

Community Outreach Research and Education

SDSU remains committed to serving as a resource/partner to community projects at the partner tribal colleges. Our participation has included assistance with the water quality project at Sitting Bull College and offering GIS/GPS workshops during the summer science camp for Rosebud youth sponsored by Sinte Gleska University. We have also recently signed on to the special student recruitment and retention programs being initiated at Fort Berthold Community College this fall.

Capacity Building

SDSU's primary capacity building activity has been the establishment of a graduate cohort program for tribal college faculty and tribal natural resource professionals. To date, 18 students have enrolled in the program including three from NRE partner institutions along with seven other tribal college faculty. These students are making rapid progress to their MS and/or PhD's in biological sciences.

Since Summer, 2003, the following courses have been delivered to the cohort – through face-to-face intensive short-courses (both on-campus and out-state), interactive television, and Internet:

Lakota Environmental Management
Graduate Statistics
Introduction to Graduate Studies
Research Methods
Rural Community Development
Agroecology
Seminar in Biological Sciences

Scientific Writing
Program Development
Grassland Fire Ecology
Pedology
GIS/GPS Applications
Plant Systems: Ethnobotany
Bioethics

In addition to coursework, students have identified research interests, formed graduate committees and had their academic plans of study approved. Delivering these courses and forming these committees have engaged a much broader range of SDSU faculty in the work of the project. SDSU has split its NRE graduate assistantship between the three students enrolled from participating tribal colleges. Supplemental funding for the program, which helps support student scholarships and travel has come from a USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant, private donations, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Working with these students in this innovative educational approach has been an enriching, rewarding experience for everyone involved at SDSU.

Strengthening Partnerships

Hosting the mid-year project meeting in Brookings allowed more SDSU faculty to learn about the project, meet key players, and begin dialogues about collaboration. During late Spring, a team of eight SDSU faculty traveled to the Macy and Santee campuses of NICC—this helped strengthen relationships and created a broader awareness among collaborative partners. Site visits by faculty to SBC focused on Linda's graduate research, but also spurred further discussion regarding about NRE activities, including drawing on resource people in landscape architecture and turfgrass management for their new campus planting effort. Finally, the trip to Washington, DC, was a powerful, affirming, educational opportunity, that, along with moving toward project sustainability, also greatly strengthened relationships among attending partners.