Plateau Center for Native American Research and Collaboration
by Ken Lokensgard

The Plateau Center for Native American Research and Collaboration is a source of research support and Native graduate student service. As noted previously, regular activities include consultation on grants and grant proposals, departmental outreach, and communication with the cultural resources representatives of numerous tribes. In all cases, we encourage collaborative, ethical research and other work with the eleven tribes, which are signatories to a memorandum of understanding with WSU, and other tribal communities. We also maintain contact with many of WSU’s current Native American graduate students, as well as new applicants to degree programs. Some student and research-related activities are highlighted below.

Cultural Studies and Social Thought doctoral student Phill Allen (Nez Perce) was the Head Man Dancer at WSU’s 40th Annual Pah-Loots-Pu Powwow. It took place in Beasley Coliseum on March 26th and 27th. Phill also hosted a Grass Dance Special. The Pah-Loots-Pu Powwow is organized each year by WSU students. This year, undergraduate Sequoia Dance (Shoshone-Bannock) was the chair of the powwow committee. The Plateau Center encouraged faculty and staff to attend, and we received positive feedback from those who did.

On April 20 and 21, the Plateau Center and The WSU Graduate School will begin a series of workshops devoted to Native American graduate student recruitment, retention, and mentoring. These workshops are intended for faculty, staff, and researchers. In the first of these, we will present basic information about federal and state Indian policy, sovereignty, and “indigenous research methods.” The second workshop, devoted to discussions of recruitment and funding, will take place in early May. The third, focusing specifically upon mentoring and community engagement, will take place in the fall. These workshops are made possible, in part, by the Pacific Northwest Circle of Success: Mentoring Opportunities for STEM Alliance (PNW-COSMOS). WSU’s participation in this alliance is funded National Science Foundation AGEP-T grant # 1432932. For more information about the workshops and other PNW-COSMOS activities, visit the PNW-COSMOS website.

On April 23, the WSU Chapter of the Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP), the Center for Mestizo & Indigenous Research & Engagement, and the Plateau Center will host the WSU Indigenous Research Convention for Education, Health, and the Social Sciences. The small conference features research presentations and posters primarily by graduate students conducting culturally responsive work with Indigenous communities. For more information, contact Psychology doctoral student Greg Urquhart (E. Band Cherokee descent), organizer and president of the WSU chapter of the SIP.

In conclusion, we encourage members of the tribal communities, faculty members, graduate students, and staff who are interested in responsible, collaborative research or who simply want to know more about the Plateau Center and its activities, to contact us. You can reach Dr. Ken Lokensgard at kenneth.lokensgard@wsu.edu or at 509-335-1055.