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Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation
12151 Avenue of the Chiefs
Crazy Horse, SD 57730

Contact: Amanda Allcock
(605) 673-4681
amanda.allcock@crazyhorse.org

The “7th Gen” Summer Semester is Under Way at Crazy Horse Memorial’s The Indian University of North America

CRAZY HORSE, SD (July 26, 2020) — The Indian University of North America’s 7th Gen summer semester is underway at Crazy Horse Memorial, with 36 students enrolled. They represent 21 Native nations and 10 states, including South Dakota, California, Alaska, Utah, Michigan, New Mexico, Wyoming, Virginia, Colorado, and Oklahoma.

In partnership with the University of South Dakota, the 7th Gen program incorporates: College Success Strategies, taught by Professor Whitnee Pearce; Composition 1 taught by Professor Joshua Rudnik, Ph.D., who also is the university director; General Psychology, taught by Professor William Cockrell; Fundamentals of Speech, taught by Professor Golnesa AsheghAli; American Indian Art History, taught by Professor Andrew Dunehoo, who also serves as Crazy Horse Memorial’s museum curator and director of cultural affairs; a paid internship for all first-year students, taught by Professor Whitnee Pearce; and an experiential internship for the upper-level students, taught by Professor Whitney Rencountre, who also serves as the university’s associate director.

“7th Gen is all about improving the academic and life success of the students we serve,” said Laurie Becvar, Crazy Horse Memorial’s president and chief operating officer, who also oversees The Indian University of North America. “The overarching purpose is to improve college persistence and college graduation of Native students.”

Postsecondary degree attainment of Native Americans is 23 percent, which is lower than that of any other minority group. It’s also significantly lower than the national average of 47 percent.

“Striving to close that gap is a worthy goal,” Becvar said. “Data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau illustrates a direct correlation between obtaining a college degree and reduced poverty levels. Statistics show that individuals with a college degree earn more and have a higher annual income than individuals without a college degree.”

The median earnings for individuals who have a bachelor's degree is \$56,344, and those who have a graduate or professional degree have median earnings of \$75,495. For those who have a high school diploma or GED, that number drops to \$31,956.

Although 7th Gen students are encouraged to follow their dreams whether that includes a college degree or not, program advisors share the benefits of attaining a degree and provide critical support to students so they can move in that direction if they wish.

“Attaining a college degree is helpful to one's personal life, and it provides a foundation for being able to contribute to one's family and community,” Becvar said. “Many of our students are interested in giving back and serving in their home communities. 7th Gen provides a great pathway to that life.”

After completing the 7th Gen summer semester, students will continue their studies at colleges and universities throughout the country, including tribal colleges. No matter where they pursue their postsecondary education, The Indian University of North America’s team of professionals provides success coaching throughout the journey.

According to Becvar, the 7th Gen program and its continued success coaching make a real difference in the lives of participating students.

“Surveys reveal that approximately three-quarters of respondents who completed our 7th Gen program have graduated from their universities and colleges, or they remain enrolled in their degree programs,” she said. “This means the world to us, because education is a critical component of our mission here.”

Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation funds tuition, books, and the majority of food and lodging costs for those accepted into the 7th Gen summer program.

To learn more about Crazy Horse Memorial, to plan a visit, and for information about making a contribution, call (605) 673-4681 or visit crazyhorsememorial.org. To stay up to date on the latest news and events, follow the Crazy Horse Memorial on Facebook (/crazyhorsememorial), Twitter (@crazyhorsemem) and Instagram (@crazyhorsememorial); and follow The Indian University of North America on Facebook (/TheIndianUniversityofNorthAmerica) and Instagram (@IndianUniversityCrazyHorse).

The Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation is dedicated to protecting and preserving the culture, tradition, and living heritage of the North American Indians by continuing the progress on the world's largest sculptural undertaking, the memorial of Lakota leader Crazy Horse; providing educational and cultural programming to encourage harmony and reconciliation among all peoples and nations; acting as a repository for Native American artifacts, arts, and crafts through the Indian Museum of North America and the Native American Educational and Cultural Center; and establishing and operating the Indian University of North America and, when practical, a medical training center for American Indians.



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