

Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee

September 25, 2024

Overview of Native Student Data and Support

Background:

The AA/SA Committee has regularly attended to matters related to Native American students and their academic journeys. Since July 2023, the committee has had Native Student Success as a standing agenda item. The committee works to be informed about the complexity of the Native student experience and serve as a resource on the topic for the larger Board of Trustee membership.

Objective:

The committee will be provided with an overview of the following areas in preparation for a committee conversation, and to provide context for the larger Board meeting on the 26th. This is an ongoing conversation and an area of focus for the Trustees since the Tribal Business Councils presented to the Board of Trustees in 2018.

1. UW commitment to Native American students.
2. Current enrollment of Native American students and review of fall 2024 new students.
3. Lifecycle of students and individualized support.
4. Ongoing hurdles for Native students for review or discussion.
5. Cost of attendance snapshot.

Outline:

1. UW commitment to Native American students.

The Native Education, Resource, and Cultural Center opened on UW main campus in 2018 and was a further visible and tangible commitment of the University to our Native American students. Since that time, the University continues to invest in the recruitment and retention of this student group and learn across time how to better serve the individuals and their families.

2. Current enrollment of Native American students, with new information on specific tribal enrollment, and review of fall 2024 new students.

In the last week, university staff was able to identify that if students had entered their tribal affiliation during the initial enrollment process with UW via the Salesforce database, that data could be specifically requested and loaded into Banner, the university's main student record system. As such, for this September 2024 meeting, a current record of the number of students who are enrolled in Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone was able to be determined. The current student enrollment data for those who selected the identification marker of American Indian or Alaska Native was pulled, n=302. From there, Salesforce data was loaded to provide additional identification of specific tribal affiliation. To further clarify enrolled students who did not indicate in Salesforce, staff in the Native center reviewed the list of 302 to identify other enrolled Native students.

The outcomes of the Native American students identified is as follows:

- There are 21 Eastern Shoshone and 21 Northern Arapaho students.

- There are 31 undergraduates with 14 from the Eastern Shoshone and 17 from the Northern Arapaho tribes.
- There are 11 graduate/professional students with 7 from the Eastern Shoshone and 4 from the Northern Arapaho tribes.
- There are 3 first-time students, 6 new transfer students, and 6 new graduate students this fall.
- Only undergraduates receive Pell grants, so of the 31 undergrads, 21 received a Pell Grant (68%) this fall.
 - 9 out of 14 Eastern Shoshone students received a Pell Grant (64%)
 - 12 out of 17 Northern Arapaho students received a Pell Grant (71%)

For the fall 2024 semester, there is one first-time student from the Eastern Shoshone tribe, five new transfer students from the Northern Arapahoe and Eastern Shoshone tribes; and six new graduate students from these tribes. For future AA/SA committee meetings, a more thorough review of the students can be shared regarding financial support and campus engagement.

3. Lifecycle of students and individualized support.

Over the past four years, the university administration has partnered with the various student support, academic, and research and economic development departments on campus to plan numerous visits to Wind River Reservation and get direct input from Tribal Business Councils, K-12 educators, and community members on how the University can further partner with the tribes and work together on economic development and support higher education journeys for tribal members. Consistently it has been offered that more students need to complete high school, provide more on-site reservation resources from UW to support those considering and pursuing higher education, and a smoother transition to higher education, for students and their families, would be significantly helpful. The experience that a Native student feels they have to choose between home on the reservation or college can limit their success. UW is further responding to these needs in three ways. One, Cass Underwood, the Native Center Project Coordinator, has been transitioned to work directly from the Intertribal Center at Central Wyoming College. This allows for greater support of UW students when they are preparing to transition to UW, are home from Laramie, or studying remotely. Additionally, Cass has greater ability to work with students while still in K-12 to promote continuing education, and she serves as a local resource to community members. Two, the Native Center received additional donor funds this academic year to begin a peer mentoring program, more below. Three, UW and CWC president's and administrative teams are working together to create a cohort model to support students through the higher education journey.

Peer Mentoring Program

In the spring of 2024, a donor met with the Native Center team to inquire about ways to further support Native students on campus. The program concept for the peer mentoring program was a clear fit for this donor's desire to contribute. As such, in the 2024-2025 academic year, new funds are available to start the program. The team is working now to refine the scope of the peer education program and will work to hire two student peers this fall semester. The preliminary overview for the peer mentors is to serve as a direct student contact for Native students. They will provide support individually and can help with encouraging on-campus engagement, familiarizing students support resources, problem solving challenges across the student experience, and the peer mentors will be additional members of the Native Center

team that works to welcome, host, and support fellow tribal members here on UW's campus. Additionally, there are multiple student staff who work in the Native Center with Reinette and Tarissa.

Partnership between UW and CWC

UW and CWC are deeply invested in supporting Native American students. Meetings over the past year have arrived at the commitment to better support the transition to higher education through a cohort model of students who will start at CWC and then transition together to UW. Initial concept planning intends to have a cohort of approximately 20 students who will have wrap-around support to help meet needs such as transportation to and from campus and the reservations. The students would be co-advised and co-admitted to both institutions. A planning group is currently being confirmed for further coordination.

4. Ongoing hurdles for Native students for review or discussion.

While many services and supports are being provided to Native American students, there are additional challenges often shared by those students with staff in the Native Center. The most common challenges include the high cost of living in Laramie, transportation to and from the reservation, childcare for the children of UW students, and the general culture shock of coming from the communal nature of the reservation to the individualistic nature on campus.

5. Cost of attendance snapshot.

Much focus in the past two years has been related to the national conversation on tuition remission for Native American students. The funding provided to students enrolled in federally recognized tribes varies by state, and by institutions within each state. The university and the Legislature have reviewed this topic on a variety of occasions. Most recently at the fall 2024 Select Committee on Tribal Relations meeting the following overview on cost of attendance was provided.

Taking the total cost of attendance at UW including living on campus is \$26,078. Assuming 40 students per year total equals \$1,043,120 per year. The University would require an endowment of \$20.9 million to generate annual earning of that amount per year. The current balances of the two primary Wind River Reservation endowments are Northern Arapahoe - \$2.8 million and Chief Washakie - \$691,000.

If the focus is as other institutions have done with a tuition/fee waiver, the high end of the cost for 40 students at tuition of \$5,190 and fees of \$2,578 without any other aid like Hathaway would total \$310,720 per year. That would require an endowment of \$6.2 million if funded by that mechanism.

The Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) has completed a review of the report provided by Alyson White Eagle, shared in January 2024. The data provided to complete that report was incorrect and can now provide a more accurate overview. The OIA team put in the correct data and completed analysis with the new numbers. Additional information about scholarships specifically designed to support students within the Native American demographic have been provided for review previously, along with information on students receiving the Hathaway scholarship.

NOTE: Spring 2024 review of Native Student Academic Interests

Top 10 Applications-Any Status

Undeclared
Nursing - Pre-Basic BSN (Laramie Campus)
Criminal Justice

Business Undeclared
Psychology
Kinesiology and Health Promotion
Mechanical Engineering
Computer Science
Biology
Engineering Undeclared

Top 10 Applications-Submitted

Undeclared

Business Undeclared
Criminal Justice
Nursing - Pre-Basic BSN (Laramie Campus)
Psychology
Kinesiology and Health Promotion
Mechanical Engineering
Computer Science
Engineering Undeclared
Biology

Top 10 Applications-Admitted

Undeclared

Business Undeclared
Criminal Justice

Psychology
Nursing - Pre-Basic BSN (Laramie Campus)
Kinesiology and Health Promotion
Mechanical Engineering
Computer Science
Biology
Engineering Undeclared

On Submitted Applications
28% indicated an additional Academic Interest

Of those 4 areas stood out:

Environment & Natural Resources - concurrent major/minor
Creative Writing - minor
Outdoor Leadership - minor
Sustainability - minor

18% indicated Pre-Professional Interest

Of those 4 areas stood out:

Pre-Medicine
Pre-Veterinary
Pre-Law
Pre-Physical Therapy

A couple of take-aways based on this information:

- Most of the majors are profession oriented or Undeclared.
- Nursing goes down in rankings as the applications progressed in the funnel.
- Psychology goes up in the rankings as the applications progressed in the funnel.
- The other programs stayed fairly flat in comparison.