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Letter from the Director

February 22, 2018 faith.price

by Barbara Aston

As I sit at my desk here in French Administration, my window looks out on several trees, evergreen and crabapple trees. The ground and trees are lightly blanketed with a skiff of snow. The crabapple trees are bare of their leaves, but still retain their small dried fruits on their limbs. I watch as a squirrel grips a branch while it pulls at one of the dried crabapples. This squirrel has been busy for many days, gathering food and munching away. It wraps its tail close along its back, sheltering from the cold, or uses it to balance. One morning I witnessed three squirrels racing about and chasing one another until one dominated, claiming the tree as its territory.

For millennia we have observed and communed with our relatives in nature and their gentle, sometimes fearsome, spirits. Those that stand firm or stationary, such as the ground we stand on, and the trees, teach us of their strength and that which is stable, dependable, and true. With those that move about, we observe their focus on their task at hand, their awareness to their surroundings, their resiliency, and their beauty – their being-ness. If we take this time, we learn from them, slow the hurried activity that can fill our days, and hopefully let a sense of gratitude and wisdom regarding our place in the whole grow within us.

It is through our observations and our communing that we learn of the natural laws, the laws that have governed our Native peoples. This represents an educational path that we must not lose sight of and
continue to pass on to our children and our grand-children. In higher education, we need to embrace and support these ways of knowing as foundational to who our students are as indigenous peoples. Higher education can provide a set of tools for understanding others and the world we live in (both natural and built), and for asking questions and seeking answers. We strive to assist our students in interpreting this knowledge through the lens of tribal traditions for how it may apply or be useful, but not as a replacement. We will continue to strive through our Tribal Nation Building Leadership Program and all of our programmatic services to hold up the traditional ways of the people and to celebrate them.

Ken Lokensgard (r) passes the Chili Cook-off crown and traveling trophy to 2018 winner Faith Price.

We are currently in the middle of searching for individuals to join our staff in this important work through the roles of Outreach Coordinator and Retention Specialist. We have narrowed the pool and will begin interviewing in the coming weeks. We look forward to introducing our new staff to all of you in the future and continuing to strengthen our support of students and of the university at large.

On another note, we held our annual Chili Cook-off with 6 entries. The winner was our own Faith Price with her moose and venison chili. I managed two votes for my “Classic” chili – it was actually Nalley’s – now I have given away my secret. I didn’t vote for myself either. 😊

Have a blessed spring, and to our students, enjoy this time of your life with its challenges, struggles, and exciting adventures!
Iñupiat Video Game “Never Alone” Designer Visits WSU

February 22, 2018 faith.price

by Faith Price, Assistant Director

Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna) is the first video game developed in collaboration with the Iñupiat Alaska Native people. Ian Gil, the lead game designer, will be at WSU March 7 and 8 to share about the game’s development.

Gil is coming to campus as part of the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation’s Spring Symposium. Native American Programs is a co-sponsor. The symposium intends to explore how video and online games reflect the perspectives of their creators and how some designers are challenging and diversifying that landscape.

Never Alone is one of the games bringing broader worldviews to gamers everywhere. The game was developed in combination with Iñupiat storytellers and elders. It stars a young Iñupiat girl and her arctic fox companion as they try to stop a blizzard threatening their community. The game includes traditions, stories, and language.

There will be an hour of open play of Never Alone on March 7th from 5-6pm in Spark 10, followed by a keynote from Gil from 6-7pm in the Spark Atrium. The following day, March 8th, Gil will be a speaker in a 1:30-3:30pm workshop “Introduction to the Professional Game Creation Process” with Ed Chang at the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation’s Creativity Suite. There will be other workshops looking at gender, intersectionality, and technonormativity throughout the day.

See the full Symposium schedule.

Learn more about the game at neveralonegame.com.
Workshop Offered on Healing from Historical Trauma

February 19, 2018 faith.price

by Shana Lombard, Communications Assistant

Native American Programs will host a historical trauma workshop 4 pm. – 9 p.m. Friday, February 23, and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday, February 24 at Casa Latina for students and the community to learn how to identify trauma in their family and establish personal tools to apply healing to themselves and their family.

Dr. Robbie Paul will be presenting a workshop on historical trauma and the healing process at WSU this weekend.

The workshop will be led by Roberta L. Paul, PhD. She is a member of the Nez Perce Tribe and recently retired from WSU Spokane as the school’s director of Native American Health Sciences. Paul earned her doctorate in 2007 from Gonzaga University.

Attendees will learn information on how to understand their family’s timeline. Other activities include learning meditation techniques, drawing and dancing.

This workshop can help people heal and not be trapped in family trauma, Paul said. A lot of the information she has obtained comes from research of her own family and its dealings with trauma. She researched back to 1793 to her great-great grandfather Chief Ut-Sun-Malikan.

Dr. Paul provided the following workshop description:

Historical trauma is defined as suffering from devastating losses over several generations. An example of historical trauma is the Nez Perce War of 1877 which resulted in cultural conflict over ownership of land, religious practices, forced exile, loss of land, cultural living ways and forced assimilation. Native American researchers of historical trauma have defined these legacies as unresolved grief which can be manifested in health related diagnosis. Historical unresolved grief is defined by Maria Brave Heart-Jordan as chronic, delayed, or impaired and it is pathological. It is unresolved and the grief is manifested
in various symptoms such as depression, substance abuse, and somatization. The legacies of historical trauma are now being recognized as contributing factors in physical health related diagnosis such as diabetes, depressions, alcoholism, and suicide. The primary goal of this workshop is to increase the participant’s awareness of his/her cultural background, beliefs, biases, and values, and explore the relationship between cultural self-awareness, cultural competency and historical trauma.

Dr. Paul was recently recognized as a 2018 honoree of the “Women of Courage” Award from University of Washington, and was recognized by WSU as a “Woman of Distinction” in 2014.

The event is free, but space is limited. You must pre-register to attend.

The address of the Casa Latina is 955 B Street, Pullman, WA 99163. Directions and more information on the house can be found at https://culturalhouses.wsu.edu
Alaska Native Student Directs WSU’s “The Fratchelor”

February 19, 2018 faith.price

by Shana Lombard, Communications Assistant

Anders, Chinik Alaska Native, wrapped up filming of his Cable 8 show *The Fratchelor* two months ago. The show had much success on campus, even breaking a company record, getting ten thousand views the first week it aired.

Zach Anders films some background footage while they interview a spiritual medium during a shoot of *The Fratchelor*.

“It was a unique experience, one of those things where you have no idea where anything was going to go.”
Anders served as director of *The Fratchelor*. He is a junior in the Murrow College of Communication double majoring in broadcast journalism and political science.

Cable 8 is a student-run production company that is run under the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication. The company produces four to five television shows that air on television on campus and the city of Pullman.

Ander’s show *The Fratchelor* was a show mimicking ABC’s hit show *The Bachelor* but with a university twist. The show follows one WSU fraternity student in his pursuit to find his semester fling, centralizing the scenery to WSU campus and Pullman.

For a show to attempt to try to match ABC’s quality, Anders had to rely on others to get the job done. He credits his crew and show talent for aiding in the show’s success.

“It was their baby so they wanted to make sure it lived,” Anders said.

The show really utilized the community of Pullman. When looking at what other universities have done with a story similar to *The Fratchelor*’s, it is easy to point out how involved Ander’s crew was with its production. From bringing in local spiritual mediums on one episode or going to a well-known hangout spot, Zeppos, the show crew really did their best to make the show as realistic as possible.

Anders recently obtained a summer position working for KOMO 4 in Seattle where he’ll be tasked to help in broadcasts. He’ll receive more information on his position there when it gets closer to the end of the semester.

“Excited to be working somewhere where news is happening daily,” Anders said. “I’ve never been in a place where you’re able to refine those skills on a daily basis.”
Coger Studies Abroad her Final Semester

February 19, 2018 faith.price

by Shana Lombard, Communications Assistant

Denise “DJ” Coger, Cherokee and Japanese, walked at graduation this past December, earning herself a bachelor’s in psychology. She still has one semester left as a Coug as she’s currently studying abroad at a university in London.

Denise “DJ” Coger displays the print she received at the December graduation. She is flanked by Native Programs director Barbara Aston (l) and assistant director Faith Price. Coger’s mother is in the background (l).

Reflecting back on her years at Washington State, DJ feels that it went by too fast but was most happy about all the memories she’s made with friends on campus.

“I made a lot of friends from different social circles,” Coger said.

Coger spent a lot of time making these friends in various places like the Native Center, her sorority Kappa Delta Chi, and clubs like the Native American Women’s Association (NAWA). These experiences
added a lot to her overall school experience, said Coger. For example, her sorority taught her professionalism and how to make personal connections with others.

Her journey to WSU stems from wanting to branch out and become more independent from her parents.

“I wanted to come to WSU because it was so far away from home but still in the state. I wanted to get away from home. I didn’t want to be close,” she exclaimed.

WSU’s campus is located just over 250 miles from her hometown of Mt. Vernon, Washington. So, Coger found it more easy to grow into herself.

“I just wanted to be my own person and be independent and do my own thing and be able to have fun and experience something new,” she said.

She had two favorite psychology classes while on campus. Both taught her valuable skills to aid in her professionalism in the work force such as mental assessments, knowledge of available resources for patients and how to go about diagnosing mental disorders.

As for when she returns back to the States this May, Coger plans to take a well-deserved nap.

“[I] might sleep for two weeks or a month possibly and then start looking for a job,” she said.

She does have her eyes set on applying for grad school as well. She plans to apply to the University of Washington’s and Eastern Washington University’s schools of social work.

One piece of advice she would like to leave to freshmen considering to major in psychology is “to make friends with your professors” for possible sources of letters of recommendation down the road and to also make friends in your classes because the classes become more enjoyable when you have friends.
Crow Mother and Daughter Duo Exhibit and Lecture at WSU

February 9, 2018 faith.price

by Shana Lombard, Communications Assistant

While most who partake in the profession of an artist do not get to experience doing so with their child, that is not the case for Wendy Red Star and Beatrice Red Star Fletcher. Together the two have collaborated on making indigenous art which was exhibited at the WSU Museum of Art this past fall.

Wendy Red Star (center), her daughter Beatrice, and WSU student and Crow tribal member Chantel Hill.

A member of the Crow Tribe, Red Star has been a part of many art installations across the country and continued that at the WSU Museum of Art this past fall. Red Star and her ten-year-old daughter, Beatrice, gave a lecture in November about their collaborations to share the vast stories of the Crow people.

Red Star earned a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts from Montana State. She uses a variety of mediums for her work. Throughout her many projects, she has used photography, sculptures, fiber arts and performances. At our museum, Red Star used the medium of photography and silk-screened photos. These were pieces she created at a residency she had on the Umatilla reservation in Pendleton, OR.

In four of the pieces that were on display, Red Star was posed in her traditional Crow regalia and sitting in scenery of one of the four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Her portion of the art exhibit also showed two photographs from her Crow’s Shadow Prints collection. One was of a station wagon with a background of red and white geometric designs going across. The other was of trucks decked out with Pendleton blankets and traditional items, presumably from the Crow Fair Indian Days powwow parade, also with a geometric background of various colors. The inspiration of the background was from Pendleton blankets Red Star saw at a local Pendleton Woolen Mills store.
At her lecture, Red Star went over many pieces in her collection and what the meaning is behind each piece. Red Star’s daughter, Beatrice, also shared on her own art.

Two collections that Beatrice Red Star Fletcher shared about were when her mother handed her pictures to color. The other collection she talked about was her collection of her take on an “everyday Native American.” This piece was to defeat stereotypes on what Native Americans look like and how they act in their everyday life.

It is clear that Red Star’s mission is to share the story of her people, the Crow, through art. She also pioneers for other Native American women to step into the art realm.

The WSU Museum of Art held its last day of operations with Wendy and Beatrice’s lecture. The museum will reopen under a new name and in a new building, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. It will have its first day of operations just before WSU hosts Mom’s weekend in April. One of the opening exhibits will feature another Native American artist, Marie Watt of the Seneca tribe.
Nez Perce Graduate Continues Tradition

February 8, 2018 faith.price
by Faith Price, Assistant Director

For Shelby Leighton, being a Coug is a family tradition.

“I had a ton of family that came up here – my mom, all of her four sisters and one of her brothers, and my grandfather,” said Leighton. “Beyond that, all the family are Cougar fans, even if they didn’t attend WSU.”

Shelby Leighton celebrates with his family after the Multicultural Graduation Celebration in December.

And now Leighton has continued the Cougar tradition, earning his bachelor’s of business administration-management in December 2017.

He initially began at WSU as a chemistry major on a pre-med track, but switched majors after his sophomore year. It was a difficult choice.

“When I was a chem major and began to realize that that track wasn’t what I wanted to do, it was hard because I felt like I was failing,” said Leighton. “So it was coming to terms with that and finding
something I was happy doing and that I could make an impact doing. I eventually chose a business track and I feel like that could make an impact for my tribe and other tribal communities.”

His participation in the WSU Tribal Nation Building Leadership Program helped influence his career trajectory. The Leadership program began in the fall of 2013 as a four-year curriculum designed to provide participants leadership skills based on tribal values. Leighton was a member of the inaugural cohort.

“I had intended in high school to go far away after college career-wise, but when we learned about sovereignty and stewardship [in leadership courses]...it made me decide that I wanted to work with my tribe and at home,” said Leighton.

In addition to the Leadership Program, Leighton served as a mentor for the Multicultural Student Mentor Program for a year and a half, and also chaired the Ku-ah-mah Native student organization. During his time as a Pullman student, Leighton was also an avid football fan.

“Cougar football games were always awesome. I think I missed two games because I was out of town, but otherwise I was at every home game my entire college career,” said Leighton.

After graduation, Leighton moved to Arizona where his girlfriend who is also a WSU alum is attending graduate school. Leighton intends to work for a couple of years, then go back to get his master’s degree.

He plans to “eventually come back home with a decent amount of work experience and the education to hopefully have a great impact.”

Wherever he goes next, he will always be part of the Cougar family.

“Being a coug and being part of this community. It’s really special.”
Levi Horn Inspires at Sports Summit

February 8, 2018 faith.price

by Faith Price, Assistant Director

Nearly 100 middle and high school students, parents, and chaperones traveled to Washington State University to attend the 6th annual Native Youth Sports Summit and Native American Appreciation Day basketball game on January 28. Attendees came from as far away as Nooksack, Lyle, Inchelium, Toppenish, Cusick, and Lapwai.

One of the highlights of this year’s Sports Summit was the opportunity to hear from Northern Cheyenne tribal member Levi Horn whose athletic career took him all the way to the NFL. Horn spent two years with the Chicago Bears, followed by a short stint with the Minnesota Vikings. Now he works for the Native Project in Spokane as a substance abuse counselor.

Former NFL athlete Levi Horn (Northern Cheyenne) was the keynote speaker at the 6th Annual WSU Native Youth Sports Summit. Pictured here (l-r): Assistant Director Faith Price, Native Student Ambassadors Jay-J Yarbrough-Jones and Urijah Willis, Levi Horn, Native Student Ambassador Miranda Cleveland, Director/Tribal Liaison Barbara Aston, and Communications Assistant Shana Lombard.

Horn emphasized to the audience the importance of making good choices, setting goals, and being resilient. Making it to the NFL was not easy.

Horn had the size and ability from a young age to be an amazing football player. In middle school, he was 6’4” and 240 pounds – too big to play football against other kids his age.
At the beginning of his high school football career at Rogers High School in Spokane, he was nearly kicked off the football team because of the bad decisions he was making at the time. Horn told the group he had a friend who was dragging him down.

“A decision I made in the ninth grade not to kick it with him anymore changed my life,” said Horn.

His high school coach could already see his potential and told him if he wanted to play in the NFL, he needed to make better choices. Horn said he decided, “I choose football.”

However, even with his size and evident talent, Horn lacked the confidence to think he could pursue a career in football. Negative people around him did not help.

“I’ve had a lot of people tell me I couldn’t make it. And I believed them,” said Horn.

One pivotal night, though, he received a recruitment call from Minot State in North Dakota. Horn remembered thinking it was his friends playing a prank on him. The coach managed to convince him it was for real, telling him, “Levi, you’re going to play college football somewhere and we want it to be here.”

“That moment changed my future because I never thought I was going to go to college,” said Horn.

His senior year of high school, he began to set goals. He scrambled to take all the classes he needed to make sure he qualified for the NCAA. In the end, with scholarship offers from multiple universities, Horn elected to go to the University of Oregon.

At Oregon, self-doubt continued to haunt him.

“I didn’t believe that I could go to college and do the work,” said Horn.

He wanted to make his family and Native people proud, but the pressure of carrying so many people’s expectations started to hit him. He became depressed and found himself, “hanging with hoodlums who weren’t even in college.”
At the end of his freshman year, the University of Oregon told him he either needed to transfer or he would be kicked off the team. He ended up transferring to the University of Montana and began setting goals again.

“It was hard,” said Horn. “Being a collegiate athlete is intensive.”

The first game he got playing time, four people had to get hurt before he got to play. However, he worked hard on his goals and by his junior year was the starting left tackle. He began to set bigger goals of being the best in the conference, and going to the NFL.

Horn urged the crowd not to give up on their dreams or settle for mediocrity.

“We get in that thinking, ‘this is good enough,’” said Horn. He is thankful for the many mentors he had that encouraged him to think bigger and believe in himself.

“I did not go to the NFL by myself.”

At one point when he was at “rock bottom” as a freshman at Oregon, Horn said he started praying. His prayer was something along the lines of:

“Creator, if you get me to the NFL, I will do whatever you want,” said Horn.

Well, he got to the NFL, and it appears the Creator wanted to continue to use him to inspire youth. He is currently finishing his education, working as a substance abuse counselor, and traveling the nation sharing his journey with Native youth. We appreciated the opportunity to host him at Washington State University!

In addition to hearing from Horn, the WSU Native Student Ambassadors shared their experiences as college students and gave advice for future students. Immediately following the Sports Summit, participants went to Beasley Coliseum for the 7th annual Native American Appreciation Day women’s basketball game, a collaboration between WSU Native American Programs and Athletics.

The game featured the WSU Native community, as well as guests from the region. The national anthem sung in Salish by LaRae Wiley director of the Salish School of Spokane. Elsie Cree (Yakama/Nez Perce), a senior in Elementary Education, danced for the half time entertainment. The first 400 fans received T-shirts that said Go Cougs in the Nez Perce language. Kúutx K’oy’am’á!
Sports Summit participants got to go down on the floor after the basketball game for a photo opp.