Grad Students Attend AISES, New Funding Opportunities through Nez Perce Tribe

by Ken Lokensgard, Assistant Director, Plateau Center

Native graduate students and prospective graduate students have some great opportunities offered through funding available from WSU Graduate School and the Nez Perce Tribe.

Graduate students Danielle Guzman (Nez Perce) and Daylen Isaac (Yakama), both of whom are studying horticulture, and undergraduate Jay-J Yarbrough-Jones (Nez Perce), a kinesiology student, were able to attend the National American Indian Science and Engineering Society meeting in Denver, Colorado in October. All three students presented research posters.

Their attendance was supported by the Graduate School, through their participation in the PNW-COSMOS Alliance (funded in part by NSF AGEP-T grant #1432910) to increase numbers of Native graduate students in STEM disciplines. Students from several of the other Alliance institutions—University of Montana, University of Idaho, Montana State University, Heritage College, Northwest Indian College, and Salish-Kootenai College—also attended, as did Native American Programs Assistant Director Dr. Ken Lokensgard, Dr. Lori Carris of the Graduate School, and Dr. Shelly Pressley, Director of Undergraduate Research.

Developments closer to home include more funding for WSU Native graduate or professional students or students interested in advanced degrees. This funding comes in the form of a Local Education Fund grant awarded by the Nez Perce Tribe to the Plateau Center for the 2017-2018 school year.

Through this grant, current Nez Perce students can receive small scholarships during both the fall and spring semesters. Prior to receiving these funds, students must meet with Dr. Lokensgard about applying for external scholarships. They must also meet with representatives of the Nez Perce Cultural Resources Program to discuss ways that their academic work can promote Nez Perce Culture. The Tribe and the Plateau Center hope that these requirements will help students to gain even more funding and to know that their research will be valued by the community. This grant also helps Nez Perce students considering an advanced degree prepare for graduate entrance exams and to develop strong applications for admission. Anyone interested in learning more should contact Dr. Lokensgard. The Plateau Center is very grateful for the support provided by the Nez Perce Tribe.

Importantly, the graduate and professional school preparatory program described above can benefit all Native students considering advanced degrees, although there may be some small costs for Non-Nez Perce students. Moreover, there are many other means of support for Native students interested in continuing their studies. Those who would like to know more only need visit or call the Plateau Center.

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