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Native Tribal Scholars; Strengthening Families-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren; Native American and Indigenous Studies Annual Conference 2012

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Native Tribal Scholars; Strengthening Families-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren; Native American and Indigenous Studies Annual Conference 2012

Cedric Woods, UMass Boston Director –Institute for New England Native American Studies
Principal Investigator and Co-Chair of Executive Host Committee (NAISA)

Native Tribal Scholars

Native Tribal Scholars is a pre-collegiate initiative developed and run as a collaboration between the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the North American Indian Center of Boston, and UMass Boston (Institute for New England Native American Studies and Academic Support Services). Native youth in grades 8-12 consistently lag behind their non-Native peers on many key academic indicators contributing to fewer Native high school students adequately prepared for college. The goal of this initiative is to provide academic support to Native American youth in these age groups. This is a Massachusetts based summer residential program that focuses on teaching science, math and writing through a culturally relevant curricula. The program also has a academic year component.

Partners and Co-Contributors

North American Indian Center of Boston
Academic Support Services (UMass Boston)
Co-Principal investigator- Joan Becker, Vice Provost for Academic Support Services
Funder: The Office of Indian Education in the U.S. Department of Education

Goals

The goal of this program is to serve 60 students annually (counting both academic year and residential programs), with the expectation that at least 90% of participants will successfully complete a rigorous high school program of study and at least 95% will graduate with their ninth-grade cohort—a significantly higher rate than of Native students in Mashpee (72%) and in the BPS (50%)

Results and Next Steps

The NTS held its first residential program in the summer of 2011 and served 40 students, surpassing its goal of serving 30 in the summer. The program consisted of a six-week intensive residential program with Native-focused classes and workshops in language arts, math, science, public speaking, tribal sovereignty, media/film and Native culture. The NTS program has generated increased interest among its audience, who are looking forward to the upcoming six week residential program

North American Indian Center’s Strengthening Families Project-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

The elder years are often thought of as a time of rest and relaxation, the reality for many American Indian elders is that they have taken on the responsibility of raising the next generation of their family. The rate of grandparents raising families is significantly higher in the American Indian community. As a result of residing in the greater Boston area, many of these families are far removed from access to tribal resources that may assist them with this challenge. As such, they look to urban Indian organizations like NAICOB to provide assistance and support. Through this project, NAICOB and UMass Boston will assess and identify their greatest challenges and areas of need, followed by the development of workshops, focus groups, and a resource manual that connects them with the appropriate provider or program.

Partners and Co-Contributors

NAICOB
College of Public and Community Service (UMass Boston)
William Holmes, UMass Boston Senior Lecturer-Graduate Human Services
Sylvia Mignon, UMass Boston Senior Lecturer-Graduate Human Services
Funder: Administration for Native Americans

Goals

The goal of this initiative is to provide on-going sustainable support services and resources to grandparents in the Greater Boston Native American Community who are the sole caregivers of their grand children. These programs will focus on empowering these grand-parenting elders to meet the housing, education, healthcare and cultural needs of their grandchildren while strengthening intergenerational ties. By the end of the three-year project period, the project expects to positively impact the lives of up to 326 grandparents and their grandchildren..

Approaches and Methods

To accomplish this goal, the project expects to develop service resource guides, both online and printed; disseminate those guides through a myriad of sources; and provide workshops and training to complement the social services already provided by local agencies. By serving as the hub of this service and support delivery, NAICOB will ensure that the support network will be Native-focused and culturally sensitive

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association 2012 Annual Conference

The Native American and Indigenous Studies Association has become the premier organization for those in the field of Native and Indigenous Studies. With over 700 members, it is comprised of scholars from around the globe representing numerous indigenous peoples and their non-indigenous allies. While it has held several annual conferences, this is its first year in New England, something that was made possible only as a result of a multi-university (UMass Boston, UMass Amherst, Yale University, Harvard University, Dartmouth College) and tribal (Mohegan Tribe) collaboration. The 2012 conference will be held June 3-6 at the Mohegan Tribe’s reservation, the first time held on trust land, and also feature readings by regional Native authors and a reception at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. There are a record number of regional scholars and community members from the Northeast participating in this year’s conference.

Partners

UMass Amherst
Yale University
Harvard University,
Dartmouth College
Mohegan Tribe

UMass Boston’s Role

Our host responsibilities include identification of the conference site, development of the conference schedule, planning of New England Native specific tours and events with our partner, the Mohegan Tribe, development of the book exhibit, and development efforts to offset expenses related to the conference.

References and Resources

- Native Tribal Scholars: Building an Academic Community. Woods, Cedric, J. The New England Board of Higher Education. January 23, 2012
- NAICOB’s Strengthening Families Initiative: Supporting Caregiver Grandparent. Holmes, William. University of Massachusetts Boston. April 1, 2011
- Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Reid, Josh. University of Massachusetts Boston