The Payne Family Native American Center
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2011 Native American Heritage Day

The University of Montana celebrated American Indian Heritage Day on Friday Sept. 23, 2011 with students and community members alike.

A Sunrise Ceremony with Arleen Adams got the day underway and from there various activities unfolded. UM President Engstrom held an open forum for students, afterwards there was a traditional flute performance and a traditional dance performance.

The day was about exposure of the cultures and traditions. One such occasion was a special Native food menu at the Food Zoo on campus.

While Heritage Day in Montana was recognized in 1997, it was finally made official at the University in 2011. Throughout the state many schools have special activities planned that help students gain more knowledge about the Montana tribes and help them learn about the history as well.

The diversity of the tribes in Montana is great and a day to recognize those differences is important. This year there were films and lectures by Native clubs and Native professors who teach on campus, every tribe has something unique to share and they welcome anybody who wants to learn more.

Celebrations in years to come will hopefully only grow in size and interest.

Visiting Professor from the University of Tromsø: Professor Øyvind Ravna

Øyvind Ravna is originally from the Sami areas in Northern Norway. He, his wife Zoa and two of their children moved to Missoula in the fall. Ravna spent the year working on his research comparing legislation on identifying and securing land, water, and natural resources of the indigenous people in North America and Scandinavia.

Ravna has been at The University of Montana since November 2011 and has enjoyed giving lectures and spending time on his research. He has had the opportunity to study and learn about Native Americans in the United States while teaching students about the indigenous people in his region. He has also used this opportunity to visit several of the Montana Indian Reservations and speak with people working in their communities.

Along with working at the University, Ravna has enjoyed being able to experience other aspects of Missoula. He and his family have especially enjoyed outdoor activities including skiing, hiking and fishing. Ravna has just bought a nice fly fishing rod and also invested in a tent which he and his family will use this summer.

While many challenges come with moving to a new area, especially a new country, Ravna said that there have not been too many obstacles. In the beginning of the year, speaking English was sometimes a challenge but after spending seven months in the U.S. it became much easier. Another difficulty Ravna and his family have faced is being away from their family in Norway. However, with their departure in mid-July the prospect of seeing family again is nearing.

When Ravna returns home he will also return to his job as a Law Professor at the University of Tromsø in Norway. He will again teach Indigenous Law but plans to continue his work with international indigenous issues. Ravna hopes to come back to The University of Montana to offer lectures on law as well as Scandinavian experiences.

Ravna would like to add, “Finally, I will use this opportunity to thank all the great colleagues I have got in the Native American Center this year, who have taken good care of me and given me opportunities to do my research.”

The Native American Studies program would also like to thank Øyvind Ravna and his family for sharing seven months with The University of Montana and also sharing their time and experiences with the students, faculty and staff.
The Kyi-Yo Native American Student Association presented the 44th annual Kyi-Yo Pow Wow at the Adams Center on Friday, April 20th and Saturday, April 21st. The pow wow proved to be a great success as elders and youth alike came together to celebrate.

This year’s theme was “Empowerment through Education.” The theme took on a literal meaning as many of the youth who were dancing were in the learning process of their specialty dances and songs.

The Kyi-Yo Pow Wow holds the spot as the largest and oldest student-run pow wow in the country. This year the Kyi-Yo Indian Club raised approximately $26,000, which they will use to help pay for next year’s pow wow. The pow wow costs about $56,000 each year. To fundraise, students embark on a relatively extensive fundraising campaign that includes sending solicitation letters to tribes and tribal casinos across the country, Montana tribal councils, and alumni and others who they believe are likely to donate. They also generate income through Indian Tacos sales and other avenues including selling fry bread at UM’s International Food Festival, and holding raffles among other efforts. If you are interested in contributing to next year’s effort, please send your tax-deductible donation to The University of Montana Foundation for Kyi-Yo. Or, for more information, contact (406)243-5831 or send an email to kyiyo@yahoo.com.

Many traveled far and wide for the event and every year it continues to grow. Until next year, Happy Pow Wow hunting!

The Native American Studies department has an average of 50 majors each semester. NAS majors come from diverse backgrounds and excel in a variety of areas. The department would like to introduce Dylan DesRosier, who is a senior double majoring in Native American Studies and Environmental Science.

Dylan Desrosier is majoring in Environmental Studies and Native American Studies with a minor in Wilderness Studies. His main career goal right now is to finish school and after getting his degree he plans on going to graduate school to get a degree in Natural Resources Management. When he completes this he plans to become a tribal environmental mediator and manager, this will allow him to work with the sustainability of tribal natural resources and the preservation of reservation land as well as culture. Desrosier currently enjoys studying outside on nice days and his favorite class has been NAS Tribal Sovereignty, in this class he was able to learn some history along with law and policy.
This year the University of Montana’s Native American Studies program held its 115th Commencement at the Payne Family Native American Center Bonnie HeavyRunner Gathering Place on Saturday May 12, 2012. There were eight graduates that were honored with six in attendance.

The graduates were welcomed with an invocation and opening prayer by Arleen and Louie Adams. The graduates received their degrees from Dr. Wade Davies and Selena Hill as well as congratulations by Dr. David Beck.

Dr. David Beck also gave out the Distinguished Alumni Award to Michael....., who is currently working in the field of language recovery and the youth, he also gave a little speech to the graduates. Kevin Kicking Woman sang the students an Honor Song and that was followed by a closing prayer by Arleen and Louie Adams.

Family and Professors filled the room in celebration and support for the graduates.

The Native American Studies program would like to once again congratulate the graduates and look forward to all the wonderful things they will accomplish.