

Subject: Summary of the BNAS Summer Session

Overview:

The Blackfoot Native American Studies (BNAS) summer session was successful, despite some logistical challenges related to space. These difficulties underscore the necessity for a dedicated space for our activities, a need which will be addressed by the new building currently under construction. This report provides a detailed account of our activities, the invaluable contributions of guest speakers, and the outcomes of our Professional Development (PD) sessions.

Session Details:

Our summer session commenced in the VO-AG room at BHS, moved to the choir room for one day, and concluded in our BNAS office. These relocations were necessary due to space constraints and the limited capacity of the Skylab. Despite these challenges, we maintained a strong focus on the Blackfoot language, covering numerous words and their pronunciations.

Professional Development:

We were honored to host two Blackfoot speakers, Reggie Crowshoe and William Big Bull, whose lectures were deeply inspiring and enriching for our staff. Their contributions included:

- Reggie Crowshoe: Delivered a lecture on "pissūtssksu"koō" (magical earth), explaining its significance as a term for a star nebula and its alignment with modern scientific concepts of stardust.
- William Big Bull: Discussed gravitational pulls and the moon's influence on tides, referred to in Blackfoot as "ō"paikimmii" (the jumping water). He also provided the Blackfoot name for our Skylab, "ai•koōkoō•si" (where it becomes night).

Both speakers shared their wisdom inside the Skylab, offering ancient Blackfoot interpretations of the skies, which was both enjoyable and humbling for all attendees. These sessions were recorded, and transcriptions will be completed when my contract resumes in late July.

Grant and Funding:

This session marked the conclusion of our obligations under the NAL grant written by Lea Whitford. The grant provided crucial support, enabling our department to work collaboratively and build cohesion. The time and opportunities afforded by this funding were critical to our success.

Assessment and Future Planning:

The BNAS assessment team continues to work diligently to provide the necessary analysis to guide our future endeavors. Their insights will be instrumental in identifying areas where our staff may require additional support and ensuring targeted, effective professional development.

Conclusion:

BNAS board report June 2024

The BNAS summer session highlighted the resilience and dedication of our team amidst logistical challenges. The imminent completion of our new building will greatly alleviate space-related stress and support our mission. We extend our gratitude to the Board of Trustees for their ongoing support and look forward to continuing our work in an enhanced environment.

Next Steps:

- Complete the transcription and editing of recordings from guest speaker sessions.
- Review and implement findings from the BNAS assessment team.
- Prepare for the move into the new BNAS building and plan for future sessions and events.

Thank you for your attention and continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hall
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