

MSU IS INDIAN COUNTRY

A PROTOCOL GUIDE TO MONTANA TRIBES AND TRIBAL COLLEGES FOR MSU FACULTY AND STAFF

President's Message:

Montana State University serves Montana Indian Tribes, Tribal Colleges and communities in a spirit of partnership. Our faculty and staff are committed to mutual respect and trusting relationships as essential elements for successful delivery of our core mission of learning, research and service.

Community-Based Participatory Partnership will characterize our approach with Montana Tribes.

- *Community-Based*: MSU will respond to priorities and needs identified by Tribes, Tribal Colleges and Indian communities.
- *Participatory*: MSU will build tribal capacity and will involve tribal expertise and resources as part of all mutual efforts.
- *Partnership*: MSU will engage Tribes, Tribal Colleges and communities as full equals in all initiatives.

MSU embraces **cultural attunement** as our means of engaging in the cultural diversity within our Montana community. Cultural attunement is respectful communication, sensitivity to the dynamics of relationships within a culture, and respect for the values and beliefs of our cultures. It comes from the active and vigilant practice of maintaining cultural humility, and represents active attention and ongoing mindfulness.

I am grateful for the guidance given me by the MSU President's Council of Elders in matters of our service to our Native American communities and students. The Elders teach us much about respectful relationships among all people, and with Indian people especially.

Please join me in welcoming every new opportunity for MSU to engage with Montana Native Americans in productive, durable and mutually respectful service.

Waded Cruzado, President

Montana State University

A Note on Background...

MSU IS INDIAN COUNTRY reflects themes expressed consistently by Montana Tribal Council and Tribal College leaders. Montana State University agrees and affirms these as sound principles for meaningful partnerships between the University and our Tribal partners.

Bill Yellowtail, MSU Director of Tribal Partnerships, drafted this document for MSU President Waded Cruzado after having travelled throughout Montana in the autumn of 2011 to interview Tribal Council and Tribal College leaders for the purpose of assembling their protocols and preferences regarding relationships with MSU. Dr. Cruzado presented **MSU IS INDIAN COUNTRY** to her President's Council of Tribal Elders in November, 2011.

MSU IS INDIAN COUNTRY is intended to inform and guide MSU faculty and staff. It will be delivered through training opportunities on campus and will be readily available through MSU communications media.

As relationships are living entities, so too will this document evolve and improve through time and experience. We are grateful for the continued support and advice of Montana Indian people and communities.

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This guide is intended to assist MSU faculty and staff as we foster and facilitate working relationships in Montana Indian Country. It is intended to be much more than a directory; rather, this document will set a tone for true partnerships.

MSU-Tribal *Community-Based Participatory Partnership* respects preferences that are consistently expressed by tribal leadership, tribal colleges and Indian communities.

A. *The university must operate within priorities and needs that originate from Indian Country.*

At minimum, tribes and tribal colleges expect MSU faculty/staff to consult with them sufficiently prior to proposal-writing to ensure that any initiative affecting their communities can be measured against local priorities. Last-minute requests for tribal endorsement will not be favored.

Most tribes and tribal colleges have strategic plans which designate priorities for their communities and programs. Given an opportunity, tribal entities will become proactive in initiating invitations for MSU engagement.

B. *Indian communities' capacity to determine and execute their own futures is paramount.*

MSU should focus on outreach and research that will enhance, in a lasting way, the tribes' ability to plan, research, develop and administer their own programs.

C. *Tribal entities are ready for and interested in real partnerships rather than one-way relationships.*

MSU and tribal entities should develop agreements for articulation, research or service that define respective roles and expectations.

D. *Sustainable commitments are necessary in all initiatives.*

Tribes and the university will pursue initiatives that result in durable outcomes – and relationships. While the transient nature of some funding sources is a recognized reality, consideration must always be given to relationships that are dependable and lasting. Tribes and tribal colleges are less interested in short-term commitments that are characterized by sporadic visits at the convenience of MSU personnel.

E. *Tribal and/or tribal college research regulations are subject to strict compliance.*

Most of the tribes and/or tribal colleges have Institutional Review Boards. MSU researchers must be certain to understand and comply with each tribe's regulatory process. The MSU Office of Sponsored Programs has information regarding specific Montana tribal IRBs.

In addition, The Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council has an approved IRB that is applicable when there is not an applicable tribal IRB or when research involves more than one Montana tribe (see the section on the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council for more information).

F. *Tribes and tribal colleges require respect for their intellectual property.*

Ownership of MSU-sponsored research product involving tribal people or resources should be considered and resolved in agreement with tribal authorities before research commences. Matters like data collection, data repository, research publication, etc. must be specified. Joint authorship should be considered whenever possible.

G. *Tribes and tribal colleges expect equitable treatment in fiscal matters.*

Whenever possible, MSU grant development for initiatives involving Indian Country should give consideration to funding for tribal participation. Further, most tribes and/or tribal colleges have approved indirect cost rates which might be applicable to federal grants that involve tribal participation.

TRIBE-SPECIFIC DIRECTORY AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Each of the thirteen Montana tribes and seven tribal colleges has designated contact points for MSU-tribal partnerships. MSU personnel must understand that these preferences are local-specific, and are intended to streamline initial communications. Tribal/tribal college contact persons will direct inquiries to the appropriate local programs.

When working relationships between MSU program personnel and tribal/tribal college personnel have been established, then communication protocols may be pursued less formally, depending upon the nature of the partnership.

The tribal governments and tribal colleges of the seven Montana Indian reservations are listed here with internet addresses for direct access to each of their respective websites. MSU personnel are encouraged to consult these sources for more comprehensive background and current information than can be maintained in this document.

It is the nature of individual tribal governmental structures to be very dynamic and changeable. Therefore care must be taken that tribal leadership names are current when initiating communications – simply to avoid embarrassing diplomatic mistakes.

[Tribal-specific communication and information resource to be managed on MSU web.]

There are other valuable contacts and information resources available in Montana regarding tribal matters, besides direct tribal sites. For example, the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, and others each have very pertinent information. Links to those resources are included here.