Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced that the Bureau of Indian Education, Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) in Lawrence, Kan., and the Haskell Indian National Board of Regents have formed a partnership to develop a post secondary education learning model to improve the educational experience of Haskell students. HINU is one of two BIE-operated post secondary institutions of higher learning for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

"I am pleased to see the Bureau of Indian Education and the administration and Board of Regents of Haskell Indian Nations University collaborate on improving the quality of education for Haskell students," Echo Hawk said. "The information collected from these sessions will be used to develop a learning model for post secondary education and a strategic planning process that Haskell can use to offer current and potential students an enhanced learning experience that will serve themselves and Indian Country well."

The BIE, the university and the Haskell Board of Regents are currently holding a series of 12 dialogue and information-sharing sessions across Indian Country to develop such a model. The sessions, which began on June 26 and will continue until March 2010, are for Haskell students, their parents and alumni, as well as tribal leaders, educators, managers of tribal education programs, and others to share ideas and methods on improving American Indian post secondary education to meet the students' cultural and learning needs.

"These dialogue sessions are an effort by the BIE and Haskell Indian Nations University to connect directly with, and obtain input from, tribal leaders and other stakeholders who have shared in Haskell's rich heritage," said Acting BIE Director Kevin Skenandore. "They also offer a great opportunity to learn about Haskell as a post secondary institution of higher learning and to provide feedback on ways to enhance and enrich the learning experience for students."

Through the sessions, the BIE and HINU want to learn more about the successes and challenges experienced by Haskell students and alumni, and to understand how Haskell graduates have strengthened tribal government and economic development in Indian Country. They also are seeking recommendations on improving the students' quality of life and on degree offerings that are useful to tribes and to students for post-graduate employment, as well as identifying public and private sector entities to partner with HINU in support of its mission.

The first two sessions in the 2009-2010 schedule have already taken place. The remaining sessions (all times are local time) are:

Session 1: Western and Navajo Regions, June 26, 2009, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Phoenix, Ariz.

Session 2: Northwest Region, July 24, 2009, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Portland, Ore.

Session 3: Rocky Mountain Region, August 14, 2009, 9:00 a.m.-noon, Bureau of Indian Affairs building, 316 North 26th Street, 3rd Floor, Billings, Mont.

Session 4: Pacific Region, August 21, 2009, 9:00 a.m.-noon, Bureau of Indian Affairs building, 2800 Cottage Way, Large Conference Room W2820, Sacramento, Calif.

Session 5: Southern Plains and Eastern Oklahoma Regions, August 28, 2009, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Indian Health Service building, 701 Market Drive, Red Bud Conference Room, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Session 6: Haskell Indian Nations University, Sept. 11, 2009, times TBA, 155 Indian Avenue, Lawrence, Kan.

Session 7: Great Plains Region, September 18, 2009, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Oglala Lakota Community College, 127 Ollwood Drive, Room 133, Rapid City, S.D.

Session 8: Pacific Region, October 11-16, 2009, times and location TBA, Palm Springs, Calif.

Session 9: Midwest Region, October 23, 2009, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Hilton Milwaukee City Center, 509 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Mitchell Room, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Session 10: Eastern Region, October 25-29, 2009, times TBA, Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, 1 Seminole Way, Hollywood, Fla.

Session 11: Alaska Region, December 2, 2009, 9:00 a.m.-noon, Egan Civic and Convention Center, 555 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska

Session 12: Southwest and Navajo Regions, March 11, 2010, 1:00-4:00 p.m., location TBA, Albuquerque, N.M.

For more information about session dates, times and locations, visit the BIE website at http://enan.bia.edu/home.aspx or call BIE Education Specialist Chris Redman at (405) 605-6001.

Haskell Indian Nations University has served the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students for well over a century. Opened on September 1, 1884 as the United States Industrial Training School, with a focus on agricultural education in grades one through five, the school was known as Haskell Institute throughout Indian Country until 1970 when it was transformed into a two-year higher education institution and renamed Haskell Indian Junior College. In 1993, the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs approved changing the school's name to its current form.

Haskell has grown from its original 22 students in 1884 to an average enrollment today of over 1,000 students each semester from federally recognized tribes across the U.S. It offers baccalaureate programs in elementary teacher education, American Indian studies, business administration and environmental science, and integrates American Indian/Alaska Native culture into all of its curricula. Students may transfer to another baccalaureate degree-granting institution or go directly into the workforce. Haskell is celebrating its 125-year anniversary in 2009. For more information, visit www.haskell.edu.