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The American Indian Center staff wish you a safe and happy winter break!

Welcome from the Director

Another semester has quickly come to an end. 129 American Indian students started and/or returned to SCSU for the fall semester. Besides wishing our graduates good luck, the staff at the American Indian Center (AIC) wishes everyone a Happy Holiday season and we will see you at the beginning of the new year to continue your journey toward your degree. Our experiences this fall semester at the AIC and on campus included the Annual House Blessing, the Native leadership Retreat, a Pumpkin Carving Contest, and a Fall Harvest Feast. We had several American Indian Speakers on campus that included Jamie Edwards (Mille Lacs Ojibwe), Craig Howe (Oglala Sioux), and Carl Gawboy (Bois Forte Ojibwe).

Several of our American Indian students were able to attend the National Indian Education Association conference, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society conference and the Minnesota Mentoring conference.

On February 22, 2012, Sherman Alexie will visit our campus and conduct a large presentation at the Ritsche Auditorium. The AIC staff will host a reception and book signing for Sherman before his speech where our American Indian students will be able to meet and greet the author and ask questions. Sherman Alexie’s book, *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, was used as a common reading by about 900 SCSU students during the fall semester.

In the upcoming spring semester we have many ways to get involved with the American Indian Center, staff and other American Indian students. There is an opportunity to join the Peer Mentoring Program as a mentor or mentee. The annual spring break service trip to the Northern Cheyenne reservation will be accepting applications in January. Angela Wilson is scheduled to speak at the Power-in-Diversity conference in its 3rd year on January 27th. Sherman Alexie will visit in February. The AIC will sponsor an American Indian Awareness Week on April 9-13 and host the 19th annual Traditional Pow Wow on Saturday, April 14, 2012. So, enjoy the semester break and when you find yourself back on campus, stop by to visit and have a cup of coffee.

Sincerely,

Jim Knutson-Kolodzne
American Indian Center Director
Native Leadership Retreat

The annual Native Leadership was held at the AIC on Friday, September 7th. The purpose of the Native Leadership Retreat is to provide first-year Native students the opportunity to learn about campus services, discuss current issues, and learn about opportunities available to them at SCSU. Additionally, returning students are able to practice their leadership skills by presenting at the retreat or interacting with the new students and serving as role models for new students.

Presentations were provided by the Write Place, the Advising Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, UChoose, the Green House tutoring program, the AIC Mentor Program, and AIC Student Workers. Several new students were awarded scholarships for participation and prizes were awarded to all who were in attendance. Congratulations to Liz Clasen for winning a Barnes and Noble Nook!

It was a great experience for all who attended!

American Indian Center Mentor Program

The Peer Mentor Program began this fall with a full day of mentor training required for both the mentors and mentees on Saturday, September 24, 2011. Sheryl Garcia and Cara Grussing were the mentor program training facilitators. The mentor training agenda started with a light continental breakfast and then opened with introductions and group icebreakers. All students attended a power point presentation that outlined what mentoring is about, why a mentor commitment is important, the benefits of mentoring, the expectations, and more. The emphasis of the mentor program this year was on leadership. The facilitators showed a couple of short video clips on what is and is not leadership and emphasized how leadership skills are gained through the mentor program. Our hope is that mentees would complete a full academic year in the mentor program and then graduate into a mentor position the following year. Then each student received a binder with additional supplementary information about mentoring. We discussed each section through, followed by answering questions about mentoring and individual roles about being a mentor and mentee. Later, the staff and students enjoyed a pizza lunch and ice cream together then continued on with the training with a talking circle. The training ended with a group photo, and each of the students received Peer Mentor Program t-shirt and a drawstring bag.

There are currently a total of 12 student participants in the Peer Mentor Program. Some of the mentor activities provided fall semester were movie & popcorn night, board game and ice cream social, and a birch bark basket one day workshop. These fun monthly mentor activities have been great ways for mentors and mentees to get together and connect.

We have planned to follow up with leadership skills training in the Peer Mentor Program with the start of the new 2012 year. At the start of spring semester students will be given the opportunity to participate in leadership training on campus through a ropes course to further develop their leadership skills.
House Blessing
The annual AIC House Blessing was held on Wednesday, September 7th. We want to thank all who participated in the house blessing, especially William Wilson, who performed the ceremony this year and drum group, Buffalo Horse. Many came to participate in the ceremony and learn more about American Indian culture. Thank you again for making the blessing a wonderful and successful way to start the school year.

Fall Harvest Feast
The annual AIC Fall Harvest Feast and Pumpkin Carving Contest was held on October 27th. It was a great opportunity to share a turkey dinner with mashed potatoes and stuffing and have some fun. Congratulations to the Pumpkin Carving Contest winners: Jacquie Bosquez-1st place, Sasheen Goslin-2nd place, and Kip Perkins-3rd place!

AIC Peer Mentor Program
Volunteering
On Saturday, December 3, 2011, Peer Mentor Program staff, mentors and mentees participated in a volunteer project called Kids Against Hunger - Fight Famine that was held at Sauk Rapids High School. The Peer Mentor Program participants helped to assemble food packages that will be sent to Africa. The volunteer project was a fun way to volunteer and spend time together for a good cause.

On Tuesday, December 13, 2011, Associate Director, Sheryl Garcia, graduate assistant, Cara Grussing, and mentor program mentors and mentees, Maricia Varela, Jayden Cofer, and Jesse MacArthur, sang carols at the St. Benedict's Senior Community Benedict Homes, a residential home for people with memory loss. The residents enjoyed listening to many carols and participated in singing along with the piano, guitar, and singers.

The mentors and mentees of the AIC Peer Mentor Program hope to continue to volunteer during the spring semester. Participants have really enjoyed the opportunity to serve in the local community.
ENGAGE Program

The ENGAGE Program provides opportunities for individuals and groups of American Indian students to sample the university experience at SCSU, and enables them to fully explore campus life through a one or two day comprehensive visit.

This fall the American Indian Center had a total of four high schools that attended the ENGAGE Program. The four high schools in attendance were: Cloquet, Robbinsdale, Nay-Ah-Shing and Deer River High School. Three of the four high schools came for an overnight, two-day visit, while one of the schools came for a day visit.

All of the high schools were provided with an individualized agenda which included presentations about advising, admissions, financial aid, the Write Place and more. The high school students also had the opportunity to attend a college class which helped them experience and observe from an academic perspective. In addition, the high school students and staff ate at the Garvey cafeteria for most of their meals.

In the evenings the schools got a chance to relax and enjoy pizza, bowling and billiards at the Underground in Atwood. One high school got to attend the Speaker Series with guest speaker, Jamie Edwards, at the American Indian Center.

The AIC staff was pleased to have the different high schools come and visit us, and we look forward to more high school visits from other schools.

Sheryl Garcia, Associate Director

Speakers

The American Indian Center was happy to help bring several speakers to St. Cloud State University to speak on topics relevant to American Indian life. Along with other campus departments, the American Indian Center invited both Craig Howe and Carl Gawboy to campus. On November 3rd, Craig Howe, Director of the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies, spoke about Lakota spirituality and other topics related to American Indian culture. Carl Gawboy, artist, illustrator, and retired college professor, discussed traditional Native American views of astronomy on December 6th.

The American Indian Center Speaker Series featured Jamie Edwards, Director of Government Affairs for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, on November 17th. The Government Affairs staff conducts lobbying efforts and ensures that the Band’s interests are properly represented, coordinated and monitored at the local, state, and federal government levels. Edwards, a graduate of SCSU, spoke on current issues facing American Indian Communities.
Student Spotlight

Congratulations to Jeanne Bendickson for winning the trip to attend the National Indian Education Associate Conference! Read about her experience below.

National Indian Education Association Trip

The NIEA convention was titled “Building Alliances to Strengthen Native Education Values.” I really liked this title because being there I really felt that Native leaders, community leaders, educators, students, families and school administrators were coming together to teach best practices, connect with others who are passionate about educating Native students, and pursue solutions to education issues that affect Native communities. There was an emphasis on coming together and serving Native children and families the best way possible.

I attended several workshops that I felt would enhance my major in Elementary Education. I attended workshops that included Urban Indian Education: We are all related, Reading through Rhythm, Rhyme, and Repetition, Teaching Reading through the 95 % club, and What is IDEA. I was able to take a lot of interesting information with me that will help me reach Native children in the classroom.

The workshop I really enjoyed the most was Urban Indian Education: We are all related. The presenters were from Minnesota: Jennifer McComas (Ojibwe) and Ida Downwind. They talked about the Urban Indian Education Partnership in Minneapolis. As educators, they have strived to create the conditions that will support student learning and success. In the workshop they discussed professional development, instructional practice, and student success.

I also attended the Social Pow Wow, which was a lot of fun. I also went to a Pueblo Indian Museum in Albuquerque. I was also able to spread the word about the AIC at the tradeshow. I worked at the table at the tradeshow for St. Cloud State and told many prospective students about the wonderful atmosphere here at the American Indian Center.
American Indian Science and Engineering Society

The mission of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) is to substantially increase the representation of American Indians and Alaskan Natives in engineering, science, and other related technology disciplines.

Since 1977, AISES has worked to substantially increase American Indian and Alaska Native representation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields — as students, professionals, mentors, and leaders. AISES employs a “full circle of support” model that begins with pre-college programs, progresses into collegiate life, and then into the professional years of members and on into retirement.

AISES works to promote, initiate, and provide educational services for American Indian and Alaska Native pre-college, college, and graduate students in STEM. AISES also supports early-, mid-, and executive-level professionals in STEM through professional development, mentoring, networking, community service, and awards programs and initiatives. AISES is the only professional society established by and for American Indian and Alaska Natives that specifically emphasizes lifelong learning and educational achievement by utilizing cultural aspects with STEM.
Hello everyone!

My name is Liz Clasen and I am the new leader for the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) student organization on campus. It is a place for students within the sciences, both social and lab, and engineering to come together to discuss, learn and make connections for future careers. It is open to anyone who wants to be a part of it. We are always looking for new members!

This November AISES was finally eligible to become a State Cloud State University recognized organization. We are now able to use University resources and support to make AISES even better on the campus. We had been trying for a few years and finally everyone’s hard work paid off. Thank you to everyone who helped!

One large event that happened this semester was a few members were able to travel to Minneapolis on November 11th to the AISES 33rd Annual National Conference themed Food For Thought. There were over a hundred vendors offering research opportunities, jobs, internships, and prizes. It was a great networking opportunity and very informational. It was an amazing time.

This semester has been a fun experience, especially because I am the new leader, and I hope next semester will be just as fun. One major event planned is the AISES Chapter High Powered Rocket Competition in April. We are building a rocket and will be launching it near Milwaukee in front of a panel of judges looking to see how well it stabilizes once it is in the air. It should be an interesting experience! Hopefully, it will fly without any problems!

New members are always welcome and if you are interested, please come! Our first meeting of the semester will be in mid-January. We are a fun group of people. :)

Thank you,
Liz Clasen

Above: AISES members and Associate Director and AISES Advisor, Sheryl Garicia, at the AISES National Conference in Minneapolis.
Right: AISES Members Liz Clasen, Tashiana Osbourne, and Jayden Cofer.
Meet our new student worker, Jesse MacArthur!

Q: What is your major?
A: Anthropology, Double minoring in Spanish and Biology

Q: What is your year in school?
A: Senior

Q: What is your hometown?
A: Brainerd

Q: Why did you choose St. Cloud State University?
A: It had everything I was looking for. It just worked out. And it wasn’t too far from home.

Q: What interested you in working at the AIC?
A: The environment and the chance to work with Native people. People here seem to be much more outgoing and friendly and accepting than other environments and places.

Q: What have you enjoyed about working at the AIC?
A: All of the different people that I’ve had the privilege of meeting as well as learning about different backgrounds.

Q: Is there any other information you’d like others to know about you?
A: It’s good to be outgoing and meet someone new. Don’t be scared to experience something different. It’s been a very enriching experience for me and has helped me to see a little bit of the diversity that prior to this time I had not been aware of.

During her undergraduate work at SCSU, Mandi worked at the AIC. Now she’s back for her Master’s Degree, and she’s a graduate assistant at the AIC. Welcome back, Mandi!
Upcoming AIC Activities and Events

Spring 2012 Events

January
Power In Diversity Conference
January 27-29, 2012
Atwood Memorial Center

February
American Indian Speaker Series
Reception and Book Signing with Sherman Alexie
February 22, 2011 2:00-4:30 PM
American Indian Center

March
Lame Deer Spring Break Trip
March 3-10, 2012
Northern Cheyenne Reservation
Lame Deer, Montana

April
American Indian Awareness Week
April 8-13, 2011

19th Annual AIC Pow Wow
SCSU Halenbeck Hall –Main Gym
April 14, 2012

May
AIC Mentoring Program Dinner
May 5, 2010 4:30 PM
TBA

Get your copy of the SCSU Common Reading Program book, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, signed by author Sherman Alexie!

Visit our website at http://www.stcloudstate.edu/aic/ for resources, news, updates, and information about current events!

The 3rd annual Power in Diversity Leadership Conference will offer opportunities for personal growth and leadership development to college students through a variety of workshops, keynote addresses, and programs, each selected based on their vision of how to empower individuals and groups to bring about change. The concept of change is not limited to the activist sense of the word; we are also encouraging participants to envision change through their education, their career choice, and the personal choices that they make.

http://www.stcloudstate.edu/mss/powerindiversity/default.asp

Contact the AIC if you are interested in attending!

Sherman Alexie

Sherman Alexie is the author of twenty-two books, including The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, winner of the 2007 National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, War Dances, winner of the 2010 PEN Faulkner Award, and The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, a PEN Hemingway Special Citation winner. He is also the winner of the 2001 PEN Malamud Award for Excellence in the Art of the Short Story. Smoke Signals, the film he wrote and co-produced, won the Audience Award and Filmmakers’ Trophy at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. He lives with his family in Seattle, Washington.

Join us for a reception and book signing with Sherman Alexie at the AIC from 2:00-4:30 on February 22nd!