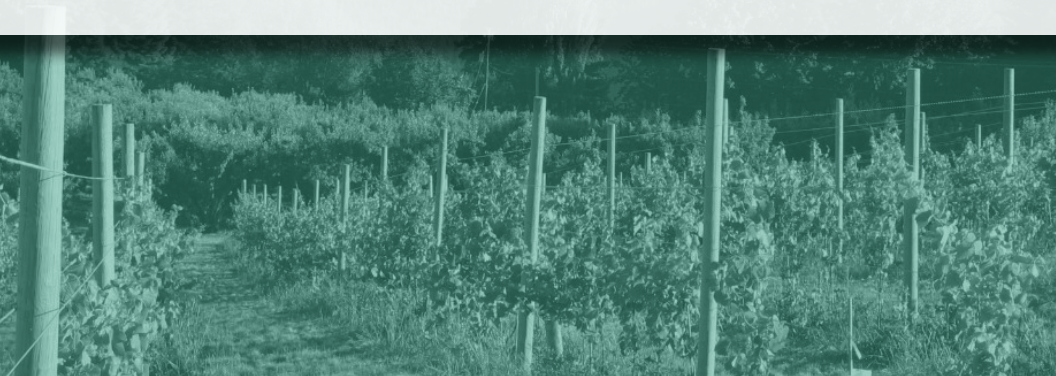




Tribal Leadership Forum at Portland State University Northwest Tribal Teachers Pathway Project



“

If we could make the average teacher as good as the best teachers, the benefit to students would be phenomenal.

— Bill Gates

”

In the Spring of 2012, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded funding to the Northwest Tribal Teachers Pathway Program (NWT₂P₂). Here are the NWT₂P₂ First Generation College students who will begin the teachers program in July 2013.



CHRISTINA URENIA

Cristina Urenia, the mother of two, has been a leader at both Portland Community College and Portland State University, directing student activities such as the annual pow wows which bring community and campus together. She graduated from Portland State University with a Bachelor of Science in August 2012. The strength she draws from being active in the Portland Indian community has helped her realize the importance of this path in preparing to become a teacher. Christina is White Mountain Apache.



“ We get knowledge from people in our lives and community. ”





GINA RENTZ

A member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Oregon, Gina Rentz graduated from Portland State University in June 2012 with a Bachelor of Science degree in History.

Although a single parent, Gina manages to find time to volunteer at the Native American Youth and Family Services Program in North Portland, the PSU Annual community pow wow, and the Chinuk Wawa language revitalization program at Portland State University.



“ I hope to show our younger generations the value of perseverance in education. ”





BLAKE HAGAN

Blake Hagan, Oglala Sioux from Pine Ridge, South Dakota, earned his Bachelor's degree from Oregon State University with a 3.5 GPA. An Anthropology major, Blake understands the complexity of his own culture across American history and will continue to build upon and use this knowledge base in the classroom.



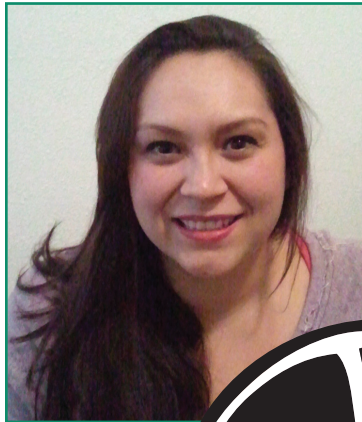
I believe every student sees the world through their own unique lenses. A student's culture, family and environment are what help them shape that view; this is why it is so important to have teachers with similar backgrounds and world views in schools where there are Native populations. I believe increasing the numbers of Native teachers would help improve Native student scores, self-identity and connection to their community.





SADIE MILDENBERGER

S Cayuse and Walla Walla Indian, Sadie has worked at her tribe's secondary grades charter school in eastern Oregon where she is considered "a natural leader of the youth." While completing her B.A. in Language Arts at PSU, Sadie took leave from her studies to return to the reservation and learn her language from a tribal elder who has since passed on. When she receives her teaching license, Sadie will return home, choosing Nixyaawii Community School because it "perfectly fits the plan I have been working on for the last eight years."



“ I would love to see the children on my reservation getting a scholarly education based on the heritage of our people led by a quality teacher who knows their culture as well. ”





OTHER STUDENTS

We also assisted 4 more students who needed only 1-2 courses to complete their Bachelor's degree at Portland State University (PSU). This increases the percentage nationally of American Indian students who have completed a higher education degree.

The NWT₂P₂ student numbers help make up a diverse student body at PSU, Oregon's most diverse university, in the middle of one of America's most liveable, progressive, and creative cities.

Where Are We Headed?

Our focus has been on recruiting students, preparing them well, and supporting them once in the classroom. We believe their training as a culturally responsive, community-based teacher is key to increasing educational achievement for Native students.

We are now developing services which spotlight gateways to education beginning at middle school, such as a Go2College Day. We believe it is critical for Native students to enter high school prepared to learn, and able to graduate.



At the high school level, we seek to increase the number of Native students who graduate on time, and are academically prepared for college and careers they select. We believe that assuring the culturally responsive effectiveness of the next generation of teachers will increase educational achievement and help to close achievement gaps.



To increase the vitality of Native communities, we seek to expand strategic partnerships at the higher education level which will advance active engagement and retention of Native students, particularly First Generation College-going students and adult learners.

