational programs to specific Native student populations
- Having a diverse, competent and caring faculty and staff
- Collaborating with tribes to understand their needs and interests
- Building cultural relevance into the curriculum
- Cultivating a sense a place for Native students
- Sound and engaging teaching approaches
- Using assessment to guide planning and continuous improvement
- Identifying and addressing impediments to student success in specific trouble areas
As a student, I understand how grueling and rigorous the study of law can be. It is an experience that one can only fully grasp as an actual student. Although books are great resources, the study of law can only be experienced firsthand.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for future lawyers?

A: If I could make one suggestion to any aspiring attorneys, my biggest one would be to begin networking as soon as possible. This can be anything; talking to a local attorney, visiting a local law school or researching the field of law you wish to pursue. The practice of law is a social profession and the earlier a person is able to hone his networking skills, the easier it becomes to develop as both a professional and a well-rounded person. I would say that my strongest asset in law school has been my eagerness to attend various events, both locally and nationally. Opportunities abound! While it does take effort to stray outside your comfort zone, the payoff will be tremendous both socially and professionally.

Q: What are you doing presently?

A: I am currently in the spring semester of my second year of law school. My immediate plans involve applying for summer internships. As of now, I am currently applying for legal intern positions with various firms, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services. In addition to my legal studies, with an upcoming promotion to Major, I am also preparing for additional military duties in the Army National Guard. I encourage everyone to get the most out of their education, particularly other Native Americans like myself.

To download the Pathways report, go to: www.evergreen.edu/nativeprograms/reports/pathways

For information on the dissemination conference, go to: www.evergreen.edu/nativeprograms/conferences/pathways

(Duane Earl Tobias is Law School Academic Coordinator for the Council On Legal Education Opportunity at the American Bar Association in Washington, DC.)
Future Leaders Are Among Us

By Christa Moya
2009 Gates Millennium Scholars, Monument Valley High School

In February of 2009, Diane Fuller (Navajo) was awarded the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars (AIGC Scholars) Ambassador of the Year Award. This prestigious honor is given to individuals who demonstrate the inspiration, knowledge and skills to empower American Indian youth to reach their academic dreams and help them achieve success in their communities and society.

“Participating as a Reader on the selection committee was an amazing experience. Reading the stories shared by Native youth from across the country reaffirmed my belief that our future leaders are among us. Being honored as AIGC Scholars Ambassador of the Year was a very humbling experience. It’s rare that educators are honored at any level for their commitment to education. All that we do is for the success of our students; therein lies our reward”, said Diane.

Diane is an educator and advocate currently teaching Honors English and College Prep at Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona. She also serves as the English Department Chair and National Honor Society (NHS) Adviser. In addition, Diane is a full-time doctoral student at Arizona State University in the Educational Leadership Program.

Diane became involved with the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) initiative in 2005, when she recommended Simon Chief, who became a recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship. Soon after, Diane realized the importance of reaching out to many more students like Simon, who have achieved academic excellence and demonstrate leadership potential by participating in community service and extra curricular activities. Diane provides support and guidance to help make a difference in her student’s lives. She truly believes in providing access and opportunities to Native students and educating individuals who work with our youth, by sharing her lessons learned with administrators. Throughout her five year involvement with GMS, Diane has learned some lessons about helping students through the GMS Nomination process. She would like to share the follow-
inviting best practices insights with nominators, recommenders and educators:

• Invite current GMS scholars or alumni to speak to students about their transition to college and their experiences as Gates Scholars.
• Host a GMS workshop at your school and invite students and their parents to participate.
• Encourage students throughout the nomination process. Continuously support and motivate students through gentle reminders!
• Collaborate with TRIO Upward Bound and other programs that introduce students to college opportunities.
• Teach students how to organize a portfolio with college and scholarship applications. Once the students decide where to attend college, it is amazing to see them independently organize all the correspondence from that school.
• Encourage school administrators and educators to make themselves available to students before school, during lunch, after school, evenings and/or on weekends, whenever possible. Active students have hectic academic and extracurricular schedules and usually need to be accommodated as they begin the intense application process. After some guidance, the students will become independent and can assist their peers.

• Encourage underclassmen to begin thinking about planning for college and scholarships. Plant the seeds early! Provide students with practice applications so they can visualize what is needed for college or scholarship applications. Early outreach will help students prepare and engage in leadership roles and community service activities.
• Involve English departments and teachers. The eight required essay questions can be turned into writing props. This practice will allow students to receive some critical feedback from their teachers.

• Students applying for GMS can form a club. Students can plan to meet before school, during lunch, after school, evenings and/or on weekends to work on their nomination packets. Students can mentor and motivate one another to complete the process.
• Review each student’s nomination packet for completion, prior to submission!
• Celebrate together. Once everyone has submitted their nomination packet, celebrate the accomplishment.

Last, Diane attributes much of the recognition and success of Monument Valley Gates Millennium recipients to the support she received from the school administrators like; Principal, Gillian Vormittag; Associate Principal, Jack Gilmore and Counselor, Becky Gilmore. These three individuals were instrumental in expanding the pipeline to Native youth by providing opportunities for students to gain access to funding opportunities like the GMS Program.

Diane made a difference! In 2009, eleven students from Monument Valley High School were recipients of a Gates Millennium Scholarship. Diane encourages nominators, recommenders and educators to nominate a student for the Gates Millennium Scholars Program and make a difference today!

“Participating as a Reader on the selection committee was an amazing experience. Reading the stories shared by Native youth from across the country reaffirmed my belief that our future leaders are among us. ...”

FORD FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

Fellowships are offered for research-based study in the sciences and the humanities to students planning a career in teaching and research at the college or university level. Fellowships are offered at the following levels: PREDOCTORAL DISSERTATION POSTDOCTORAL

Fellowships include a stipend and an institution allowance for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships. Application deadlines are in early November. For online applications and detailed information see the Web site at: www.nationalacademies.org/ford
Meet Our Newest Board Members

by Susan Duran

The newest members of the American Indian Graduate Center were nominated and elected in January of 2010. We are proud and honored that these two outstanding individuals have enthusiastically agreed to serve on our board.

Danna R. Jackson, Esq.
Danna Jackson grew up on the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Flathead Indian Reservation in western Montana. Ms. Jackson received her B.A. in 1993 and her J.D. in 1996, from the University of Montana. She is a member of the District of Columbia and Montana bars.


Ms. Jackson is also a visiting instructor at the University of Montana Law School, teaching Indian Gaming, Contemporary Issues in Indian Policy (Summer 2008) and Indian Education Law (Summer 2009). She has been listed in 2009 and 2010’s list of Best Lawyers in America in the area of Native American Law.

Ms. Jackson is a consultant to Akin Gump, where she advises tribal clients on issues regarding Indian gaming, taxation, economic development on Indian lands, housing, water settlements, education, tribal trust, transportation and appropriations.

Prior to joining Akin Gump, Ms. Jackson worked for Senator Tim Johnson, D-S.D., who serves on the Senate Banking, Appropriations, Energy and Natural Resources, and Indian Affairs committees. As an advisor to the Senator, most of her work focused on Indian affairs and appropriations matters during the 107th, 108th and 109th Congresses. Prior to working on the Hill, Ms. Jackson was a staff attorney for the National Indian Gaming Commission and practiced law in Great Falls, Montana.

William Anoatubby
Bill Anoatubby began work for the Chickasaw Nation in 1975 as its health services director. A year later, he was asked to direct its finance department. In October 1978, he was promoted to the position of special assistant to the governor and controller. In 1979, he was elected as the tribe’s first Lt. Governor. Governor Anoatubby was elected to his first term as Governor in 1987. In his first term, Governor Anoatubby established goals of economic development and self-sufficiency for the Chickasaw Nation and its people. He became the 30th Governor of the Chickasaw Nation when he was elected to the position in 1987. He has since been re-elected to serve each term, and began his sixth term in office in 2007.

When Governor Anoatubby was first elected governor in 1987, the Chickasaw Nation had approximately 250 employees and annual operating outlays totaled less than $11 million. Today, the Chickasaw Nation has more than 10,000 employees and capital outlays in excess of $350 million. Governor Anoatubby has focused his administration on health care, education, quality housing and economic development.

Governor Anoatubby was recently selected as co-winner of the inaugural Native American Finance Officers Association’s “Tribal Leader of the Year” award. He shares this award with John Feliz, Chairman of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians. ✦

Congratulations and Welcome!
The Alumni Connection

by Susan Duran

Class of 1988
Mr. Robert L. McAnally (Assiniboine/Crow) J.D., University of Montana
“AIGC is one of the finest (and only) organizations available to assist American Indians in their difficult quest for higher education. I appreciate your assistance. Keep up the good work!”

Class of 1998
Dr. Elizabeth A. Verdure-McDougall (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) Ph.D., University of North Dakota
“Thanks for the assistance during my time in graduate school.”

Class of 2005
Mr. Christopher D. Mora (Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana) M.P.A., Harvard Kennedy School of Government
Mr. Mora was funded by AIGC in 2004-2005. He is currently serving as Judge Advocate for the United States Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps.

Class of 2009
Ms. Jessica A. Barris (Pascua Yaqui) M.A., San Diego State University
“I graduated with my Master’s in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, with a specialization in Technical and Professional Writing. I want to thank you for your financial support during my graduate studies. Because of your scholarship, I was able to graduate debt-free. You have made a HUGE difference in my life and I hope you will continue to offer scholarships to American Indian graduate students!”

Class of 2009
Ms. Kelly Huddleston (Cow Creek Band of Umpqua) J.D., University of New Mexico
“I would like to give AIGC a huge THANK YOU for making my legal education possible, because it is unlikely I could have done it without your assistance. And please be assured that once I have become a fully-employed lawyer, I will remember AIGC and try to assist you in furthering your mission as much as I am able. Thanks again.”

Class of 2010
Ms. Brenda Lee (Stingerie) Lopez (Walker River Paiute) M.S., Grand Canyon University
“I wanted to let you know that I have graduated from the Grand Canyon University Graduate Program in Addiction Counseling. I was not funded during my time at GCU, but one year previous, AIGC funded me while at Argosy University where, unfortunately, I had to drop out due to my husband’s job. I re-entered the work force and was employed at Grand Canyon University where, later, I started their program. I have been accepted into Walden University for my Ph.D. in clinical psychology and I will start September 7, 2010. I will be resubmitting another application for funding soon. Thank you so much.”

Class of 2010
Ms. Renee Roman Nose (Cheyenne-Arapahoe) Master’s – Interdisciplinary Studies, Oregon State University
“As a past recipient of an AIGC scholarship, it is my distinct pleasure to notify you that I have met all degree requirements, defended my research and am now a proud graduate of Oregon State University, with a Master’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. My major was applied anthropology, focusing on language and cultural preservation, and my double minors were in art and ethnic studies.

I appreciate the support given to me by AIGC and look forward to returning the gift.” ▲

Note:
To ensure that we have all your current information, please take a minute to visit our web site (aigcs.org) or send an email to (susan@aigcs.org) to update your information (be sure to include your previous address so we know we have the right individual). As always, feel free to let us know what path your life is taking.
I was born in Paola, Kansas to Lester (Maalhsckia) and June Kastens McCoy. My parents are both wonderful people, but they divorced when I was around 2 and a half years of age. My father has lived around Paola his entire life, as that is where the remainder of his family lives; my mother and I moved into a trailer house on her parent’s farmstead outside Herndon, Kansas. The time on the farm was just what someone like me needed! Two of my uncles and their families lived on the same farmstead and I had a great time playing with my cousins Diet and Jude. They were great companions and we spent pretty much all day outside — with the exception of Saturday morning cartoons and Sunday morning church.

My mother and I lived on the farmstead until I was four and a half, when my mother remarried and we moved to Junction City, Kansas, to begin life as part of a new family. Our new family consisted of Marvin Hesterman and his two teenage sons, Phillip and Terry. We remained in Junction City until my mother became pregnant with my little sister, Beth; at which time it was decided that a move out of the city was in order to raise Beth and me. Our next destination was Meade, Kansas. Meade was a great choice — a small community where I could ride my bike on the street and play with my classmates without my mother worrying about where I was. I just knew to be home at noon for lunch and five p.m. for supper every day.

I had a great deal of freedom and I credit my mother’s parenting skills to my success in life. When I was very young, she once told me that I couldn’t catch the birds that were landing in the yard. It took time and determination, but one day I brought a live bird back to her (not a baby bird, but a full grown adult). I don’t remember my mother ever telling me again that I couldn’t do something. She only provided support from a distance, letting me make my own mistakes and whispering gentle advice now and again. 😊

I graduated from Meade High School in 1993. I was more interested in shooting, camping and working than I was in studying. Once, in high school, in order to raise a grade to a D, I took a book home — other than that, my books stayed in my locker. I know this drove my mother and my stepfather nuts, as they were both schoolteachers!

After high school, I enlisted in the US Air Force and served in Wyoming, at F.E. Warren AFB. My Air Force time was great and I was quite comfortable serving my country, but my cousins, who were both attending Kansas University, prodded me to get out and go to school. I accepted the challenge and began the Civil Engineering program at Kansas State University in August of 1996, graduating in 2001 with a BS in Civil Engineering.

It wasn’t until my senior year of college that I found out that I was a member of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma. An aunt of mine had been trying to prove for years that our family members, on my paternal side, were indeed tribal members, based on the La Cygne Journal of October 7, 1871. Once I received my roll card, I became very interested in my Native heritage and started attending the annual pow wow. My father gathered most of the items that I needed to be a gourd dancer and my mother made my shawl. I am most proud of the wooden box that my father purchased from a tribal member in which to store my regalia. A close second is a fan, made from a golden eagle’s wing, that my father also had made for me.

Once I started attending the pow wows every year, I was introduced to Jim Battese, a tribal counsel member. I expressed interest in helping the tribe with their
construction endeavors utilizing my civil engineering knowledge. A year later, I found myself appointed to the Board of Directors of Tahway Construction, the tribe’s construction company.

After graduating KSU, I followed my then girlfriend of five years, to Fort Worth, TX. She had also attended KSU, graduating two years before me, with a degree in Wildlife Biology. After graduation, she accepted a position with the Fort Worth Zoo. The economy was strong in the civil engineering field, with 100% job placement from KSU. I accepted a position with Carter Burgess (an engineering firm headquartered in Fort Worth). Jana and I married in 2001 and started our life together in Fort Worth.

While working in the city, Jana and I realized how we longed to return to the country to raise a family. Within that same timeframe, I decided that I wanted to go to school to become a chiropractor. Chiropractic medicine had helped me greatly since high school, when I had a couple of automobile accidents that affected my neck. After the accidents, I experienced headaches and the only thing that helped them was an adjustment from the chiropractor. I also enjoy helping and visiting with people. I don’t know why I didn’t pursue a degree in chiropractic from the beginning; maybe I thought that going to school to become a doctor was a bit overwhelming and out of reach.

Graduation took place in August of 2008. Earlier in 2008, our first child was born, a beautiful and wonderful little boy named Cade Apeehkwa (Nighthawk) McCoy. We opened a chiropractic clinic in Belt, MT, where I practice 4 days a week. On Fridays, I practice at the Nah-tos Health Center on the Rocky Boy Reservation. Special thanks to the Rocky Boy Health Board and the staff at Rocky Boy; they have been wonderful.

The greatest accomplishment for me was to graduate with a doctorate degree in the top 10% of my class, while driving 90 miles round trip per day and still being able to maintain a good relationship with Jana. I am a very driven individual, so I thrive on challenges. Just showing up day after day is a major part of the battle. The key is to set small goals every week. After you accomplish one goal, set another for the next week and then just keep going until you see the light at the end of tunnel.

If you, as a Native American, are interested in graduate school and passionate about what you will be studying, go for it! You can do anything you want to do. If you work hard and apply for scholarships, you will get them. Financially, I received a great deal of support from the American Indian Graduate Center; they were more than generous during the three years I was in graduate school. Additionally, I received financial support from the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma’s Education Committee, Association on American Indian Affairs, Whitehead Scholarship Committee and the Texas Chiropractic Auxiliary. I also borrowed a great deal of money to cover the expenses the scholarships didn’t cover. I encourage everyone to follow their dreams, even if it means taking on student loans. It is an investment in yourself and your family’s future. Advisors should encourage prospective students to follow their dreams and realize there is no limit on what they can accomplish! Native students have more funding opportunities than most nationalities and should take advantage of them.

My extended family provided a great deal of emotional support throughout my time in graduate school but, the one person who sacrificed the most is my wonderful wife, Jana. Jana is the inspiration that kept me going through the hardest times. I am fortunate to have a wonderful best friend and great wife all in the same person. Jana had our second child on May 14th, 2010; a gorgeous little girl that we named Makena Kintiwa (golden eagle) McCoy.

I also had the support of a Fort Worth chiropractor who mentored me before and during school. Dr. Mark Bronson is a Texas native and a third-generation chiropractor with hands of gold. Doctor Bronson is a wonderful individual; many thanks to him.

It is also VERY important to keep a regular exercise regimen; this is vital for your spiritual, mental, physical and emotional well being. Even if you only have 20 minutes a day, devote this time to cardiovascular exercise. Cardio is where you will reap the most benefit for the limited amount of time you will have.

Now, it’s your time to shine — go catch your “bird”! ✶

If you, as a Native American, are interested in graduate school and passionate about what you will be studying, go for it! You can do anything you want to do. If you work hard and apply for scholarships, you will get them.
Arlene Tachine entered Penn State’s American Indian Leadership Program in the College of Education straight from the Navajo Reservation, near the small town of Cuba, N.M. The rest of her life’s journey has been more circuitous.

Arlene said, “I developed a passion for aviation when I was six or seven years old, because I lived in a very, very rural environment. We were still using a horse-drawn wagon and my parents would drive us to a little trading post with a single-engine aircraft that was used to bring in supplies. The man who owned the aircraft, James Nelson, was a missionary. One day, I got really sick and had to be flown to the hospital. I remember being strapped in and the next thing I saw was the instrument panel light up like a Christmas tree — and I fell in love with aviation!”

With her passion for aviation, Arlene joined the army, at age eighteen, as a aviation aircraft technician. Her military tour of duty took her to Germany, Colorado, Virginia, Alabama, Delaware and Alaska. After 9/11, while teaching in New Mexico, she was mobilized to Tallil, Iraq, where she served as technical inspector, crew chief and combat medic. “Two times I nearly didn’t make it back to the United States from my mission in Iraq,” she calmly states.

When Arlene retired from the army, about three years ago, she rejoined her husband, Alvin, and three daughters on the New Mexico Navajo Reservation and, once more, began teaching secondary students. Due to her daughter’s learning disability, Arlene also began graduate studies in special education. Later, witnessing the educational challenges throughout her community, Arlene decided to change her graduate focus to educational leadership.

In the summer of 2008, Arlene researched and applied for the American Indian Leadership Program at Penn State.

“I received an acceptance letter, with Dr. (William) Hartman’s signature on it, in April of 2009,” she said. “It was so exciting for me and my family. I believed it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance, so I took out some of my retirement, packed my truck and moved across the country. It was a privilege to meet the American Indian Leadership Program fellow students and I was honored to be among the best Native American Indian educators.”

After spending a year in Pennsylvania, Arlene graduated from the AILP with a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership this past summer and returned to New Mexico.

“The people in my community are all proud of me. I brought back my knowledge and education — all that I’ve seen and heard, the people I’ve met. I brought it all back to my community, especially to my students,” she said. “They’re amazing. And the looks on their faces! I sent them pictures of Penn State and they were amazed, ‘That’s so far away. Were you really there?’”

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“... I see the pulmonary branches and alveoli example,” my tenth grade son said, as we looked at a nearby tree, to review what he learned at a First Responder’s course he took in school. “The lung starts as a main tracheal trunk and branches to the two bronchial. They branch off into smaller and smaller airways. These end in the alveoli, the leaves.” He saw it and he got it.

I understood, right then and there, that comparing myself to him at that age, coming from the Navajo reservation, I never got it. His education far exceeds my own at that age. His motivation at this age blows mine to smithereens.

Of course, I lived in Shiprock, NM, on a farm of alfalfa and fruit trees, caring for livestock. I was introduced to my many relatives and their lifestyles in the heart of the reservation. My mother, a retired registered nurse, and my father, a WWII veteran and retired carpenter, influenced me and my outlook on life. I also benefited from growing up the youngest in a large family, with seven brothers and sisters who showed me many things. We cherished what our parents taught us on the farm, along with Navajo traditions. Moreover, I also saw how they struggled and had to make tough life choices. These experiences motivated me to get an education and look for ways to better myself. I worked hard in high school and headed to the University of New Mexico (UNM), where I majored in Biology and minored in Chemistry. With these credentials, I applied to the UNM school of Medicine (UNM SOM). Needless to say, I got in.

I got through medical school with the financial help of the American Indian Graduate Center and tribal scholarships. Medical school was as hard as you’ve heard it is, but well worth it. I found the amount of information to learn enormous but doable. I had many mentors through undergraduate and medical school, all whom showed me what could be accomplished, not only how to navigate the academic side of school, but political challenges along the way.

I was able to find an Internal Medicine position in Denver, Colorado. I met and worked with many fine colleges and attending physicians. I was, and still am, very grateful to these individuals who allowed me to become a better physician. Without these teachers, I would not be the caring doctor I am today.

I find the beginning of my thirteenth year in private practice still exciting. I have helped, saved and inspired my patients to learn as I care for them.

I find the beginning of my thirteenth year in private practice still exciting. I have helped, saved and inspired my patients to learn as I care for them.
Diabetes is a very serious problem for Native Americans and Alaska Natives and is on the increase, sometimes in epidemic proportions, within Native communities. Here are currently 23.6 million people in the United States, or 8% of the population, who have diabetes. For any population, the genetics of diabetes is certainly complex, with a number of genes contributing somewhat to the overall risk. As with so many common diseases, any hope of finding a single gene responsible for susceptibility to diabetes gave way, long ago, to a more realistic approach that presumes genetic complexity.

Diabetes is a very serious problem for Native Americans and Alaska Natives and is on the increase, sometimes in epidemic proportions, within Native communities. Once considered an elders’ disease associated with adults aged 35 or older, children as young as 4 years of age have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, and it is estimated that more than 60% of Native Americans will be diagnosed in their lifetime. Research in recent years indicates that many Native people are genetically predisposed to diabetes but also shows that changing one’s lifestyle can help prevent or delay the onset of the disease.

• American Indians and Alaska Natives get diabetes more often; these two groups are more than twice as likely as whites to have diabetes.
• Fourteen percent (14%) of Americans and Alaska Natives, aged 18 and older, have Type 2 diabetes.
• Diabetes is the #1 cause of kidney failure, causing almost half of all cases in the United States, and is the fourth leading cause of death in Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Over the last thirty years, researchers have compiled detailed health and genetic information about one group of Native Americans in particular—the Pima Indians of the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. This population has the highest known reported prevalence of diabetes anywhere in the world; half of the adults have Type 2 diabetes. Nearly all of the adults with diabetes are overweight. The Pima Indians also tend to have low metabolisms, which, together with a sedentary lifestyle and high-fat diet acquired in recent years, may predispose individuals to being overweight.

The Pima Indians of Mexico, who are genetically similar to the Pima Indians of Arizona, have a more active lifestyle and a low-fat, lower calorie diet. They also have a much lower incidence of diabetes than their relatives to the north.

Studies of these two groups of Pima Indians—one in Arizona the other in Mexico—support the idea that individuals can lower their risk by changing their lifestyles, despite their genetic background.

What is Diabetes?
Diabetes mellitus is a pancreatic disorder, where the body cannot produce or process insulin. Insulin is used by the body to break down blood sugars and starches into energy. Although the exact cause of the disease is unknown, it is thought that the increase in obesity and inactivity in today’s culture is increasing the incidence of diabetes. Genetics is also a big factor in who will get the disease. There are two types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2.

Type 1 Diabetes
This type of diabetes was originally known as juvenile diabetes, because it’s usually diagnosed in children and young adults. In this form of the disease, the body does not produce insulin at all.

Symptoms of Type 1 diabetes include: nausea and vomiting; frequent urination, with large amounts of urine being produced at one time; unexplained weight
There is no cure for this type of diabetes, but it can be kept under control by supplying the body with the right amount of insulin through pumps, injections or pen injections. Monitoring the blood sugar level is extremely important for people with Type 1 diabetes. If the blood sugar level is even a little bit off, complications can occur which are sometimes fatal.

**Type 2 Diabetes**

This type of diabetes is more common. Insulin is continuing to be produced, but it’s not being properly used in the body. This type of diabetes normally occurs later in life. Symptoms of Type 2 diabetes include: slow-healing cuts and bruises; recurrent infections of the gums, bladder and skin; itchy skin; frequent need to urinate; increased thirst; tingling in the hands or feet; fatigue or blurred vision; high blood pressure; impotence; worsening eyesight and angina or heart attacks.

It is important to get prompt treatment if you suspect you have diabetes and to maintain regular checkups with your health care provider once you’ve been diagnosed. If not properly managed, diabetes can lead to several serious complications. Uncontrolled blood sugar levels can cause nerve damage, referred to as diabetic neuropathy. In the arms and legs, nerve damage can cause pain, tingling and numbness; internally it can cause constipation, erectile dysfunction and vision problems.

Treatment often includes oral medications or insulin shots but, depending on how severe the symptoms are, Type 2 diabetes care can simply include more exercise and a healthy diet plan. Diabetes supplies are available from several online manufacturers and many medical supply stores. For both types of this disease, a doctor will diagnose and then recommend a treatment plan. Various resources for diabetics can be found online, at hospitals and in support groups in your particular area.

Most Native Americans and Alaska Natives think it’s not a question of whether they’ll get diabetes, but when. With proper management, it’s not necessarily true that they will develop diabetes or, if they do, the disease will progress to the end stage.
the American Indian Graduate
Positive Program Results

Indian Education: A Culture-Based Intergenerational Approach
A Framework for Native Student Success

by Priscilla Buffalohead and Ramona Kitto Stately

In the fall of 1995, the Indian Education staff in the Osseo Schools of Minnesota began developing a program that would lead to higher high school graduation rates for Native students. By 2005, staff began to realize that the majority of these students not only graduated from high school, but went on to obtain advanced degrees far beyond the original expectations of the program. Over the past four years, 100% of the eligible students graduated from high school. Katie, Bois Forte Ojibwe, is currently President of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society chapter on the University of Minnesota campus. She is pursuing a degree in American Indian Studies, with an Ojibwe language minor, and hopes to teach the language to Native students. Jacqui, Sault Ste. Marie Ojibwe, is completing her degree in Recreational Sports Management from St. Cloud State University. Robbie, Bois Forte Ojibwe, is completing his program at West Point and Sara, Yankton Dakota, is working on her degree at Yale. Blake, Standing Rock Sioux, is finishing his degree in business and plans to continue at the University of Minnesota in a Master’s program. Kristen, Upper Sioux Community, finished her degree at the University of Minnesota in American Indian studies, with an emphasis on the Dakota language. Her younger sister, Tara, finished her degree at Upper Iowa University and will complete her Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology in 2010. Jeff, White Earth Ojibwe, will complete his Master of Business degree from the same institution.

These are but a few examples of the educational achievement of the Native students participating in the Osseo Indian Education Program. In a year when the State of Minnesota’s Native American students are dropping out at a steady rising level and the Success for the Future Program is focusing on Dropout prevention programs, Osseo Area Schools are showing huge successes. These achievements led the Secondary Indian Education staff to consider the factors that led to student success. Beginning with interviews with these students, and with their generous help, some intriguing results were concluded. These will be discussed at the conclusion of the article.

Program Background
The Osseo Indian Education Program began in 1990, with an American Indian Advisory Committee. The program began to take off in the fall of 1995, when a full-time staff member was able to identify all Native students in the schools and write funding proposals creating classes and activities for these students. At that time, over 100 students were identified as eligible for services and, over the next ten years, these numbers have gradually increased to between 175 and 200 students. Approximately 70% are Ojibwe, from reservations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and North Dakota. Twenty percent are members of the Dakota or Lakota Nations and the remaining 10% are Cherokee, Choctaw, Mohawk, Comanche, Koomeeay, Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk (Winnebago). The wide diversity of tribal backgrounds provides its own special challenges, as staff must not only teach from their own tribal backgrounds, but become informed about the tribal culture of students from this wide diversity of tribal affiliations. In search of suitable materials, the staff sought out official tribal web sites and the majority of contacts with tribal offices produced curriculum specific to each student’s tribal nation.

The program is housed at the Osseo Educational Service Center. The district is the fifth largest in the state of Minnesota, with approximately 22,000 students. The Native students are scattered in the 25 schools that encompass the entire district. The district boundaries include several communities located in the northwest suburbs of Minneapolis. These communities include
inner and outer ring suburbs, as well as established rural communities. The ethnic composition of the district is sharply split between what district officials refer to as east and west sides. East Side schools include lower income and immigrant families. The majority of these families are African-American, Hispanic, Asian and recent African immigrants. West Side schools are predominantly middle income Euro-American families.

Because Native students and their families live scattered throughout the district, attend many different schools and come from different tribal backgrounds, few families actually knew one another; therefore, the challenge to Indian Education staff members became creating a sense of community when none had previously existed. A starting point became the Indian Parent Advisory Committee, which had already been formed. The committee began to address this diversity by creating a mission statement upon which all members could agree. This mission became “to empower Indian students and their families to enhance their educational potential through special, unique and culturally related educational programming”.

**Intergenerational Decision Making**

As staff began to brainstorm program ideas, it became apparent that an intergenerational approach was the best approach for delivering educational services to this unique community. In tribal tradition, education took place in family and community environments, where generations of families taught and learned together. School districts typically separate the generations based on age; parents and grandparents are involved only to a very limited extent. Staff members also realized that parents and grandparents had to be actively involved in the decision making process. Their ideas had to be carried out in concrete ways, so they could see their ideas actually blossom. The staff surveyed parents and grandparents to ascertain the skills they could bring to the program. One parent could teach traditional, fancy shawl and jingle dress dance. She was hired, along with two other individuals to teach drum and men’s dance. The drum teachers came from the University of Minnesota, occasionally doubling as tutors for Native high school students.

When funds became available to hire a third staff member, and no individual with teacher credentials and knowledge of the Native community could be found, the staff decided to hire several parents to go into classrooms and educate teachers and students in the general school population about Native history and culture. Because the parents did not have teaching credentials, they were hired as consultants. Participating parents earned some badly needed additional income, experienced positive interaction with school personnel and, in preparation for their presentations, learned even more about their own cultural heritage.

Eventually, the parents decided that they wanted to take a college class on Indian history and culture so they could enhance their presentations. The idea then expanded to include Native high school students. At that time, no Native student had ever been recommended for the post-secondary options program in the district. By offering college classes, the program could sponsor their own post-secondary options. Since one staff member had already taught at the college level, she agreed to facilitate the first college offering and a local Native college agreed to sponsor the class. The Osseo Indian Education program, in partnership with this college, wrote a grant to help parents and students pay for the cost of processing college credits, books and other materials. The first class was taught in the home of one of the participating parents. Comfortable couches, coffee and dessert created an atmosphere far less intimidating than a formal classroom. Nineteen grandparents, parents and students signed up for the first eight–week summer class and eighteen finished the class. During the following two summers, two other classes were offered, taught by a Native professor from another local college. One high school student, who took all three classes, ended up with six college credits, enabling him to graduate from the College of St. Thomas in three years.

**Culture-Based Learning**

During the school year, staff offered Native students weekly and monthly culture classes, post-secondary preparation activities and advocacy. After school, weekend and summer activities greatly enhanced a sense of community, as most of the Native students, parents and grandparents participated in at least one, if not all, the activities. These activities replaced stiff formal meetings. In relaxed settings, parents and students could communicate about any educational issues they were facing in the schools. One staff member, hired in the fall of 2005, became so enthusiastic about offering culture history to Native students, she actually enlisted the help of her husband and traveled to all the secondary schools with a trailer. Inside the trailer were tipi poles and canvas. She designed a lesson whereby her students learned how to put up and take down the tipi. The follow-up lesson included teaching students about the math and science involved in erecting a tipi. It was also a great opportunity to break down and discuss stereotypes about tipis.
Culture-based learning came under attack when the Bush administration began implementing an educational policy called ‘No Child Left Behind’. Even though Congressional legislation provided federal funds for “culturally unique” education, those hired in the federal Office of Indian Education tried to make programs drop their culture-based learning in favor of traditional academic subjects designed to help students pass standardized tests. While the assimilation doctrine of ‘No Child Left Behind’ may have been embraced by other ethnic groups, Native students and parents had already had enough of “assimilation” education. The entire 19th century, and a portion of the 20th, was devoted to “assimilating” Native people. What they wanted was a chance to learn more about their tribal heritage, culture, cultural history and languages that were in grave danger of becoming extinct. Osseo school staff worked hard to align the request to teach Native students academics and maintain the culture-based learning in its current form, to retain their funding. They continued, however, to offer culture-based curriculum because the focus was beginning to reap high benefits in terms of student achievement.

The first activity that the elementary staff personnel, Priscilla Buffalohead, and the parents created together became a student-run business enterprise called Little Buffalo Crafts. For the past thirteen years, students have continued to run this business and have created a number of authentic traditional items. The items are sold at vendor booths during Indian education conferences, pow-wows and craft fairs, within the Minneapolis-St. Paul Indian community, and at select school events. The students earn points for making crafts and selling them and attending Saturday mentorship sessions throughout the year. These sessions are led by Indian Elders, community members and parents, who teach the students how to create particular items. One parent, for example, from the Carrier Tribe of British Columbia, taught students how to make moose hide baby moccasins. The Elders of her tribe provided the program with hand-tanned moose hide. The mentors are a valuable part of the business and program, because community Elders, artisans and parents, who attend art events, promote the Native student artists in the larger Indian community. Over the years, Native students and their families have gradually been introduced to an even larger community of Native people throughout the state of Minnesota.

Native students, who participate in the business, earn a paycheck every few months. The amount of money earned is based upon the number of points they have accumulated from participating in mentorships, creating artwork to be sold and selling at vendor booths. With the help of a district technology consultant, five participating students worked for eight weeks to create a web page on the Internet for advertising their business. Other students helped create a business catalog. Through participation, the students have learned a wide variety of skills; creating art (traditional utilitarian products), reaching by selling the product, carrying out basic principles of organizing and running a business, developing public relations skills and learning the fundamentals of web design. Several of the students participating in the student business enterprise majored in business in college.

Secondary students visit at least three college campuses per year and, as with every aspect of the program, we align this activity with our goal to enhance the community-based support for these students. The specific colleges visited are selected based on certain criteria. Only college campuses that specifically focus on nurturing “Native American community” are chosen. We determine whether or not they have a culture house, an American Indian dormitory floor for freshman or an American Indian Center. We ascertain whether or not our values, as Native peoples, are visible. Is there an
Elder Advisory Council and are there academic advisors available who are willing to help the students make the post-secondary transition? What scholarships and grants are available and do we have students there who have had positive experiences? At Osseo, these college visits begin in the seventh grade and, even though this seems early for some students, it becomes a long established, usual field trip. As the years progress, our students become familiar with the campus, the staff and the idea of going to college. The ideal college visit includes being toured by Osseo School district alumni, which is a common occurrence. A recent study done by researcher Karina L. Walters, Ph.D., of the Choctaw Nation, reveals that, as victims of historical trauma, we are less apt to react to stress in a negative way if we are a positively grounded in our identity as Native peoples. As we continue to expose our students to larger and larger Native communities outside the school, we continue to choose strong and proud Native American role models.

In The Four Hills of Life, Ojibwe Wisdom, Thomas Peacock describes our lives as extending over four stages. In all stages, we have different roles and responsibilities. Yet, one role that remains constant throughout all the stages is our role as a teacher. The Secondary Indian Education teacher understands that teaching requires a higher form of understanding; therefore, much of the classroom time is spent helping the students teach one another. A classic example of this can be seen in our storytelling lesson. Junior and senior high students learn about the traditional concepts of storytelling and have to then choose a traditional story to tell as a group. They each have a role as narrator, puppeteer or activity coordinator, in order to tell the story to the others. This project allows the students to be teachers and exhibit leadership in a community-based way, rather than “standing out in the crowd” or “rising to the top”, which is not a comfortable concept for Native Americans. Sometimes, we travel to elementary schools or other junior and senior high schools to share our culture and knowledge.

Another culture-based activity that evolved from staff and parent brainstorming is the Native Youth Garden that was planted in 1994. Under the supervision of Priscilla Buffalohead, for whom the garden is named, participating parents and students gather to prepare the soil and plant seeds in a garden space provided by the school district. These are special, non-commercial seeds – hybrids that are part of the original stock of seeds planted by Native gardeners for generations. Among many others, the seeds include Omaha Pumpkin, Moves Slowly Sunflower and Wild Goose Beans. These crops are planted in hills. Three sections of the garden are planted with corn, beans and squash. The fourth garden section is called the Healing Garden and is dedicated to healing plants Native people have traditionally used for the sick, both physically and spiritually. Healing plants in the garden include, among others; Prairie Sage, Sweet Grass, Sweet Flag and several varieties of Coneflower. A watch-er’s stage, used by Dakota women in their gardens, also became a part of the Native Youth garden. As the garden project evolved, staff students and parents became linked to other Native communities. Students shared their special seeds with the Upper Sioux Community, Fond du Lac College and the Menominee Reservation in Wisconsin. In October 2001, the garden project became the subject of a videotape, so other programs could launch their own Native gardens.

One of the most popular activities offered by the Indian Education Program is the bi-weekly drum and dance class. Parents and students have the opportunity to learn traditional songs, drumming and dancing. Students design their own regalia and, with the help of other parents, have the opportunity to display their creations at the annual Indian Education sponsored Education Day and Wacipi. The dance teachers are parents in the district and the most recent drum teacher is a member of the Ho-Chunk tribe. With experience garnered from the drum and dance classes, one parent has started her own regalia making business. Some students have won honors in competition dancing at local pow-wows. A smaller group of parents and students attend Dakota and Ojibwe language classes offered by the Indian Education Program. Because the classes are offered to entire families, family members can practice the language at home on a weekly basis. Some students have made presentations to the school board, proclaiming May as American Indian month in Minnesota, in their own Native languages. At least two former students are now completing their college degrees, with an emphasis on teaching Dakota and Ojibwe.

**Variables Leading to Native Student Academic Success**

Student success, traditionally measured in higher scores on standardized tests and college entrance exams, are generally correlated with education and income of parents. Neither of these variables was clearly present in the history of Osseo Native student success.

Most of the students came from families where high school was the highest level of education and almost all had, and continue to have, very modest incomes. Half of the students came from two-parent families and half came from single-parent homes. One mother, who never
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finished high school, became a leading member of the Osseo Indian community. While she had no diploma, she gave other students and parents the gift of her art and craft skills. She even made regalia for students who could not afford to have outfits made. Her son went to college, earned a certificate in auto body work and then decided to get a degree in business. He is completing that degree and planning to go to graduate school.

Former students, who had participated actively in the Indian Education Program from elementary through secondary school, were interviewed so they might be able to explain how the Osseo Indian Education program helped them in their post-secondary education. Two variables that stood out in their responses were; 1.) students had participated in the program and activities for several years and 2.) their parents had also been involved in the program and activities. Jacqui noted, “I really loved the family involvement that was supported through every activity the program offered. I am thankful for the many close friends I made through the program. I was very surprised, when I came to St. Cloud State University, that other Native students knew so little about their culture and were much less comfortable embracing their heritage and sharing it with others. I cannot imagine how different my life would be if I did not grow up with the (Osseo) Indian Education Program being part of my life. I feel incredibly lucky to have had it.”

Students felt that the culture-based program, in which they became actively involved, gave them a strong foundation for their identity. With a foundation they had not received in the core public school curriculum, came a sense of pride they gained from culture classes. They realized this land is truly theirs. They came to an understanding of the rich contributions their ancestors made to world life and culture and began to recognize a sense of belonging to Native communities that continue to make contributions to society.

Katie noted that, with the background of culture classes, “I am able to correct prejudices, when I am confronted with them, and able to educate people about their misconceptions of Native Americans. Without this background knowledge, I would not be the informed person that I am”.

Students further commented that because the evening and week-end activities allowed them to bond with other Native students and parents, they felt a sense of “community”. They noted that they did not want to let this community down, even though they were not pushed to embrace post-secondary education. Katie noted that the program motivated her to graduate from high school because she had “a community outside of school that could benefit from my going to college”. “That community”, she explained, “could feel proud of me and look to me to carry on my education with the tools they had given me.”

The program activities of Osseo’s Indian Education also introduced them to other small Native communities within larger institutions. Katie spoke of college visits being her favorite part of Indian Education because she got to meet Native educators and students on the college level, who could provide her with the same support she had received from the Osseo Indian Education community. Other Native college students commented on how important it was to become a part of the larger urban Indian community, through their student business and participation in local pow-wows.

Another integral part of the success of this program has been the support of the current school Superintendent, Susan Hintz. Susan has ensured that all staff is presented with training in order to understand the significance, history, legal aspects, current success and importance of the Indian Education Program. She has even gone as far as requiring all principals to either present the training to their staff or allow the Indian Education staff to present it. This training has not only created awareness and overwhelming support from the teachers and staff, it has also helped increase the number of Native American students we are identifying. In addition, every school door in the district welcomes students in many languages. Since 2007, those signs have included ‘welcome’ in the language of the tribes Indigenous to ‘Mni Sota’. This inclusion is a source of pride to our Native American students. The Osseo School district’s mission is to “inspire and prepare all students with the confidence, courage and competence to achieve their dreams, contribute to community and engage in a lifetime of learning.” The leadership of this district recognizes that, in order to fulfill this mission, we must actively understand and embrace cultural differences and value these diverse perspectives.

Besides parent involvement, identification with small Native communities within larger impersonal institutions, a sense of pride fostered by in-depth learning about Native history and community, from which they or their ancestors came, and support from the larger school community, the students attributed their academic success to loving and caring Indian Education staff. Tara, a graduate student in counseling, talked about how, while in junior high, a thoughtless social studies teacher made fun of the Dakota, her Nation. She walked out of the class in tears and met up with one of the
Indian Education parents, who happened to be working part-time at the school. She talked about how her loving Indian mothers—staff and parents—supported her throughout the ordeal. Tara noted, “The Indian Education Program was wonderful. It was a group of people outside the classroom but still in the education department, who I could talk to about things, go to for advice and just learn about my culture. The support I received from the strong women, who all seemed like second mothers, helped so much.”

Another former student, Jacqui, spoke about how she felt comfortable counteracting all the stereotypes and prejudices about Native people that she encounters on a daily basis. She feels proud that she can correct all these misunderstandings. She knows she had a very solid community support base. Successful Indian Education teachers create a loving and caring environment for their students that is crucially important in the future success of Native students.

Successful programs and successful students cannot be measured with performance on an impartial racially and culturally biased standardized test. The Osseo Indian Education Program, now nearly 20 years old, has the data to prove that cultural-based, parent-involved decision making actually works. It has produced students who have not only graduated from high school, but have gone on to college and graduate school, and who are planning to give back to the community that supported them. Paralleling the 2009 National Indian Education Association conference theme, we are doing our part in shaping the future of our wisdom keepers.

(Priscilla Buffalohead and Ramona Kitto Stately worked together at the Osseo School district. Priscilla Buffalohead, recently retired, was the staff person who created and nurtured this culture-based program for the Elementary Indian Education Program. Ramona Kitto Stately is the current Program Director of the “Success for the Future” grant for Secondary Indian Education and also the 7-12 Culture and Language Specialist at the Osseo School District. Ms. Stately is an enrolled member of the Santee Dakota nation.)
ized my educational goals and had decided to give back to my nation. I enjoyed teaching and began to take on leadership roles beyond the classroom. From that point on, I continued to teach in rural Indian communities in New Mexico and Arizona.

At each location, I continued to serve as a teacher leader working to improve our programs. School improvement became an important focus in my career. I participated in numerous projects involving curriculum development and teacher leadership. I also served as mentor teacher to new teachers entering the field.

As I continued to serve as a teacher leader, I felt an ongoing obligation to improve my knowledge base in the area of educational administration. I enjoyed serving as a voice for teachers, students and families who deserved quality education. Increasingly, I worked to become more articulate in order to continue to be an advocate for the children our schools served. These desires led me to pursue my second Master’s degree in Educational Leadership at the University of New Mexico.

As I pursued my administrative coursework, I became interested in Indian education and educational policies of the past and present. I especially enjoyed reading about historical Indian education policies and making connections with the experiences of my parents. As I became increasingly aware of the impacts educational policies have had on Indian communities, I felt compelled to hone my skills and eventually contribute to the research community. I became convinced that the issues Indian educators and communities face deserved scholarly consideration. I worked full-time and attended evening and weekend classes for three years and eventually completed the program and obtained my administrative license.

Throughout my career, I have often looked back to my graduation day at Harvard. I remember being in awe of the doctoral graduates as they were hooded by their mentors. I remember envisioning myself one day achieving that same educational goal. I imagined myself walking across the stage to be hooded and wondered what it would feel like. I believed in myself and knew it was a goal I could not let go; one day, I knew I’d achieve my dream.

As I pursued my career and educational goals, I continued to keep in close contact with colleagues and mentors from my graduate programs. I would seek their guidance and often learned of educational or career opportunities from their connections. Eventually, I crossed paths with a mentor from Harvard. He had taken a position at Arizona State University in the Educational Leadership department and encouraged me to apply. I applied and my mentor continues to assist me as a member of my dissertation committee.

I was accepted during the Spring of 2006 and was delighted to have finally begun to take the steps towards my lifelong dream. I was ready to begin coursework when my father was tragically taken from our family. I was stunned by my father’s death and was suddenly left with feelings of helplessness. I was overcome with sadness and immense grief and, to complicate matters, our family had to face the reality of the circumstances of my father’s death. As the individual responsible for my father’s death faced trial, we began the slow process of dealing with the wheels of justice within the U.S. District Court system. I spent countless hours working with Utah’s Office of Victims of Crime in order to assure the rights of my father and family were realized. I served as a voice for my father and family within the federal court system for two years, while balancing coursework and a full-time teaching position. At times, I thought of leaving ASU and returning to New Mexico to be closer to my family. I decided to finish my program and remembered the wishes of my father. He was always an ardent supporter of my education and had always hoped I would realize my educational goals. I decided to remain at ASU to honor my family and fulfill my personal dreams. It was a decision that was not easy to make. Many times, the stress of a full-time teaching position, doctoral coursework and family seemed too difficult for one person to handle. However, with the help of family and friends, I survived. My family provided the love and protection I needed, while my colleagues and members of my doctoral cohort kept me focused on my academic goals.

As I continue to work on my dissertation, I have learned that I am privileged to have been able to have the educational experiences that have shaped my life. I am grateful for the sacrifices my parents made in order for me to not only gain from public education but to also learn valuable life lessons from my grandparents. I feel that completion of my degree sheds light on the need to improve Indian education, while honoring the educational struggles our parents endured. With this realization, my work has become even more rewarding. I have come full-circle and I think my father would be proud.

(Danielle Lansing is an AIGC alumna and currently resides in Mesa, Arizona.)
Community Generosity

The True Spirit of Giving Back

by Susan Duran

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally-recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, California. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains, who share a common language and culture. The reservation is named after Santos Manuel, a great tribal leader, and consists of just over 800 acres of mostly mountainous land. Established in 1891, the San Manuel reservation is recognized as a sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Like other governments, it seeks to provide a better quality of life for its citizens by building infrastructure, maintaining civil services and promoting social, economic and cultural development. Encompassing gaming governmental operations and other enterprises, the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is one of the largest employers in the Inland Empire area and employs over 3,000 people.

The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians considers a quality education critical for the survival of their culture, and economic and cultural welfare. The tribe recognizes that educational attainment and achievement are critical to providing the skills and knowledge that all tribal members will need to ensure their survival.

San Manuel’s commitment to education also extends beyond the borders of the San Manuel reservation. In keeping with the tribe’s belief in education’s vital role for creating a vibrant and strong community, the tribe’s Department of Education also serves on advisory boards for several local educational organizations. In addition to the goal of creating broad-based educational programs, the tribe is also working actively working with San Manuel endowment recipients, including: California State University, San Bernardino; the University of California, Los Angeles and Claremont Graduate University.

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians contributes significant resources from gaming to various philanthropic causes, through its charitable donations, to others in the community. The tribe’s philanthropic generosity extends to local governments to improve roads, support local municipalities, fund fire and police services and to keep the community free from litter, all while beautifying the surrounding areas. As its economy has grown, the tribe has drawn upon its history, knowledge, expertise and cultural values to direct philanthropic giving, totaling in the millions of dollars, to Native American causes nationwide, particularly in the areas of education, health and economic development.

(At a reception in April of this year, AIGC was pleased to recognize a few of its outstanding contributors, including this generous tribe. Ms. Lynn Valbuena, Vice Chairwoman of the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians, attended the reception to represent the tribe.)
Arlene Tachine

Continued from page 30

Arlene says her goal is to make a difference as a school principal: “My motto is, ‘Know the Way, Show the Way, Be the Way!’ I want to be a bridge for my students, to fill the gap that exists because their parents never had an opportunity to travel and learn like I did. I want them to ask me questions and, as a leader, I want to have the answers for them.”

“We cannot do anything about the boundaries of the reservation. The mindset of the children is that they were born on the reservation and they don’t know how to look beyond that with a vision for the future. My vision is for Native American Indian children to learn that they can go beyond what they see; take a chance and make something of themselves; leave the reservation, travel the world and still be able to come home and share their life experiences with others, to give back to their people, like I am doing right now!”

New Staff Members

The American Indian Graduate Center is proud to welcome two new staff members this month; Melvin E. Monette and Steven H. Abbott.

Steven has accepted the position of Coordinator of Outreach and Student Services for the Gates Millennium Scholars program and was previously the Associate Director for Recruitment and Student Affairs for Harvard University’s Native American Program. Mr. Abbott holds a B.A. from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine and an M.A. from Dartmouth. Steve can be reached, via email, at steven@aigcs.org.

Melvin has joined the AIGC staff as Director of Graduate and Special Programs, leaving his former position as Director of Student Recruitment and Diversity, at the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Health. Melvin earned both a B.S. and M.S., from the University of North Dakota, and an Ed. D., from Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota. Melvin’s email address is melvin@aigcs.org.

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