American Indian Awareness Week 2007: Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures

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The United Nations in 1994 drafted its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and affirmed, “That all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind”. In keeping with this powerful statement the American Indian Studies program proposes to dedicate its 2007 American Indian Awareness Week activities to celebrating the cultural contributions of Indigenous peoples from North America, Hawaii and the South Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Australia. The week long activities will include presentations by Indigenous dancers, musicians, scholars, and a showing of films. American Indian Awareness Week has always been an event which strives to not only provide the Native American student population with the opportunity to connect their cultures to their college experience, but also serves as an outlet for the EWU non-Native students, faculty and staff to have a culturally appropriate and accurate educational exchange. Celebrating Indigenous Peoples and Cultures will take that learning experience to a global level.

According to the Academic Strategic Plan, Eastern Washington University strives to create an educational experience which encourages learning as exploration inside and outside the classroom 24/7 and learning rich in multicultural experiences. It also encourages partnerships with scholars, researchers, and artists. The proposed event, Celebrating Indigenous Peoples and Cultures is a reflection of these exact points. It will demonstrate Eastern’s continual commitment to embracing cultural diversity and will support the university’s 2006-07 priorities to retain students, especially student of color, by engaging them in the life of the university.
**Project Goal and Objectives**

**Project Goal**

The goal of this project is to present a week long series of events which will promote cultural diversity at Eastern Washington University with a focus on Indigenous peoples from North America and the South Pacific Islands. Also, to provide EWU students, faculty and staff the opportunity to seek out and share in a cross-cultural learning experiences outside of a classroom setting.

**Project Objectives**

Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures proposes to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To provide the Eastern Washington University campus, and the Cheney/Spokane communities, an opportunity to learn about cultures different from their own.
2. The activities will allow for a cultural exchange between Indigenous peoples.
3. To promote the development of a more global perspective of Indigenous peoples, their cultures and the contemporary issues they face.
4. To provide EWU students, faculty and staff with culturally diverse learning experiences both inside and outside of a classroom setting.
5. The series of events will contribute to the number of activities and events which promote cultural diversity on campus.

**Project Activities**
The proposed schedule of events for Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures will take place during Spring quarter, April 2007. It will kick-off with a day celebrating the dances of Indigenous peoples. Professional and college dance troupes will be invited to perform. Suggested dance performances included those from the Pueblo, Alaskan Native and Aztec cultures. Also, an invitation will be extended to the South Pacific Island students from Whitworth College to share the traditional dance styles of their various islands. Local Indigenous crafts people and artist may be invited to participate in the event allowing for an “Indigenous Global Market”.

The second day will be a lecture by the Native Hawaiian scholar, Dr. Haunnani-Kay Trask. Professor Trask is the former Director of the Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaii-Manoa in Honolulu. The author of four books and numerous articles on Hawaiian sovereignty and cultural struggles, she is one of Hawaii’s best known Native leaders and scholars. This event will be co-sponsored with EWU’s Women’s Studies Program and the Women’s Center.

Day three will provide an opportunity for the campus to learn about the current research being conducted by Indigenous communities concerning the role of education in protecting and preserving Indigenous languages and cultures. Panelist will include members of the EWU faculty and regional Indigenous scholars, educators and language/cultural preservation officers. Possible panelist include, Robbie Paul, PhD candidate, Nez Perce nation, LaRae Wiley, Okanogan Salish language teacher, Colville Tribes, Pauline Flett, Spokane Salish Language Program, Spokane tribe of Indians, Dr. Raphael Guillory, Professor, EWU College of Education, Nez Perce nation and Gladys So Happy-Wiltse, Yakama Cultural Program, Yakama Nation. It is hoped that the panel will also include someone to speak on the language immersion programs which have successfully been developed by Native Hawaiian communities.
The fourth day will be a film festival of movies whose themes focus on Indigenous topics. Suggested titles include, from New Zealand: Whale Rider, and Once Were Warriors, Australia: Rabbit-Proof Fence and Fringe Dwellers, United States: On the Edge of America and Smokes Signals, Canada: Dance Me Outside and Cowboys and Indians.

The final day will be a celebration of Native American music with on campus with a performance by nationally acclaimed local musician/songwriter Jim Boyd. The singer Chenoa, who is from the Seattle area, will perform traditional songs from the Native American Church. This event would also include an opportunity to showcase the musical talents of the Native students attending EWU as well as those from other area colleges and high schools. The goal of this day is to provide the campus with an exposure to the many genre of Native music.

All of the events will be free and open to the public. Area public schools both on and off reservation, will be encourage to bring their students to participate. Information will also be distributed to tribal elders programs inviting them to attend the various events.

**Project’s impact on the EWU 2006-07 priorities**

This project, Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures, will impact the EWU 2006-07 priorities on many levels. The event will reflect Eastern’s commitment to promoting cultural diversity on campus and can serve as a recruitment tool. Native American, Indigenous and other students coming from culturally diverse backgrounds will feel welcomed on a campus which honors and embraces their distinct cultures. It will also provide many photo opportunities which can be used in recruitment materials. Current Native American and Indigenous students will feel more accepted on campus and will be able to share a culturally relevant learning experience with their non-Native peers and faculty. This will contribute to the retention of these students by
making them feel culturally supported. The project will also provide a tremendous learning experience for students, faculty and staff. The various scheduled events link academic disciplines including, history, political science, education, anthropology, Native American/Indigenous studies, women’s studies, art, music and dance. It will promote a cross-cultural learning experience between EWU students and faculty with Indigenous scholars and experts, outside of a classroom setting.

**Potential for successful outcome**

The American Indian Studies Program (AISP) has provided culturally accurate and relevant programming for the campus for over thirty-five years. These events have consistently been on a grand scale and include the annual Native American Student Association Powwow, American Indian Awareness Week and AISP’s Annual Welcome Back Luncheon. The AISP staff has developed an extensive on and off campus support network to assist in developing the project. Outreach to speakers and performers have already begun with verbal interest and commitments from Jim Boyd, Chenoa, LaRae Wiley, and Dr. Trask’s booking agency. Members of the Native American student body are very excited about the project and have volunteered their time to work on it.

**Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration**

The project offers numerous opportunities for collaboration with departments, offices and agencies both on and off-campus. Scheduling of events involves working with EWU Event Planning and Eagle Entertainment. In addition, University Graphics and Printing are involved with publicity. University Relations will assist with media contact and outreach. The Native American Alumni Association and the Native American Student Association will help in the
development of the project’s individual events. In the past the AISP has worked with the
Women’s Studies and the Women’s Center to co-sponsor events, and we will continue that
tradition with the lecture by Haunani-Kay Trask. The Office of Residential Life has previously
co-sponsored the showing of films in the residential halls as part of American Indian Awareness
Week and will be approached once again for the Indigenous film festival. The College of
Education will be asked to co-host the panel discussion on Indigenous education, with the event
being held in Martin Hall. Faculty in related departments will be notified and encouraged to have
their students attend the events related to their discipline and courses.

Off-campus collaboration will include contacting and inviting members of the South
Pacific Islander community of Spokane to participate in the dance and music festivals. This
would include participation on the part of the South Pacific Island student group from Whitworth
College who perform at their annual luau. An invitation to participate in the project will also be
extended to the Hawaiian Club of EWU. Area Native American organizations such as, Title VII
Indian Education, Native Project, Medicine Wheel Academy, and the Native American student
organizations at the community colleges and Gonzaga University will be notified and encouraged
to participant in the project.

Assessment plan

Assessment of the project will taken place in the following ways:

1. **Accomplishments**- Organizers of the project will respond to the questions: Were all of
the proposed events organized and successfully presented? Did the project bring Dr.
Trask to speak on Campus? Did a panel discussion on Indigenous education take place?
Was an Indigenous film festival organized and presented? Did both a dance and music
celebration/festival take place on campus?
2. **Impact on campus** – What was the impact on the campus of the events? A record of the numbers attending the individual events will be kept where possible. Larger events such as the dance and music celebrations may require estimations.

3. **Qualitative feedback**- Written evaluations forms will be developed to collect feedback on the lecture, panel discussions and films, asking attendees to use a numerical rating to evaluate the usefulness of the event to their learning experience. Verbal feedback will be taken from the presenters and performers as to their assessment of the success of the event they participated in. The AISP staff and other organizers will meet to assess the project and offer feedback on the event and ways it could have been improved. Any published articles on the events by campus and local press will be reviewed for their evaluation of the project. This information will be incorporated into the project’s evaluation report.

**Plans for Sustainability**

This will be a one time project as each year the events for American Indian Awareness Week reflect a new theme. There have been discussions around making the Native American Music Festival an annual event. If an annual music festival does happen it would be co-sponsored by area tribal groups and organizations.

**Timeline**
July, 2006 – Begin researching and gathering contact information for selection of performers and presenters. Draft an outline of scheduled events for Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures. Establish tentative dates for events and begin reserving on-campus spaces. Begin distributing preliminary flyer for event at Native American cultural events and powwows. Seek out additional funding for the event.

August, 2006 – Develop list of responsibilities needed to organize the event. Create list of sub-committees. Begin recruiting volunteers from on and off campus to serve on the event planning committee. Continue distribution of preliminary flyer at powwows and cultural events.

September, 2006 – Organize planning committee which will meet as needed during the months leading up to the event. Confirm dates for the events, and on campus venues. Begin selecting and contacting performers and presenters.

October, 2006 – Finalize performers and presenters. Begin developing publicity for event – posters and flyers. Continue seeking additional funding if needed.

November, 2006 – Finalize publicity for the event. Begin researching travel and hotel arrangements for presenters and performers.

December, 2006 – Continue seeking additional funding if needed. Prepare publicity mailing list.


February, 2007 – Monitor return of contracts from presenters. Follow up where needed to make sure all are returned. Confirm each event- room arrangements, room set-up, alternate location if needed, plan receptions.

March, 2007 – Confirm all arrangements. Present any pre-event activities, such as viewing of related films, articles for campus, tribal and local newspapers. Continue advertising event regionally.

April, 2007 – Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures takes place.
May, 2007 – Hold assessment meeting with organizing committee. Follow up to make sure bills have been paid. Begin writing final evaluation report.


Celebrating Indigenous Peoples & Cultures Project

Budget

Honorariums (includes travel costs):
4 Dance troupes + travel $16,000
Haunani-Kay Trask + travel $6,000
Jim Boyd $3,000
Chenoa + travel $1,200
2 local musicians (@ $500 each) $1,000
Indigenous education panelist (6@ $300 each) $1,800

**Hotel Cost (estimated):**
12 rooms for 2 nights @ $135 each night $3,240

**Per Diems (estimated)** $4,000

**Publicity (Printing, graphic art & postage)** $1,000

**Equipment Rental** $1,000

**Event Planning Costs** $400

**Total:** $38,640

**Funding sources:**

**Strategic Planning Grant request** $25,000
American Indian Studies Program $5,640
BOT Diversity Initiative Grant $5,000
EWU Foundations $1,000
Other on & off campus funding sources $2,000