

Calendar of Events Spring 2010

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
January 17	3 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Freedom Walk 2010	Chamber & BSU
January 18	All Day	No Classes - Martin Luther King Day	BSU
February 10	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	AIRC Campus Preview	AIRC
February 12	11 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Valentine's Day Taco Sale	AIRC
February 12	6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Hand Drum Exhibition & Dance	AIRC
March 8-12	All Week	No Classes - Spring Break	BSU
March 19	4:30 p.m.	AIRC Scholarship Application Deadline	AIRC
March 24	6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	"American Outrage" film showing (free)	AIRC
March 31	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	AIRC Campus Preview	AIRC
April 7	8 a.m. - 4 p.m.	No Classes - Student Achievement Day	BSU
April 15	10 a.m. - 3 p.m.	American Indian Entrepreneur Summit	AIRC
April 22	6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Indian Awards Banquet	Beaux Arts Ballroom
April 29	All Day	No Classes - Reading Day	BSU
April 30 - May 6	All Day	Final Exams	BSU
April 30	7 p.m. - 10 p.m.	CIS Pow Wow Warm-up	John Glas Fieldhouse
May 1	1 p.m. - 10 p.m.	CIS Traditional Pow Wow	John Glas Fieldhouse
May 7	2 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Graduation Ceremonies	John Glas Fieldhouse

American Indian Resource Center

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

IN THIS ISSUE

GEM Scholars Program is an exciting opportunity for American Indian students wishing to pursue graduate degrees in Geology, Environmental Science, or Meteorology.

Paid internships for students during the summer of 2010.

Tori Dahlke, the Retention Counselor, on upcoming events for Spring Semester 2010.

Get to know our staff!

Director's Corner

Welcome to Spring Semester. Although it is cold outside now, we will soon be warmed by sunny days and spring breezes. The faculty and staff at the American Indian Resource Center are looking forward to spring semester with a full slate of retention activities for students as well as educational and cultural activities for faculty, staff, students and the general community.

Bemidji State University has a long history of serving American Indian students well. This institution has an opportunity, perhaps unprecedented, to work with and contribute to the welfare of American Indian communities like never before. The American Indian Resource Center at BSU plans to survey American Indian students at five different colleges in northern Minnesota this spring on why students persist or drop out of college before graduation. The results of this survey will be shared with all the participating institutions and a plan of action will be developed to address student retention issues. Having a well educated population will strengthen our local American Indian communities and all of northern Minnesota. This is a goal well worth pursuing.

It is my belief that all people want to be respected, have a vision of a better future for themselves and their loved ones, and have the opportunity to go as far as their abilities can take them. Individuals can do amazing things when given a realistic opportunity to succeed. Because Bemidji State University has many excellent faculty and talented support staff, we are in a great position to help make dreams a reality.

Donald R. Day

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BEMIDJI
STATE UNIVERSITY



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GEM Scholars Program

The GEM (Geology, Environmental Science, Meteorology) Scholars Program is a research partnership between Purdue University and Bemidji State University, Red Lake Nations College, and Leech Lake Tribal College. The program goals are to increase the number of American Indian students pursuing graduate degrees in geo-science programs at Purdue University. Students accepted into the GEM Scholars Program will (1) Get paid for being a GEM Scholar; (2) Attend summer workshops at BSU and at research sites where they work with BSU and Purdue University researchers/mentors; and (3) Visit Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, in September to present their research findings.

This is an exciting opportunity for American Indian students wishing to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in Geology, Environmental Science, or Meteorology. Contact Suzanne Zurn-Birkhimer (Women in Engineering at Purdue University and a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe at 765-494-0758), Pat Welle (Professor of Economics & Environmental Studies at BSU at 218-755-3873), or Don Day (American Indian Resource Center at BSU at 218-755-2032) for more information.

Summer Internships

The American Indian Resource Center has secured a couple of paid internships for students during the summer of 2010. The internships are with the USDA and concentrate

on environmental science, wildlife conservation, and natural resource management. These paid internships are designed to encourage more students to move into these fields as a career choice.

BSU Student Spotlight – Breanna Miettinen

Aaniin, my name is Breanna Miettinen. I am from Leech Lake, and I grew up in S. Lake.

This is my fourth year at Bemidji State University. I am majoring in Accounting with an emphasis in Accounting Information Systems, and a minor in Management Information Systems.

I will graduate in the spring of 2011. I am currently serving my second year as the Treasurer for the Council of Indian Students. Also, I work at the American Indian Resource Center as a University Ambassador.



Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Grant

BSU secured a \$100,000 HUD grant to help build the American Indian Resource Center. The funds were used to build a new office, purchase new furniture, replace the decayed sidewalk, build a permanent flower bed, build a fire pit, install a roof on storage area, purchase shades, purchase a new projector and Smart Board, purchase cement furniture for patio, and buy new computers and language curriculum. These grant funds make it possible for the American Indian Resource Center to be more efficient in serving students and the community in all our educational endeavors. Visit the Center and see the great improvements made and in use.

Ben Burgess & Tori Dahlke earn degrees

Congratulations to Ben Burgess (Bezhiginini) for earning a Ph.D. in Native American Studies from the University of California – Davis. Ben has been the Director of the BSU Indian Studies Department since 2006. Ben’s heritage is Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe (Wisconsin) and Yankton Nakota (South Dakota).

Congratulations to Colette “Tori” Dahlke (Niizhooeginiw) for earning a Master’s of Science Degree in Education with a concentration in Psychology from Bemidji State University. Tori has been the Retention Counselor at the BSU American Indian Resource Center since 2008.

BSU Graduate Spotlight - Tara Anderson

My name is Tara Anderson and I am a descendent of the Red Lake Nation in northern Minnesota. My mother was a product of the “sixties scoop” where many Native children were removed from their homes to be placed in predominantly Caucasian homes. Although my mother had a warm and loving childhood, there was always something missing in her life. When I was a small child, my mom received a letter from her adoption agency stating that she had been enrolled in the Red Lake Nation. We had always felt a part of our lives was missing and only discovered what was missing when we began to learn our traditions. Our search truly began when my mother and I were enrolled as undergraduate students at Bemidji State University together. My mother was an Indian Studies Major and I was a Chemistry Major. She met family members in her classes and obtained the understanding of the history of the Anishinaabe people and other Native nations along with the inter-generational trauma that was associated with her adoption. Through this knowledge, she was able to generate compassion and forgiveness which initiated her own healing. My mother’s involvement with the American Indian Resource Center helped to add to our lives a missing piece and close the circle (in knowing ourselves).

My undergraduate career was difficult to say the least. In my freshman year I was pregnant with and gave birth to my second child. My sophomore year I was suffering badly from post-partum depression and underwent surgery when I began to develop cervical cancer. It was during this time that I knew I wanted to be involved in healing and I knew I needed my education more than ever. I found that BSU and my family were my life lines during these times of crises. I truly feel that had I gone to any other school, I would have failed and dropped out of school. The university had many resources to help me succeed including the American Indian Resource Center, financial resources, educational resources and they could direct me to a plethora of community resources. The professors were understanding and flexible. They only wanted me to succeed and saw that I truly was driven to do so. All I needed was the opportunity.

During my senior year at Bemidji State another opportunity knocked on my door. People involved with Purdue University were visiting the American Indian Resource Center and were looking for Native American students to become involved in two different programs. The first was GEM scholars. This was an opportunity to get research experience in the field under the supervision of Purdue professors. The research project was to look at the effect that invasive species of earthworms were having on the northern hardwood forests, specifically on Red Lake Reservation. This experience made me fall in love with research and field work. I also feel this



experience really had an impact on me emotionally. Working on tribal lands with fellow Native students really warmed my heart. I felt accepted as a Native American as I never had before. I felt connected to the people and the land as I knew my ancestors had before me. I knew that I never wanted that connection to be broken again.

The second project that Purdue University was initiating was the Tecumseh project. The purpose was to try and recruit more Native Americans to pursue advanced degrees in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) at their university. Students accepted to the graduate school were awarded the Alfred P. Sloan scholarship and were supported financially and academically to continue their education. The Tecumseh project has its roots here and has been successful. The Alfred P. Sloan foundation has funded the NAECC (Native American Educational and Cultural Center) on campus. This was great in that it gave the students that were coming to Purdue University a place to meet and study and a place to share our collective cultures. This was a critical component to our success here because of the 7,500 graduate students that were enrolled there in the past year only 15 students are Native American. Purdue University also developed a class for the incoming students to integrate our traditional beliefs and western science. Due to the minimal numbers of Native graduate students that we had this was also very important to our success by allowing us to share our commonalities and differences as well as draw on the strength of each other. It has helped us find our paths in our research careers as well as the ability to overcome “imposter syndrome.” I found these supports to be critical to my success.

I started my graduate career at Purdue University in the fall of 2009 researching bio fuels in the Biochemistry Department. I quickly knew this was not what I wanted to do with my life; it did not satisfy my healer nature. My second year I transferred to the Biological Sciences department and was very blessed to get a research assistantship working in a breast cancer lab under Dr. Ignacio Camarillo. Our lab is focused on understanding the effects of diet and obesity on breast cancer. We are currently developing my Master’s thesis research project. It is my desire to do a translational study. I have done preliminary literature research that shows Native American women have some of the lowest incidence rates of breast cancer, but have the highest incidence rates of obesity and diabetes; both of which are associated with increased breast cancer incidence. We want to understand why Native American women, having such high risk factors for breast cancer, have some of the lowest rates. I will begin by gathering further information on breast cancer incidences in Native American women from tribes across the country that have not been studied in this capacity. Next I will look at risk factors that could be involved in these observations (including diet, socioeconomic status, physical activity and poverty) and see how statistically relevant these aspects are in the incidence of

breast cancer among Native American women. I believe this will point to a biological cause that will assist us in identifying and developing additional options in the prevention and treatment of breast cancer in all women in the future.

I am so grateful for all the support I have received in my education from the universities I have attended, the American Indian Resource Center, Native American Educational and Cultural Center, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and for my discovery and practice of my culture. I am consistently making a concerted effort to live my life in the spirit and context of Bimaadiziwiin; which is an Anishinaabe concept of living your life in a good way in thought and action, to yourself and others. Life may be difficult in graduate school, especially raising two young daughters, but I always try to remember to live my life in a good way. That single concept helps me to push myself harder to succeed. It is my sincere hope that I set an example for my children, other Native women (who I feel are strong beyond all measure), and even complete strangers. Bimaadiziwiin helps me believe that all humans can succeed and work together for a common goal and in turn keep hope alive for the future.



Dr. Donald Day
Executive Director, AIRC



Dr. John Gonzalez , Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Psychology



Colette “Tori” Dahlke, M.S.
Retention Counselor



Dr. Anton Treuer
Professor of Ojibwe



Henry Flocken, M. Ed
Assistant Professor of Ojibwe



Stephanie Hendricks
OAS Intermediate



Dr. Ben Burgess
Assistant Professor of Indian Studies



Dr. Leah Carpenter
Chair of Accounting



Tori Dahlke – Retention Counselor Aaniin! The American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) has been an amazing venue for activities, events and learning this fall semester 2009. The semester began with a pipe ceremony at the AIRC Day of Welcome. More than sixty students, faculty and staff attended. Along with the AIRC and Council of Indian Students, the American Indian Alumni Chapter also provided an information booth with AIAC representatives, Rochelle Johnson, Susan Ninham and elder representative Lucy Barrett.

This school year the AIRC has planned four Campus Preview events to assist BSU in its efforts to recruit Native American students. Although recruiting Native American students to BSU and hosting tours is not new to the AIRC, what is new is that specific dates were set and invitations were sent out inviting high schools, tribal and community colleges to bring potential students to the AIRC for a special campus preview. One of the exciting aspects of this initiative was the leadership demonstrated by the Council of Indian Students when asked if members of the CIS could volunteer as AIRC University Ambassadors to conduct the tours. Five current members and one former member volunteered and have completed the tour guide training with the Admissions Office. The CIS/AIRC University Ambassadors are: Fawn Belgarde, Anna Goldtooth, Petra Neadeau, Arlin Thunder, Gabe Wakonabo and former CIS member Greg Wood. The first two previews went very well hosting over 50 high school and Tribal college students. Included in the preview is a welcome, a presentation that includes information on transitioning to a four year university, a power point presentation on BSU majors, college life, costs and financial aid, a customized tour (includes 3 Dimensional Hologram presentation) and lunch at Walnut Hall. The campus previews scheduled for this winter and spring are February 10 and March 31, 2010, from 10:00 AM to approximately 1:30 PM, everyone welcome!

It has been a very energizing semester for me working with students in a variety of ways. Whether it is advising students with their class schedules and registration, adding or dropping a class, completing an academic plan, exploring possible majors, finding an advisor, or assisting with financial aid, money issues, finding a job, housing, daycare, or just being available to talk. I know students would agree that for many this has been a difficult semester, but at the same time, would agree that it was absolutely worthwhile (keeping in perspective the ultimate goal...a college degree).