



## Visiting Tribal Scholars Program Aims to Create a New Generation of Scientists

Moscow, ID - A new Visiting Tribal Scholars Program at the University of Idaho will connect Native American students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) with Indigenous scientific methodology providing high impact mentorship that will pave a way for native student success.

Rates of Native American students in the STEM colleges at the university have been slowly decreasing and efforts have been made to reverse this trend. The College of Natural Resources has the largest number of scholarly research projects being conducted by faculty and graduate students involving the regional Tribes and will serve as the host college for the program.

Dr. Dennis Becker, Dean of the College of Natural Resources, indicated that the concept for the Tribal Scholars Program has been in the works for a few years and started with discussions between Tribal leaders and faculty members during a Tribal Summit on Natural Resources. The focus was on identifying ways in which institutions of higher education could facilitate Indigenous student education, increase enrollment, and increase success rates of existing students. Tribal leaders and faculty identified the need for and interest in building capacity through collaboration, the need for understanding of and imbedding Indigenous ways of knowing, pedagogies, and values into the curriculum.

Building on these themes, the aim of the visiting scholars program is to increase completion rates for Native American students by providing culturally responsive support in the form of mentoring to Indigenous students, Indigenous curricula in the affiliated programs, and by providing direct linkages to regional tribes to engage in research or projects of mutual interest to the scholar and college. The intention is that visiting scholars might also model the value of STEM training for Indigenous students in regional communities to increase enrollment.

Dr. Dennis Becker, Dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho stated, "The regional Tribes are intimately involved in issues like salmon recovery, forest restoration and watershed management. By working with visiting scholars we can broaden our efforts to train professionals while providing a more culturally appropriate experience for tribal students. Focusing on projects and courses of mutual interest is a win-win and involves multiple tribes over time."

The Program, which receives partial seed support for visiting scholars from the Idaho Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), funded by the National Science Foundation, will implement activities aligned with Idaho EPSCoR's current research initiative, the GEM3 program ([www.idahogem3.org](http://www.idahogem3.org)).

Visiting scholars shall be recognized for their professional contributions in a natural resources or environmental science field and will be appointed to a term of up to two years, starting in fall 2020.

**For more information or to apply, please contact either of the following:**

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