

The Native American Center of Excellence Consortium

The Native American Center of Excellence Consortium was established in 1993 in the Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center with funds provided by the U.S. Public Health Service. It is the only Native American Center located in a College of Dentistry and only one of four located in a College of Medicine in the United States.

In the spring of 2001, the OUHSC graduated eleven Native American dental students—the highest number to graduate from a dental school at one time in the history of dentistry.

In the spring of 2002, OUHSC graduated seventeen Native American medical students the highest number to graduate from a medical school at one time in the history of medicine.

In the spring of 2006, OUHSC will graduate the First Native American Twins in the history of medical schools in the United States.

The activities of the Center include:

- ◆ Increasing interest in dental and medical careers among Native American high school and college students.
- ◆ Preparing Native American students for successful careers in dentistry and medicine.
- ◆ Enrolling and graduating more Native American students at OUHSC Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine.
- ◆ Increasing awareness among all dental and medical students and other practitioners of the health needs of Native Americans.
- ◆ Encouraging Native Americans to pursue careers in higher education, resulting in increased numbers of Native Americans in faculty and administrative positions.
- ◆ Fostering research related to the health of Native Americans.

In recruitment NACOE goals are:

- ◆ Presentations at high schools, colleges and tribal events about career opportunities in dentistry and medicine.
- ◆ Career Day for Native American high school and college students at OUHSC Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine.
- ◆ Academic counseling and tutoring for Native American pre-dental and pre-medical students.
- ◆ Assistance for Native Americans preparing for Dental Admission Test (DAT) or the Medical Admission Test (MCAT).

In retention NACOE goals are:

- ◆ Foundation of the first chapter of the Society of American Indian Dental Students. Membership in the Association of Native American Medical Students.

- ◆ Tutoring and mentoring provided for Native American dental and medical students.
- ◆ Lecture series on Native American culture and health care issues.
- ◆ Externships at Indian Health Service and tribal clinics.

NACOE serves as role models:

- ◆ Native American administrative staff and Native American full-time faculty in the Colleges of Dentistry and Medicine.
- ◆ Linkage with Native American dental and medical practitioners who serve as role models for prospective students.

For more information contact Jerry Tahsequah (Comanche) Associate Director at the Centre. ◆

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