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Walthill Schools - Introduction Letter

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Fax

To: Sandy Ostrand
Of: Walthill Schools
Fax: 1-402-846-5029
Phone: 1-402-846-5432
Pages: 3, including this cover sheet.
Date: January 21, 1997

Hi Ms. Ostrand,

As a brief introduction, I'm a faculty member at UNO and I'm involved in a Native American educational project that is both unique and rather timely. In response to the October Executive Order by President Clinton that concerns Native Americans, as well as the Space Grant Initiatives that I have outlined in the following pages, I've been in contact with NICC and Little Priest Tribal College over the past several weeks. I was in Winnebago a few weeks ago and met with Yvonne Bushyhead and Virgil Likness about the attached pages. These pages are a major part of what I have sent to Dr. Liz Ward at NASA who prepared the NASA brief for AIHEC last week.

Where you and the Walthill Schools come in is that I'm putting together a meeting here at UNO on February 25 and 26 of tribal schools' administrators and I hope that someone from your school district will be able to attend. However, I understand that there are several administrative changes occurring so I'm not sure who to talk to at Walthill and it seems that you may be the administrator-in-charge today (a title you may or may enjoy) so I hope you can connect me with the right person(s).

The meeting at UNO begins at 3PM on the 25th and concludes about the same time on the 26th. We have asked the administrators to come as our guest and have reserved a block of rooms and have an agenda planned which includes several business meetings, a tour of the UNO campus with a focus on things that we can do with the tribal colleges, and overviews from several guest speakers from our Space Grant affiliates.

Why don't you look over the attached pages, keeping in mind that we are very interested in improving the math, science, and technology skills of elementary and secondary skills through the use of aeronautics and astronautics. I am very keen on increasing the number of Native Americans in the field as well.

I'll call you this afternoon.

From the desk of...

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Space Grant Native American Activities

The Nebraska Space Grant has initiated, within the Western Region, several unique activities concerning Native Americans. This model could well serve as the foundation for a NASA Native American program. In addition, several states will provide leadership for specific segments. Among these activities are:

1. The formation of a permanent Native American (NA) working group for the western region; this working group will meet again during the 1997 Western Region Space Grant Meeting in October or November 1997. At that meeting, it is hoped that several representatives of Native American Tribal Colleges would attend and participate in working groups activities.
2. The Nebraska Space Grant has committed a 1/4 time release for a faculty member to provide leadership for the western region NA initiatives; this investment can also be utilized for any national programs.
3. The National Council of Space Grant Directors is considering the western region NA program as a national initiative.
4. The development of a Western Region World Wide Web site. This web site will contain western region NA news and items of general interest as well as links to other western region state NA homepages and selected NA web sites.
5. The establishment of a western region NA database. The database will be the first such aerospace/aeronautics specific site focusing exclusively on Native Americans employed in the field.
6. A presentation of the results of the western region Native American working group will be made at the Midwest Regional Space Grant Directors.
7. Discussions have begun with executives of a national general aviation airplane manufacturer to provide tribal college schools (K-12 as well as post-secondary) with aeronautical library books and instructional materials.
8. The collection of aerospace/aeronautics career information for inclusion on the Western Region NA Homepage; It is envisioned that this career information will ultimately include job overviews, descriptions of various career ladders, and profiles on Native Americans currently working in the aerospace/aeronautics field.
9. The development of a Western Region NA reflector site email list that can be accessed from the Nebraska Space Grant Homepage at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.
10. The sharing of progress on the Nebraska Space Grant Articulation Model with Native American Tribal Schools with the western region. This information will also include progress reports on the envisioned joint project (based on the Nebraska initiative) between Nebraska, South Dakota, and Kansas. Although letters of understanding between participants have not been formally signed at this time, it is planned that these documents will be completed by early in 1997.

11. In the three state project with NE, SD, and KS, the infrastructure is being developed; this program will include 8 tribal colleges in the states represented.
12. In Nebraska, arrangements for increased interface between the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the tribal colleges. Visitations by Space Grant affiliates to the Little Priest and Nebraska Indian Community College campuses are scheduled in January.

It is envisioned that any of the activities undertaken by the Western Region can serve as models of good practice for other states wishing to develop Native American articulation programs. The Nebraska Space Grant stands ready to assist others in developing their own unique Native American programs.

For additional information, contact Dr. Hank Lehrer, Aviation Institute, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182, 402-554-3424.