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Wokini Initiative: The New Beginnings Newsletter

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## The New Beginnings Newsletter

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# WOKINI INITIATIVE

A NEW BEGINNING

South Dakota State University®



# The New Beginnings Newsletter

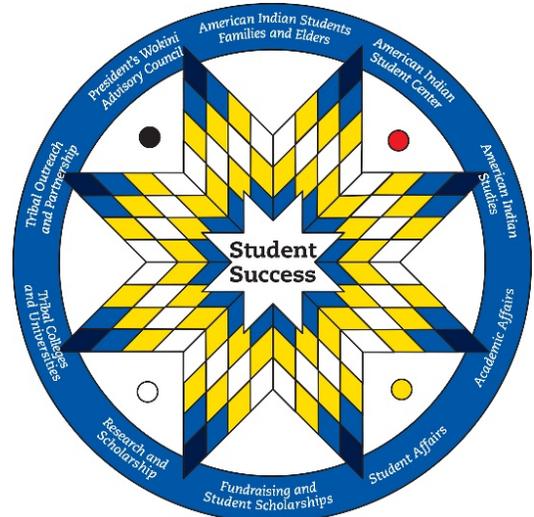
October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The Wokini Initiative is excited to announce our first edition of the New Beginnings Newsletter. The Wokini Initiative is SDSU's collaborative and holistic framework to support American Indian student success and Indigenous Nation-building.

Ongoing collaboration between key campus and tribal stakeholders is central to the Wokini framework. The Initiative builds upon SDSU's current tribal partnerships and American Indian Student Center services to 1) enhance cultural programming and support for American Indian students, 2) offer Wokini scholarships for citizens of the nine tribal nations in South Dakota, and 3) enhance research and outreach partnerships with tribes, tribal colleges and other tribal organizations. Wokini is Lakota meaning "new beginnings." We hope that the Wokini Initiative will usher in a new beginning for SDSU's American Indian students and South Dakota's tribal nations.

Currently, the Wokini Initiative is working on implementing a one-million-dollar grant to provide campus wide professional development programming that focuses on American Indian cultural competency, history and contemporary issues in Indian Country. Megan Leisinger is the project coordinator for this grant and she is working to create a tribal advisory council that will provide guidance in the creation of professional development curriculum.

We expect that this grant project will help to create a welcoming environment for American Indians by increasing SDSU's staff/faculty knowledge of the history and culture of the Oceti



## The Wokini Infographic

The Wokini Infographic draws upon indigenous and Oceti Sakowin symbolism to represent the fundamental essence of the Wokini Initiative. First is the symbol of the circle. Life is a sacred circle in which all things are connected and the outer circle of the Wokini infographic represents this Sacred Circle. The graphic also references the morning star which represents wisdom and new beginnings. The eight-pointed star design is a symbol commonly found on the Oceti Sakowin star quilt. The giving of the star quilt shows generosity, respect for the recipient, and honor. The four colored dots in each quadrant are the colors of the medicine wheel, which represents the Four Directions, Father Sky, and Mother Earth, all of which symbolize dimensions of health and the cycles of life. The words on the outer circle show the Initiative's essential internal and external partnerships. The star's tips pointing to each partnership symbolize the holistic and collaborative nature of the Initiative as well as the importance of communication and relationships.

Sakowin history and culture. Oceti Sakowin, meaning, “the seven council fires,” is the proper name for the people mistakenly called the Sioux. The seven council fires is a federation that includes the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota peoples. We hope that a more welcoming environment will allow American Indian students to find success at SDSU.

## Tribal Spotlight:

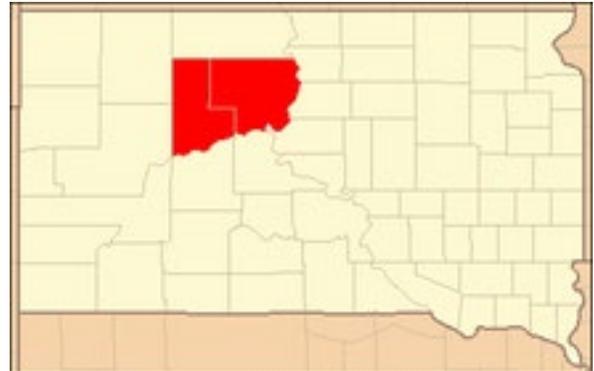
### Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe



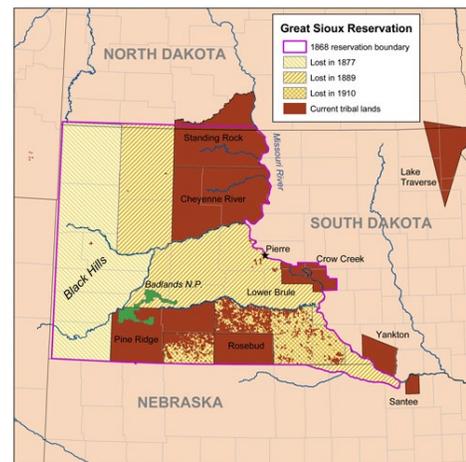
The US government recognizes 573 tribal nations within the borders of what is now the United States. Each tribe is a sovereign nation, which means that each tribe has the inherent authority to govern themselves. Each South Dakota tribal nation has their own flag. This month we highlight the official flag of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. There are important symbols within the flag: The rainbow is for the Cheyenne River Sioux people, who are keepers of the Most Sacred Calf Pipe, a gift from the White Buffalo Calf Woman. The eagle feathers at the edges of the rim of the world represent the spotted eagle, who is the protector of all Lakota. The two pipes fused together are for unity. One pipe is for the Lakota, the other, a symbol of solidarity with all other Indian Nations.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is located near the center of the state, northwest of

Pierre. The reservation’s eastern border is formed by the Missouri River and its southern border by the Cheyenne River. The Cheyenne River Reservation is home to four of the seven Lakota bands (Tiospaye) of the “Titunwan” or “People of the Plains”: The “Mnicoujou” Planters By The Water, “Oohenumpa” Two Kettle, “Itazipco” Without Bows, and the “Siha Sapa” Black Foot (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe).



The location of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation  
Below: The original Great Sioux Reservation



The treaty of Fort Laramie established the Great Sioux Reservation in 1868 and this reservation covered the entirety of what is today the west river region of South Dakota. Throughout the 1870’s and 1880’s, the Great Sioux reservation was diminished when the US government repeatedly broke its treaty

obligations. By 1889 the Cheyenne River Reservation was created with its present-day borders. The Cheyenne River reservation is the fourth largest American Indian reservation with just over 4000 square miles and a population just over 8000.

## Word of the Month

October

“Moon of the falling leaves”

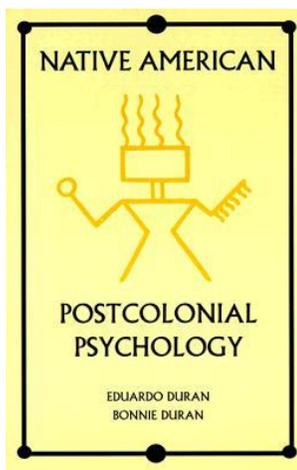
Canwape Kasna Wi (Chah-wah'-pay Kah-sh-nah Wee)

## Book of the Month

Native American Postcolonial Psychology

*By Eduardo and Bonnie Duran*

The suggested reading for October will assist in focusing the spotlight on historical trauma in Native American communities. This book demonstrates the necessity to understand intergenerational trauma and internalized oppression in order to understand Native Americans today. It makes native American ways of conceptualizing the world available to readers.



## Future Happenings

Be sure to check out our Wokini Initiative SdState Facebook page as we will post future activities, events, collaborations, and updates there.