

WIND RIVER LEADERSHIP SCHOOL IMPROVES WORKING COLLABORATIVELY, BUILDING NETWORKS, LEADERSHIP

Situation

Extension has historically been involved in the development of intensive, yearlong leadership schools for Wyoming counties; however, nothing had been developed to meet the needs of the wide array of organizations on the Wind River Indian Reservation (WRIR), such as school boards, community recreation programs, and even the tribal governance councils.

The Wind River extension office over the years has received multiple requests for programming related to building capacity and leadership skills in Indian country. Tina Russell, the WRIR extension educator, along with Tara Kuipers and Hannah Swanbom, extension

community development educators, researched tribal leadership programs to find something more suitable to the reservation.

The Wind River Leadership School, which kicked off in the fall of 2014, was developed after extensive work with WRIR community members over a two-year period.

The school consisted of three day-long educational sessions over three months, which incorporated a variety of leadership development lectures, skills exercises, and field trips. The focus of each class was two-pronged: building leadership skills and building knowledge of community resources and organizations.





Twenty participants attended various course sessions, with 12 completing all three sessions and graduating from the program. A second school planned for the winter of 2016 is being designed with input from previous attendees.

Impacts

Each educational program was assessed through written program evaluations. Participants were invited to a leadership school reunion two months after the program to reconnect with other participants and further evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Evaluation responses were overwhelmingly positive. Most participants stated they felt ready to apply the information learned. All stated they had gained knowledge of their community and improved their knowledge or skills in working collaboratively with others; building relationships and networks; and leading groups, committees or teams. The following are a few notable comments about what they learned in this course:

"I have gotten many ideas on ethics that I may transfer to anything in my family, community, and school."

"I will always remember that leadership is a process. And to be aware that if you are a leader you will be responsible for all the action."

"I am building a great base of information that is invaluable in my future leadership roles."

"Don't take negative thoughts/words personally."

"Learning about 'the different types of learning styles' will help me in my supervising and management duties."

Long-term impacts will likely include an increased number of leadership school participants taking on leadership roles in their family and work environments or in a public service capacity, thereby strengthening the entire WRIR over time, and the development of a Wind River leadership school primarily led and organized by tribal community members.



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Leadership Development
<http://bit.ly/WRLeadership>