

## MSU-Northern Bi-Annual Diversity Action Plan – 2009

In compliance with BOR Policy 1902 and MCA 20-1-501, below is the MSU-N Diversity Action Plan prepared for the upcoming November Board of Regents Meeting. Per recent changes in reporting, only the Action Plan is included in this report. Statistical information will be provided as needed to support information contained within the action plan.

**ACTION PLAN ITEM ONE - MSU-N update on achievements accomplished since the July 2007 Diversity Report including updates by college, student services, and financial aid.**

Montana State University-Northern continues its elementary education partnership with the three tribal colleges in northern Montana. That partnership permits students to complete two years of their degree work at the tribal colleges, including most of the pre-education classes. Students may complete their education on the MSU-Northern campus for a bachelor of science degree in elementary education. That partnership was originally funded by grants from the Federal government. When this soft money source ended, MSU-Northern has continued the relationship with its own limited resources. More than 50 Native American students have become elementary education teachers under this program. Recently, FPCC, FBCC, and SCC have been approved for another cycle of funding to partner with MSUN.

MSU-Northern has established a similar program for Native American students who are interested in a profession in the sciences. Both the biology degree and the general science secondary education degree are available under this partnership, with the first two years of coursework at area tribal colleges and the second two years at the Northern campus. The program has continued to grow and includes students from Fort Peck Community College.

The Science Faculty at MSU-Northern is continuing to teach specialized science courses for at least two of the tribal colleges in Montana, Fort Belknap College and Fort Peck Community College.

The Multicultural Coordinator, a Native American, is the point person for minority recruiting. The overall minority student population has increased since 2007. This increase is attributed to extra recruiting efforts and improved student advising processes. The Multicultural Coordinator responsibilities also include recruitment and transfer of Native American students to MSU-Northern.

In addition, Gear Up student camps have been an annual event on the Northern campus since 2006. The camp has been revised and attendance has increased from 14 in 2006 to 50 in 2007. Northern did two Gear Up camps for 2008 and 2009. The camps for 2008 and again in 2009 attracted about 140 students each. The grade range of the campers spans 7<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grades.

Northern continues to host and support group Talent Search and Gear Up activities with campus visits coordinated with schools. MSU-Northern received a Gear Up grant from the state of Montana to offer a weeklong technology program for Native American junior high students. This program is held in the summers at Northern.

The Assistant Dean of Students coordinates two summer programs, Upward Bound (current high school students) and Bridge Programs (recent high school graduates) from Fort Belknap. These four-week summer programs are held on the MSU-N campus. They are designed to give students a feel for the college experience. The high school graduates (Bridge Program) complete 6 college credit hours while in the program.

In fall 2009, MSUN along with Rocky Boy received grant funding for a program entitled YouthBuild. The goal of YouthBuild is to provide at-risk youth ages 17-24 with a positive learning environment to learn skills necessary to be competitive in the job market. In addition, the program is designed to provide students with leadership, technical skills, and confidence so they can offer a positive contribution to the community. Currently there are 30 students enrolled in the program. They receive instruction in plumbing, carpentry and electrical technology. The courses are designed to prepare students for enrolling in college courses or to enter an apprentice program.

The institution continues its efforts to attract and hire Native American people for faculty and staff positions. In addition to the Bio-Energy WIRED Grant Director hired in 2007, a full-time Native American faculty member was hired to teach Metals Technology in the fall of 2009. Also, an adjunct Native American teacher from Rocky Boy has been hired to teach the Native American Studies minor. All recruiting materials include an AA/EEO statement about Northern's commitment to Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity for all positions. Also, the MSU-N Diversity Committee continues to meet and discuss diversity-related issues on campus.

MSU-Northern continues to explore other academic program opportunities with area tribal colleges.

During fall 2009 orientation, diversity issues were discussed and all faculty and staff received copies of the SAMSHA publication entitled CultureCard. The Culture Card is a guide designed to build cultural awareness for both American Indians and Alaska Natives. The pamphlet includes information on myths and fact, regional and cultural differences, cultural customs, spirituality, communication styles, and tribal sovereignty

MSU-Northern and several academic programs at the institution continue to collaborate on grant opportunities with area tribal colleges. A grant entitled A Higher Education Initiative: Leadership through Partnership was submitted for establishing a partnership with the Tribal Colleges to plan the initiative and focus sustainability and allow for faculty engagement in the process.

The MSUN Nursing Program continues to receive some 6-8 Native American students into the program each year.

The Financial Aid Office strives to accommodate all Native American students in securing financial aid. We host a College Goal Sunday on campus in February in which surrounding high school students and Tribal College students are invited to participate and receive assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. We have had good attendance from area reservation schools and have helped many Native American students submit FAFSA in a timely manner.

**ACTION PLAN ITEM TWO** – Please provide a brief discussion of the steps your campus will be taking in the coming year to meet the requirements of MCA 20-1-501

The Teacher Education Program, as part of its curriculum reform, and as part of its diversity efforts under OPI PEPPS accreditation rules, has made a special effort to incorporate instruction on cultural diversity into its program. The Teacher Education Program has also worked hard to develop clinical instructional settings for its students that involve Native American children.

MSU-Northern continues to review its general education program. The faculty committee responsible for this work considers MCA 20-1-501 as part of that review.

MSU-Northern currently offers seven 300 and 400 level courses in Native American Studies to prepare students for a Minor in this area.

The Diversity Committee continues to meet to discuss diversity issues on campus.

**ACTION ITEM NUMBER THREE** – Provide a list of quantifiable goals to accomplish in meeting the Regent’s policy directive – Policy 1902 for the upcoming year.

1. Increase the number of grant-funded partnerships with tribal colleges by 33%
2. Increase the number of Native American students completing the elementary education degree by 20%
3. Hire at least one more Native American faculty member, and one Native American staff member
4. Diversity Committee (at least two members will be Native American) to meet at least twice each year with regular reports of activity to the University Advisory Committee
5. Continue the Gear Up, Upward Bound, and Talent Search programs in summer 2010.
6. Continue to attract 6-8 Native American students to the nursing program each year.
7. Increase overall Native American student enrollment by 5%
8. Include at least one Native American employee on all Search Committees whenever possible.
9. Maintain the standing committee “Indian Education for All” to meet at least quarterly.