



INDIAN EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF NEVADA

Greeting from the Indian Ed. Consultant

Submitted by Fredina Drye-Romero, Consultant

Greetings! It has been another exciting academic year for Nevada School Districts, Schools, and Tribal programs. This issue will highlight news from the 2009 American Indian/Alaskan Native Education (AI/AN) Summit held at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), as well as programs like the “Veggie for Kids Curriculum,” and how one school district collaboratively worked with other school districts and Tribes to bring motivational speaker, Howard Rainer, to Nevada. Additionally, other program news is included to highlight Indian education happenings throughout Nevada.

2009 American Indian/Alaskan Native Education Summit

Submitted by Fredina Drye-Romero, Consultant



In March 2009, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) held the 2nd Annual AI/AN Education Summit at UNR. The Summit was held in collaboration with the Nevada Indian Commission (NIC), UNR’s Center for Student Cultural Diversity Office and the Native American Student Organization. The theme, “Building the Bridge to Transition” attracted approximately 100 teachers, administrators, post-secondary professionals as well as tribal representatives from around the State.

The Summit commenced with prayers given in the Northern Paiute language, by Ralph Burns (Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe), the Southern Paiute language, by Fred Drye (Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians), and the Washoe language, by elder Melba Rakow (Washoe Tribe). Christina Thomas sang the Northern Paiute Flag Song. Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Shannon Ellis, UNR Vice-President for Student Services, and Sherry Rupert, Executive Director for the NIC made welcoming comments. Randy Melendez, principal for Pyramid Lake High School delivered an inspiring keynote speech that mentioned his life experience as a student in the educational system from elementary to post secondary education, leading to being the principal for Pyramid Lake High School.

The Summit was successful in providing information geared toward promoting a stronger transition for AI/AN students, as students move from elementary to secondary, and then on to post-secondary education. *(Continued on pg. 2)*

In This Issue:

- Pg. 1 Greeting from Indian Education Consultant
- 2009 American Indian/Alaskan Native Education Summit
- Pg. 3 Howard Rainer Visits Nevada
- Veggies for Kids Curriculum
- Sierra Nevada College Scholarship
- Pg. 5 Clark County School District 2009 College Tour
- American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES)
- Pg. 6 UNR Annual Powwow
- UNLV Celebrate American Indian Graduates
- Nevada State Board of Education**
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Below is a synopsis of what each session provided.

On the first day, NDE consultants offered a session that provided statewide graduation data and statewide dropout rates, as well as Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) results for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math status. In addition, Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) results for Reading grades 3-8, Math grades 3-8, Writing grades 5 and 8, and the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) for ELA and Math were shared. An NDE Consultant explained the Advanced Placement (AP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. The AP program is a rigorous program with 37 courses that are provided to high school students to study and learn at the college level. The IB Program is an intense pre-university program that is offered in only three Nevada schools. Research shows that students who take AP courses increase their probability of completing a degree in four years. *The AI/AN population is underrepresented in both programs.* Another NDE Consultant provided information on the role of vocabulary in the math classroom and how reading is linked to being successful in all classes, not just math.

The McDermitt and Owyhee Combined School principals presented information on successful programs in their high schools. McDermitt High School students enhanced the presentations by talking about their experience in a Teen Success program.

The University of Nevada, Reno presented two programs – *Dean's Future Scholar's and Start Thinking About College*. Collaboratively, UNR and Clark County School District's (CCSD) Indian Education Opportunities Program presented on early outreach programs that are working in their areas.

In another session, Carolee Dodge-Francis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), offered a presentation

on "Health is Life in Balance," which is a K-12 science-based culturally appropriate curriculum. The curriculum was made available to school districts, teachers and Tribes free of charge.

On the second day Dr. Steven Crum, from the University of California, Davis, presented "Factors Which Determine Native American Success in Higher Education: A Historical and Contemporary Prospective." Dr. Crum is from the Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe. Dr. Crum's presentation set the stage for the post secondary education for AI/AN students.

Higher education professionals Kari Emm, UNR, Chuck Masoka, CSN, and Kyle Ethelbah and Christopher Kypuros from UNLV, presented a variety of ways that outreach is being offered to AI/AN students in the State, as well as specified programs that influence higher rates of retention and graduation.

Another successful panel, facilitated by Gary Wyatt, NDE, consisted of representatives from the College of Southern Nevada, Great Basin College, Western Nevada Community College, Truckee Meadows Community College, Western Apprenticeship Coordinators Association, and the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada Workforce Development program. The panel discussed the ways in which their post secondary programs could be beneficial to AI students in the workforce.

UNR's Financial Aid Advisor, Anita Daphnis and Johnell Cropper, discussed not only financial aid, but also how the Nevada Indian American Higher Educations Collaborative Committee (NIAHEC) was formed between the Northern Nevada Public Universities, Colleges and the Nevada Indian Commission in 2006. The NIAHEC committee has worked together to improve the educational process for AI/AN students.

The recruitment and retention specialist from CSN, Chuck Masoka, and the Indian Education Opportunities Program staff, Della Salazar and Cheryl Nelson, from CCSD, presented on collaborative efforts to continue the upward trend of graduating American Indian students from high school. One particular program provided by CCSD allows high school students to experience postsecondary education on a college tour that has been ongoing for the last four years.

The participants were provided information in the final session, which highlighted the Policy Guidance on Ethnicity Codes, Descriptions, and Procedures. The presentation explained what happens nationally and statewide when American Indian students self-identify with more than one race. For example, if an American Indian student, from a Federally recognized American Indian tribe, also self-identifies as Hispanic or Latino they will be reported in the Hispanic/Latino category. The presentation informed educators that the policy would go into effect during the 2010-2011 academic school year. *For further information on the Policy Guidance on Ethnicity Codes contact Steve Canavero at: (775) 687-9187 or scanavero@doe.nv.gov.*

The committee succeeded in bringing practitioners from around the State to discuss Indian Education, as well as ideas of how to build upon the transition process for American Indian students in Nevada. The intent of the Summit is to continue the working relationship between educators at all levels and to increase student achievement for American Indian/Alaskan Native Students in the State. Thank you everyone for making the Summit a success, your input was invaluable.

For additional information on any of the sessions contact Fredina Drye-Romero at fromero@doe.nv.gov

Howard Rainer Visits Northern Nevada

Submitted by Leslie Brown, Indian Education Liaison, Edited by Vicki Tam

On March 25, the Churchill County High School (CCHS) Native American Culture Club hosted the “Circle of Eagles: Native American Youth Leadership Conference” for schools around Nevada. The conference featured motivational speaker Howard Rainer. Circle of Eagles was a gathering of Native American youths, parents, tribal leaders, and educators. Over 200 people were in attendance and some of the students represented had traveled a great distance to attend Mr. Rainer’s motivational presentation. Students from Yerington, Gabbs, Walker River, Lovelock and Pyramid Lake were also present. The conference opened with a Paiute prayer led by Hilda James. Cody Poafabitty sang a Paiute song. Rainer took the floor, encouraging the audience to take an active part in his speech. Rainer involved the audience by telling them to take notes and to interact with each other. Marissa Weaselboy stated, “At first, many students weren’t eager or willing to do the activities and embarrass themselves, but throughout the conference, they got over it. He reached the students on a level that others wouldn’t be able to. He wasn’t boring or rude, but he maintained a personal level to get his message out.” Rainer said, “Everyone of you in this room has something to offer. You just don’t know it yet.” He continued by saying, “We’re going to show you what you have to offer.”

In the middle of Rainer’s motivational speech, he allowed the audience to take the floor to

encourage others. Poafabitty was one of the students who stood up during the event to speak his mind about Rainer’s messages. “When I publicly speak one of these days, I want to spread the word about the Native people and how we’re still here. We’re not about the stereotypes that we’re drunks or that we’re drug abusers or gang members. Try to push away from that and try to do better,” he said. “Keep on learning because basically, if you’re not going to



learn then how are you going to listen? If you don’t listen to what’s around you, then you don’t have certain viewpoints. Then how are you going to voice your opinions? You have to represent our people.” Another thing Rainer addressed is the ‘Choose Me’ attitude, which means, “I’m ready; I’m willing; and I give 100 percent.” “Opportunity is waiting for every one of you. It’s waiting for you. ... It’s going to knock [on your door]. It could happen in 2009, 2010, 2015. But it’s going to knock and it’s going to call out your name. And if you’re not ready and if you don’t like yourself and you put yourself down, that door is going to shut in your face,” Rainer said. “Don’t short change yourself in high school.” Jasmine Ortega felt

inspired by Rainer’s motivational speech to do better. “He told us a story about how he wasn’t going to do anything in school. He didn’t have any motivation, but a teacher told him to do something better with his life. That’s how I feel. I want to do something better with my life,” she said.

Stepping Stones manager Yvonne Capucci encouraged the audience to continue their education during the conference. “You guys can do it and I know you can. You guys are beautiful. And you know what, you guys are going to be parents one day. You guys are going to be elders. You’re going to be up here like us talking. You guys are beautiful kids and I want to see you go. You can lose your husband. You can lose your wife. You can lose your house. You can lose it all. But, you can never ever lose your education,” she said.

Rainer also addressed academic goals. He let the audience know that readers can and will get ahead. He encouraged the audience to read more and read better. “Don’t ever listen to doubters who doubt you,” he said. If you listen to them, you’ll believe them. And if you believe them, they’ll stop you.”

(Continued on Pg. 4)

“I believe that our Native American young people want to hear messages of hope, direction, and encouragement. These are challenging times for our youth, and there is the possibility of impacting some young person’s life with motivational presentations that will get them thinking about who they can and should be as a Native American.” --Howard Rainer

(Continue from Pg. 3)

Rainer also talked about how dwelling on the past will influence the present and future through attitudes, actions, and behaviors by referring to the past as a sack that hangs on to the audience's backs. "[Your past is] going to remind you of two things: you're not worthy and you make mistakes. That's what the past does. That past shapes your attitude, action, and behavior. You cannot bring your past back - it's only memory - but you can change it. You can do something about the present. Your future is waiting for you," Rainer said. Rainer believes in helping Native Americans achieve success in the future and believes that Native youths have potential to achieve their goals.

The Native American Culture Club offered Rainer a basket full

of Nevada souvenirs along with a tule duck made by Joey Allen for his generosity for speaking without a fee. For further information, contact Mr. Rainer at howard.rainer@byu.edu. See his DVD *Voices of Promise*.

<http://ce.byu.edu/cw/voices/index>



Veggies for Kids Curriculum

Submitted by Sandy Emm, Natchez 3rd Grade Elementary Teacher



On April 28th Randy Emm of the University of Nevada, Reno's Cooperative Extension Office offered an activity to the Natchez Elementary third grade classroom. The curriculum was called "Veggies for Kids," which included traditional native foods from Paiute tribes and the science

food pyramid. Students identified and sorted traditional food into categories on the food pyramid. The students did a lot of eating and naming the vegetables in Paiute, as well as using the grinding rock. Good job, Mr. Emm!

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Sierra Nevada College Scholarship

The Sierra Nevada College (SNC) announced a unique scholarship opportunity to members of all Indian tribes within the State of Nevada. SNC will be awarding at least 5 full-tuition scholarships starting in the fall of 2009.

The application deadline was Thursday, July 2, 2009. After the review process, done by the Nevada Indian Commission, all viable candidates will be

forwarded to Sierra Nevada College Admissions Office for final selection. Scholarship recipients were to be notified no later than July 17, 2009.

Please direct any other questions you may have to SNC admissions office at (775) 831-1314 x7411 or admissions@sierranevada.edu. For financial aid questions call (775) 831-1314 ext. 7404.

Clark County School District 2009 College Tour

Submitted by Indian Education Opportunities Programs, Clark County School District

The 2009 College Tour took place during the Clark County School District Spring Break. The College Tour is an annual event open to Title VII-eligible American Indian and Alaskan Native students in 8th through 12th grade. Students are selected to participate in the tour by submitting an application (including an essay, grade transcripts, two letters of recommendation) and completing an interview. Thirteen high school and two middle school students participated in the four-day event. Participants were on a chartered bus and toured Arizona

universities and colleges. They toured Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University-East, Arizona State University-Mesa and Prescott College.

The 2009 College Tour participants were: Kerriabah Bedonie (Navajo), Caleb Blair (Cherokee), Danica Engstrom (Tlingit), Angel Goodman (Coharie), Autumn Higgins (Southern Paiute), Anthony Johnson (Quechan), Katana Kay (Southern Paiute), Docian Molden (Southern Paiute), Alyssa Myers (Southern Paiute), Anthony Pintor

(Hopi), Aisha Tso (Navajo), Aaron Wilson (Oglala), Alex Wilson (Oglala), Kimberly Wyatt (Southern Paiute), Taime Yazzie (Navajo)

The students were comprised of urban students from the Las Vegas area and students from the Moapa Band of Paiutes reservation. Chaperones included one administrator, four licensed teachers, and one support staff. The feedback from both students and chaperones was positive toward the experience and everyone expressed the desire to participate again next year.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)

Submitted by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society Office

The American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) offers programs and services to ensure various levels of support in alignment with its organizational mission, which is to substantially increase the representation of American Indian and Alaskan Natives in engineering, science and other related technology fields. Support begins with pre-college programs including a national science fair for 5th-12th grade students, a multitude of programs for college students, including scholarships, internships, college chapters that provide academic, cultural and social support, and two national events promoting career preparation, leadership

development, and a host of professional development opportunities. In all, members from over 200 Native Nations are represented within AISES.

Each school year, AISES offers scholarships to American Indian and Alaskan Native students with exceptional academic merit and leadership. Among these scholarships are the A.T. Anderson Memorial Scholarship, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation Scholarship and the AISES Google Scholarship. Deadlines and eligibility criteria may be found on the AISES website: <http://www.aises.org/Programs/ScholarshipsandInternships/Scholarships>.

AISES also holds the largest American Indian National Conference and Career Fair for students and professionals in the science and engineering fields, where more than 200 corporations, government agencies, universities and tribes and tribal enterprises meet with students and professionals eager to learn about career and other opportunities. This year's conference will be held October 29-31, 2009 in Portland, Oregon with the theme "The Difference is You." If you would like more information on AISES opportunities and events, please call (505)765-1052 or visit the website at www.aises.org.



University of Nevada, Reno Annual Spring Powwow

Submitted by Kenny Dyer, Native American Student Organization President

On a cloudy weekend, amidst the possibility of monsoon-like rains, the 5th Annual UNR, Spring Powwow emerged like thunder, nearly doubling the number of enrolled dancers and drum groups. At last year's powwow there were one hundred and twenty enrolled dancers and three drum groups, and this year there were two hundred and fifty dancers and six drum groups. This year's powwow, which took place May 2-3 at Manzanita Bowl on the UNR

campus, would not have been possible without the help of the Native American Student Organization, (NASO) and student



NASO with Invited Guest
Miss Indian World, Brooke Grant

volunteers from the Ethnic Studies 280 American Culture and Identity class, as well as the Native American Alumni Chapter and The Center for Student Cultural Diversity. Over the two wonderful days, there were an estimated eighteen hundred attendees at the powwow, which is also higher than the previous year. It appears that, through rain, sleet, or snow the UNR Spring Powwow will only gain in popularity and become bigger and better.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Celebrates AI Graduates

Submitted by Kyle Ethelbah, Director for Adult Educational Services/Educational Opportunity Center

The American Indian Alliance (AIA), American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) and the Native American Student Association (NASA) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs sponsored the 9th Annual Native American Convocation Ceremony on Friday May 8, 2009 at 6pm in the Student Union Theater. The theme for the event was "Go My Child" and honored 65 Native American Graduates from the Summer/Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters. Of those 65, twenty graduates participated in this year's event.

Approximately 200 community leaders, faculty, staff, students and

family members came out in support of this momentous occasion. The Master of Ceremonies was College of Southern Nevada's (CSN) Recruitment and Retention Specialist, Chuck Masoka. During the event, families were given the opportunity to share their gratitude and offer support to their new graduates in an emotional and energizing component of the ceremony. Each graduate received recognition from U.S. Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign and Nevada Congresswoman Dina Titus, Nevada Indian Commission Executive Director Sherry L. Rupert, as well as recognition from AIA, AISES and NASA themselves. This year the group celebrated the achievements of several members including, Christopher Kypuros, NASA

Faculty Advisor who obtained his PhD in Educational Leadership, and Kyle Ethelbah, AIA Representative and Chair of the Southern Nevada Native American Educational Coalition who obtained a Master's in Public Health. Student Leaders Simone Boutang, Siphwe Harris and Nic'Cola Armstrong all graduated with Bachelor degrees in Education, Hospitality Management, Psychology, Spanish and Gaming Management, respectively.

The graduation committee is grateful to the American Indian community in Nevada for their continued support, and hopes to establish UNLV as a premier environment for American Indians in the State of Nevada.