



2008

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Tribal Leadership Summit

Memorandum of Understanding Between Washington State Regional Tribes and the University of Washington

The University of Washington intends to explore the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Washington state regional tribes in order to enhance our ability to communicate and build relationships with tribes. By setting out terms for mutual cooperation, we seek to enhance the UW's efforts in providing education, research and service to Native American communities and to promote better understanding of Native American issues.

In our discussion with tribal leaders at the 2008 UW Tribal Leadership Summit, we seek to identify the key elements of a memorandum of understanding. We also wish to explore the idea of working towards a multi-institution memorandum, an opportunity for Washington's six public universities (University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Washington University, Central Washington University, Evergreen State College, Lewis-Clark State College) to formalize a statewide partnership with the region's tribes. The UW would be privileged to initiate this effort.

Elements of a six-institution MOU might include:

- An official statement affirming the institutional understanding of tribal sovereignty
- A defined structure for university leadership/tribal leadership relationships
 - o In the case of the UW, an Annual Tribal Leadership Summit, a government-to-government meeting attended by elected tribal leaders and the UW president, in which priority initiatives are identified and discussed. Quarterly Native American Advisory Board meetings, attended by tribal staff and representatives, the UW Vice Provost for Diversity and relevant UW staff, would focus on addressing the priorities identified in the Summit.
- Agreed upon priorities that will better enable tribes and universities to focus on identifying and implementing solutions
 - o Recruitment, retention and graduation of Native American students
 - o Collaborative and practical research on tribally-identified issues
 - o Provide a campus environment that is welcoming and supportive of Native American faculty, staff, and students
 - o Engage tribes in the life of the institution where possible, in course instruction and in activities that enhance the student experience and student success
- Commitment of an appropriate level of resources and staffing to successfully implement the MOU

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Through the MOU, the UW and the tribes can strengthen our collective ability to successfully address issues of mutual concern. We can recognize our mutual concern and responsibility for the education and wellbeing of Native American students and tribal communities and cooperate for the benefit of the students and tribal communities. The MOU will institutionalize the relationship, ensuring that changes in leadership will not diminish the university's commitment to working with the tribes, or the tribes' commitment to working with the university.