

Honors in Education 2014-15

By Leslie Riggs

Education Manager

It has been an incredible seven months. I started in this position in February 2015 and my feet have yet to touch the ground. It has been a flurry of activity that does not seem to be letting up anytime soon.

To say that I have enjoyed myself would be an understatement. I am surrounded by a group of individuals doing, in my opinion, some of the most important work of the Tribe. Education changes lives. It has most certainly changed mine for the better and I am grateful for all of the opportunities the Tribe affords for those who are here, those who came before and those who are yet to come.

I am not going to say too much. I am going to let the people doing the hard work speak for themselves. However, I want to take this opportunity to say hayu masi (many thanks) for all of the great work that has been done and how thankful I am to have such wonderful people working in Education.



Leslie Riggs

Part-Time College Program – 2015 Educational Opportunities Abound

By John Harp

An opportunity for lifelong learning – that is a primary objective of the Part-time College (PTC) program.

The PTC program is available to all Tribal members aged 18 or older, regardless of residence or financial need.

The PTC program supports Tribal members while they attend college-credit classes, usually on a part-time basis. The program also can be used by students pursuing graduate degrees.

Coursework is generally through regionally accredited non-profit community colleges and universities – providing an opportunity for personal and professional development that leads to self-sufficiency, economic independence and lifelong learning.

Recently, the maximum funding levels available in this program were increased. Using Tribal funds, this program supports participants with payment of tuition, fees, textbooks and required supplies.

Qualified applicants enrolled at a two-year college are eligible for up to \$1,600 per term or \$2,400 per semester. Undergraduate students at four-year colleges and universities are eligible for up to \$2,400 per term or \$3,600 per semester. Graduate students can receive up to \$3,200 per term or \$4,800 per semester.

For the 2014-15 academic school year, there were 365 student enrollments by 204 individual Tribal members living in 15 states. The PTC program had a successful completion rate in excess of 90 percent during the past year.

When eligible, many program participants will coordinate benefits with the Tribe's other Higher Education programs, and this coordination between Education Division programs helps ensure the most comprehensive support possible to participating Tribal members. Career Information Services and educational counseling and advising are available to all program participants.

Applications to the PTC program can be submitted at any time throughout the school year, but the completed application packet must be received no less than before the start of any school term.

For more information on the Part-Time College Program or to receive an application packet, please contact John Harp at 503-879-4591 or at 1-800-422-0232, ext. 4591, or by e-mail at John.Harp@grandronde.org.



John Harp

Family Services

The initial year of the Family Services program proved very successful. Modeled after the Self Enhancement Inc. organization, which helps at-risk youth reach their academic and personal potentials, the Family Services coordination team of Audra Sherwood and Elaine Lane-Raven sought to discover and eliminate barriers to students and families in local academic settings.

Family Services staff met families in their homes to identify what obstacles lay in their children's way of academic excellence. Relationships were built and parental input was the building block of the individual service plans that were put into action.

Staff was able to assist families in numerous ways, including:

- Acting as liaisons for IEP meetings;
- Advocating at local schools for specific student and/or family needs;
- Coordinating medical and mental health care for the child;
- Providing transportation services as needed;
- Providing training for family in areas of need and interest;
- Encouraging family participation in their child's education;
- Providing tutoring nights in conjunction with Youth Education and Delphian



Audra Sherwood

School, including a cultural component to each night with the help of Joe and Alice Martineau;

- Bringing educational activities into the home;
- Providing special needs equipment for school and home use;
- Ensuring families were aware of community services available to them;
- And creating a lending library of books and trainings.

Relationships with the local Willamina School District also were forged and reinforced through meetings, student observation in the classrooms, collaboration, and a strong and consistent presence within the school.

Highlights of partnering with school administration and staff included:

- Providing needed equipment for Life Skills classroom, including a commercial stove/oven for students to practice cooking skills;
- Working with Disabilities staff to assist in purchase of items to help Tribal students with special needs;
- Hosting training for WSD and Education staff to speak to specific needs, challenges and strategies for working with local youth;
- Helping WSD staff identify with parental points of view to aid in healthier discussions to support student success;
- Contributing to design a memorandum of understanding with the Sheridan School District;
- And two interactive literacy concerts at Willamina Elementary.

Specific needs of the community that were revealed in the assessment process also were vetted for solutions, including Elders and other relatives as parents, literacy deficiencies and poor school attendance.

By collaborating with Polk County Family & Community Outreach, the Family Services team have sent Elders to local trainings, put them in touch with financial, legal and emotional resources, and will be providing an eight-week training and support group beginning in October.

A partnership with StORytime Oregon brought significant changes into the Grand Ronde community in the area of literacy, including the installation of 14 Little Libraries around the Tribe, the production and giveaway of 350 books written in the Chinuk Wawa language and three local literacy concerts for children.

To date, the Little Libraries have been stocked with more than 2,300 books, most of which have been donations from the community. A waiting list has been created for those who did not receive the Chinuk Wawa books for when the subsequent order arrives and discussions of future books to be created are in the works.

Family Services staff members also have researched diligently to find a tracking system to aid Education staff in monitoring student attendance and progress. This system will allow staff to see trends and make interventions as necessary to ensure students receive the best services possible while increasing outcomes.

Goals for next year include analysis of tracking system data to ensure efforts are producing expected outcomes, strengthened cooperation in Sheridan schools, exploration of strategies to increase math scores for students and provision of services to more students and families.

By continuous work with students, families, schools and Tribal and outside partners, the Family Services program's ultimate objective is to bridge the gap between home and school while continuing to meet families where they are.

Full-Time College – Bachelor Degree

By Bryan Langley

The Full-Time College program provides funding for members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde who are attending college on a full-time basis in pursuit of a bachelor's degree. There are no residency requirements, so Tribal members across the country can access the program.

Tribal Council has generously supported the Higher Education program enabling us to increase the maximum funding limit to \$4,000 per term or \$6,000 per semester.

To be eligible for funding, students must have completed high school or have completed a GED, applied for federal financial aid by completing the FAFSA, been accepted for admission into an approved accredited institution, be an enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member and applied for at least one scholarship.

Students are required to meet a minimum academic standard of earning a 2.0 GPA and full-time status per term. If students meet the academic standard they are eligible to receive the funding each year up to a maximum of 15 terms.

Tribal funding is not intended to cover all cost for attending college. Members are encouraged to apply for other scholarship opportunities. Members can contact Mercedes Reeves for more information on scholarship opportunities.

Tribal members interested in the Bachelor Degree program should contact Bryan K. Langley, Higher Education manager, at 503-879-2276 or bryan.langley@grandronde.org for more information or to obtain an application.

Every year we have Tribal members who have completed their college degree and are ready to enter the workforce or move on to an advanced degree. This year was no different as we celebrated the accomplishments of 18 Tribal members who earned a bachelor's degrees.

Degrees earned ranged from business to accounting to social work to the arts. Tribal members earned degrees from colleges in Oregon, Washington, California and Iowa. The mission of education is simple, get educated, and that is just what our members are doing.



Elaine Lane-Raven



Bryan Langley