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DRAFT
**STRATEGIC INITIATIVES TO GUIDE NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
2010-2015**

Prepared on behalf of the UM Community by the Native American and Indigenous
Education Strategic Planning Committee at UM

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The Need

Native American peoples make up nearly seven percent of the state population and over eleven percent of the K-12 school-age students. As the University of Montana's (UM) strategic vision articulates the goal to "serve the citizens, communities, regions, business, industry, State, and world," the UM's mission necessarily involves providing educational opportunities for Native American people as nations within the nation and as individuals. Our proposed Native American and Indigenous Education Strategic Plan (NAIESP) seeks to realize, over time, those specific directives and goals that have been declared and established by state constitutional provisions, specific state statutes implementing those constitutional provisions, and the Montana Board of Regents' 1990 directive requiring specific minority achievement and representational goals within the Montana University System (MUS)—particularly with reference to Native American students. That mandate is being fulfilled on many fronts within the UM through its academic programming and student support efforts. Yet, Native American students make up only four percent of the UM student body, and their six-year graduation rate is approximately half the rate of other UM students who begin here as first-time freshmen. Therefore, increasing the retention of Native American traditional (first-time freshmen) and non-traditional students (older students) on the undergraduate and graduate levels is a primary concern driving this report.

In terms of traditional Native American knowledge, our academic programming requires greater effort to reflect tribal cultures, beliefs, and histories, especially given the state of Montana Constitution's mandate to "recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians" and to be "committed in [our] educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity" (Article X, Section 1, Subsection 2). Increasing the critical mass of Native American faculty and staff and keeping in step with UM's vision for the growth of graduate education are, therefore, related concerns. The importance of the presence of Native American role models in all sectors of the UM cannot be overstated.

In extending the Montana Constitution and the UM's vision into making worldwide connections between Native American and Indigenous education, we hope to increase learning about shared global histories that reflect on our local knowledge. Native American education is

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coextensive with the legal foundations of the Montana Constitution, and its values are also reflected in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as law expands to include them. Indigenous peoples all over the world seek recognition of their rights as distinct peoples, including the right to self-determination and the right to control development of their societies. In that spirit, the NAIESP includes academic goals for increasing the inclusion of Indigenous Studies and connections with global Indigenous nations.

A third concern involves diversity at the UM. Native Americans constitute the largest ethnic or racial minority in the state, and their participation in higher education on our campus enriches the University as a whole. With the continuing influx of people from outside Montana, it is imperative that the unique place Native Americans hold as North American Indigenous nations within Montana and the Northwest region needs to be integral to our vision for the UM's growth and change. In the UM's mission to serve the state of Montana through its preparation of students in higher education and to collaborate with tribal communities, we believe that increasing our understanding of tribal knowledge and contemporary tribal realities forms a central part of the UM's commitment to ethically appropriate research. Specifically, we encourage researchers to be sensitive to the interests, not only of individuals who are subjects of research but of groups who are subjects of research. At the same time, the UM stands behind its commitment to academic freedom and the right of faculty members and students to full freedom of inquiry with respect to teaching, learning, research, creative activities, and publication. As part of the UM's effort to sustain and strengthen relations with tribal nations and communities, the Indigenous community-based research model--in its process, benefits, and perspectives--should be encouraged where appropriate and while continuing to uphold the principle of academic freedom.

The Planning Process

Beginning in the autumn term of 2008, a strategic planning process was initiated to determine the current strengths and challenges in Native American and Indigenous education at the UM. For the purposes of this document, "Native American and Indigenous education" is defined broadly as both the academic and student support structures that encourage individuals—Native and non-Native alike— to thrive on the UM-Missoula campus in their roles

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as students, faculty, and staff and that increase and strengthen the UM's relationships with Native American tribal communities, institutions, and reservations. Since current academic conversations, particularly in Native American Studies (NAS), extend beyond American Indian and Alaska Native populations (the definition of "Native American"), we have included "Indigenous" to signal global connections with other tribal peoples. Although defining "Indigenous" is complex and challenging, for the purposes of this document, "Indigenous peoples" generally refers to the aboriginal peoples who inhabit geographic regions with which they have the earliest known historical connection or who were moved into the regions by colonizing forces. In addition, Indigenous peoples have a social or cultural identity distinct from that of the dominant or mainstream society, which makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the process of development and constrained in the exercise of their human rights. Our reason for including Indigenous content in the academic plan for the University is to assure a place for Native American and Indigenous peoples within international program growth, since Native Americans share a common colonial history with other tribal peoples around the world. Indigenous students from other parts of the world will be supported by International Programs, not through American Indian Student Services; hence, "Indigenous education" refers only to academic programs and curricular content. The NAIESP committee was convened in the fall of 2008 and charged with developing, in collaboration with the campus community, an up-to-date and ambitious strategic plan to serve as a decision-making guide over the next five years. Designed implicitly and crucially for effectiveness, the plan aligns with the Mission and Core Values of the UM (see www.umt.edu/president/umms.htm). The planning committee collected data to answer a series of environmental scan questions and questions generated by the committee. The environmental scan questions addressed by the NAIESP committee focused on both internal and external influences on Native American people at the UM, in the state of Montana, and beyond. Questions for the internal scan related to the broad categories of the UM student body, access and affordability, the UM work force related to Native American education, academic programs offered, and funding trends. Questions for the external scan focused on demographic trends, trends in K-12 education that reach higher education, the economic environment, political and regulatory environments, natural resources

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issues, tribal community visions and concerns, tribal education, and international academic and political factors. This included exploring system-wide published strategic plans, trends, and expectations for higher education in Montana and beyond. The Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Analysis and the Registrar's Office provided data related to students (e.g., enrollment, retention, and cost of education), the workforce, diversity, research and creative activity, and demographic trends. In addition, the committee met with individuals with expertise in areas related to the environmental scan and attended state-wide conferences, such as the Montana Indian Education Association conference, Intersecting Interests: Tribal Knowledge and Research Communities conference, Tribal Youth Summit, and the UM Diversity Workshop. Student clusters were asked to respond to questionnaires about the strengths and challenges of Native American education at the UM, and then discuss their ideas with the committee. Tribal educational leaders from around the state were also consulted. Although the NAIESP committee recognizes the transitional value of soft money as a source of institutional enrichment and growth, our plan focuses on visions for permanent institutional change and growth. We identified four key initiatives to address in the next five years.

Aspirations for Native American & Indigenous Education in Academic Affairs

The following assessments and aspirations emerged for Native American and Indigenous education from interviews, surveys, cluster groups, townhall meetings, conferences, and discussions conducted during the environmental scan phase of the NAIESP committee's work.

In five years. . .

- The UM Payne Family Native American Center (PFNAC) will attract interest in Native American and Indigenous education and will increase the number of undergraduate and graduate Native American students in addition to providing a model for LEED (Leadership/Energy/Environmental Design, "Green") architecture on university campuses across the nation.
- The UM will be recognized as a leader in Native American education within the region and the nation for its excellent academic programs, in particular, in Native American and Indigenous Studies.
- Native American student enrollments will have increased significantly through steady efforts to close the Native American student achievement gap.
- The UM will continue to build on its strengths in offering an exciting and stimulating intellectual atmosphere for undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff, including being known for

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programs and departmental efforts such as the Indians into Psychology Ph.D. program, American Indian law studies, the NAS Department, Anthropology's Cultural Preservation graduate degree program, Reznert for Native American journalism students across the nation, the Native American laboratory, Forestry's Native American Resource program, the Center for Excellence in the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, the Sloan Scholars Program, American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) national home, and its vibrant Native student clubs and organizations, particularly Kyi-Yo. UM will continue its co-action with K-12 through the College of Education and Human Sciences to assure that the vitality and growth of the state-wide Indian Education for All (IEFA) efforts succeed.

- The UM will continue to respect and maintain the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with TCUs.
- The UM academics related to climate change and environmental policy studies will grow in importance and will centrally include tribal peoples in educational endeavors to research and apply knowledge in natural resources management, preservation of environmental integrity, as well as economic development.
- UM will continue to play a key role in professional and human resource development across the state of Montana and the nation.
- UM will continue to further the higher education goals and opportunities for Montana's tribal peoples, in keeping with the IEFA directive to work with local tribes, while also serving the other tribes of the region, and the nation.

First Initiative: Cultivate Native American education at the undergraduate Level.

Goal 1: Provide a dynamic educational environment that is inclusive of Native American histories, cultural traditions, and perspectives, as part of the UM Academic Strategic initiative of "respecting, welcoming, encouraging, and celebrating diversity in all its forms."

- Create a campus climate that respects the integrity of Native American cultural **knowledge, histories, and traditions.**
- Acknowledge the IEFA constitutional mandate to "recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians" and be "committed in [our] educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity" (Article X, Section 1, Subsection 2), as the IEFA mandate extends to appropriate curricular development in institutions of higher education.

Goal 2: Empower Native American students to succeed at the UM in a timely fashion, with a minimum of debt, and to provide educational growth and development appropriate to their goals.

- a. Increase the retention rate of Native American students, in five years, to equal the average retention rate for all UM students.

- ❖ Identify and study the Native American student body beyond first-time freshmen to include TCU transfer students, out-of-state transfers, transfers from other four-year institutions within the state and elsewhere, as appropriate.
 - ❖ Increase American Indian Student Services (AISS) staff to assist in retention efforts, particularly for students in their first year on the UM campus, and to empower AISS to network more effectively across campus with other advising and student support efforts.
 - ❖ Continue to build on focused and culturally appropriate orientation for first-time freshmen and transfer students, with incentives for participation as well as evaluation of the orientation's effectiveness.
 - ❖ Increase Financial Aid staff to serve Native American and all students in the timely completion of forms and to provide assistance to Native American students to improve their financial literacy.
 - ❖ Study the utilization of the American Indian Tuition Waiver to assess whether it is achieving its potential for maximizing Native American student retention.
 - ❖ Collaborate with Montana's TCUs and high schools with high Native American enrollments to develop on-line courses in order to orient and transition transfer students to university academic life before they matriculate to the UM.
 - ❖ Create writing-transition workshop initiatives aimed at increasing writing and research skill sets, after assessing current transition efforts on campus.
 - ❖ Identify bottleneck courses in particular majors that prevent students from completing their required degree coursework and establish tutoring and study groups at the beginning of the term for those courses.
 - ❖ Identify the most successful models for two-plus-two educational links between the UM and two-year and TCUs in Montana in fields of particular interest to Native American students and others from reservation communities; develop and maintain such degree options.
 - ❖ Strengthen the terms of the dual admission components of MOUs with Montana's TCUs, through advising and curricular coordination and collaboration.
 - ❖ Foster engagement of Native American students with students from other racial and ethnic groups on campus.
 - ❖ Collaborate with the seven TCUs to develop strategies that foster smooth transitions into the UM and include the UM College of Technology in efforts to strengthen Native American students' understanding of the demands of university education.
 - ❖ Introduce Native American students to library collections as well as how to navigate the library infrastructure in order to engage them in research, scholarship, and creative activities.
- b. Increase the academic Native American presence on campus.**

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- ❖ Recruit Native American faculty in every UM school and college, with particular focus on fields that serve Montana Native communities and students' goals.
- ❖ Design and Implement a visiting Native American elder program to enhance the campus community's knowledge and awareness of contemporary Native American life as well as to provide role models and support for all students, particularly Native Americans.
- ❖ Maintain a Native American advisory board for the UM, based on a shared vision for Montana's future growth, development, and sustainability.
- ❖ Create an annual Native American speaker series to address campus on contemporary issues in Indian Country.
- ❖ Establish a visiting Native American scholars program to rotate competitively, but with the locus within the NAS Department.
- ❖ Identify key areas for Native American scholarship and offer a competitive postdoctoral position.
- ❖ Increase the number of Native American languages taught at UM and maintain current levels with adequate funding and staffing.

Goal 3: Increase and enhance networks with tribal communities and tribal education entities.

- Enhance and/or establish good working relationships with TCUs and high school counselors from Montana reservations and urban high schools enrolling high numbers of American Indian students.
- Enhance and/or establish relations with Montana tribal education departments to support recruitment and retention efforts.
- Support professional development, mentoring, and leadership opportunities for campus staff who provide service to the Native American student population, with a minimal expectation that they understand the constitutional mandate for Montana education to recognize "the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians" and be "committed in [our] educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity."
- Establish a resource base to provide support for employee participation in Native American conferences and workshops designed to enhance awareness of Native American educational issues and needs.
- Form an ongoing workshop with university administrators, advising staff, other interested staff, and faculty aimed at networking, increasing knowledge of tribal peoples and Native American student challenges, and collaborating on event planning.

Goal 4: Enhance recruitment, retention, and support for Native American faculty and staff.

- Develop recruitment plans with benchmarks in all colleges and schools on the basis of researched best practices.

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- Identify appropriate incentives for Native American faculty and staff recruitment and retention efforts.
- Develop assessment tools for evaluating the work-life quality of Native American faculty and staff.
- Establish mentoring mechanisms for growing UM Native American leadership.

Goal 5: Ensure better affordability of UM education.

- Increase scholarship opportunities for and applications by Native American students by designating responsibility for researching resources and educating students on how to apply..
- Assess and track university-wide utilization of outside scholarship resources, establish benchmarks for increasing scholarship awards, and disseminate information about resources to all advising staff.
- Provide money-management and financial literacy skills learning opportunities for Native American students.

Goal 6: Enhance the NAS curriculum to provide knowledge and applied research skills relevant to contemporary tribal concerns.

- Provide adequate teaching staff to empower NAS adequately to serve General Education at the UM.
- Increase NAS faculty to include specialists in fields identified by NAS as needed for a well-rounded curriculum.
- Develop appropriate joint faculty appointments for increasing interdisciplinary research and teaching as well as for course development.

Goal 7: Develop internship and community learning opportunities relevant to Native American students who desire to grow the skill sets needed in tribal community development as well as other opportunities for career goal enhancement.

- Convene a committee on campus of appropriate UM staff and faculty and with tribal community consultants to brainstorm relevant Native American student and communities needs, identify resources, and provide advisory oversight of the Native American component of internships.
- Develop and implement living-learning communities for Native American students within UM housing.

Goal 8: Develop and Implement a plan for disseminating information about IEFA and its roots in Montana's constitution.

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- Enhance current web links to key Native American organizations—for example, the Montana / Wyoming Tribal Leaders Association, the Office of Public Instruction, Montana.tribes.com—in order to make IEFA research available for use by UM staff and faculty, as desired and needed.
- Encourage the incorporation of appropriate historical and cultural curricula related to Montana Indians, as fits with the constitutional mandate.
- Explore with tribal educators and institutions innovative and culturally appropriate ways to enhance the UM's relations with the Native American students and communities we serve.

Second Initiative: Cultivate Native American and Indigenous education at the graduate level.

Goal 1: Enhance graduate education for Native American students in all colleges and schools, in order to transform the intellectual atmosphere at the UM, to provide greater educational opportunities for Native American students, and to create significant cultural and economic impact in Montana.

- Develop culturally appropriate recruitment strategies in an effort to increase critical mass, particularly in fields central to growing Montana and sustaining Native American economic and cultural life.
- Create ongoing workshops, training, and other program initiatives to foster excellence in mentoring for leadership on all levels of educational engagement.
- Build mechanisms for the inclusion of and support for Native American students in research in all colleges and schools, including teaching and research assistantships.
- Increase Native American student knowledge and awareness of library collections as well as how to navigate the library infrastructure to engage in Native American and Native American Studies research, scholarship and creative activities.

Goal 2: Enhance and further develop current mechanisms for a university-wide graduate student support system.

- Implement a faculty advisory subcommittee for Native American graduate education that reports to the Vice President for Graduate Studies and the Provost.
- Develop an on-campus database of Native American and NAS faculty and student research to facilitate collaborations and networking.
- Encourage the revitalization of a Native American graduate student organization.

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Goal 3: Increase the number of Native graduate students to be proportionate with the UM's growth in the graduate student body.

- Identify and seek financial resources for growing the Native American graduate student body.
- Explore the feasibility of an Interdisciplinary Studies graduate program in Indigenous Studies or with an Indigenous Studies emphasis.

Goal 4: Increase and enhance international Indigenous Studies connections and collaborations.

- Dedicate resources to exchanges with international Indigenous Studies scholars and students.
- Host an international Indigenous workshop/conference on a regular basis.
- Identify and further develop curricula that foster research on the global significance of Indigenous environmental, economic, and cultural concerns, intersecting as appropriate with climate change and resource management program endeavors.
- Institute UM membership in WINHEC (World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium).

Third Initiative: Maintain ethically appropriate research with Native American nations, communities, TCUs, and individuals, that is respectful of community-based and traditional Indigenous knowledge and that encourages researchers to be sensitive to the interests of both individuals and groups who are subjects of research.

Goal 1: Work with the Research Office to develop and implement a self-study process to discern the UM's research and creative activity across all colleges and professional schools in regard to Native American community and individual research,

- Develop procedures for UM Policy #707 (Code of Ethics of American Anthropology Association) involving the knowledge, traditional resources, and properties of Indigenous Peoples.
- Report yearly on research projects involving Native American peoples, particularly involving Native American students on campus, to assure that research is being conducted in keeping with established university policy regarding human subjects and research in Indigenous communities and with Indigenous peoples.
- Develop and implement a plan that educates UM researchers about the importance of understanding tribal protocols on the local and global levels.

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Goal 2: Communicate and work with Montana tribes to identify their economic development plans, needs, and potential collaborative projects and research with UM.

- Form an on-campus committee of faculty and administrators to explore collaborative strategies.

Goal 3: Support research, scholarship, and creative activities across the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities to enhance opportunities for interdisciplinary connections that engage Native American and NAS scholars and learners, on campus and on reservations.

- Institute a yearly NAS workshop for faculty and graduate students.
- Develop a structure for recognition of outstanding Native American graduate student work.

Goal 4: Explore the feasibility of building and funding a research institute to be housed in the PFNAC.

- Engage the UM Foundation and the Office of Research and Development Office in a focused effort to raise money in order to complete the PFNAC basement and to secure base funding for an institute.
- Engage Native American leaders and UM teaching and research faculty from the beginning in the vision for an institute.
- Research other national Native American institutes and projects for models and identify faculty who would provide leadership for the effort.

Goal 5: Build two-plus-two science and health promotion programs with TCUs.

- Create and implement a plan for growth based on UM strengths and tribal community needs as well as TCU infrastructure.
- Assess current transitional programs for preparing students for math and science studies and research and enhance their scope.
- Develop a faculty and graduate student exchange program with the TCUs of Montana.

Goal 6: Enhance International Indigenous learning and research opportunities.

- Develop strategies to increase international Indigenous scholarly exchanges.
- Coordinate efforts with the UM strategic plan for academics.
- Strengthen existing international Indigenous exchange projects.

Goal 7: Address and correct inequities that persist as a result of the historical exclusion of Native American peoples from being enfranchised into the larger American society and its institutions.

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- Develop and implement equitable tribal identification procedures for tracking and recruitment efforts aimed at increasing Native American faculty and staff and eliminating disparities in the numbers of Native American faculty and staff.

Fourth Initiative: Build community through engagement and co-action.

Goal 1: Build an administrative infrastructure for growing Native American leadership in higher education.

- Establish and implement orientation procedures for new Native American campus leaders.
- Develop a system for assigning mentors to new Native American administrators and directors.

Goal 2: Develop a zero-tolerance policy for racism and disparaging treatment of Native American students on campus.

- Provide the means for new employees to be oriented in the particulars of how their conduct and communication must be free of bias and prejudice at all times.
- Make explicit the expectation of bias- and prejudice-free conduct in employee evaluation.

Goal 3: Maximize technological innovations to address the needs of rural, isolated tribal communities.

- Assess current telecast capabilities on campus and on Montana's reservations.
- Determine Native American student technology competency and access.
- Develop and implement a plan for increasing technology literacy among Native American students, providing on-line education to tribal communities, and increasing the availability of technology resources.
- Develop and enhance existing writing-instruction resources for Native American students to include library, science, and archival research skills.
- Continue student services emphasis on promoting respectful student to student relations as outlined in the student conduct code.

Goal 4: Enhance co-action through the College of Education and Human Sciences to expand partnerships with the K-12 sector in order to improve continuation and graduation rates of Montana Native American high school students.

- Conduct a targeted search to fill a Native American faculty position within the School of Education with a scholar whose specialty involves a deep understanding of the history of

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Native American education as well as of the obstacles Native American students face in higher education.

- Take a leadership role in the implementation of IEFA by collaborating with NAS scholars and tribes in developing and implementing curricula.

Goal 5: Sustain and enhance UM's commitment to work closely and effectively with Montana tribes and to support increased Native American student success at the UM.

- Make explicit the UM leadership's values in hiring and orientation procedures for new administrators, faculty, and staff.

Goal 6: Develop and implement a plan for continued collaboration between AISS and the NAS toward building an ideal sense of community in the new PFNAC.

- Plan a retreat for staff and faculty of AISS and NAS every year, beginning in the Spring 2010.
- Create a schedule for regular meetings between leadership and staff of AISS and NAS.