

MOU a boost for Grand Ronde Tribe

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

SEATTLE — The Grand Ronde Tribe joined 17 other Northwest Tribes in signing a Memo of Understanding with the University of Washington on Saturday Sept. 11, in the lobby of the Orson Bennett Johnson building on the university's campus.

Competing poorly for parking with thousands of tailgaters for the Washington/Syracuse football game that afternoon, Tribal and university representatives nevertheless took a giant step forward in building relations for the years ahead.

Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy said she has been pushing for this agreement since the Tribal leaders' summit held at the university in 2007.

"Time passes and you almost forget about it, and then, all of a sudden, there is this surprise," Kennedy said.

"The MOU adds to efforts we have already been involved with where we seek to be included among the Tribes with land claims in Washington state," said Tribal member David Lewis, who is manager of the Tribe's Cultural Resources Division.

"The Grand Ronde Tribe's claims to the Clackamas homelands to the north of the Columbia River are mentioned in the Willamette Valley treaty, but are as yet unspecified as to the exact area.

"In surveys of all ethnographic studies, Clackamas Chinook Tribes claim upriver tributaries at least 20 miles north of the Columbia River. We have some reports of Cascade Tribe claims perhaps 30 miles to the north at specific gathering sites.

"Our inclusion in the UW MOU is exactly appropriate."

"I am pleased that the University of Washington is taking a proactive approach in developing relationships with Tribal governments," said Tribal member and Education Division Manager April Campbell in an e-mail after the event.

"This MOU represents an interest in the performance and success of Native students. Over the years, the Tribe has developed several informal partnerships with other colleges and universities. It is my hope that we can use this relationship as a model for other post-secondary institutes."

The memo falls "within the protocol outlined in the Washington State Centennial Accord," according to the MOU. The 1989 accord seeks improved relationships be-



Photo by Ron Karten

Grand Ronde Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy signs a Memo of Understanding with the University of Washington on Sept. 11 in the lobby of the Orson Bennett Johnson building. The MOU seeks an "enhanced and sustained" government-to-government relationship between the Tribe and the University of Washington.

Grand Ronde Tribe reaches out to higher education across the state

Among formal partnerships are:

- Oregon Government-to-Government Indian Education Cluster Curriculum and Education Resources Committee member.
- University of Oregon Sapsikwala Advisory Board.
- Job Growers Health Care Grant Partner.
- OSAC – College Goal Oregon Site for Financial Aid.

Among Tribal associations are the following informal alliances:

- Chemeketa Community College: Student Financial Aid, Onsite Class Offerings, Native Club and student retention efforts.
- Oregon Indian Education Association: Training opportunities.
- Partners for working with students: Eastern Oregon University; George Fox University; Lane Community College; Lewis and Clark College; Linn-Benton Community College; Oregon Department of Education; Oregon Health Sciences University; Oregon Indian Coalition on Postsecondary Education; Oregon State University; Oregon Student Assistance Commission – scholarship reader.
- Oregon University System: Southern Oregon University; Western Oregon University; Willamette University; and Portland State University. ■

tween the state of Washington and federally recognized Tribes in the state.

The MOU seeks an "enhanced and sustained" government-to-government relationship between participating Tribes and the University of Washington; it formalizes a structure that "strengthens and advances the relationships between them, and enhances the UW's educational, research and service partnerships and programs involving Tribes."

The memo will ensure that an annual Tribal Leadership Summit

and quarterly Native American Advisory Board meetings will continue to be held in future years, regardless of changes in university administration.

Immediate priorities coming from the MOU include enhanced efforts to recruit, retain and successfully graduate more American Indian students, as well as recruiting and

retaining American Indian faculty and staff members.

The university already has embarked on the planning and building of "a longhouse-style facility on the campus as a facility that enhances the recruitment and success of American Indian students," and to "expand and integrate American Indian culture, knowledge and history into the academic curriculum."

The university longhouse project, "House of Knowledge," for Native American students is scheduled for a 2014 opening.

"What we do today guarantees that the longhouse will be built," said Sheila Edwards Lange, vice president for Minority Affairs and Diversity at the university.

"This is about the future, and making sure that our histories are told the right way."

Leonard Forsman, chair of the Suquamish Tribe on the Port Madison Indian Reservation, said that the Tribes and the university "have a lot of shared values," and that "we look forward to future opportunities."

"This is truly a turning point," said University of Washington Interim President Phyllis Wise. "This is a huge step in our increasing relationship. How much we have yet to learn!"

Research partnerships with Tribes have been increasing since the Native American Advisory Board was formed in 1996, said Lange.

Native American enrollment has increased dramatically in recent years. The freshman class, for example, grew from 46 students in 2003 to 104 in the 2010, according to Lange.

"But there is so much more to do," she added, "and this partnership that we are signing today will ensure continued work on these things."

Kennedy, who signed the MOU first, attended with Makah Tribal Elder Rose Jimmicum and Kennedy's granddaughter, Tribal member Synon Allen.

A sign of benefits to come, Allen, a high school senior, attended a program at the university for minority students last summer that paved the way for her to begin her studies there next year.

"I want to get into medicine," she said. "I want to be a pediatrician." ■

Elders holding salmon bake fundraiser Oct. 4

Tribal Elders will hold a traditional Indian Salmon Bake fundraiser from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Oct. 4, in the Tribal Community Center.

Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5.50 for children age 11 and younger.

For more information, contact Elder Activity Assistant Daniel Ham at 503-879-2233. ■

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