



Sharing Our Pathways

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A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative
Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

Seeking Future Alaska Native PhDs!

by Ray Barnhardt and Oscar Kawagley

For over six generations, Alaska Native people have been experiencing negative feedback in their relationships with external systems. Though diminished and often in the background, much of the traditional knowledge systems and world views remain intact and in practice. There is a growing appreciation of the contributions that indigenous knowledge can make to our contemporary understanding in areas such as medicine, resource management, meteorology, biology and in basic human behavior and educational practices. Yet in order to fully benefit from these contributions, more indigenous scholars are needed.

A quality often identified as a strength of indigenous knowledge systems is the interconnectedness between the parts of a system, rather than the parts in isolation. In the study of the role of education for indigenous

people, however, attention must extend beyond the relationships of the parts within an indigenous knowledge system and take into account the relationships between the system as a whole and the other external systems

with which it interacts, the most critical and pervasive being the formal structures for knowledge production and validation imbedded in the institutions of Western society, especially the schools.

Over a period of ten years in the course of implementing a variety of education and research initiatives throughout Alaska, we have come to recognize that there is much more to

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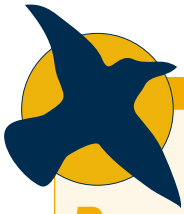
Indigenous Scholars Help Shape the Future of Alaska

BETH LEONARD IS ORIGINALLY FROM SHAGELUK, ALASKA, a Deg Hit'an Athabascan community on the Innoko River. Her father is James Dementi who was raised in Didlang Tochagg or Swiftwater. Her mother is the late Reverend Jean Aubrey Dementi, originally from California. Beth is married to Michael Leonard and they have one daughter, Samantha Leonard.

Beth earned her bachelor's degree in linguistics from UAF in 1994, and a master's in education—language & literacy, in 1996. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the UAF Interdisciplinary Studies program. Her program is based in cross-cultural studies, Alaska Native studies and Alaska Native languages. Beth is working on completing her dissertation entitled "Deg Hit'an Narratives and Native Ways of Knowing." Beth is currently an affiliate assistant professor of Athabascan, Alaska Native Language Center.

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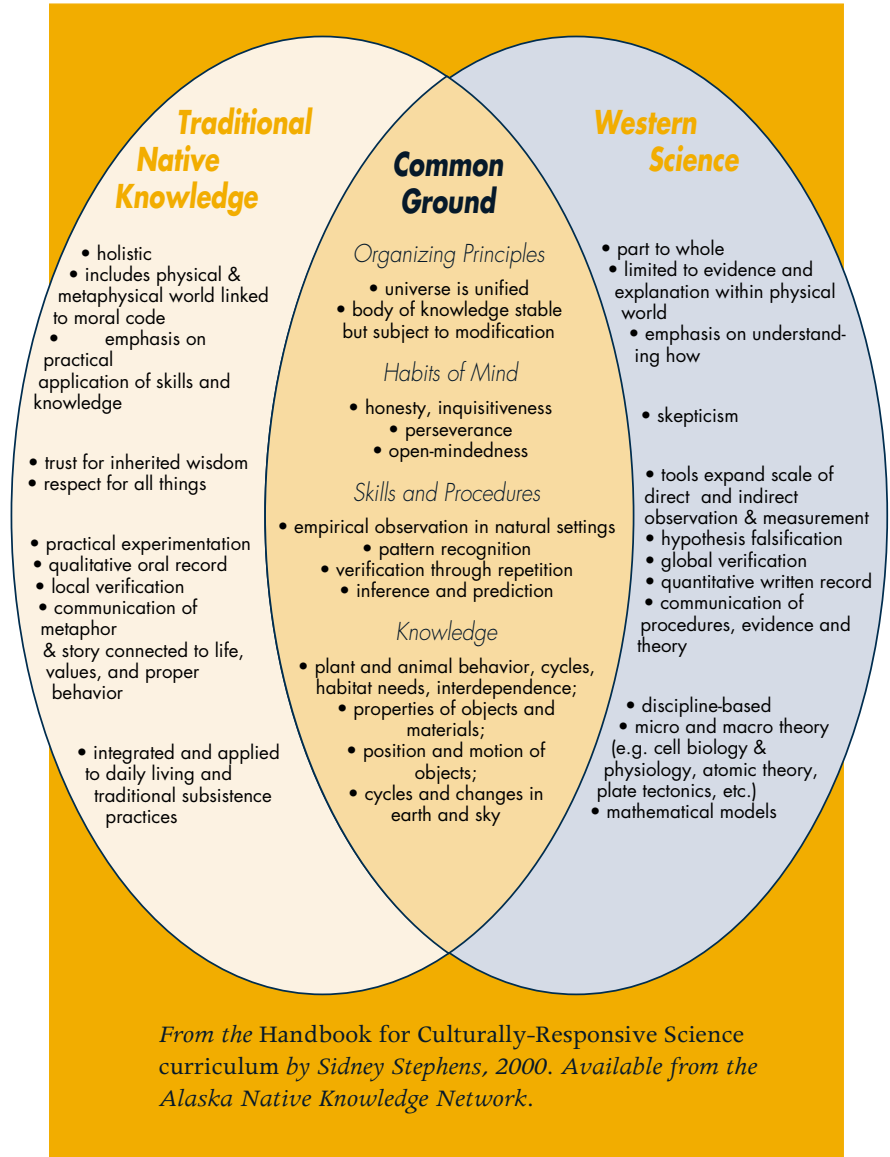
We welcome your comments and suggestions and encourage you to submit them to:

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be gained from further exploring the fertile ground that exists within indigenous knowledge systems, as well as at the intersection of converging knowledge systems and world views. The following diagram captures some of the critical elements that interrelate when indigenous knowledge systems and Western science traditions are put side-by-side and nudged together in an effort to derive synergistic benefits (Stephens, 2000).



The knowledge and skills derived from thousands of years of careful observation, scrutiny and survival in a complex ecosystem readily lends itself to the in-depth study of basic principles of biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, particularly as they relate to applied areas such as botany, geology, hydrology, meteo-

rology, astronomy, physiology, anatomy, pharmacology, technology, engineering, ecology, topography, ornithology, fisheries and other applied fields. Following are some of the research areas in which indigenous knowledge and Western science have been shown to readily converge:

Weather forecasting	Terminology/concepts/place names
Animal behavior	Counting systems/measurement/estimation
Navigation skills/star knowledge	Clothing design/insulation
Observation skills	Tools/technology
Pattern recognition	Building design/materials/construction
Seasonal changes/cycles	Transportation systems
Edible plants/diet/nutrition	Genealogy
Food preservation/preparation	Waste disposal
Rules of survival/safety	Fire/heating/cooking
Medicinal plants/medical knowledge	Hunting/fishing/trapping

Since 1995, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative has engaged in a ten-year rural school reform effort aimed at fostering connections and complementary relationships between the indigenous knowledge systems rooted in Alaska Native cultures and the formal education systems imported to serve the needs of rural Native communities. These initiatives have served to strengthen the quality of educational experiences and improve the academic performance of students throughout rural Alaska. The purpose of these efforts has been to implement research-based initiatives to systematically document the Alaska Native knowledge systems and to develop pedagogical practices and school curricula that incorporates this knowledge and these ways of knowing in the formal education system. The following initiatives are the major thrusts of the AKRSI educational reform strategy:

- ✓ Indigenous Science Knowledge Base/Multimedia Cultural Atlas Development
- ✓ Native Ways of Knowing/Parent Involvement
- ✓ Elders and Cultural Camps/Academy of Elders
- ✓ Village Science Applications/Science Camps and Fairs
- ✓ Alaska Native Knowledge Network/Cultural Resources

- and Web Site
- ✓ Math/Science Performance Standards and Assessments
- ✓ Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools
- ✓ Native Educator Associations/Leadership Development

Many of the Native educators involved in these initiatives have concurrently enrolled in graduate coursework and, in response, UAF developed the new M.A. in Cross-Cultural Studies. This degree provides opportunities for advanced study and research on issues associated with the perpetuation of indigenous knowledge systems in Alaska. Twenty-two Alaska Natives have completed masters-level programs over the past five years. An equivalent number are now enrolled in conjunction with the above activities. One Native educator has completed an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Cross-Cultural Studies at UAF and three others are currently enrolled in a doctoral program. Through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (www.ankn.uaf.edu) we have published numerous articles, books, videos, CD-ROM, curriculum materials, maps and posters documenting the outcomes of the research and development initiatives students have completed in conjunction with their graduate studies.

Preparing the First Generation of Indigenous Scholars

Based on this work, we are now seeking funding for a concerted program to prepare the first generation of indigenous scholars who will possess the breadth and depth of expertise to effectively integrate indigenous and Western knowledge to the benefit of all indigenous people as well as society as a whole.

If we are successful in securing fellowship funding, we intend to prepare a cadre of Native scholars with the skills and understandings to bring the two systems of thought together in a manner that promotes a synergistic relationship whereby we begin to form a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of the world around us, while preserving the essential integrity of each component of this integrated system. Students will be required to identify an area of interdisciplinary research interest in which UAF has established faculty expertise and for which there is an opportunity for practical application in an existing indigenous Alaskan context. Four areas of particular relevance in that regard are climate change, environmental contaminants, ecological relationships and place-based education, so students would be expected to select an initial research topic related to one of these areas. The work of the students and faculty associated with this program is intended to produce a two-way flow of new insights and understandings that will serve to strengthen the knowledge base of the university at the same time that it produces graduates who are able to take on some of the most intractable issues across a variety of arenas impacting Alaskan communities.

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The underlying purpose of the proposed initiative focusing on integrating indigenous knowledge and Western science is to draw upon indigenous knowledge systems as a complement to the Western system of knowledge in advancing our understanding of the world around us. The graduates of the proposed program will be prepared to apply multiple lenses in addressing the long-standing dichotomy between indigenous people and the institutions by which they are governed. The focus of the proposed program is to foster complimentary relationships between two interdependent but historically divergent and complex systems—the indigenous knowledge systems rooted in the Native cultures and scientific research and applications associated with mainstream institutions. In each of these systems is a rich body of knowledge and skills that, if properly explicated and leveraged, can serve to strengthen the quality of life for all citizens.

The proposed program for integrating indigenous and Western knowledge is put forward as a thematic emphasis for students enrolling in the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program administered by the Graduate School at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. UAF offers a disciplinary-based Ph.D. program in 10 science-related areas plus mathematics, engineering and anthropology. All other doctoral candidates enroll through the Interdisciplinary Program and must devise an individual course of study around an identifiable thematic area for which UAF has appropriate expertise and resources. It is to this latter program that this initiative is directed, as a vehicle to draw together interdisciplinary resources and expertise that address a range of issues that are not currently reflected in the established UAF doctoral programs.

The proposed program would seek

to establish a balance between breadth and depth of expertise whereby all students would participate in a common course of study associated with the broad theme of integrating indigenous and Western knowledge, plus each student would be required to choose an area of relevant disciplinary studies in which they would achieve in-depth expertise. Coursework to achieve both the breadth and depth requirements would be taken through a combination of existing UAF and cooperating institution course offerings, along with special seminars, distance education, visiting scholars, international exchanges, internships and indigenous Elder's academies sponsored by the initiative. Recently implemented graduate courses available through the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies would provide the core for the thematic overview:

- ✗ CCS 601, Documenting Indigenous Knowledge
- ✗ CCS 602, Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights
- ✗ CCS 608, Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- ✗ CCS 612, Traditional Ecological Knowledge

These courses would be complemented with comparable offerings in the collaborating disciplinary departments, plus students would be expected to enroll for a semester or two in another indigenous-serving institution outside of Alaska to gain further breadth and depth of perspective. Students enrolling in a cooperating international institution with a strong indigenous emphasis would be expected to identify an indigenous scholar from that institution who would serve as a member of their graduate advisory committee to help guide the research in ways that foster cross-institutional collaboration and comparative analysis.

A primary emphasis in the recruitment of students will be on attracting indigenous candidates from through-

out Alaska, as well as Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and others with in-depth experience in indigenous settings, so that the student cohort will represent multiple cultural perspectives which can be brought to bear on the theme of the program.

UAF faculty member Rick Caulfield accurately articulates one of the primary incentives for initiating such a program, which is to address the severe shortage of Alaska Natives with advanced degrees who can assume critical faculty roles and research responsibilities throughout the state:

The task before us is reflected in the fact that on UAF's Fairbanks campus only three percent of regular faculty are Alaska Native or Native American. Alaska Natives make up 16% of the state's total population yet are severely under-represented in the ranks of faculty. Were UAF's Fairbanks campus to employ indigenous faculty proportionate to the state's population, it would mean having over 60 indigenous faculty members rather than the 11 now employed (2000 data)

To fulfill this objective, UAF's Graduate School could focus on expansion of special indigenous graduate programs across disciplines for students in Alaska and throughout the circumpolar North. Filling this vital niche would build a pool of potential applicants for future faculty positions—growing capacity from within the state and throughout the North. Proactive strategies could include developing a bridging and mentoring program for Native graduate education (2002).

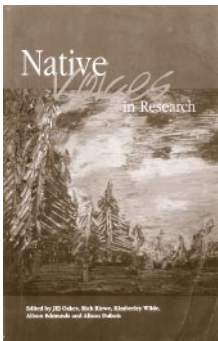
While we have a growing list of over 40 Alaska Native graduates with master's degrees who are interested in pursuing a Ph.D. program, nearly all are first generation graduates with extensive demands on their time and

Book Review: Native Voices in Research

edited by Jill Oakes, Rick Riewe, Alison Edmunds, Alison Dubois, and Kimberley Wilde. *Aboriginal Issues Press, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada (2003).*

by Vivian Martindale

Every year Aboriginal Issues Press publishes a volume of papers on subjects relating to current concerns of Aboriginal peoples. These papers come from a variety of fields including medicine, natural science and traditional environmental knowledge.



Although the term “Aboriginal” is common in Canada, in this review I have chosen to substitute the term “indigenous” for “Aboriginal” since it is

more global in nature. This particular book is divided into five sections: Health and Education, Colonization, Ethics and Methodology, Consultation and Public Policy and Traditional

Knowledge and Planning. The book examines the perspectives of research by and about indigenous peoples as well as past and present social issues. Additionally many of the contributions touch upon ethical issues in research and the indigenous communities’ role in their own research.

In a paper entitled, “Dentistry in Nunavut: Inuit Self-Determination and the Politics of Health,” Carlos Quinonez examines the historical and current structure of the dental health services in Nunavut and how the people there are dealing with the poli-

tics of dental treatment. In a section on traditional environmental knowledge, Colin Gallagher writes about his experiences with the Anishinaabe in “Quit Thinking Like a Scientist”. Gallagher’s experience with gathering research while working with Elders is an example of learning by working within a community. In “Storytelling as a Methodology,” Kimberley Wilde explores the concept of storytelling as methodology, one she utilized during her undergraduate and graduate work. She writes about the importance of listening to the Elders when they are telling stories and as well the importance of storytelling to the human experience.

Another particularly engaging article by Jay-Lynne Makinauk, Ojibway from Sagkeeng First Nation, addresses the problems indigenous students encounter while attending college. The article analyzes the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional needs of the students. The author looks at the difficulties that rural students have in adjusting to a predominantly non-indigenous university.

The book *Native Voices in Research* not only explores research issues in Canada, it broadens its focus to include articles about Greenland, Bolivia, Paraguay, India and the United States. With this book, Aboriginal Issues Press attempts to draw together the division between outside researchers and scholars and the reality of indigenous people themselves. From the information provided about the authors, 10 of the total 32 authors are indigenous peoples. Although more than half of the writers in this edition are not indigenous peoples, the authors all work within indigenous communities and have expertise in their fields of study. This book is a worthwhile read for educators and students in the field of indigenous studies because of its variety of articles, by both students and professionals, who conduct research within indigenous communities.

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expertise. The fellowships and travel support we are seeking for this program are essential to providing students the opportunity to step back from day-to-day demands and immerse themselves in their graduate studies and research so they can complete a program in a reasonable timeframe. The intent is to recruit two cohorts of 12 students each, with each candidate receiving support for up to three years. In addition, we will welcome students from other institutions who may wish to participate in the

program activities and course offerings at their own expense.

To obtain funding and institutional support for this proposal, we have to demonstrate that there are sufficient potential students who would be interested in enrolling in such a program. Please let us know if you are interested in pursuing a doctoral program along these lines so we can add your name to our list and notify you if we are successful in receiving the support necessary to begin implementation. Send your expression of interest to ffrjb@uaf.edu. ✨



Teaching & Learning Through a Cultural Eye: 31st Annual BMEEC February 9-11, 2005 in Anchorage

Teaching in Alaska comes with unique blessings and challenges. This is a region of linguistic and cultural diversity, and is one of the only states whose second most spoken language is of Native origin, in this instance, Yup'it. Spanish comes next, and the fastest growing population of English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Anchorage schools is Hmong. In villages and cities throughout the state, about 21 thousand elementary and high school students speak Spanish, Russian, Tagalog or one of a hundred other languages. How is a teacher to meet the diverse needs of their students and the strict academic achievement requirements of No Child Left Behind legislation?

The annual Bilingual Multicultural Education Equity Conference, now in its 31st year, gathers hundreds of educators, specialists, parents, students and practitioners to share their experiences and learn from experts. The opening address and the banquet will feature Haida and Hmong presentations. Bilingual education in Alaska varies from dual language instruction with a focus almost entirely on English to Native language immersion and language revitalization programs. At this conference, educators learn what's happening in their region, state and on the national front.

With the help of a \$1.4 million United States Department of Education grant, Sealaska Heritage Institute is developing curriculum materials for a K-2 Haida immersion program. The director is Rosita Worl, who will be a featured presenter. She states that in addition to stemming the loss

of Native languages, studies show language immersion also improves student performance in other academic areas. In addition, Elizabeth McKinley, a Maori educator from the University of Waikato in New Zealand, will describe how the teaching of science and mathematics is strengthened by building on cultural knowledge.

Presentations

There are presentations to suit the needs and interests of the widest possible range of educators. Kendra Hughes of Northwest Regional Education Laboratory will offer a workshop in SIOP (Sheltered English), which improves teaching and learning by focusing on content and the language needs of second-language speaking students. Mike Travis will also guide participants through a practical lesson in sheltering instruction

using cultural tools, standards and instructional techniques that help English language learners. Jackie McCubrey, an Alaska veteran and district teacher of the year, will demonstrate the Formula 3 Reading Spelling Learning Program, in use nationally and by 10 districts in Alaska. Jill Showman will demonstrate ways to encourage LEP student writing and inform teachers about professional development opportunities through the Writing Consortium.

Southwest Region School District will demonstrate their school reform process, aiming for coherent High Performance Learning Communities, which involves diagnosis of schools as systems and responsiveness to the cultural and linguistic conditions of the community. Lower Kuskokwim School District will describe how they are integrating standards-based education in their Yup'ik Immersion program. Susan Paskvan will show how to combine four strands to develop a quality Title III discretionary grant application, from professional development in English and Native language skills to family involvement in after school activities and seasonal language camps.

Workshops

The three-day conference, February 9 through 11, will have over 60 workshops on culturally-responsive schooling, services to ELL students, equity and safe schools, accountabil-

ity and testing, language development, reading strategies, staff development, student leadership and supplemental services.

The Goals for the Conference Are:

- To increase public and professional awareness of successful program practices in bilingual/multicultural education and share strategies to prepare all students to meet district and state performance standards as required in No Child Left Behind.
- To provide an opportunity for selected high school students to explore teacher education, heritage language education and to develop leadership skills.
- To address community-based strategies which enable students to become proficient in their heritage language and culture.
- To address educational equity issues of gender, race and national origin in Alaska schools.

Pre-conference Events

Title III and Educator workshops
Alaska Native Educators Association
charter meeting

Other events

AKABE Awards Luncheon
Installation of New AKABE Board
Student Essay Contest winners
Alaska Native Science Fair Awards
Bilingual Educator of the Year
Bilingual Program of the Year
Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literature Awards

For more information or to register contact:

BMEEC /The Coordinators, Inc.
329 F Street, Suite 208
Anchorage, AK 99501
Fax (907) 646-9001 ✨

2005 Native Educator's Conference

by Linda Green and Teri Schneider

The 2005 Native Educator's Conference will be held concurrently with the BMEEC, including a strand of NEC workshops and panels focusing on teaching and learning through a cultural eye. Panelists include Elders and Native superintendents who will provide a stimulating look at what schools and communities are doing to implement teaching and learning strategies based on the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*.

The first day (February 8, 2005) of activities will consist of a pre-conference work session for the newly established Alaska Native Educators Association (ANEA). Orders of business will include election of officers, passing association bylaws, and planning activities for the coming year. ANEA was established to assist with the efforts of the regional Native educator associations that have been formed over the past ten years.

In the evening of February 8, the Alaska Native Educator's Association (ANEA) will host the annual Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literature (HAIL) awards ceremony and reception at the Sheraton Hotel. Check the NEC/BMEEC registration desk for the specific room. Everyone is invited to join in these events recognizing people from each region who have contributed to the rich literary traditions of Alaska Natives

In addition, awards for students participating in the annual Alaska Native Science and Engineering Society statewide science fair at Camp Carlquist on February 6-7 will be presented at the BMEEC

luncheon on February 9, 2005. The Native Science Fair is sponsored by the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative in collaboration with The Imaginarium in Anchorage.

All the Native Educator's Conference activities will be held at the Anchorage Sheraton in conjunction with the BMEEC. For further information you can contact Linda Green at linda@mail.ankn.uaf.edu or 907-474-5814. NEC/BMEEC conference registration information and a preliminary event schedule can be viewed at: www.ankn.uaf.edu/bmeec. ✨

A Celebration Honoring

Alaska's Indigenous Literature

2005 Awards Ceremony

Tuesday, February 8, 2005
Sheraton Hotel
following the NEC

Access Alaska: Reaching Out as a Resource for Youth with Disabilities

by Oscar Frank

Interior Alaska High School/High Tech is a model program run by Access Alaska Incorporated that assists disabled rural and urban Alaskan youth to prepare for work or remain in school. High School/High Tech encourages youth who experience a disability to enter a career in science, engineering or technology. Access Alaska seeks positive, hopeful and culturally relevant experiences, frequently grounded in the exploration of local resources, for youth with personal challenges.

Students from Old Harbor and Interior Alaska, especially Nenana, have participated in the program. During the summer of 2003, a Nenana youth who was jointly sponsored by Tanana Chiefs Conference Youth Employment Services and Access Alaska, traveled to Arctic Village for a youth leadership conference. Over 40 youth from Interior Alaska villages participated in this conference. They spent ten days exploring the wild and scenic country of Arctic Village and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), which is home to the Gwich'in Athabascan and located in the majestic Brooks Range. Elders, village leaders, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and Tanana Chiefs' staff provided sessions on the land and water issues. There were sessions on Athabascan and Western leadership styles. Youth learned about ANWR's rich and fragile habitats. One Native Elder described how to live off the land.

Access Alaska staff also attended the 2004 Village Management Institute hosted by Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka. Many rural parents had questions about services for special education students and the availabil-

ity of those services and resources in rural school districts. Most agreed parental involvement is important for their child's academic success.

In October 2004, Access Alaska received four scholarships for youth to attend two conferences—Access the Future and Wellness V—sponsored by Oregon Health and Science University in Portland Oregon and geared towards youth with disabilities. While there, the Alaska youth met peers who quickly became friends and a source of support in their efforts to pursue work and education goals beyond high school.

Youth met Rachael Schodoris, a legally blind 19-year-old girl who grew up around sled dogs in Oregon. Ms. Schodoris, with the aid of a visual interpreter, is going to race the 2005 Iditarod Trail International Sled Dog Race. She is an inspiration for all youth, but especially those who experience a disability.

As a participant in Access Alaska's Department of Labor work employment program, each youth has an Individual Service Strategy that describes goals and objectives they personally want to achieve. Youth prepare for work and obtain real jobs.

Job readiness and transition from school to work are key program components. Individual youth learn job search and resume writing skills, attend job fairs, are involved in peer counseling, participate in paid internships and conduct Internet research.

Youth who experience a disability are concerned about passing Alaska's High School Qualifying Exam (HSQE). It can be challenging for them. High school graduation is important because many want to enter college or go for other schooling.

Access Alaska is now exploring ways to collaborate with Native organizations and others for mentoring and transitioning opportunities for youth with disabilities.

UAF is an academic resource for Access Alaska youth and staff. Youth attend the popular Science for Alaska series and can get extra school credit for attending and writing about the sessions. Last year youth and staff met a NASA scientist. Through that contact, NASA invited Access Alaska participants to their educational conference in Anchorage this past July.

Sharing Our Pathways newsletter assists Access Alaska in learning about culturally-relevant educational guidelines, programs, opportunities and resources throughout Alaska and beyond. Elders, local leaders and those who live a subsistence lifestyle contribute knowledge about the lands, water and people in their area.

Rural and Native youth who have a disability are no different than "mainstream" youth in their dreams for a real job and higher education. They work hard and face many challenges, but for those who are Alaska

Inupiaq & Bering Strait Yupik Teachable Calendar

by Katie Bourdon

In hopes of sparking more interest in expressing our culture in the classroom and at home, a group of Native educators from the Inupiaq & Bering Strait Yupik regions

have compiled a teachable calendar for teachers and parents. Our subsistence way of life shapes or determines our daily activities every season. It provides a natural and relevant means for bringing cultural life to the classroom. Preschool through high-school teachers use a calendar for a variety of activities, so bridging our subsistence activities and a yearly calendar makes sense as a way to reach as many folks as possible.



In the calendar: Vivian Murray from Elim. Notice the fish hanging in the background. Photo from Emily Murray.

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Native, their heritage is a powerful friend as they seek to work and obtain an education in today's world. A chance to be employed, attend a conference or be involved with an alternative education experience like a leadership event is important. In these settings, youth have an opportunity for social interaction and to learn new things, which is often a strong motivational force for identifying and achieving goals, particularly for youth who may experience isolation associated with their disability.

Here is a useful website for high school students with disabilities to prepare for college: <http://www.washington.edu/doiit>.

If you have questions, please call:

Access Alaska, Inc.
Interior Alaska High School/
High Tech
3550 Airport Way, Suite # 3
Fairbanks, AK 99709
(907) 479-7940
Email:
ofrank@accessalaska.net ✨



In the calendar: A young girl from Gambell cutting up a young seal while she is supervised. Photo from EHP Collection.

Each month features mini-lessons in various school subjects based on the traditional harvesting activities in our communities. Quotes from Elders and cultural experts offer advice to teachers, parents and children. Photographs that exhibit the wonderful collection housed at the Eskimo Heritage Program are displayed throughout the calendar. Family activities on the calendar encourage parents to not only become more involved in their children's classrooms, but to also take pride in their cultural heritage and nurture it in their family. All the activities recognize the importance of our culture and the intelligent Native way of living life.

This is our first year completing this calendar and suggestions, improvements and corrections are welcomed. Calendars are \$10.00 each. Please contact Kawerak Eskimo Heritage Program at 443-4386 or 443-4387 or email to ehp.pd@kawerak.org. We are truly excited about this calendar and hope both teachers and parents embrace it. *Quyanna!*

Calendar Contributors:

Emily "Funny" Murray, Elim
Luci Washington, St. Michael
Martha Stackhouse, Barrow
Polly Schaeffer, Kotzebue
Annie Conger, Nome
Dianne Schaeffer, EHP Staff
Katie Bourdon, EHP Staff ✨

Formation of WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board of Affirmation

by Ray Barnhardt

At its annual meeting in Brisbane, Australia August 2004, the Executive Board of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium formally accredited the following programs offered by the Maori Wananga (Tribal Colleges) in New Zealand:

- ✓ Bachelors of Maori Law and Philosophy offered by Te Wananga o Raukawa
 - ✓ Bachelors of Teaching offered by Te Wananga o Awanuirangi
 - ✓ A Kamatua (Elders) program offered by Te Wananga o Aotearoa
- Based on that experience, a proposal (below) was put forward for

consideration to establish a standing WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board of Affirmation and adopted by the WINHEC Executive Board which had been serving as the Interim Board for the Accreditation Authority.

Further information on these and other initiatives sponsored by WINHEC, including the WINHEC

Accreditation Handbook, may be obtained from the WINHEC web site at www.win-hec.org, or contact Missy Lord at the WINHEC head office in New Zealand: missy.lord@tworotaki.ac.nz. The Accreditation Handbook is also available on the ANKN web site at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ihe.html>. The next WINHEC Executive Board meeting is scheduled to take place at the time of the 7th World Indigenous People's Conference on Education to be held in New Zealand November 26—December 1, 2005. Information on the WIPCE conference may be obtained at <http://www.wipce2005.com>. ✨

TITLE: WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board of Review

Membership

The WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board of Affirmation shall be made up of one representative from each member indigenous region (currently Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, Alaska, U.S./AIHEC Colleges, Canada and Saamiland—others to be added as necessary) to serve a five-year (staggered) term. Board of Review members shall be nominated by the appropriate indigenous authority in each region and approved for membership by the WINHEC Executive Board. Where possible, Board of Review members should have firsthand experience with indigenous-serving programs/institutions and the WINHEC accreditation process.

Terms of Reference:

1. The WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board of Review shall be responsible to and serve at the discretion of the WINHEC Executive Board. The activities of the Board of Review shall be managed through the WINHEC Head Office and all formal actions of the Board of Review shall be subject to approval by the WINHEC Executive Board.
2. The primary function of the WINHEC Accreditation Authority Board of Review shall be to oversee the implementation of the WINHEC accreditation review process, including but not limited to the following activities:
 - a. Maintain, update and disseminate the Accreditation Handbook and all associated materials, including formal records of completed accreditation reviews.
 - b. Establish criteria for eligibility and procedures for reviewing applications for candidacy, including conducting a preliminary site visit prior to acceptance as a candidate for consideration.
 - c. Establish clear and user-friendly guidelines for conducting a program/institutional self study and preparing the appropriate documentation for an accreditation review.
 - d. Establish guidelines for selection, appointment and responsibilities of the site review team and the process for conducting a site visit.
 - e. Review the report of each site review team to insure appropriate standards have been met and submit recommendations to the WINHEC Executive Board for action.
 - f. Review and monitor interim reports from accredited programs/ institutions to insure all standards and practices are maintained over the period of approval.
3. Assist the WINHEC head office in developing appropriate ways to recognize the quality of WINHEC-accredited programs/ institutions and disseminate information to bring further credence and recognition to the WINHEC accreditation process.

Empowering Parents

by Katie Bourdon

Recently I read an article entitled, “Raising Children to Feel Self-Love Helps Them” by Harley Sundown, a principal in the Lower Yukon School District. Harley wrote about his experience of feeling loved and being important in his Yup’ik family and, in turn, how this affected the choices he made in school and life.

The concept of loving our children seems simple and straightforward, and therefore doing well in school should fall into place. However, the reality of alcohol abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse in our communities is staggering and affects entire families as well as individual family members in traumatic ways. Each child is affected differently based on his/her personality and birth order. The loss of self-esteem, a warped self-image and feelings of unworthiness can fester and grow within a child and be devastating.

When a child feels bad about himself, he does not try as hard in school as if to say, “Why fail again.” Children don’t understand they are losing a part of themselves until they grow older and realize that what happened was wrong and not their fault. On the upside, technology and having access to information and services is making a dent in this negative cycle. People who are willing to take responsibility for themselves—past mistakes, present problems and future choices—are changing their families’ self-esteem and self-image. Native pride is growing and is evident in the revival of dance and Native language in some communities. We need to increase and continue

having Native parents in the classroom and at school to validate our children and to encourage them to try and do well. Consistency is the key, so volunteer on a regular basis—even a half hour a week, as long as it is every week.

The Eskimo Heritage Collection documents the information shared by



Shishmaref folks at camp. EHP Collection photo.

Elders from the Bering Straits region during Elder conferences. They stress the importance of keeping our language and traditions alive, requiring cultural relevance in schools, teaching our children Native values and passing on a subsistence way of life. Elders have been advocating for our language and culture within the education system for years. We are beginning to see an increase in language immersion and cultural charter schools



A Gambell Elder woman demonstrating a string story. EHP Collection photo.

in our state. However, the number of Native parents who are active in their children’s education is still very low. Frank Hill, co-director of Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative and former Alaska school district superintendent says, “Parents are the ones who can drive the school’s initiatives.”

I don’t think we fully realize we have this power. Even if we do know, we certainly aren’t involved enough or in significant numbers in the PTSA or Native Parent Committees to be heard as a strong voice. We need to encourage each other to visit our children’s classrooms, to read to our children, to be at the school, even for the lunch hour. Our presence makes a difference, not only in our children’s day, but also with the whole school system.

Martha Stackhouse, Inupiaq educator, shared a comment with me on this issue that relates to the points Harley Sundown expressed: “The more you hold your babies (even after they get older) the better—they will not be spoiled from holding. It is the material goods that spoil kids. If parents spent more time with their kids, talk to them and play with them, they would grow up to feel important—that they are wanted.” ✨

Al Kookesh Steps into Senate District C

by Nancy Barnes

Albert Kookesh was elected to the State Senate District C in November. He replaces Senator Georgianna Lincoln who has retired after 14 years of service. Senate District C encompasses 250,000 square miles and is the largest senate district seat in the United States. To give you an idea of this diverse district, it includes 126 communities, 25 school districts, 16 Native languages and covers six Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) regional areas: Doyon, Calista, CIRI, Ahtna, Chugach and Sealaska.

Albert served in the State House of Representatives for the past eight years, representing House District 5, which covers Southeast Alaska and a handful of Prince William Sound communities—Chenega, Tatitlek and Cordova. At the 2004 Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, he was re-elected to be AFN co-chair for his seventh year. He is Tlingit and is from Angoon, where he still resides. Albert is a life-long subsistence hunter and fisherman. He has been on the Sealaska Corporation Board since 1976 and is active as the board chair. He is a

trustee for the First Alaskans Foundation, is on the executive committee (for life) for the Alaska Native Brotherhood Grand Camp, and is the owner/operator for Kootznoowoo Inlet Lodge in Angoon.

Albert is married to Sally Woods-Kookesh who teaches in Angoon. Sally is originally from Tanana. They have five children and five grandchildren. Albert is a graduate of Mount Edgecumbe High School. He completed an undergraduate degree at Alaska Methodist University and a law degree from the University of



Outgoing Senator Georgianna Lincoln with the new Senator Al Kookesh, Senate District C

Washington.

Albert has been a staunch supporter of quality education in rural Alaska. He says, "Rural Alaskans want no less or no more than urban communities when it comes to the education of our children." When asked how he felt about the new Alaska History graduation requirement, Albert remarks, "I wholeheartedly support this proposal. Our children should know about Alaska history. This is a first step in bridging the rural and urban divide. We need to know who we are and where we came from."

Please feel free to contact Senator Kookesh or his staff members, Dorothy Shockley and Nancy Barnes, during the Alaska Legislative Session beginning January 11, 2005. The toll free number is 1-888-288-3473. ✨

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