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Space Grant Native American Activities - Briefing for Dr. Julius Dashe, NASA Director of Space Grant

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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.
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.

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.

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.

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.

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