



Washington State University Leadership Program

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Leadership Program Provides New Opportunity for Young Leaders

by Stevee Chapman

WSU students have a new opportunity to develop their leadership skills within a framework of tribal principles and values, through the new Tribal Nation Building Leadership Program.

"The goal of the program is to prepare students for tribal leadership whether in an official capacity as an elected member of a tribal governing body, as an employee working for the tribe, or a member of a tribal community," said Barbara Aston, the Director of the Plateau Center for Native American Programs/Tribal Liaison.

According to Aston, the components of the Tribal Nation Building Leadership Program include academic coursework, service learning, internships, undergraduate

research projects and presentations, as well as opportunities to explore "sovereignty in action." The members of the WSU Native American Advisory Board to the President were the impetus for the new Leadership Program, in order to help students develop qualities needed by the tribes in future leaders and tribal employees.

Currently, there are seven students involved in the Tribal Nation Building Program, six of whom are recipients of either the MOU or Plateau Native American scholarship, and the seventh referred through the health sciences pipeline initiatives. These students are enrolled in UCOL 104, a two-credit course taught by Dr. Selena Castro, Director of PASS (Pathways to Academic Success Seminar) for WSU.

"This section [of the course] has been adapted to provide opportunities for incorporating some of the concepts of the new Tribal Nation Building Leadership Program including discussion and research topics relevant to tribes and Native people," Aston said.

In addition to the two hours of class time per week, the students meet for an additional hour four times during the semester to explore their own Native identity through self-reflection exercises and family history and genealogy."

Over the course of the semester, Aston said the students each prepare a research poster that they will share with the Native American Advisory Board. In the spring of 2014, students are to enroll in a special projects course which will focus on exploring their respective tribal histories, contemporary tribal status, as well as participating in a variety of leadership opportunities.

As for future goals of the program, Aston said they hope to expand the number of student participants, as well as open it up to students beyond the scholarship recipients. Additional plans are to add a UCOL 304 in addition to UCOL 104. UCOL 104 is designed for freshmen and UCOL 304 is designed for continuing and transfer students.

"Our current course offerings will be revised based on what we are learning through our pilot this fall, and we will begin to implement the internship and undergraduate research aspects of the program," said Aston.

Along with the developments in the curriculum, Aston said an additional position in the Plateau Center will assist with the coordination of the Leadership Program.



Sequoia Dance, Shoshone-Bannock and Assiniboine, presents her research to classmates in special session UCOL 104. Each student has completed a research project and essay. They will present their research to the WSU Native American Advisory Board at their next meeting.

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