Leveraging Cultural and Academic Partnerships to Develop Leaders

Native Youth Pipeline Project and Community Engagement within Southern CA

UCLA School of Law
Tribal Learning Community & Educational Exchange
Objectives

• Native Nations Building ideals; Bridging our Native communities and education.
• Design development: Utilizing community outreach and needs with university expectations
• Community Partnership: Ownership, Response and implementation
• University Partnership: Response and implementation
• Success and limitations
Native Nations Building: Understanding and Listening
Native Nations Building-Philosophy

• **Sovereignty Matters.** When Native nations make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decision makers on matters as diverse as governmental form, natural resource management, economic development, health care, and social service provision.

• **Culture Matters.** Successful economies stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally grounded institutions of self-government. Indigenous societies are diverse; each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture.

• **Leadership Matters.** Nation building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose change. Such leaders, whether elected, community, or spiritual, convince people that things can be different and inspire them to take action.
Why Native Nation Building

Processes of globalization and government policy make new demands on Native Communities, while at the same time Native are reasserting Native identity, culture, and community in an environment of continuous endangerments to their political autonomy and culture. Only an education program that researches Native issues and trains leaders and community members with contemporary knowledge and brings the skills of higher education to Native communities will help in supporting native nation building and continuity. (Duane Champagne, Ph.D. Dept. of Sociology, UCLA)
The Tribal Learning Community & Educational Exchange (TLCE) program was created in 2003 through an endowment from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. Officially opening in 2004, TLCEE introduced programs that are interdisciplinary in scope, emphasizing both legal and general education that includes Native peoples’ perspectives, knowledge, priorities, and visions for the future within higher education.

Our mission is “to serve our Native American Community through our Native peoples’ perspectives, that are both tribally and culturally respectful, and will allow the pursuit of a greater future for all, through our educational exchange.”
TLCEE Summary of Goals and Objectives

TLCEE's goals can be summarized as follows

• Development of relevant courses for delivery to the Native community and students interested in professional development and working in tribal communities;

• Collaboration with Native community members and traditional knowledge bearers;

• A focus on enhancing Native governance and nation building; and

• The creation of pipeline programs that encourage and support Native Students to pursue and enroll in university level courses at UCLA.
TLCEE has a philosophy of developing and using American Indian content as a basis for instruction within our projects. Understanding historical references, community and economic development, and Federal constructs affecting our Native Nations gives us the ability to give our students a means in having greater understanding of Indian Country and assists in their professional development.
Developing Pipeline Project
Pipeline Philosophy

Western Academia fails to integrate American Indian topics, knowledge and cultural understanding within classroom curriculum. The results, Native topics are taught during specific dates within the year and fail to include local Tribal Communities. Native students fail to be interested in academics when it is not based within their own cultural understanding or community, but instead, on foreign ideals.

Within our Pipeline Project, we offer American Indian content as a way of incorporating our students and their cultural understanding. We feel this will empower our students to pursue knowledge that will help our Native Communities and allow greater success through cultural identity.
What UC Admissions Examines

Comprehensive Review

- All achievements (both academic and non-academic) and challenges are considered in the context of the opportunities the student has had and how the student has taken advantage of those opportunities and overcome challenges to be a high achiever
  - Academic Accomplishments
    - Strength of coursework (HL, AP, Community College coursework), GPA, SAT/ACT
  - Personal Achievements
    - Commitment & Leadership, After School Academic Preparation Programs, Honors/Awards
  - Life Experiences
    - Cultural Involvement, Life Obstacles & Challenges, Special Circumstances

Personal Statement

- This allows student to make best case for admission
- NOT a repeat of what is already in the application
- Highly recommend to talk about cultural involvement.
Community Needs

TLCEE has made numerous visits to our Tribal and Urban Communities. We believe in community outreach and direct discussion on Community concerns and needs. We also believe that our discussions should be inclusive, where our dialogue is open and customary. Therefore, we go out into the community where we listen and can be directed on each community’s unique needs. We also understand one meeting will never resolve concerns and therefore our travels are continuous to our Native communities.

NASAI
Assessing our Community Needs

Needs have included future investment in their community members where they will have greater knowledge in business, law, and cultural protection. These immediate needs can infuse their Tribal communities for future growth and to take control of their Tribal assets.
Merging UA / Culture Ideals / TLCEE / Community Needs

Combining UC admissions standards and our Educational Model with community ideals the following are to be included within our pipeline projects:

- Cultural Based Instruction
- Community involvement to assist in culturally based topics
- Research methodology
- Mentoring from university and alumni
- Academic Workshops
- Developed Project at end of each program.
Pipeline Model

Utilizing a core set of TLCEE online courses (offered to non-matriculated students for Professional development) we decided to offer them to our Native Youth:

- Use of existing online courses, we give our students the opportunity to earn university credits through UCLA Extension.
- We developed groups of students in hybrid pods located in their communities.
- Site Coordinators from the Community and mentors are assigned to each pod to assist with instruction of class concepts.
- Students meet twice per week and like college students, our students are required to read on their own.
- Overall, forum meetings held at midway and at the end of the quarter to give presentations.

NASAI
TLCEE Leadership Pipeline Project

• Introduction to Tribal Legal Studies:
  – Introductory course on historical and legal concepts leading up to the establishment of Federal Indian Law.

• Economic Development in Tribal Communities
  – Economic Development within Indian Country and models used in Tribal and urban communities.

• Cultural Resources and Law
  – Understanding NAGPRA and cultural resource protection.

• Leadership and Communications Course.
  – Develops ideals on leaderships and writing

Gold Certification = 16.5 university units
Leadership Year 1 Review
Fast Facts

- 14 students accepted to 4 year universities within the region
- 1 student at UCLA
- Continued improvement of retention of students per quarter.
- 3 Internships for students who completed courses
- 7 universities working together
- 3 UCLA Departments working together.
- 4 Non-profits working for this program.
- AmeriCorps Program working with our Pipeline Project.
- Projected Fall is 11 pods or roughly 66 students.
Fall 2014 Support Network

Northern Region
LA/Tulare Counties
1 Tribal Consortium
1 High School

Inland Region
Riverside/San Bernardino Counties
2 BIE Schools
2 Tribes (Ed. Centers)

Southern Region
San Diego County
5 Tribes (Ed. Centers)
2 Urban Non-Profits
### Stats from first year using Leaders Model

#### Introduction to Tribal Legal Studies (Fall 2014)

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#### Cultural Resources and Law (Winter 2015)

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#### Economic Development in Tribal Communities (Spring 2015)

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#### Leadership and Communications Course (Summer 2015-Coming Soon)

The Results are the following acceptances for our students from our Leaders Project.
Leaders Future
Future Leaders and Internships

What occurs beyond the completion of our courses and certification? In the Summer of 2104 we took one of our students to work with a Mentor on a project where they created a legal memo on the possibility for a non-profit organization in gaining a trademark from the US Patent/Trademark Commission. For the non-profit, this was gainful information as they can now proceed knowing costs, why, and what to expect in this process.

For the student:

– The students demonstrated leadership and application of knowledge gained from his coursework.
– The student performed community service of several hours to place on resume/personal statement.
– Finally, he was supervised by a mentor familiar with legal concepts and was able to direct student in the correct format of research, writing, and application of law.

Here, our network has the opportunity to continue these needed services with our native community utilizing our network, resources and academic knowledge of our institutions. In the end, our community benefits, our partnerships are strengthened and most of all our students have opportunity and a greater future.