Review of Nebraska Native American Effort

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Review of Nebraska Native American Effort
Washington, DC Luncheon Meeting
August 8, 1997
Dr. Hank Lehrer, Nebraska Space Grant

Philosophical Underpinning: A recent report documents that high dropout rates and low academic achievement by American Indian students stem in part from a pervasive disregard for cultural relevancy in the education of American Indian students. In particular, positive early and middle school experiences in science and mathematics are essential to preparing young Indian people for science and engineering careers. Source: (National Science Foundation (1995). Educating American Indian/Alaska Native Elementary and Secondary Students: Guideline for Mathematics, Science and Technology Programs, pp. 31 - 35.).

A Chronology for Change: The following events have a direct correlation to this initiative:
1. May 1996: SG/EPSCoR conference hosts tribally controlled colleges in Williamsburg, VA.
2. October 12, 1996: AIHEC meeting in Rapid City, SD hosts SG Directors from SD, NE, MN, and MT.
3. October 19, 1996: President Clinton signs Executive Order 13021.
5. February 16, 1997: Formation of the Nebraska Native American Working Group in Omaha, NE.
8. June 19, 1997: Meetings if NNAWG, Winnebago and Santee, NE.
9. June 20, 1997: Meeting with SD Space Grant officials, Rapid City, SD; discussions concerning joint projects and letters of agreement.
10. September 6, 1997: Proposal Writing Workshop at Norfolk, NE.
13. October 24, 1997: Meeting of the NNAWG at S. Sioux City, NE.
15. February 1998: NNAWG Retreat - UNO.
Intra-State (two tribal colleges and 4 reservation school districts)
1. Formation of Nebraska Native American Working Group.
2. Preparation of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNO and Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) and Little Priest Tribal College.
3. Awarding of Organizational Enhancement Grants to tribal colleges.
4. ACE Academy Scholarships to tribal public school district.
5. Awarding of NASA scholarships to tribal colleges and schools.
6. Agreement to continue to work jointly on future projects.

Interstate (NE, KS, and SD)
1. Dialogue between NE and SD has begun. Joint projects under consideration:
   a. Kites over the Great Plains.
   b. Automated weather station for reservations.
   c. Co-ordination of reservation school and tribal college programs.
   d. Spring 1998 meeting of NE and SD tribal college and reservation school officials in Mitchell, SD.
2. Goal is to use the NE effort as a Model of Best Practice for a three state program.
3. Letters of agreement are being prepared to include signatures at the director, dean, and chancellor/president level.

Western Region
1. Establishment of the Native American Working Group (NAWG) on November 8, 1997; activities re-affirmed at the National Space Grant Directors meeting in Washington in March.
2. The NAWG has begun work on:
   # WWW homepage and website.
   # NA database.
   # Collection of aerospace/aeronautics career information.