

American Indian Urban Teaching Program (AIUTP)

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Portland, the largest city in the state of Oregon, “has the ninth largest Native American population in the US” (PIRC, 2008). While more than 2.1 percent of K-12 students in the Portland area are American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN,) only 0.6 percent of their teachers are Native. The proposed American Indian Urban Teacher Program (AIUTP) will prepare 18 new, fully licensed AI/AN teachers and have a significant impact on moving toward parity in the percentage of Native teachers in the Portland metropolitan area and across Oregon.

Portland State University (PSU) is strategically located at the center of a large urban Native population, which has historically served Native students through academic programs and the Native American Student Community Center. The AIUTP will reside within PSU’s Graduate School of Education (GSE), which prepares more teachers than any other institution in the State.

Among its primary goals, the AIUTP will (1) Recruit 18 qualified Native students; (2) Establish an indigenized professional development program; (3) Develop the capacity of faculty, mentors, and others to meet the unique needs of Native students; (4) Place the pre-service teachers in schools serving high numbers of AI/AN students in K-12 classrooms; (5) Provide multidimensional induction to graduates during their first year of teaching.

The AIUTP will be a rigorous graduate program, integrating clinical experience with an evidence-based academic program to prepare Native teachers to be proficient in content and instructional approaches that honor the cultures, traditions, and knowledge of their students while supporting their competency in meeting rigorous academic standards.

The proposed project, submitted by consortium partners—the GSE and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Grand Ronde, Umatilla, and Siletz Indian Communities meets Absolute Priorities One and Two.

Impact on community: As noted above. Portland “has the ninth largest Native American population in the US” (PIRC, 2008). Directed by Dr. Cornel Pewewardy, a nationally recognized educator, this project, in partnership with five Oregon confederated tribes will prepare Native American Oregonians as teachers.