

New UO program supports long-term success of American Indian students residing in Oregon

Home Flight Scholars Program includes financial aid, addresses student retention, graduation and professional development

EUGENE, Ore. – The University of Oregon recently launched the Home Flight Scholars Program. This program, available immediately to currently enrolled eligible undergraduate students, goes beyond breaking financial barriers for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) residents. The UO has built this program in consultation with the UO Native American Advisory Council, recognizing the cultural and academic challenges AI/AN students often experience.

Through a combination of federal, state and institutional grants, the Home Flight Scholars Program will cover full tuition and fee costs, create a new academic advisor position, enhance mentorship opportunities and develop a culture-rich program for new students to help them launch successful academic careers.

The program is available immediately to an estimated 150-175 self-identified AI/AN undergraduate students who are Oregon residents, contingent on eligibility.

“The university is dedicated to the success of Oregon’s American Indian/Alaska Native students,” said Interim UO President Patrick Phillips. “The Home Flight Scholars Program tackles the unique challenges these students face and prepares them to graduate with an education and the experience that empowers them to return home and make a positive impact in their communities and for their families.”

Three major factors affect the success of AI/AN students: financial hardships, academic difficulties and the lack of cultural connectedness. The Home Flight Scholars Program addresses these issues, incorporating wrap-around services that support student retention and graduation through complementary financial assistance, improved counseling and academic services, and professional development.

Once state and federal options have been exhausted, the UO will waive remaining tuition and fees for Oregon residents who are enrolled citizens of any of the 574 federally recognized Tribes.

The scholars program establishes a new AI/AN academic advisor position, provides faculty and peer mentorship opportunities and continues academic support for students living in the Kalapuya Ilihi residence hall through the Native American and Indigenous Studies – Academic Residential Community (NAIS ARC). Twenty-seven students enrolled this fall in the NAIS ARC, which provides a strong residential academic support system for students’ academic and social needs, and connections to community and cultural traditions.

The program incorporates a wide range of activities to help new students adjust to life on campus and in Eugene. Orientation programs will help students familiarize themselves to campus life and the classroom.

Professional development is an integral part of the UO experience and the Home Flight Scholars Program will provide a number of opportunities connected

to the students’ heritage. These include professional conferences, Tribal job and internship fairs, and the Future Stewards Program within graduate studies.

By providing these wrap-around support services, the UO aims to recruit Oregon’s top AI/AN scholars; expand the welcoming, inclusive and supportive community for these scholars; boost the retention and graduation rate of American Indian scholars above the national average; and expand the representation of Native American and Alaska Natives in the state’s workforce and in decision-making positions.

“With Home Flight, we can provide academic and social guidance that will compliment Tribal educational values. We hope that each graduate will consider returning to their home reservations and become future stewards and leaders within their communities,” said Jason Younker (Coquille), assistant vice president and advisor to the president on sovereignty and government-to-government relations.

“Today (Oct. 10) the University of Oregon takes the next step in removing financial barriers for AI/AN students. Most of us have grown up wondering whether we were going to be able to afford college, or whether going to college or staying home is our choice. But each of us has had ancestors that sacrificed and survived so that we could have the choices that we do today. The choice should be where to go to college, not if we can go to college.”

For more information, visit home-flight.uoregon.edu.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people.

Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their Indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, and they continue to make important contributions in their communities, at UO and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

Background

Nationally, 28.4 percent of American Indians live below poverty level, double the national average. Federal and state programs have made it feasible for American Indian scholars to attend colleges, gain degrees and overcome some of the employment barriers they face. The programs provide financial aid to assist with the cost of tuition, fees and sometimes housing.

Current data also show that less than half – 41 percent – of first-time, full-time American Indian students attending four-year institutions graduate within six years. More than half of the students – 53 percent – drop out of four-year colleges. Three major reasons these scholars drop out of college are financial hardships (38%), academic disqualification (28%) and don’t fit into social life at college (13%).

General Council Meeting

Saturday, Nov. 5, 2022 • 1 p.m. • Siletz, Oregon

Call to Order	Salem Casino Project
Invocation	Consent Decree Negotiations
Flag Salute	Declarations for Tribal Council
Roll Call	Tribal Member Concerns
Approval of Agenda	Chairman’s Report
Approval of Minutes	Announcements
	Adjourn

JOM FAMILIES

Follow the CTSI Education department on the CTSI Youth Facebook page and in your local area newsletter for monthly youth program information.



@CTSIYouth

Email your local Education Specialist to be added to our email list:

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2022-2023 CTSI College Information Nights

Sponsored by the Education Department **6PM VIA ZOOM**

- ★ **College Information Night II** 12/15/2022
 - College Applications: School selections & Application submission
 - Tribal & other types of financial aid
 - Guest Presenter: Learning Campus life
 - Guest Presenter: Learn about a Voc. training program
- ★ **College Information Night III** 02/16/2023
 - Re-cap from Night I & II
 - Overview of CTSI Student aid programs
 - (STHD Temporary Student Housing Assistance; 477 Self Sufficiency Classroom training; Adult Ed.; AVT; HE; CTSI Student Laptop Program; Education Committee Scholarships)
 - Guest Presenter: Learning Campus life
 - Guest Presenter: Learn about a Voc. training program
- ★ **College Information Night IV** 04/20/2023
 - Re-cap of CTSI Student aid programs
 - Deadline Reminders
 - Guest Presenter: Learning Campus life
 - Guest Presenter: Learn about a Voc. training program

Contact an Education Specialist to Sign Up!

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