**EVERGREEN’s MPA in Tribal Governance soon to Celebrate 10th Anniversary**

***2012***

**Tribal Governance as a Graduate Program**

*A brief history*

The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington launched the first permanent Master of Public Administration degree with an emphasis in Tribal Governance in 2002. Inspired by Joe DeLa Cruz (Quinault) and guided by a group of tribal leaders including Billy Frank, Jr. (Nisqually), W. Ron Allen (Jamestown S’Klallam), Senator John McCoy (Tulalip), Sam Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) and many others contributed their knowledge, insight, and support for the creation of the this Tribal Governance concentration. They asked newly minted Evergreen Professors, Alan Parker (Chippewa Cree) and Linda Moon Stumpff (Apache/Seminole) to begin developing a curriculum for the Masters of Public Administration with a Tribal Governance component in 1999. Tribal leadership wanted a graduate program that would build a core of reservation-based tribal citizens who gained the knowledge and skills for administering tribal laws and policies to create an innovative institute, processes and courses to advance sovereignty or to ‘push the envelope’ as the idea was expressed by Joe DeLa Cruz. Establishing this new emphasis area required approval for a major change in curriculum by the Higher Education Commission Board (HEC Board) of Washington State. Prof. Parker became the Director of the Northwest Indian Applied Research Center and Prof. Moon Stumpff took the position as Director of the Masters of Public Administration (3 yrs.) in order to move the concentration forward. Prof. Sam Deloria joined the team as a consulting faculty and participated in the development of all of the tribal governance concentration courses. The work of building the curriculum moved quickly, using surveys and gaining input from tribal leaders, talking to prospective students, and sharing ideas with a national audience at the American Society of Public Administration.

***ABOVE HISTORY HAS BEEN SENT TO LAURA on 04/17/2015***

Funding was a major barrier and was soon removed by the gracious donations of Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Squaxin Island along with numerous other tribes in Washington State. It was covered for the next two years by a federal education grant (FIPSI grant) with strong support from Senator Patty Murray. Finally, the series of tribal governance courses were included in the regular budget of the College by the Legislature with continuing support from Senator John McCoy. Building the curriculum moved quickly, using surveys and continuing meetings with tribal political and administrative leaders and prospective students to gain their input. The first student cohort reflected the diversity that because the hallmark of the program.

Students came from tribes all over the nation, with many holding jobs in tribal governments, while state and federal governments sent employees with responsibilities in tribal affairs. Washington State has a well-developed system of relationships between every department and tribe that is outlined by the Centennial Accord of 1989. Recent students’ cohorts have included the same diversity and now include international students from indigenous nations and a wide variety of ages and experiences in tribal affairs. Course work covers a variety of topics: sovereignty, intergovernmental relations, tribal organizations and structure, tribal economies, and tribal policy.

**A National Forum for Tribal Governance**

Students in the tribal cohort have the opportunity to student in Evergreen’s interdisciplinary environment with its strong emphasis on collaboration, community-based research and connecting theory to practice. Students go through the two-year degree program together, working in teams to study contemporary tribal policy issues and administrative challenges. Many develop research project that benefit their own communities or leverage intergovernmental relationships. Classes are held Friday through Sunday every other weekend, enabling regional students to continue to live and work in their communities while earning a graduate degree. Online and team projects keep students solving activities and active participation. Tribal leaders are frequent speakers, along with experts in a variety of fields from economics to international relations. Numerous years of case study research funded by National Science Foundation, Gates, Lumina and other grants produced over 80 tribal case studies that are available to students.

**Opportunities for Native Graduate Students**

Tribal governance alumni spread out into a variety of jobs, many advancing towards higher-ranking positions in tribal governments, federal, state, and local government positions in tribal affairs or non-profit organizations. Inter-tribal discussion and comparisons provide unique opportunities for dialogue. Tuition is competitive, in fact, lower than most other state graduate institutions and the full range of state and federal financial aid opportunities are available. Some out-of-state tribes with land claims in Washington State are exempt from out-of-state tuition. Recruitment is ongoing and we accept application for admission during every even year.