

Lac Courte Oreilles Community Ojibwe College (LCOOCC) Men's Talking Circle
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Effective Strategies, Best Practice, and Institutional Challenges in Recruitment and Retention of Native American Males in STEM

Workshop on the Recruitment and Retention of Native American Male Students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
NATIVO Lodge • Albuquerque, NM
April 9-10, 2010

Motivation/Inspiration behind developing the LCOOCC Men's Talking Circle:

- The dominant culture's male gender role expectations.
- Compassion Advocacy Men's Program (CAMP)
- *Where Have All the Men Gone?* Presented by Thomas G. Mortenson at the Council for Opportunity in Education 25th Annual Conference, September 2006: New York, NY.
- *Institute on College Males* May 23-25, 2007 at Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA.
- In sum, many colleges and universities are experiencing a declining number of men entering classes and finding persistence to successful graduation increasingly difficult. Common challenges include:
 - Academically under-prepared
 - Not aware of commitment
 - Limited-income
 - First generation college student
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Substance abuse/dependency
 - Child care
 - Intimate partner/Family violence
 - Family illness
 - Grief issues
 - Socially/culturally not cool to be in school
 - Legacy of Historical Trauma

The LCOOCC Men's Talking Circle History:

- Loosely planned and formed as a "men's academic and personal support group" during the 2006-2007 academic year with a core group of 4-5 staff and faculty along with 4-5 male students. The Student Services Department provided funds to support light lunches during the meetings.
- Planning and forming the group continued into the 2007-2008 academic year including formalizing the group's mission and name to the Men's Talking Circle during the spring semester.

The LCOOCC Men's Talking Circle:

- The mission of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College Men's Talking Circle is to provide a support system with male students, both academically and personally, to help men meet their individual needs and enable them to persevere and be successful in attaining their desired degrees.
- Moreover, we hope that this effort inspires our Native male students to be role models and sources of encouragement for other Native men to seriously consider higher education.
- The Circle meets on a bi-weekly basis during the noon hour of each semester. A light lunch funded through the Student Services Department is provided at each gathering. The attendance varies from 10 to 30 participants with an average about 10 to 15.
- Topics and speakers have included:
 - Academic issues, concerns, and progress
 - Personal issues including relationship and legal concerns
 - Financial aid and the Financial Aid Director
 - Internships
 - Career and life planning
 - Tutoring
 - Cultural enrichment through the LCO Tribe's Spiritual Advisor
 - Networking opportunities with staff, faculty, and students
 - Encouragement through presentations by the College President, an LCO Tribal Council member, and the Dean of Student Services and Enrollment Management

LCOOCC STEM Recruitment and Retention Assets:

- *The Webs of Learning Scholarship Program* funded by the National Science Foundation, Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) to promote enrollment, retention, graduation, and continuing study at four-year programs in the STEM fields.
- The Internship Program is administered through the Sustainable Living Institute at Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College and is an initiative supported by the National Science Foundation – Tribal Colleges & Universities Program funding that provides for experiential learning opportunities, the advancement and integration of research and the provision of professional services to address community needs and planning efforts.

LCOOCC STEM Majors:

- Science
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Renewable Energy Associate Degree
- Renewable Energy Certificate
- Pre-Nursing