

News Release

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BHSU AND THE INDIAN UNIVERSITY OF NORTH AMERICA® AT CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL® LAUNCH WICHOZANI HEALTH AND WELLNESS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

SPEARFISH, S.D. – Black Hills State University (BHSU) and The Indian University of North America® (IUNA) at Crazy Horse Memorial® announced a new undergraduate certificate program in Wichozani Health and Wellness. This semester-long program, offered on-site at Crazy Horse Memorial®, will focus on public health and wellness education tailored for Indigenous communities, emphasizing traditional healing practices.

The certificate is designed for individuals interested in Indigenous tribal healthcare services and health-related programs. It promotes cultural sensitivity, an understanding of traditional healing methods, and addresses unique health challenges faced by Indigenous communities. “Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation is excited to implement the new Wichozani Health and Wellness program beginning Spring 2025 in partnership with Black Hills State University,” said Whitney Rencountre, Chief Executive Officer at Crazy Horse Memorial®. “This program will provide aspiring Indigenous students with tools, expanding their knowledge of health, to greater serve their communities.”

Notable courses of the program include “Native American Public Health,” “Ethnobotany of the Northern Plains,” and “Native Food Systems.” This certificate complements a wide array of majors and career paths in healthcare, biological sciences, nursing, American Indian Studies, and exercise sciences.

This initiative builds on the partnership established by the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation between BHSU and IUNA to offer higher education opportunities. It includes the 7TH GEN.® First-Year and Upper-Level Undergraduate Summer Programs, which support Native students through immersive cultural and educational experiences. These programs provide transferable credits to the college, university, or technical institute of the student’s choice. The third cohort of this program recently completed the summer programs and marked the second consecutive year of a 100% completion rate among enrolled students.

“This is another exciting piece of BHSU’s partnership with IUNA, and we are thrilled to contribute to academic programs that support Native students,” said Dr. Jon Kilpinen, provost at BHSU. “As we worked on ideas for a Spring certificate program, it was clear that a focus on Native health and wellness would fill a critical need. There are only a few certificate programs nationally that address Native health issues, and just a handful of those are intended specifically for undergraduate students.”

The first cohort of the Wichozani Health and Wellness Certificate Program is expected to start classes in Spring 2025.

CUTLINE: (Courtesy of Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation) The 2024 cohort of students and staff of the Black Hills State University and The Indian University of North America® (IUNA) at Crazy Horse Memorial® 7TH GEN.® summer program pose for a picture in front of the iconic monument.

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