College of Humanities & Sciences
University of Montana
The Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute
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The Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute is located on the garden level of The Payne Family Native American Center at the University of Montana. The Payne Family Native American Center is the first facility in the nation built to accommodate a Department of Native American Studies and American Indian Student Services. Fittingly, it is the site of an historic Salish Indian encampment, and the building is designed to reflect that legacy as well as the heritage and cultures of all Montana tribes.

The Institute is named in honor of Elouise Cobell, an activist from the Blackfeet tribe who in 1985 embarked on one of the largest and most complicated class-action lawsuits ever brought against the U.S. Government. The lawsuit obtained billions of dollars in royalties owed to individual tribal members across the country.

Institute Facilities:

**Land and Culture Laboratory**

The Laboratory is equipped for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping that will help train students in this technology. It also will be used in work with native communities, and others, to track spatially related historical, social, or cultural issues. Computing capabilities and interactive displays facilitate teaching and research applications, including access to databases, satellite images, and high-resolution maps. With these tools students and researchers can work with community partners to conduct projects of value and to solve real-world problems.

**Conference/Meeting Space**

The Institute also provides the ability to engage indigenous peoples across miles and cultures. Long distance video communication enables classes to track cultural events from indigenous communities whether in New Zealand, Norway, or Wolf Point Montana. Audio/visual editing and file sharing capabilities allow students to exchange ideas, and send or receive class activities in real time, with institutions from tribal communities, greatly enhancing the study of indigenous cultures and languages.

**Classroom and Media Spaces**

In addition to offering unprecedented technology and learning environments, the Institute also provides a multi-screen theater room, and a conference room modeled on a native round room. This room has a domed room and uses the same technology as NASA to immerse viewers in an interactive display of the environment and the sky. This enables both astronomical work and backdrops for native storytelling.

Support for the Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute was provided by the Payne Family, the Murdoch Charitable Trust, the Northwest Area Foundation, the University of Montana, and the UM College of Humanities and Sciences.

For more information, please contact Willie Brown at 406-243-5851 or willie.brown@umontana.edu.

Pictured on front (from top-left): Elouise Cobell; Main Hall at UM; The Payne Family Native American Center; Student performing at Kyi-Yo Powwow; Elouise Cobell dedication display in Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute; Elouise Cobell’s son, Turk, at 2015 dedication ceremony