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Wokini Initiative: The New Beginnings Newsletter

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The New Beginnings Newsletter, June 2020

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THE NEW BEGINNINGS NEWSLETTER



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The Lasting Impact of Indian Boarding Schools

In 1892 Captain Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School, wrote: "A great general had said that the only good Indian is a dead one.... I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man." The commissioner of Indian Affairs, General Thomas

Morgan, remarked, "It is cheaper to educate a man and to raise him to self-support than to raise another generation of savages and fight them." These harsh sentiments reveal the ideological foundations upon which the policy of Federal Indian Boarding Schools rested. The goal of the schools was clearly not to educate American Indians to empower them. Instead, these schools aimed to make American Indians obedient and submissive to the colonial power structure. The schools overwhelmingly had negative consequences for American Indian cultures, however American Indians were not simply passive victims. Due to the creative resistance of American Indian students and their parents, some were able to find empowerment in ways that administrators did not foresee.

The first boarding school established for American Indian children was the Carlisle Indian Industrial school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The school was established in 1879 and was a converted military barracks, foreshadowing the militaristic discipline and control that would come to characterize Carlisle and other boarding schools. Within 5 years, the government established many other off-reservation boarding schools and by 1902 there were 154 boarding schools operating for 21,500 native children (Jacobs 2006). The fact that an estimated 500 students died while at Carlisle Indian School, underscores how brutal and violent these schools were (Ecoffey).

The racial ideology of the late 1800s held that native people were mentally and physically weaker than white Europeans and that native people lacked control over their physical bodies (Lomawaima 1993). This ideology manifested itself in curricular emphasis on development of the body through physical labor, strict dress codes, uniforms and precise daily hygiene rituals. Boys primarily learned manual labor such as factory work and farming whereas women learned domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning. It is clear from the school's curricular emphasis on bodily discipline and physical labor that the boarding school saw American Indian students not as a group to be assimilated, but as a people destined to assume the role of a marginalized underclass and a source of cheap agricultural, industrial and domestic laborers. Yet there was another rationale for emphasis on strict discipline that was purely ideological. It prepared American Indian students to unquestioningly obey the

demands of white authority figures and thus the colonial order more broadly (Lomawaima 1993).

Fortunately, the ultimate economic and ideological goals of the boarding schools were not fully successful. Students in the boarding schools resisted the authority of administrators and even found ways to make the boarding schools empower native people. Many students continued to practice tribal traditions and ceremonies in secret whenever possible. Many parents would visit their children and keep them informed of births, deaths and ceremonies occurring at home. During the limited times students could return home, parents reinforced cultural values (Davis 2001). In these subtle ways, boarding school parents and students tried to keep native culture alive. Boarding schools also facilitated the development of a pan-Indian identity by making students from several different tribes aware of the shared experience of colonial oppression (Adams 1995). The creation of such a pan-Indian identity in the boarding schools was influential in making coordinated movements like the American Indian Movement possible.

The American Indian boarding schools had many negative impacts on the cultures and communities of the first peoples in America. They tore apart many families and today are understood to have played a large role in creating intergenerational trauma and cycles of abuse (Yellow Horse Braveheart 1999). Yet American Indians are also never passive victims. Historically, and today, American Indians find ways to resist the influence of colonialism, maintain culture, and become stronger.



Pride Month Spotlight: Two-Spirits

Two spirit is a term used amongst many American Indian communities to refer to individuals who do not align with purely male or purely female gender performances or social roles. Two spirit individuals simultaneously manifest both a masculine and a feminine spirit, or a different balance of masculine and feminine characteristics than usually seen in masculine men and feminine women (Evans 2014).

The term first came into popular use in 1990 after the Third Annual Intertribal Native American/First Nations Gay and Lesbian conference in Winnipeg, Canada. The new term was intended to replace the problematic connotations of the anthropological term

berdache, a French term meaning passive homosexual or male prostitute (Evans 2014).

American Indian tribes conceptualized gender and sexuality in ways that were more fluid and unrestricted than the European gender system of early colonists. Among the Navajo for example, there were 4 genders: masculine men, feminine men, masculine women and feminine women. In most tribes, two-spirit people were considered an important part of the community and fulfilled specialized social roles. There were also formal ceremonies which allowed individuals to transition to the opposite gender. Two spirits were also believed to have special sensory abilities such as closer links to ancestors, the ability to interpret visions, and serve as peacemakers. Amongst the Lakota they were foretellers of the future, conferrers of lucky names, and matchmakers (Zevallos 2019)

The fact that several different cultures could develop several different conceptualizations of gender shows how gender is socially and culturally constructed. During colonization, many tribes lost their traditional gender systems and were indoctrinated through boarding schools to adhere to European gender norms (Zevallos 2019). Therefore, the two-spirit movement and a return to native conceptualizations of gender are essential elements of decolonization movements.





Tribal Spotlight: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation is located on the border of north and south Dakota with the Missouri river forming the reservation's eastern border. With an area of about 3500 square miles, it is the nation's sixth largest reservation and is home to just over 8000 residents. The bands living on the reservation are the Ihanktonwanna and Hunkpatina Nakota as well as the Hunkpapa and Sihasapa Lakota.

The Ihanktonwanna, "band of the little end village" and the Hunkpatina, "band at the end of the camping circle," are bands known as the middle division of the Oceti Sakowin nation since they lived between the Lakota on the plains and the Dakota of present day Minnesota. In their original territory, these bands had contact with tribes which lived along the rivers such as the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara and adopted certain aspects of their cultures such as the earthlodge, and horticultural techniques. Today these bands live primarily on the North Dakota side of the reservation.

The Hunkpapa, meaning campers at the horn in Lakota, and the Sihasapa, meaning blackfeet, are Lakota bands which live primarily on the South Dakota side of the reservation. Their original territory was on the great plains between the Cheyenne and Heart rivers to the south and north and between the Missouri and Tongue rivers to the east and west.

Contemporarily, the standing rock reservation is best known for being the site of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. In 2016, tribes from across the nation took part in

protests against the construction of the pipeline, which poses a threat to tribal burial grounds and drinking water.

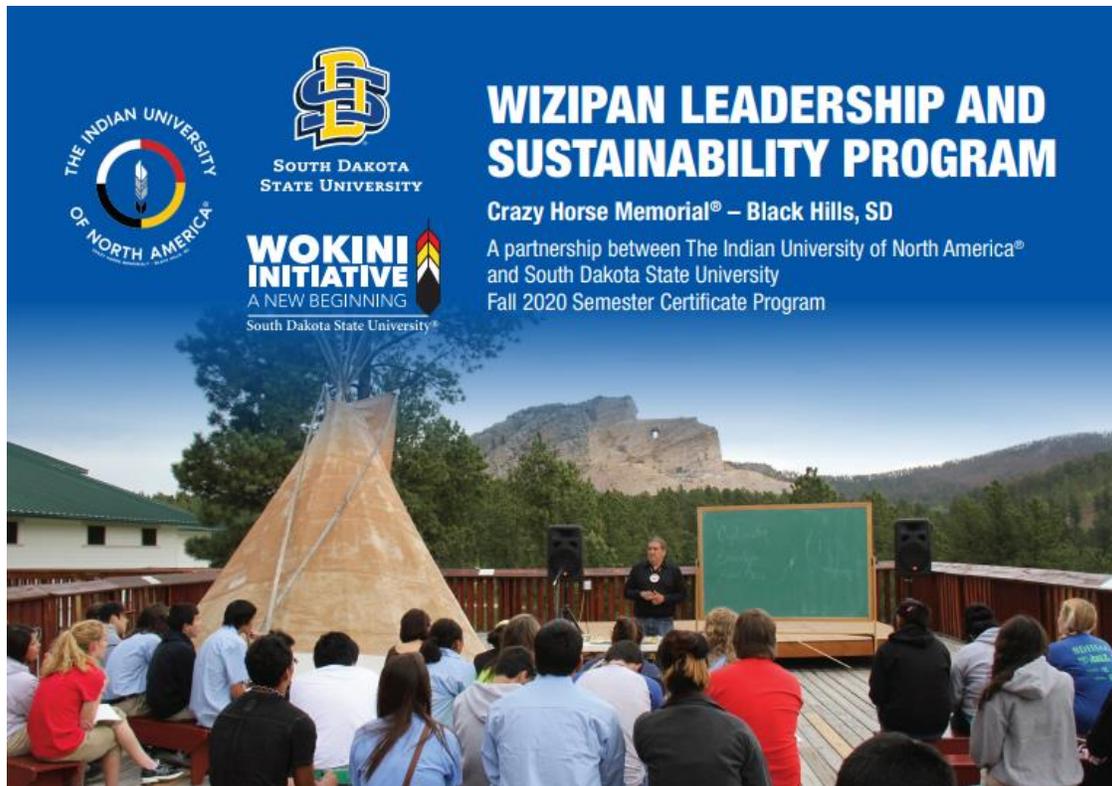
Lakota Language Instructor Position Available

The American Indian Studies Program, American Indian Student Center, and the Wokini Initiative have come together to offer an exciting career opportunity for a Lakota Language Instructor/Lecturer at our Brookings campus. We are looking for a creative individual grounded in Lakota culture, language, and communities to join our collaborative programs beginning in August of 2020. This is a nine-month, full-time, benefits-eligible position, supervised by School of American and Global Studies Director in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

SDSU is especially interested in candidates who can effectively contribute to and/or coordinate course offerings that address the experiences of underrepresented minorities in organizations and our university's understanding of Indigeneity, tribal relations, treaties, and sovereignty. Indigenous people, women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities are especially encouraged to apply.

For more information on this position and to apply, click [here](#).

The Wizipan Leadership and Sustainability Program



The Wikipan Leadership and Sustainability Program of The Indian University of North America® at Crazy Horse Memorial is a semester long experience through a partnership between the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation and South Dakota State University. Wachante Hecha Wikipan in Lakota implies the Heart of Everything that Is, but Wikipan on its own, according to the late Lakota leader Albert White Hat, references the Black Hills as a container of all resources; any person that goes into the Black Hills starving can be nourished, both physically and spiritually. The program will begin on August 31st and end on December 16th. The experience is focused on Care of Self, Care of Community, Care of Environment, and Care of Culture.

The courses offered are designed to provide students with the skill sets needed to understand the role of leadership in their communities. Sustainability affords students the opportunity to ensure the well-being of their communities and future generations. The Wikipan Program is equivalent to a study abroad program, but offered at The Indian University of North America at the Crazy Horse Memorial®. Students will have

the opportunity to earn 15 credits and think critically about what sustainability and leadership in action can look like in their communities.

If you have advisees or know students who might qualify for this program, you can find more information and application instructions [here](#).

Wokini Spotlight: The President's Wokini Advisory Council

The President's Wokini Advisory Council provides input and guidance in SDSU's efforts to support American Indian students, Indigenous nation-building and improve the outcomes of the Wokini Initiative. The council is made up of the Tribal Chairperson and Tribal Education Director from each of South Dakota's nine tribal nations as well as the President from each of South Dakota's Tribal College and Universities (TCUs). This council ensures that the projects of the Wokini Initiative are culturally responsive and reflect the needs and desires of tribal communities in South Dakota.

Book of the Month

To Show Heart: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Indian Policy, 1960-1975 by George Castile

As the title suggests, this book is a detailed look at federal Indian policy during the period from 1960 to 1975. The book gives an in depth overview of the change in attitude from the "termination" to the "self-determination" policy eras. The termination policy era lasted from roughly the mid 1940s to the 1960s and was characterized by renewed attempts to assimilate American Indians into settler society through policies that ended federal wardship status to tribes and encouraged settlement in cities away from reservations. Castile shows how diverse influences such as the civil rights movement, the American Indian Movement, the Wounded Knee standoff and Lyndon

Johnson's war on poverty led to a shift towards policies of self-determination, culminating in the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975.

Lakota Word of the Month

Thíŋpsiŋla Itkáħča Wí (June) The moon when turnips are in blossom

[Listen here](#)

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