Nez Perce Tribe Continues Funding of Native Student Ambassador Program

by Faith Price, Assistant Director

WSU’s Native American Programs received a $10,000 grant through the Nez Perce Tribe’s Local Education Program Fund for the third consecutive year in support of the Native American Student Ambassador Program.

Four current Native students have been hired as Ambassadors to assist with outreach to prospective Native American students. The 2017–18 ambassadors are: Miranda Cleveland (Colville Confederated Tribes), Kimberly Marquez (Yakama Nation), Urijah Willis (Quinault), and Jay-J Yarbrough-Jones (Nez Perce).

“I’m excited to be able to be a rep as a Native ambassador for WSU,” said Urijah Willis, a junior in wildlife ecology and conservation.

The ambassadors travel to local 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 get Native students to go to college,” said WSU senior Jay-J Yarbrough Jones. “We need more educated Indians.”

Yarbrough-Jones, a kinesiology major, is serving in his third year as a Native student ambassador. His father is from Pullman, so he spent a lot of time in the area as a youth. He also had fond memories of WSU’s Native Youth Exploring Higher Education (NY’EHE) camp he attended as an 8th grader.

“The highlight for me as an ambassador has been to be able to be a camp counselor at a camp that I attended seven years previously. I think that’s pretty cool,” said Yarbrough-Jones.

Miranda Cleveland is a senior in biology, and also attended NY’EHE as a kid.

“I am excited I get to have an influence on the next generation of the Cougar Family!” said Cleveland.

The ambassadors will be tabling at Clarkston High School’s “Family College Planning Forum” on October 26, and doing a panel presentation on the Native student’s experience at WSU. They will also be hosting a group of Wellpinit High School freshmen this month on the WSU Pullman campus.

“I want to make an impact on Native students because I wish I had more exposure to Native Programs at WSU before I came to college,” said business management senior, Kimberly Marquez. “WSU offers a lot of resources that are geared toward Native students and it’s possible that you can have your entire school paid for by scholarships.”

If you have an event you would like the ambassadors to come to in your community, please contact WSU Native Programs Assistant Director Faith Price. The ambassadors are also happy to host groups or individuals on campus!

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

Read profiles of the 2017–18 ambassadors here.