

COCC graduates

The 2016 graduation ceremony at Central Oregon Community College included the Commence Speech, made this year by Mable Jackson (right). Among the graduates was Merlin Tom (below), 3.6 gpa and two degrees. The COCC Class of 2016 included 43 Native American students.



Photos courtesy Gina Ricketts/COCC



Leanne Wolfe at COCC Commencement (left); and (above) at the COCC Multicultural Ceremony the night before graduation: Mabel, COCC Native American Program Coordinator Gina Ricketts, and the Tribal Councilwoman and Culture and Heritage director Valerie Switzler (from left).

COCC student pursuing career in film

Amanda Henderson is just finishing her second year at Centra Oregon Community College. She plans to transfer to Portland State in the fall, where she'll major in Film.

Amanda graduated from Madras High in 2013, and thought that going immediately into the workforce would be boring. She loves to experience and learn new things, so higher education was a must.

"I've always been interested in film," Amanda was saying recently. "There is something amazing about bringing a person's imagination to life.

"A film is a story for everyone to see and experience with others. Sitting in a movie theater with complete strangers—yet you all have this moment in life where you are there to share a journey. Film has the power to change people's lives because, at its core, it is storytelling. I am a sucker for a good story."

Throughout her life Amanda has been told that many of her dreams were wrong, or that they would fail. But she persisted, and has gone farther in life by ignoring their opinions.

Still, there were times it seemed like those people were right. Eventually, she found more motivation and the stubbornness needed to ensure that her dreams would come true.

Her favorite quote is from actor Tom Hiddleston who said, "Never, ever, let anyone tell you what you can and can't do. Prove the cynics wrong. Pity them, for they have no imagination. The sky's the limit. Your sky. Your limit." Amanda lives by that mantra.

When asked if she had an idea for a first film, Amanda happily explained that multiple ideas are lined up. Her ideas ranged from exciting chronicles of superheroes to a story about brothers growing up on the road. Although Amanda has plenty more stories in mind, she plans to release them in film rather than confine her creativity to words on a page.

"College can happen, even if you take time off. College isn't that scary, and there's a 60-year-old in one of my classes, which is cool.

"You don't have to have your whole life figured out. Change majors if you don't feel like being a foreign relations major anymore...

be that Film Studies major or undeclared major. Join that Gamers club or Native American Student Union. Meeting other people with similar interests makes the experience less nerve racking. You will spend countless hours, weeks, months and years in college learning new things, so why not enjoy the time here."

At college, she says, there are important numbers to add to your phone are:

Campus Safety, just in case you need their help. Your advisor's number and email, so you can talk to them when scheduling classes comes around. And the Financial Aid office.

"Read the syllabus," Amanda says. "It is important to understand and handy to keep with you. College is a time to experience new things and to learn more about who you are as a person."

We expect to see Amanda on the Red Carpet in a few years—so get your autograph now!

Tribal scholarship requirements

To students plan going to college: Some of the tribal scholarship requirements include:

1. Apply for FAFSA.
2. Submit a copy of your high school diploma and official transcripts or GED with test scores.
3. Acceptance letter.
4. Tribal scholarship application is due July 1 annually.

For more information or assistance please stop by Higher Education Office, Room 306, Top floor of the Education building or call 541-553-3311.

STRIVE for Native students

Summer Training to Revive Indigenous Vision and Empowerment—STRIVE—is a residential summer program for Native American high school students in Central Oregon.

STRIVE is from July 15-17 at the COCC Bend Campus. Students take culturally appropriate classes from college pro-

fessors in a variety of subjects, and work with successful Native college students.

It is open to students with at least a 2.0 GPA in high school, incoming freshmen through seniors. It's free for all students. For information contact Gina Ricketts at COCC 541-318-3782.

Working toward new education agreement

The Confederated Tribes, BIA and school district 509-J are working this summer toward a new inter-agency education agreement. The agreement is a multi-year agreement that guides the district education services to the tribal youth.

The current agreement, reached in 2011, expires this summer, and the Education Committee, the community and Tribal Council have been developing a new proposal.

The proposed new agreement contains provisions with specific goals and measures of accomplishment, said Ardis Smith, teacher and Education Committee member. This is intended to address some vague terms of the existing agreement, she said.

The proposed new agreement, for instance, would provide for greater information sharing as to student performance, attendance, drop-out rates, expulsions and suspensions. Some other proposed changes:

The school district board, the Tribal Council, BIA agency superintendent, and invited guests would meet three times each year. The purpose of these meetings would be to evaluate how the agreement is working, address possible amendments, promote collaborative communication, and work toward a yearly joint education report.

The draft agreement suggests that the school district board hold their regular meeting one-third of the time in Warm Springs, as about a third of the district students are tribal members.

Proposed MOU

Here are some other provisions, as set out in the draft agreement:

The cultures and languages of the Confederated Tribes are unique, and the school district and the BIA have the responsibility to act together with the tribes to ensure the survival of these cultures and languages... The Confederated Tribes

possess a special status that recognizes distinct cultural and political rights, including the right to continue separate identities. The traditional languages of the Warm Springs, Wasco, and Paiute people are an integral part of their cultures and identities and form the basic medium for the transmission and thus survival of the tribe's cultures, literatures, histories, religious, political institutions and values.

There is convincing evidence that student achievement and performance, community and school pride and educational opportunity is clearly and directly tied to respect for, and support of the Native languages, and is needed for the full academic and human potential...

Curriculum: The school district and tribes will collaborate to create and implement k-12 historically accurate, culturally embedded, place-based, contemporary, and developmentally appropriate Native American curriculum, assessment tools, and instructional materials that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and state standards...

The input of tribal member parents, students and community will be encouraged through the tribes' Education Committee...

Native Club: The school district shall sponsor a Native Club for all students in grades 6-12 who desire to participate.

The district will provide data on minor and major referrals, expulsions, suspensions, attendance, number of students below, at, or exceeding benchmarks or grade-level quarterly to the tribal Education Committee...

The above are just some of the provisions in the proposed agreement. You can read the full text by contacting the Education Committee, 541-553-3290.

The next school district board meeting is coming up on Monday evening, June 27.

See page 8 for more school district discussion.



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