Nez Perce Tribe Awards WSU $10k Grant for Ambassadors

by Faith Price

WSU’s Native American Programs was awarded a $10,000 grant through the Nez Perce Tribe’s Local Education Program Fund this fall to support the Native American Student Ambassador Program.

In September, five students were hired as Ambassadors to assist with outreach to prospective Native American students. They travel to Native communities to give presentations and participate in college fairs, serve as tour guides when Native students visit WSU, and make personal calls to prospective students to answer questions about the Native student experience at WSU.

“I want to be a part of the student ambassador program for many reasons such as I want to be able to give back not only my school, but my people,” said WSU senior Zachery Clark.

Clark (Squaxin Island) will be graduating in May of 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in accounting, and says Native American Programs helped him transition to university life.

“I want to be a part of the program that helped me call Washington State University my second home.”

Cherrise Reyes (Upper Skagit/Colville) is another senior who will be graduating in December with a degree in political science.

“Choosing to attend WSU has been one of the best decisions of my life,” said Reyes. “I hope to be successful in convincing other Native youth to choose WSU for their undergraduate education because I strongly believe that this university will have a similar impact upon them.”

After Reyes graduates halfway through the academic year, sophomore Kyra Antone (Coeur d’Alene/Tohono O’odham) will join the ambassador team.

“Being a girl who has been raised on the reservation all of her life, I know how difficult it is to take a chance and attend a big University,” said Antone. “I want to be the one to help the kids realize it isn’t as scary to come off the reservation as you may think.”

The program has two students returning as ambassadors for a second year, Elsie Cree and Jay-J Yarbrough-Jones. Cree (Yakama/Nez Perce) is an elementary education major, and Yarbrough-Jones (Nez Perce) is majoring in kinesiology.

Cree and Yarbrough-Jones served as camp counselors to the EXCEL weekend visitation program for Native American high school students last fall. The ambassadors are looking forward to welcoming the prospective students back to campus this October 28–30.

Thus far, the Ambassadors have traveled to Lapwai High school to share about WSU at a recent senior night, and given tours to campus visitors. In addition to working the EXCEL camp, they have plans to attend a family night in Clarkston, and college fairs at Lakeside High School and Lapwai High School.

Qe’ ci’yew’ yew to the Nez Perce Tribe for supporting programming for Native students at WSU!

Read more about the ambassadors here.