Welcome To The New UM NARL Director

In the spring of 2012, the Native American Research Lab (NARL) held campus interviews for the top four candidates selected for the Director of the research lab. Each of the four candidates were given the opportunity to present a classroom lecture and answer questions during an open forum. Both presentations were open to the public and UM students, staff, and faculty as well as tribal community members were invited to attend.

Aaron Thomas, a member of the Navajo Tribe and currently a chemical engineer at the University of Idaho in the College of Engineering, was selected for the position, starting in January 2013.

NARL started in 2007 with the focus of providing Native American undergraduates and graduate students with advanced “hands-on” research opportunities in the natural sciences and biomedical sciences in a research setting guided by culturally-relevant faculty role models and mentors.

During the summer, NARL provides opportunities for students in high school as well as those going to tribal colleges the chance to participate in research projects. Along with the opportunities for Native American student, NARL is also open to non-Native participation.

Many students in the NARL program are afforded opportunities to do internships at government facilities which is a great way to get real life experience as well as practice their skills.

The Native American Studies program would like to congratulate Aaron Thomas on his new position and look forward to welcoming him to campus.

Faculty Spotlight

Native American Studies Professor: Dr. Richmond Clow

Richmond Clow started working at The University of Montana in the fall of 1984 teaching in the Native American Studies department. Over the years he has taught many subjects including history, tribal government, ecological perspectives, and contemporary issues in Indian Country.

Dr. Clow is the author of many books including his most recent, "The Sioux in South Dakota History: A Twentieth Century Reader." Dr. Clow has also published "Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling," and "Trusteeship in Change: Toward Tribal Autonomy in Resource Management."

He attended the University of South Dakota and earned both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in History. Dr. Clow studied at the University of New Mexico where he earned his Ph. D.

Dr. Clow plans on spending his summer teaching during the first session of summer school and the latter half will be spent on his research and writing project where he is focusing on tribal resource management as well as politics on Montana Reservations.

His greatest challenge as a Professor is explaining complicated concepts. However, he enjoys seeing students succeed in every area of their college careers.

As one of the long time professors at The University of Montana the Native American Studies department would like to thank Dr. Richmond Clow and send best wishes his way as he works on completing his next book.
The Payne Family Native American Center hosted Western Native Voice in their voter registration efforts this election year. Western Native Voice and Montana Native Vote Group are a few organizations that focused on encouraging Native Americans to vote hoping to increase voter turnout during the 2012 election.

According to data from Executive Director of Western Native Voice, Loren BirdRattler, the goal was to reach 5,000 new voters but they surpassed that and went into the November election, in which voters nationwide re-elected Barack Obama as president, with 6,300 registered voters.

In Arlee voters came out in small waves to the Community Senior Citizens center and soon the small parking lot was full enough to force people to have to park in the street.

Arlee has one of the highest concentrations of Native voters in the state with the highest being on the Blackfeet reservation according to BirdRattler. "If you can get Blackfeet to vote you usually tip the scales," BirdRattler said.

Getting the word out about voting didn’t just come from the Native organizations but from a proud standing tradition within families and a little push from social media networks.

"It starts within your family," Steven Buffalo said. "It’s a grassroots effort and I think that if we show the way to vote hopefully our family members will follow us and vote." Buffalo is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe.

In the more rural areas Western Native Voice went mobile with their efforts to get Natives to the polls. A team of 25 canvassed the Fort Peck reservation and even in towns like Missoula, the organization is offering rides to the polls for anybody who needs them.

"(The) goal is to insure every Native who wants to participate in voting gets that right," BirdRattler said.

Confident of the candidates they voted for many Natives were happy with their choices and felt well informed by the time they made it to the polls.

"I felt great about voting this morning. I voted for President Barack Obama because I feel that he has interest in the middle class in mind, he has interest of people of color and I believe that he is a strong leader," Buffalo said.

The Democratic vote was popular with participants in Arlee. "I voted democratic straight across the board," Martin Belcourt said. He is originally from the Rocky Boys Indian Reservation but currently lives in Arlee. "By and large Natives are going to turn out record numbers for this election," said BirdRattler.

Cicily Tatsey-Bullcalf is a member of the Blackfeet Tribe from Browning, Mont. who hopes her effort in school will ripple not only throughout the University of Montana campus and her tribal community, but especially in her family.

She is a senior at the University of Montana with a major in Native American Studies. When she completes her NAS degree in May she plans to continue taking classes in the Pre-Pharmacy program. It's always been something she’s wanted to do.

"It’s always been there for me," she said. "Since middle school." Specifically, she was talking about her need to be a pharmacist and help the Native American community.

Tatsey-Bullcalf is currently a peer mentor with the Bridges Program. The program is dedicated to recruiting Native American students from tribal colleges in the fields of medicine and sciences. "I love science and math," she said. "I love hands on."

While getting her degree is a great accomplishment she isn’t just doing it for herself but her sons Royce and Rickson Bullcalf. "I choose to go to college for my children," she said.

She is married to Robert Bullcalf Jr. and with a busy school schedule she still makes family her top priority. "When I’m not in school I’m usually doing something at home," she said.

Her family enjoys cooking dinner together, bowling, watching movies and television as well as playing video games. "I don’t feel like an outcast here because I have so many relations," she said. "It’s a home away from home."

Wilena Old Person graduated from the University of Montana in the winter of 2004 with a Bachelors degree in History and Native American Studies. Along with being a mother, Old Person also works as a Student Resource Advisor (Program Coordinator) for the University of Montana’s Native American Center of Excellence in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy. Here she recruits and retains Native American and Alaska Native students.

She has done archival research at the Smithsonian and National Archives as well as archaeological surveying at Glacier National Park and Yellowstone National Park. Old Person believes that The Indian Health Care Improvement Act is important because Native Americans need better healthcare and it’s important to keep the youth and elders healthy. Wilena is currently working on Masters degree in Anthropology.
American Indian Heritage Day

A crowd cheered, encouraging the four teams as they scrambled to stand up 14 poles and balance them against each other to form a stable pyramid shape. The teams were creating the basic structure for their teepees.

The teepee race was part of a full day of events during the American Indian Heritage Day celebration on the University of Montana campus on Sept. 28th. The race, formally known as "The Bonnie ‘Sim-Sin’ Heavy Runner Memorial Teepee Race" made its way back after six years.

The race began several years ago as part of the annual Kyi-Yo Pow Wow but this year the heritage day celebration adopted the event with great enthusiasm.

"I forgot how much work it is to get a teepee up," said Francis Eagleman. "I haven't done one in a few years. This was pretty fun." Eagleman is a double major in Native American Studies and Exercise Science. She participated in the race with the American Indian Business Leaders.

For 15 years the state of Montana has recognized the fourth Friday of September as American Indian Heritage Day. This year the event started with the sunrise ceremony and later in the afternoon Doctor Theresa Branch, vice president of student affairs, read a proclamation. The event also offered up exposure for student groups who had tables with information set up.

"History has already taken place but we're still here," said Aislinn HeavyRunner-Rioux, a graduate teaching assistant at the university. "We're resilient, we're progressing, we're educating each other and we're living this experience together here at the University of Montana."

American Indian Heritage Day was an opportunity for the school and community to come together and celebrate and is hosted each year by the Native American Studies Department.

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