

**2016 GOVERNOR'S TRIBAL RELATIONS REPORT – AGENCY NARRATIVE REPORTING FORM  
(FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD JULY 1, 2015 - JUNE 30, 2016)**

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**The State-Tribal Relations Report, entitled “Partners in Building a Stronger Montana,” features the State’s cooperative work with tribes in support of the Governor’s vision for greater economic development opportunities, quality health care and education programs, and improving the effectiveness of governmental operations and services across state agencies.**

1. SUBMISSION DATE: June 26, 2017
2. STATE AGENCY/DIVISION/PROGRAM: Great Falls College MSU
3. NARRATIVE COORDINATOR NAME: Charla Merja  
PHONE/EMAIL 406-771-4301, charla.merja@gfcmsu.edu
4. ACTIVITY NAME (name electronic file with this name): Blackfeet Community College Nursing Clinical Rotations with Benefis Hospital
5. PROGRAM STAFF NAME: Frankie Lyons  
PHONE/EMAIL:406-771-4361, frankie.lyons@gfcmsu.edu
6. Select Tribe(s) Involved:  

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Belknap
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackfeet	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Peck
<input type="checkbox"/> Chippewa Cree	<input type="checkbox"/> Little Shell
<input type="checkbox"/> Confederated Salish & Kootenai	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cheyenne
<input type="checkbox"/> Crow	
7. Please specify when this state-tribal activity started and if it is ongoing or finalized.  

<input type="checkbox"/> Started before FY 2016	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Started during FY 2016
<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed/finalized during FY 2016

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Great Falls College MUS was able to provide an opportunity for Blackfeet Community College Nursing students to participate in clinical rotations at Benefis Hospital. Nine second year Nursing students from BCC were able to go to Benefis Hospital for six consecutive 10 hour rotations in January and five 12 hour rotations in March.

9. If available, provide noteworthy data regarding the impact of your program on tribal communities, such as the number of American Indian people served, jobs created in Indian Country, leveraged funds stimulating economic development, etc.
10. Are there photographs to support the narrative?  Yes  No  
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Photo File Name:

Photo Caption (include the name of the event/persons, location, and date)

Photo Credit:

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3. NARRATIVE COORDINATOR NAME: Charla Merja  
PHONE/EMAIL 406-771-4301, charla.merja@gfcmsu.edu
4. ACTIVITY NAME (name electronic file with this name): Blackfeet Language Lessons
5. PROGRAM STAFF NAME: Sandy Bauman  
PHONE/EMAIL:406-771-2268, sandra.bauman@gfcmsu.edu
6. Select Tribe(s) Involved:  

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Belknap
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GREAT FALLS – Great Falls College MSU is offering Blackfeet language lessons to anyone who is interested. The lessons are free and open to the public.  
The language lessons are held Tuesdays at 6 p.m. in the college’s Native American Enrichment Center inside the college, located at 2100 16th Ave. S. The lessons are taught by Native American studies instructor Don Fish.  
Karly Old Person, a peer mentor in the Native American Enrichment Center and enrolled member of the Blackfeet tribe, was excited when Fish asked her if she’d be interested in furthering her knowledge of the Blackfeet language.  
“These free classes are offered to the community for those who are interested in grasping and recovering the Blackfeet language,” Old Person said. “It’s a great opportunity to explain our world view through language.”  
Sandy Bauman, Director of Academic Success at GFC MSU, hopes the Blackfeet lessons help pass on the Blackfeet language.

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“It’s really important to keep that cultural awareness alive and keep the language alive,” said Bauman, who oversees the Native American Enrichment Center. Participants do not need to have any knowledge of the Blackfeet language. However, those who do have experience with the language are also welcome to attend. During the lessons, students will be able to use iPads equipped with an app designed to teach users the Blackfeet language. The lessons will start with basic words and concepts and advance from there.

For more information, contact:  
Erin Granger  
Marketing Specialist  
406.771.4314 or erin.granger@gfcmsu.edu

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Photo File Name: Blackfeet lang 1.jpg  
Photo Caption (include the name of the event/persons, location, and date): Blackfeet Language Lessons  
Photo Credit: Erin Granger

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# Great Falls College MSU

## American Indian Support Initiatives

### Spring 2017

We are currently focusing our efforts toward three initiatives.

1. The Native American Enrichment Center (NAEC) opened in spring 2016 with the goals of providing support for students and promoting awareness of Native American culture to the campus community. Currently, the center employs students who serve as mentors to other students and have received training on campus and community resources. Examples of resources include medical care, community housing resources, emergency assistance programs, and tribal education office information.

The space also serves as a gathering place for students, a home base for the Native American Student Group, and a quiet location for studying and receiving assistance from a tutor. Free lessons on the Blackfeet language are being offered to all students and community members free of charge.

As a way of promoting the services provided in the NAEC, the admissions office offers a tour and meeting with students to all visiting middle and high schools. In addition, the NAEC is highlighted during new student orientation and a tour is given to all interested attendees.

2. The Native American Student Group is an active club on campus. Their biggest project is the coordination of events to celebrate Native American Heritage in the fall semester. These events focus on highlighting Native American culture and educating the community on current issues. Fall 2016 events included a prayer ceremony, a lecture on teepee etiquette, dancers from the Little Shell tribe and Great Falls Public Schools, and a presentation about the issues surround the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The club also works each year to raise funds for scholarships and emergency assistance for students. The 2015-2016 club raise \$1000 through a raffle in order to provide scholarships. The 2016-2017 club has held bake sales, is coordinating a book sale, and will serve refreshments at graduation.

3. The American Indian Scholars Program (AISP) work to improve persistence rates of Native American students by providing opportunities for personal and professional development in a supportive group setting, representative of collectivistic cultural values. Development of this program is based on the work of Dr. Iris HeavyRunner and Dr. Richard DeCelles. Their research led to the development of the Family Education Model (FEM). Briefly stated, the model explains challenges faced by American Indian students when pursuing higher education, and offers recommendations on how to provide support in culturally relevant ways.

Using the FEM as a guide, the AISP provides a support system for American Indian students through the peer mentorship program. One key point of the FEM model is “many students and their families need the college to act as their liaison with existing social and health services during times of crisis” (p. 30). One of the goals of the Scholars group is to create peer mentors with knowledge of school

and community resources, which could be instrumental in applying that key element from the FEM model.

Cultural awareness is a big factor in making Native Americans and their families comfortable and motivated. The FEM shows that family is a big part of Native American culture and family support is a big factor in Native American Success. "The family support approach focuses on helping families identify and develop their strengths, rather than passively receiving services designed and delivered by professionals (p. 30)." This serves as the rationale for the professional and academic development component of the AISP plan.

Social activities will help develop the families bonds with the school, which will help create a better support system for the Native Student. "Activities such as dances, socials, sports, and outdoor activities include the students' families; spouses and children of students are regularly invited to join in. In this way, the entire family develops a sense of belonging at the college and no longer feels resentful of the student spending time on campus. Establishing and maintaining a sense of "family," both at home and at college, fortifies American Indian students' academic persistence (p. 31)." Members of the American Indian Scholars Group will have the task of planning a social event in the spring each year. In addition, they also have the responsibility of assisting the Native American Student Group with Native American Heritage day and month each fall. These events demonstrate the GFC commitment to the integration of Native American culture on our campus and give students and families a sense of belonging.

Not only will these events help with cultural awareness, but also provide American Indian students with a sense of empowerment and that their voices count. According the FEM, "Empowerment is an intentional, dynamic, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, caring, and group participation through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over their resources (p. 31)." By focusing on empowerment, members of the AISP can show that participation is also key to success. A goal is that these students will feel empowered to be involved in their community or be involved in school activities like student government or in various clubs. Mentors will encourage Native Student to participate in order to make their voices heard and make a difference for their community.

### **Program Overview**

There are three major components of the American Indian Scholars Program.

1. **Academic and professional development:** Workshops will be offered each semester with topics to include:
  - Interview skills
  - Resume/cover letter development
  - Professional presentation skills
  - Civil rights
  - School and local resources
  - Goal setting
  - Time management
  
2. **Service to the college:** Responsibilities include:
  - Two hours per week staffing Native American Enrichment Center (NAEC)

- Attendance at biweekly meetings
- Work with Native American Student Group during fall semester to organize and host events in recognition of Native American Heritage Month
- Organize one social or education event each spring semester to be offered to GFC campus

**3. Tiered mentorship program:**

- Tier 1 – during first semester of participation in program work with senior group member to develop peer mentorship skills
- Tier 2 – during all subsequent semesters of participation, act as peer mentor for American Indians students at GFC and demonstrate effective mentoring strategies for new members

**Eligibility**

In order to grow this program, students meeting the below criteria will be invited to join the American Indian Scholars:

- Student must be in at least their second semester of enrollment at GFC
- Student must maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher
- Student must be able to commit to coming to campus for meetings, events, and service in the NAEC

**Benefits of Participation**

Participation in the program entitles students to a stipend recognizing their service to the community. Amount of stipend increases after the first semester of participation. A \$100 stipend is earned for the first semester (training period), and a \$150 stipend each subsequent semester. The stipend is paid at the end of each term based on satisfactory performance of expectations. Satisfactory performance is defined as:

- Attending at least 70% of group activities to include workshops, events, and meetings
- Staffing NAEC two hours each week per agreement
- Serving as mentor to others by making contact information available and responding to inquiries
- Promoting group events

In addition to the financial benefits, scholars will receive:

- Recognition by both the GFC administration and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
- Development of leadership and professional skills

Reference: HeavyRunner, I., & DeCelles, R. (2002). Family education model: Meeting the student retention challenge. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 41(2), 29-37.



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3. NARRATIVE COORDINATOR NAME: Charla Merja  
PHONE/EMAIL 406-771-4301, charla.merja@gfcmsu.edu
  
4. ACTIVITY NAME (name electronic file with this name: Professional Practice Experience with Indian Family Health Clinic
5. PROGRAM STAFF NAME: Frankie Lyons  
PHONE/EMAIL:406-771-4361, frankie.lyons@gfcmsu.edu
  
6. Select Tribe(s) Involved:  

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Belknap
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackfeet	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Peck
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Indian Family Health Clinic will provide the opportunity for Great Falls College MSU Nursing students to participate in instruction and “on-the-job” training. This is a great opportunity for our students to gain exposure and experience with American Indians. It was agreed the opportunity was of mutual interest and advantage to cooperate in a plan to provide practical professional and educational experiences for the students.

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PHONE/EMAIL 406-771-4301, charla.merja@gfcmsu.edu
  
4. ACTIVITY NAME (name electronic file with this name): Native American Enrichment Center Open House
5. PROGRAM STAFF NAME: Sandra Bauman  
PHONE/EMAIL:406-771-2268, sandra.bauman@gfcmsu.edu
  
6. Select Tribe(s) Involved:  

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Belknap
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The Great Falls College MSU Native American Enrichment Center will hold an open house Tuesday, April 26 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Native American Enrichment Center at GFC MSU focuses on fostering learning and success of all students at the college, while also providing Native American students a culturally sensitive area where they can gather with their peers.

“We are excited to invite everyone to our Native American Enrichment Center to show off this great resource,” said Sandy Bauman, Director of Academic Success at GFC MSU.

The NAEC is also holding a raffle raise money for student scholarships. Raffle prizes include Native American artwork and jewelry, gift cards, a mountain bike and more.

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Tickets are \$5 each, five tickets for \$20 or 15 tickets for \$50. All money raised will fund a scholarship for students attending Great Falls College MSU next fall.

Raffle tickets can be purchased by calling the Native American Enrichment Center at 406.771.4348 or can be purchased at the open house. The drawing will be held Friday, April 29.

On Thursday, April 21, the American Indian Scholars group at GFC MSU will hold a focus group dinner for American Indian students to find out what kinds of activities and services they would be interested in seeing in the NAEC.

“We hope to get more information from this event to help us build an even stronger program next year that works on building a sense of community for students,” Bauman said.

The open house on April 26 is free and open to the public. Great Falls College MSU is located at 2100 16th Ave. S.

For more information, contact:

Sandra Bauman  
Director of Academic Success  
Phone: 406.771.2268, Email: [sandra.bauman@gfcmsu.edu](mailto:sandra.bauman@gfcmsu.edu)

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Photo File Name: IMB\_2124.jpg

Photo Caption (include the name of the event/persons, location, and date): Native American Enrichment Center Open House

Photo Credit: Erin Granger

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3. NARRATIVE COORDINATOR NAME: Charla Merja  
PHONE/EMAIL 406-771-4301, charla.merja@gfcmsu.edu
4. ACTIVITY NAME (name electronic file with this name): RevUp Grant Activities
5. PROGRAM STAFF NAME: Matt Springer  
PHONE/EMAIL:406-771-2273, matthew.springer@gfcmsu.edu
6. Select Tribe(s) Involved:  

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All	<input type="checkbox"/> Fort Belknap
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The RevUp Montana project helped support American Indian student success in several ways this year. 297 American Indian students were served by the project, accounting for 10.5% of all participants in Year 3 of the project (pleasantly overrepresented amongst participants (with American Indians accounting for approximately 6.4% of the state’s overall population). Through their participation, students had access to enhanced career and technical training and more comprehensive student support services.

In addition, the RevUp project team provided technical assistance to Little Big Horn College and Fort Peck Community College (FPCC). Both postsecondary institutions were provided assistance with budget modifications and equipment procurement assistance. While FPCC was accustomed to the demands of implementing large federal grants, more assistance was necessary to help LBHC implement its first major federal grant in compliance. This assistance included:

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- Exploring and implementing dual enrollment programs in partnership with two local high schools to launch the college's first welding program, including drafting of inter-institution contracts
- Developing written policies and procedure for federal grant reporting including: Veteran's Priority of Service, Incident Reporting, Financial policies and Administrative policies.
- Coordinating a visit from USDOL to help contextualizing the need for additional spending latitude and process controls, leading to authorization for additional equipment
  - Helped coordinate a successful response to USDOL findings, resulting in a "clean" report.
- Consistent reminders around reporting deadlines and assistance in drafting reports (e.g. desk audits)
- Developing a marketing plan for new courses
- Assisting in expense reporting with which improved their accuracy as compared to their general ledger records improving their credibility as grant recipients, including direct communications with third-party accountants to improve tracking of expenditure through new process formally adopted by LBHC
- Developing procedures to maintain appropriate CDL training processes and procedures:
  - Scheduling and tracking of CDL drive time (to maximize student output)
  - Scheduling CDL permit tests
  - Utilizing simulator to prepare students prior to driving time
  - Maintaining a log book

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