



Oregon State offers enhanced support services to help Native American students earn degrees online

By Tyler Hansen, Senior Writer and Communications Manager, OSU; originally posted May 21, 2019

CORVALLIS, Ore. – Oregon State University is increasing its outreach to Native American communities in Oregon and across the country by enabling tribal members to earn college degrees through OSU's nationally ranked online programs.

The new initiative is a partnership between Oregon State Ecampus – the university's renowned online education provider – and OSU's Office of Institutional Diversity to help Native Americans easily navigate the higher education landscape and assist them toward graduation.

"As a land grant institution, OSU is uniquely poised to provide a high-quality, accessible education for all," said Oregon State President Ed Ray. "We value and acknowledge our moral and ethical responsibility to Native Americans, who are the original stewards of this land, and are pleased to advance our mission of service by partnering in developing distance education programs that align with tribal goals."

Nationally, Native American and Alaska Native students had the lowest total college enrollment rate (19%) among all ethnic groups in 2016 according to a report published in February by the National Center for Education Statistics. Meanwhile, Native student enrollment fell by 28% nationwide from 2010 to 2016.

"We are committed to help reverse these trends," said Allison Davis-White Eyes, director of community diversity relations in OSU's Office of Institutional Diversity. "Oregon State hopes not only to raise awareness of online degree programs that are ideal for place-bound students in remote communities, but it is also offering a unique blend of student services to increase retention and degree completion rates."

Marleigh Perez, Ecampus director of student success, will serve as the primary point of contact for each Native student enrolled in a degree program online. Support staff also will include a dedicated Ecampus success coach, who will hold regular one-on-one success coaching appointments to help learners identify support resources, improve academic skills and address obstacles to success.

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Photos by Andy Taylor

Summer off to a good start

Above: Aviana Bokuro enjoys sliding in the water during activities hosted by the Tenas Illahee Childcare Center on June 14.

Below: Ayla Ben and Keionni Goodell are on their way to greet family and friends after graduating from Siletz Valley Early College Academy on June 1.

See photos of more Tribal graduates on pages 9-11.



Harjo is nation's 23rd poet laureate

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden announced on June 19 the appointment of Joy Harjo as the nation's 23rd Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry for 2019-2020.

Harjo will take up her duties in the fall, opening the library's annual literary season Sept. 19 with a reading of her work in the Coolidge Auditorium.

Harjo (Muscogee Creek Nation) is the first American Indian poet to serve in the. She succeeds Tracy K. Smith, who served two terms as laureate.

"Joy Harjo has championed the art of poetry – 'soul talk' as she calls it – for over four decades," Hayden said. "To her, poems are 'carriers of dreams, knowledge and wisdom,' and through them she tells an American story of tradition and loss, reckoning and myth-making. Her work powerfully connects us to the earth and the spiritual world with direct, inventive lyricism that helps us reimagine who we are."

Harjo currently lives in her hometown of Tulsa, Okla., and is the nation's first poet laureate from Oklahoma.

"What a tremendous honor it is to be named the U.S. poet laureate," Harjo said. "I share this honor with ancestors and teachers who inspired in me a love of poetry, who taught that words are powerful and can make change when understanding appears impossible, and how time and timelessness can live together within a poem. I count among these ancestors and teachers my Muscogee Creek people, the librarians who opened so many doors for all of us and the original poets of the indigenous Tribal nations of these lands who were joined by diverse peoples from nations all over the world to make this country and this country's poetry."

Harjo joins a long line of distinguished poets who have served in the position, including Juan Felipe Herrera, Charles Wright, Natasha Trethewey, Philip Levine, W.S. Merwin, Kay Ryan, Charles Simic, Donald Hall, Ted Kooser, Louise Glück, Billy Collins, Stanley Kunitz, Robert Pinsky, Robert Hass and Rita Dove.

Harjo was born in Tulsa on May 9, 1951, and is the author of eight books of poetry, including *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings* (W.W. Norton, 2015); *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* (W.W. Norton, 1994), which received the Oklahoma Book Arts Award; and *In Mad Love and War* (Wesleyan University Press, 1990), which received an American Book Award and the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Award.

Her next book of poems, *An American Sunrise*, will be published by W.W. Norton in fall 2019.

Harjo has also written a memoir, *Crazy Brave* (W.W. Norton, 2012), which won the 2013 PEN Center USA literary prize for creative nonfiction, as well as

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