

PITZER COLLEGE/WESTERNU'S NATIVE YOUTH TO COLLEGE PROGRAM:
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN INDIAN EDUCATION

By

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Pitzer College/WesternU's Native Youth to College Program:
Curriculum Development in Urban Indian Education

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College preparatory programs like Pitzer College/WesternU's Native Youth to College Program provide a unique experience for Native high school youth - weaving tether academics and culture for student success. However, there exists a gap in the literature on curriculum development of Native-serving programs as Mack et al, (2012), Tierney and Hagedorn (2002) and others have noticed. Using Brayboy's TribalCrit (2005) as the guiding theory, qualitative interviews of program staff and analysis of internal program documents are conducted. Nine core curricular elements –academics, culture, media studies, college preparation, health careers, intergenerational mentorship, STEM, life skills & telling your story - are found to have developed within the program, providing a blueprint which Native educators and others can use in developing curriculum for their own college preparatory programs.

Keywords: curriculum development, urban, education, college preparatory programs, American Indian, youth

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since 2009, twenty bright and enthusiastic Native high school students have come together in Southern California for two-weeks to prepare themselves for college admissions process. Run jointly by Pitzer College in Claremont, CA and Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, CA, Pitzer/WesternU's Native Youth to College Program is a college preparatory program designed to inspire Native American youth to graduate high school and strengthen their connection to traditional knowledge. A wide range of high-achieving students from all over the country, who identify as Indigenous, apply each summer. The Program's curriculum includes academic and creative writing, computer literacy, multidisciplinary arts workshops, classes on health sciences and Native American community wellness, marine science, and Chumash culture and history. The program's motto "*Tradition for Life, Education for the Future*," embodies the desired outcome of students who participate in the program - to be prepared for college while maintaining one's traditions and culture.

College preparation programs like the Native Youth to College Program provide an important service to Indigenous youth in the urban areas of Southern California. They bring together the students, their families, and the community to help these students achieve academically and foster cultural pride and knowledge. Such a holistic approach has found to be beneficial, as Cabrera and La Nasa have noted: "intervention strategies that involve the family, the student, the community, and the school are likely to facilitate [college] access" (as cited in Ng, Wolf-Wendel, & Lombardi, 2012, p. 673).

Academically, Native students have been making gains, although modest, in personal perceptions of academic achievement, college enrollment and graduation rates. A 2013 report by McKillip & Mackey of the College Board, entitled *College Access and Success Among High*

School Graduates Taking the SAT®: Native American Students, examined those trends among Native SAT cohorts in 2004 and 2010, a six year gap. The results are heartening: out of the 8,423 Native SAT takers in 2004, 51% attended college by 2005 and 54% of them graduated by 2010. An increase in 2010 shows 8, 436 Native testers, with 54% of them enrolled in college by 2011; their graduation rates were not included in the study results. Already, the 2010 cohort are high achievers as the evidence has proven: 63% aspired to graduate school after college, self-estimated mathematical ability in highest percent (72%) and above average (59%); AP exam achievements, with 88% taking three or more AP exams with scores of three and above; and SAT critical reading scores of 700-800 for 85% of the cohort and 600-690 scores for 78% of them. All of the 2010 cohort's above scores are, on average, 5% higher than the 2004 cohort's scores, a clear indicator of Native students' proven academic abilities and success.

Culturally relevant programming is a unique secondary goal of Native-focused college preparatory programs. Schweigman, Soto, Wright and Unger (2011) found that being introduced to cultural activities such as powwows, sweat lodge, drum group and roundhouse dance has helped urban Native youth in California combating culture loss and assist in the development of a positive cultural identity, especially when compared to their counterparts who did not participate. Developing a positive cultural identity has been found to bring many important benefits for Native American youth. Jones and Galliger (2007) and Pittinger (1998) found that having a strong sense of identity is linked to higher self-esteem, Weaver (1999) found that cultural identity can alleviate social and health problems, and Galliger, Jones, & Dahl (2011) found that it can even serve as a source of resiliency (as cited in Schweigman, Soto Wright & Under, 2011).

Emphasis has been placed on the positive gains made by Native students instead of the view most commonly taken by the existing literature, news reports, and research that focuses on the ‘educational crisis’ that Native American youth are facing. They are actively promoting a deficit view of access and retention at all educational levels, such as Faircloth and Tippeconnic’s 2010 report, *The Dropout/Graduation Rate Crisis Among American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Failure to Respond Places the Future of Native Peoples at Risk*.¹ When combined with the litany of other, negative, contributing factors that affect Native educational access – poverty levels, student learning deficiencies, and violence and/or substance abuse against a student and/or community – it continues the propagation of Natives-as-unsuccessful narrative. This is not to make light of the challenges that cause Native youth to stumble in their educational goals. But when the overarching narrative is one of failure, it leaves no room for the success stories of programs, families, communities, schools, and individuals who have overcome difficulties to successfully attain and complete their educational goals.

Thesis Statement

The Native Youth to College Program has found success by positively impacting Native high school students through academic preparation, intergenerational mentorship, connection to traditional culture, personal development, incorporation of community, and college preparedness. The program model has been adopted by other Native-focused college preparatory programs such as the University of California Riverside’s *Gathering of the Tribes Summer Residential Program*, Cal Poly Pomona’s *Native American Youth Leadership Summer Pipeline to College Program*, and the San Diego intertribal *Native Like Water*. Despite the wealth of existing programs, little is known regarding specific aspects of program curriculum and

¹ See NIEA (2015) and Executive Office of the President (2014) for recent discussion.

development in Native-focused college preparatory programs. This research study seeks to understand the development of, and themes within, the Native Youth to College Program curriculum. Qualitative data from interviews and analysis of 2009 - 2015 programming will shed light on how the program has developed and the ways in which it positively affects student academic, emotional, and mental development.

Purpose

As noted, successful Native focused programs combine interdisciplinary and intercultural program for holistic student success. While these goals are usually explicitly stated in program literature, actual knowledge of specific curricular activities contributing to these program outcomes are left up to speculation. Data on their programming, history, development, and future are usually kept as internal information and not released. Nor is there much data on the specific type of program like the Native Youth to College Program - dual focused, urban, intercultural, and inter-tribal. This gap in the literature is noticed by many researchers within the fields of education, urban studies, and Native American studies. The purpose of this research is twofold: first, this research seeks to fill the aforementioned gap in the literature, and secondly, is a fulfillment of community responsive research.

Situating the Researcher

My research is intimately tied to the Native Youth to College Program, and the relationships with the Native community, land, and people I have cultivated. My journey with the Program began in 2012 as an undergraduate student at Scripps College majoring in Political Science. My thesis was on the White House Tribal Nations Conferences, a topic new to me. Interviews with local tribal leaders on their perspectives of the conferences was difficult due to being originally from the U.S. Virgin Islands and having no familiarity or interactions with the

local Native community of the Inland Empire. Discovery of the Community Engagement Center at Pitzer College led me to Scott Scoggins, Native Liaison and Director of the Program. He not only helped me obtain interviews with a local tribal leader but also offered me a job working on the program upon graduation. Working with Scott on the Program that summer was my first experience with 'ceremony,' interacting with Elders, and meeting Native youth.

As summer turned into fall, I learned about, and worked with unrecognized Tribal Nations, Casino Tribes, Tribal Nations/Elders across borders, urban Native youth, Elders, and tribal politics. Since summer 2012, my work with the Native Youth to College Program has grown and developed. This research is not only for myself but to further the development and growth of the program; the topic springs from a need within the Program and the broader educational community focused on Native American youth in the area.

Research Questions

Given the diversity of the Native Youth to College Program curriculum each summer, the overarching research question is how and why the program curriculum has developed over the years and if there are any common elements that bind the curricula together. An examination of program curricula also brings some secondary questions to light. The questions of what curriculum aspects work and what doesn't are simple but critical concepts in better understanding the direction of curriculum development. Interviews of key staff revealed how the curriculum of a session or sessions was determined by the different actors, whether the mentors, students, or the staff themselves. Asking about curriculum changes helped to identify whether certain factors or sources were influential in deciding the programming for a particular year. This is exemplified by the question of how Native American youth, both urban and reservation, perceive the weaving together of Indigenous and Western Science.

Significance

This research will help fill in the specific lack of data on curriculum development in Native-focused college preparatory programs within American Indian, urban, and educational studies by providing a snapshot of the curriculum of the Native Youth to College Program over seven years. This study benefits the Native and educational communities by illuminating pre-college options available to Native youth in the Los Angeles area, data which is sorely needed but unknown due to little to no research by federal, state, and local agencies. A better understanding of the role and characteristics of effective pre college preparation programs will come to light, thus providing information to other stakeholders who are interested in improving or creating similar Native-focused college preparatory programs in the local area and across the nation.

Native students themselves will gain further insight into why education combined with their culture is important to pursue, have pride in their traditional culture(s) after discovering how Indigenous knowledge is equal to Western knowledge, and even possible future career paths that represent who they are holistically. This research will generate positive press on the Pipeline Program and its partners, a benefit that could lead to wider exposure, new student enrollment, and funding opportunities.

Definition of Terms

Native American/Indigenous/American Indian/Native. The following terms, ‘Native American,’ ‘Indigenous,’ ‘American Indian,’ and ‘Native’ all have different meanings associated with them, the use of any or all creating much discussion within and out of Indian Country.²

² See <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/21/blackhorse-do-you-prefer-native-american-or-american-indian-6-prominent-voices-respond> for a more in-depth conversation on preferred terms.

Some of the terms are rooted in being politically correct, colonization, racism, the activist movements of the 50's and 60's, geography, and even generational preference. Use of one over the other leads to restrictive binaries of 'federally recognized vs. unrecognized' or 'NA/AI vs. other Indigenous.' Given the urban, mixed, population that the Program serves, it is critical to be open and inclusive. The terms 'Indigenous,' and "Native' are used the most given the author's familiarity with the two but 'American Indian,' or 'Native American,' are also used interchangeably in this research, allowing for a wide range of identities, stories, and situations to be included.

College preparatory program. Similarly, there exists various terms to describe programs that help students succeed in academics or the college admissions process outside of the formal education system: College preparatory, academic preparatory, pre-college outreach, transition, summer bridge, and informal science education (ISE), & pipeline to college. The term 'college preparatory (prep)' will be mainly used in this paper following the program's history of using this word in promotional material and the like.

Science - indigenous and western. Science is an important aspect of the Native Youth to College Program curriculum. However, there is much confusion over the exact definition and meanings of Science, whether Indigenous or Western. An exact definition and comparison of the two terms won't be explored in this paper. Science, whether coming from a Western and/or Indigenous background, will be defined under the acronym STEM - Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics. Subcategories, such as marine science, biology, geology, etc, are included under the general header of 'science.'

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development itself, whether in a summer bridge program or a university course of study, is a topic constantly under scrutiny as society changes. A concept or term taught in schools ten years ago is now looked as outdated and non-politically correct, prompting an updating of educational curriculum. This process is noted by McKinley and Waiti (1995), as they write on the ever-evolving Maori education in New Zealand:

Contestation and negotiation constantly occur during the curriculum process with respect to what content to include; which groups are singled out to be addressed in the document (indeed, the act of singling out groups is political in itself); how the document should be written, that is, the implied teaching and learning models; which groups and individuals get an input; at what level of development does that input occur-the list goes on (as cited in Bell, 2005, p. 180).

In the last two decades, the contestation and negotiation within the curriculum process has increasingly involved minority and/or underrepresented groups looking to have their stories and voices properly included in textbooks and schools. Educators too have realized the growing divide between Euro-American teachers and the increasing number of minority and ethnically diverse students that they teach (Gay and Howard, 2001), leading to the incorporation of different inclusive approaches, such as multiculturalism. Unprepared educators and teachers have scrambled to adjust to the new educational reality of our postmodern era, and accordingly, the research has responded to the need. Numerous guides and handbooks have been produced on the

subject of curriculum development ‘in the new global age’ (Henderson and Colleagues, 2014; Slattery, 2013).

Indigenous Peoples & Curriculum

Although this push for multiculturalism in educational curricula comes from a good place, the reality is that secondary education and universities have hardly incorporated the perspectives of minority and underrepresented groups like Indigenous peoples, or worse, resort to tokenism. When Native issues appear on the curriculum, the time spent on them is limited and information is usually misrepresentative. A particularly extreme example is the Study of the Early California Missions in the State of California's 4th Grade Curriculum. While meant to educate California 4th graders about the Mission Period from all sides, the curriculum has come under fire for romanticizing the Mission Era without critical discussion or accurate facts (Miranda, 2015).

In other instances, Native Americans are looked at as one cohesive group without distinction instead of recognizing and teaching unique tribal nations with their own histories, cultures, and traditions. Such miseducation comes to no surprise, as minority groups like Native Americans are victims of normalized tokenism within the educational system in the United States, as Pitre, Allen, and Pitre (2014) succinctly noted:

The tokenism concept, a practice of making a token effort to minorities, can be found in school policies, practices, and the curriculum. Many of the school’s efforts towards multicultural education are what Banks calls additive approaches that do not address the systemic issues that have made schools and society unequal.

Cultural diversity seems to be nothing more than a token effort: a bulletin board display of famous Black Americans during Black History Month, a morning

message about Hispanic Heritage Month or Native American History Month, or the reading of a Hanukkah or a Kwanzaa book during religious holidays (p. 19).

Indigenous peoples not only have to battle outdated and incorrect preconceptions of Native peoples and Nations, whether their own or others, but when their students participate in the educational process, they often have to leave behind their traditional cultures and knowledge. The exclusion of traditional knowledge is one more factor that contributes to many Indigenous youth not doing well in mainstream education. Much of this underperformance can be traced back to the historical assimilative educational practices that the United States has forced upon Native peoples.³ Consequently, an active history of distrust and trauma surrounding formal education exists within Native communities, and rightly so.

Indigenizing the Academy

Vine Deloria and Daniel Wildcat (2001), in *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, actively call for an Indigenizing of the academy, defined as “the act of making our educational philosophy, pedagogy and system our own, making the effort to explore ways of knowledge and systems of knowledge that have actively been repressed for five centuries” (p. vii). No longer will Native youth have to forget their languages and traditional teachings at the schoolroom door but actively integrate and draw upon this knowledge. Deloria and Wildcat’s call has eagerly been taken up by Indigenous/Native communities, educators, schools, and their allies, a making of space for Indigenous epistemology, activism, and scholarship within spaces that have traditionally repressed and rejected them (Windchief & Joseph, 2015).

With this Indigenizing of the academy comes increased scrutiny of, and implementation, of Indigenous curriculum within the classroom for better understanding of Indigenous epistemologies and knowing within an educational setting. Note that this does not include

³ See Deyhle and Swisher (1997) and Szasz (1999) for discussion of history.

curriculum meant to replace colonialist and/or insensitive curriculum towards Indigenous peoples. The available research is scarce, as tribal nations are just starting to work on making complete Indigenous curriculums for their nation's youth: Lacourt, Clair, Kokotailo, Wilson & Chewning (2005), for example, have developed an oral history curriculum for Native American high school youth. research focused on incorporating an aspect of Native culture - i.e. Native literature or history - into the preexisting Western curriculum. Rather, the focus is on the complete Indigenization of curriculum meant to replace colonialist and/or insensitive curriculum towards Indigenous peoples.

So far, the previous review of the literature has focused upon curriculum development within Pre-K - 12th and higher education systems, not college preparatory programs. College preparatory programs, also known as bridge programs, summer preparatory programs, and pipeline programs, hold a special place within education, for they consistently focus on helping fulfill student learning gaps or enhancing subject knowledge when the regular educational system has been unable to do so (Contreras, 2011; Gandara and Bial, 2001). Numerous articles exist on the subject, given that it is one of the most utilized strategies in increasing underrepresented student enrollment and success in the transition from high school to postsecondary education (Strayhorn, 2011; Swail & Perna, 2002).

Different typologies have been developed to classify these transition programs (Bragg et al., 2006 & Valentine et al., 2009). Valentine et al. (2009) found that preparatory programs fall into two main categories: whether a program is supportive, preparatory, or both. Universities in particular have been major proponents of college preparatory programs, for they allow “universities to re-engage with communities using collaborative practices to better align [their]

activities with community needs,” such as discipline-focused programs in a variety of fields (Edwards, 2010, p. 1).

The literature has also focused on college preparatory efforts on different underserved groups, such as African-Americans (Slade, Eatmon, Staley & Dixon, 2015), Latinos (Delgado-Gaitan, 2012), & GED students (Long and Mullin, 2014). Research on Native American youth in college preparatory programs is relatively new, ranging from gifted Native students (Gentry & Fugate, 2012) to Hopi and Navajo youth (Gilbert, 2000). Given that Native American youth are one of the minority groups consistently underrepresented in higher education - 39% of AI/AN students who started in 2005 as first-time, full-time students at 4-year institutions graduated, compared to 60% of White students, Indigenous students have the most need for college preparatory programs with Indigenized curriculums (Strayhorn, 2011).

Gap Within the Literature

The gap in the literature is twofold: there is little research on specific curricular details within college preparation programs *and* within Native-focused programs specifically. Tierney & Hagedorn (2002) focused on the general data deficiency in regards to program outcomes: “it is surprising how little empirical data exists about program effectiveness in terms of college participation rates or strategies that make the most difference” (Coles, 1993 as cited in Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002, p. 3.) Awareness of this lack of data is echoed by Strayhorn (2011), who found similar results:

To date, no empirical studies have focused exclusively on the effect of [Summer Bridge Programs], SBPs, on historically underrepresented college students’ academic and social outcomes” and that “more information is needed about specific programmatic elements that are likely to yield the greatest benefits... (p. 144-145).

Mack et al., (2012) in their research on Native-focused Informal science education programs, noted that; “there is little research documenting how [informal science education (ISE)] programs are being developed and the ways in which culture and Western science are incorporated into the activities” (p. 1). As of now, no research study has been found focusing on the scarcity of data within a Native-serving college preparatory program. It is not that there aren’t enough Native-focused college preparatory programs (the aforementioned *College Horizons*, *Native Like Water*, *Gathering of the Tribal Nations Summer Program*) but that in-depth case studies on such programs haven’t been carried out yet.

Clues to Native Curricula Development

Interestingly, the literature has left subtle clues as to what curricular aspects should be present for a successful Native focused program. After all, Indigenous serving pre-college programs are distinct in their composition and structure, for they must incorporate the unique reality of being Indigenous into their programming. Villalpando and Solorzano (2005) focused on a general recipe for impactful and successful preparatory college programs, with the following three aspects in common: 1. A focus on cultural wealth and academic skills development; 2. Programs tailored to meet students’ needs; and 3. College preparation programs that provide a diverse array of components (p. 26-27). Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar (2003) make similar general claims, noting that pre-college preparatory programs should focus on strong academic preparation, emphasis on the culture of the student, engage families, start earlier the better (9th/8th grade), and provide knowledgeable counselors to mentor students (p. 26-28).

A group of international Indigenous educators interviewed by Benham and Cooper (2000) in *Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: in our Mother's Voice* have provided the most revealing set of clues yet:

Educational endeavors must be interdisciplinary, intercultural, and involve multiple generations from the community. Furthermore, the survival of an educational initiative would also require the involvement of elders, diverse internal and external Native and non-Native agencies, the support of sustained research and development of Native epistemology and pedagogy, and linkages with other Native educational projects. (p.17)

The involvement of Elders, Native pedagogy, and epistemologies touches upon an important facet that should be present – culture.

It is not enough that summer programs serve Indigenous students academically but must cater to their cultural side as well. As Jun & Colyar (2002) found, the incorporation of a student's culture, known as cultural integrity, into the classroom to be positive: the affirmation of students' cultural identities by both themselves and their teachers as a positive and "critical ingredient for achieving success" (as cited in Villalpando & Solorzano, 2005, 20). These clues, while scattered, allow for a working understanding of what elements should be included in an Indigenous-serving college preparatory program.

Guiding Theory

The guiding theory to be used is Bryan Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Theory (TribalCrit). With its roots in a broad array of existing theories, such as Critical Race Theory, American Indian Studies, and Political/Legal Theory, Brayboy's TribalCrit "provides a way to address the complicated relationship between American Indians and the United States federal government and begin to make sense of American Indian's liminality as both racial and legal/political groups and individuals" (p. 425). There are nine basic tenets of TribalCrit, which will briefly be outlined below:

1. Colonization is endemic to society
2. U.S. policies towards Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White Supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous people occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized nature of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on a new meaning when examined through Indigenous lenses.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies towards Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change (p. 430-431).

TribalCrit was specifically chosen over other Native educational theories due to its inclusiveness. Parallels can be drawn between 'Indigenous' in TribalCrit and the participating students and Elders in the Native Youth to College Program; the guiding theory of this research project should be just as diverse as the Program itself. Use of stories as theory and legitimate data in TribalCrit is equally important for much of the knowledge taught and encouraged in academia. An Indigenizing of the academy ties into the ninth facet of TribalCrit - that theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. While new scholarship on Native education is important and informative, it still cannot provide the same understanding and critical social consciousness needed by Indigenous scholars. An

Indigenous theory that recognizes that the connection between academia and the community must be nourished is key.

Lastly, TribalCrit specifically addresses the topic of Indigenous education in depth. TribalCrit rightly recognizes the assimilationist education in mainstream schools and encourages the learning of both Indigenous and Western assimilationist education for maximum student success:

While Indigenous ways of knowing and ‘‘book smarts’ are often seen as diametrically opposed, these different forms of knowledge do not necessarily need to be in conflict . . . Rather, they complement each other in powerful ways. This blending of knowledge—academic and cultural ones—creates knowledge that is key to survival (p. 435).

Education within TribalCrit complicates the struggles of Indigenous students walking in two worlds, for better or worse.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study used qualitative methodology to analyze the 2009 -2015 Native Youth to College Program curriculum. Interviews were conducted with past program staff to explore perceptions of specific programming while internal program documents were analyzed for common curricular themes.

Internal Program Documents

A wealth of information on program curriculum throughout the years was found within internal program documents - a multi-page report of the 2009-2012 program sessions and separate reports for the 2013, 2014, and 2015 sessions. These reports detailed every aspect of each session - student info, curriculum, budget, challenges, successes, and staff/Elders/speakers list. However, these documents are internal and not available outside of the program to the public so my own participation within the program proved invaluable in accessing such necessary information.

Each year's report was carefully combed through for a complete list of all curriculum activities that happened. Once compiled, that data was further broken down into like categories. A chart detailing the different programmatic categories and their individual classes, workshops, and other activities are provided for each session. Finally, a set of overarching curricular themes was picked out from all of the analyzed data.

Interviews

Three interviews were conducted both over Skype/phone and via email. The change to email was instituted at the end of the research period due to time concerns. The two interviews took approximately 1.5 hours to complete each and then were recorded and then transcribed. In

both situations, interviewees were asked a predetermined set of questions on the Native Youth to College Program curriculum, as well as any questions that arose during the interview. Subjects interviewed were staff of the Native Youth to College Program from the two most recent sessions (2014-2015). They were chosen due to the recent nature of the sessions, their length of association with the Program, and leadership position held. Only one participant held a higher-level position than the others. All interviewees are Native American, an important incorporation given program's roots in, and reflection of, the local Native community.

The goal of the interviews was to gather further information on curriculum choices that the internal program documents didn't elaborate on. The interview questions, designed by this researcher, primarily focused on the interviewee's perceptions - what aspects worked, what didn't, and what course they would want to add (see Appendix). Each answer to the above questions were carefully tabulated and grouped into separate categories, with similar answers marked in ascending numerical order. Each similar and different response helped contextualize the program curriculum from different views and backgrounds.

The small number of interviews - three - does provide a limited view of the program curriculum development. However, the interview number also reflects the small size of the program itself. Furthermore, the specificity of the interviewees also allows for a specific exploration of program staff and their role in a college preparatory program for Native American youth. It also reflects the diversity found within program participants, whether coming from urban and rural, reservation and non-reservation, male or female. Lastly, this work can be viewed on a macro level as a growing trend in urban and Native education in the U.S., zooming in particularly in the Southern California area. Conversely, a micro view would be of Native people in staff positions in education and/or in college prep programs in Native Southern California.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

Interviews

The main thrust of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of program curriculum weaknesses and strengths from the staff of the Native Youth to College Program. Interview results focused on the answers to three questions – 1. *What do you consider to be the 3 strongest aspects of program curriculum and why?* ; 2. *What do you consider to be the 3 weakest aspects of program curriculum and why?;* and 3. *Every year, the Pipeline Program curriculum changes, even if slightly. Please comment on your perceptions of these changes.*

Curricular Strengths and Weaknesses

Curriculum strengths. While there were different answers from all three subjects interviewed, they unanimously agreed that culture was one of the strongest curricular aspects of the program (Figure 1). Two of the interviewees considered academics to be one of the strongest aspects. The rest of the opinions were divided on different subjects – blogging, college applications, mentors, and writing (*Figure 1*).

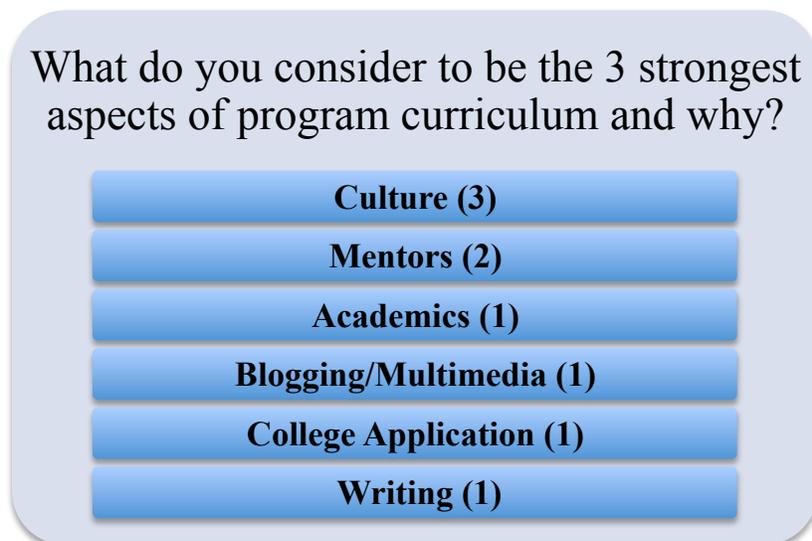


Figure 1: Native Youth to College Interview – Curriculum Strengths

1. Culture. The incorporation of culture brought out strong, positive, feelings within all interviewees. Elders are seen as the backbone of the cultural programming, as one interviewee pointed out: “This curriculum, the cultural part, has been built by [the Elders]. Following protocols and traditions is tricky in Indian Country where there are so many protocols and so many different things that we need to pay attention to” (Subject A, personal communication, December 29, 2015). Given that many of the Program students are urban and not always necessarily connected to their home cultures, the opportunity to learn protocols and traditions is important. For another interviewee, it was more personal:

When I first came to [the Native Youth to College Program] I had never made a drum before. That first year I came as a mentor, I was able to make a drum, and it was one of the most beautiful things I’ve ever done . . . And not just the drum but the other workshops that we do, a lot of the teachings that were shared, I had never heard of before. In that sense, culture is one of the most important aspects (Subject B, personal communication, January 18, 2016).

Weaknesses

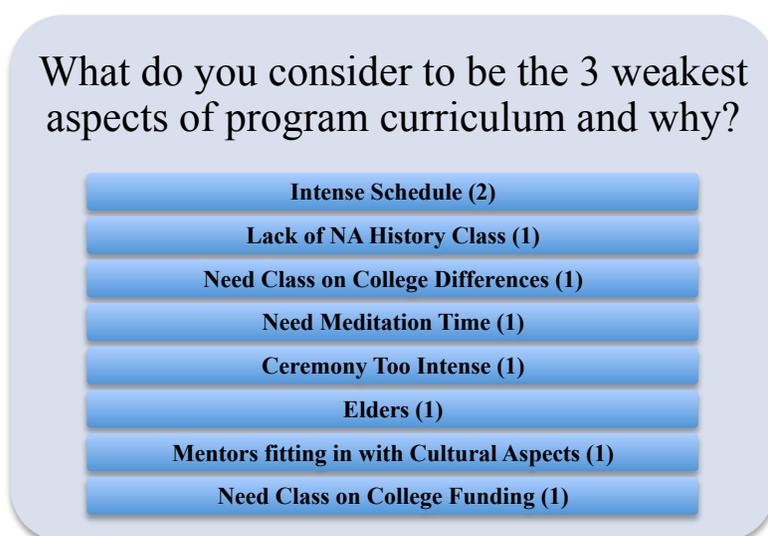


Figure 2: Native Youth to College Interview – Curriculum Weaknesses

Divided opinion continued in the second question: *What do you consider to be the 3 weakest aspects of program curriculum and why?* (Figure 1) Many topics were brought up, mainly focused on academic subjects that could be included to enhance existing curriculum but weren't present. The exception was the element of ceremony, which was described as "too intense" (Subject B, personal communication, January 18, 2016).

Perceptions of Program Changes

The third question on program changes was important but also more limited in nature. It required that the interviewee be a participant of the program for two years or more to be able to answer, with only two of the three interviewees qualifying. Both interviewees perceived programmatic changes to be quite positive. One mentioned that change meant a different program each year, which was especially good for returning students, thus allowing them to experience a 'new' program each time. The other interviewee saw change in the program as a chance to improve things:

We're starting to get to that routine that we need. We've learned that we have to adapt.

We've learned how to adapt and we have something good now. We have a good combination of tradition and academics. . . We have to be flexible. . (Subject A, personal communication, December 29, 2015).

Interview Analysis

A brief analysis of the interviews reveals mostly interviewee's personal perceptions on aspects of the program curriculum. Their responses were based on what aspects touched them emotionally, which aspects helped them grow personally. The small number (three) doesn't allow for an in-depth analysis of the interviews, particularly how these staff members reacted to or navigated micro aspects of the curriculum (i.e. how did staff react to critical pedagogy in the

classroom). This is an area for further research that won't be explored in this paper. However, the interviews did provide an example of qualitative research, and most importantly, allowed a Native voice into the research. The voices of the Native Youth to College Program, no matter how few in number, found a space to be present and legitimate in this research project.

Program Curriculum: 2009 -2015

Founding of Native of Native Youth to College Program

The reasons behind the founding of the Native Youth to College have definitely contributed to the unique trajectory of the program itself. According to internal Program reports, the founding was result of a plea from an Elder:

Pitzer's Native American Summer Pipeline to College (further known as the Pipeline Program) started when Pitzer Dean of Faculty Alan Jones, Pitzer Professor of Sociology Erich Steinman, Elder Robertjohn Knapp, and I [Program Director Scott Scoggins] met in April 2009. In this meeting Robertjohn asked Pitzer College to 'help get Native American kids into college.' From that original meeting, Dean Jones funded our project and gave ten thousand dollars for the first summer program (S. Scoggins, personal communication, January 15 2016).

It seems to be a case of the 'right place at the right time' at Pitzer College and it's openness to host and fund such a program. At the time, there weren't too many other college preparatory programs for Native youth in the area. University of California, Riverside (UCR) began a Native serving program in 2005 but it only ran for a week and couldn't serve the full need of Native students (Song, 2013).

A brief follow up with one interviewee revealed another reason behind the Native Youth to College's founding: "The other pre-existing program(s) were more of a summer camp and

there was a need for a program with more rigorous academics and the inclusion of culture and culture carriers.” It would turn out that the inclusion of culture and culture carriers (Elders) into the curriculum would turn out to be vital in ensuring program credibility with potential students, their families and communities (Subject A, personal communication, December 29, 2015).

A group of Mono Nation students from Central California had applied to the first program session but were halted from attending by a group of concerned Mono Elders. The interviewee described the situation behind the halting of the Mono students: “They were kind of skeptical – who is Pitzer College? There was no relationship built. Once key Elders were involved, it became more acceptable” (Subject A, personal communication, December 29, 2015). While the Mono students didn’t end up coming, their situation highlighted a key point of the still-uneasy relationship between Indigenous peoples and educational systems; the fear that their children may still be taken away to be assimilated (Attendance Works, 2014).

Given the positive relationship between Elders and student attendance and program legitimacy, culture was a core aspect of program curriculum from the very beginning. It also highlights the community involvement of the program’s founding and the inclusion of the different generations in one program. Elders, a need, reactions of the Native community, and the willingness of academic administrators at Pitzer all played important roles in the development of the Native Youth to College Program all those years ago.

2009 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

2009 was the inaugural session of the Native Youth to College Program. The classes are divided into four distinct categories: Culture, Media, College Preparation, and Academics. Culture is primarily focused on local tribal nations - the Tongva, the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe of Ohlone Indians, and Tejon Indians. Media Studies and College Preparation both covered

basic topics. The academics are primarily focused on social justice topics with the exception of Fundamentals of Academic Writing. (See Chart 1 below)

Chart 1: 2009 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Media	Category: College Preparation	Category: Academics
Ohlone and California history Tejon stories and the culture Tongva history and culture at the San Gabriel Mission Evening talking circles	Microsoft Word 101 Video Documentary Production Film - <i>A Spiritual Land Claim</i>	Academic Counseling Official tour of Pitzer Campus	Social Engagement through Acting and Improvisation Community Engagement & Social Justice Engaging Differences and Challenging Stereotypes Speaker - Sen. Gloria Negrete McLeod Fundamentals of Academic Writing

2010 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

The 2010 Native Youth to College Program session saw an expansion of curricular offerings, partly which resulted from the first collaboration with Western University of Health Sciences, a private medical school for the health sciences in nearby Pomona, CA. Six (6) categories are included: culture, media, academics, health careers, college preparation, and fun activities (see Chart 2 next page). The academics are well rounded out, with science, math, and English/writing courses available. Both media studies and college preparation expanded to include more offerings. WesternU provided a wide range of health career classes, including a hands-on Anatomy Lab, for an all-day visit. Fun activities are included to display student activities during program downtime.

Chart 2: 2010 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Media	Category: Academics
Tongva Ethnobotanical Gardens History and Tour of San Gabriel Mission Boarding Schools and Higher Education Talking Circle Language of Bird Calls	Being Native in Hollywood Lecture w/ Speakers Seeds of Honor II: Tobacco Film - In Who's Honor & Lecture: Bullying Video Documentary and Film Production class	Creative Writing Shakespeare Hate and Racism Workers for Justice/Students in Solidarity Food Not Bombs Holocaust Survival Math - Mathematical Patterns in Structures Math - Numeration NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory: Introduction to NASA JPL & the Mars and Saturn Programs Computational Neuroscience Neuroscience - Sheep Brain Dissection
Category: Health Careers	Category: College Preparation	Category: Other
Preventative Healthcare and Careers in Osteopathic Medicine Anatomy Lab Neurology in the OMM Lab HEENT Exam	Financial Aid Workshop Tour of Pitzer College Q&A with a Pitzer Admissions Officer	Mic/Free Time Beach Volleyball Swimming at the Pitzer Pool Slam Poetry Night and Spoken Word Workshop Talent contest with Taiwanese Thun-chin school students

2011 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

The 2011 Native Youth to College Program session was characterized by its relative lack of interaction with local Tribal Elders, with more of a focus on media industry careers and the extensive use of the Expand the Circle curriculum program (*see Chart 3 below*).

Chart 3: 2011 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Media	Category: Academics
California History Knowledge Production - both Native and non-Native Clapper Sticks and their use/history in Tongva culture Black Widow Ranch	Daily Internet Journaling (Blogging) Film Production PerpiTube project VIP tour of NBC Universal Studios	Essay Writing Neuroscience experiments U.S. Border and Immigration
Category: Health Careers	Category: College Preparation	Category: Other
Osteopathic lab Osteopathic medicine and Neurology Anatomy Lab	SAT Prep Resume Writing & Cover Letters Meeting with Pitzer Admissions Officer	Expand the Circle Curriculum Mentor Training African Drumming

New to the 2011 session was the addition of mentor training. In 2010, the role of operational program director and in-situ mentor for Program students became too large for the Program Director alone: mentors were added but didn't undergo formal training until this year. The rest of the curriculum - health careers, academics, and culture - appear to be negatively affected by the

time spent on the Expand the Circle and PerpiTube, as reflected in the low numbers. College preparation saw the important addition of SAT Prep for the first time.

Expand the Circle. Much of the 2011 Program curriculum was based around the website ‘Expand the Circle,’ an award-winning educational program developed and offered by the University of Minnesota. Expand the Circle offers culturally relevant activities that facilitate the successful transition from high school to post-secondary experiences for American Indian students. The curriculum is designed to help youth explore who they are, what skills they need, and what their options are for life after high school (University of Minnesota, n.d.). The Expand the Circle classes were collaboratively led by Director Scott Scoggins and the mentors.

PerpiTube project. The PerpiTube project was the highlight of the media studies facet of this year’s programming. PerpiTube strives to “highlight how various spaces, on and offline, amplify the connections and contradictions between local place and digital mobility, the reception and production of social media, the tension between the ephemeral and the archive, and the "artist" and "amateur" (Pitzer College Art Galleries, 2011, p. 1).

2012 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Curriculum of the 2012 Program session most notably saw the return of the cultural aspect. The now-consistent five (5) curricular aspects of culture, media, academics, health careers, and college preparation remained the same as previous sessions. Mentor Training expanded into a week-long session led by a Mentor Trainer. While the offerings from Western University seem small in comparison to the other categories, the Diabetes Institute was a multi-day intensive learning session on all aspects of Diabetes. The LightningCloud concert is not merely entertainment but the duo of Crystal Lightning and Red Cloud are Native artists who rap about Native pride, today’s issues, and other realities of being Native. (*see Chart 4 below*)

Chart 4: 2012 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Media	Category: Academics
Clapper Sticks and their use in Tongva Culture Hand Drums & Shawls Hawaiian Dancing Acting 101: American Indian Stories Tongva Plants & Talking Circle Tour of Pechanga Cultural Center Sage Bush Planting at Pitzer Sweat Lodge Ceremony American Indian Songs.	Blogging Photography Digital Booklets Film: Reel Injun Film: Alcatraz Is Not an Island	Essay Writing Tribal Governance and Politics Contemporary Native Issues Community Building Minority social movements NASA JPL with Charles White (Ojibway)
Category: Health Careers	Category: College Preparation	Category: Other
Diabetes Institute Anatomy Lab	Tour of Pitzer and Pomona Colleges Discussion with an Pitzer Admissions Officer Resume Writing & SAT Prep	LightningCloud Concert Mentor Training

2013 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

The curriculum of the 2013 Native Youth to College Program was broad and interdisciplinary. Marine Science curriculum was again conducted at Wishtoyo Foundation’s Chumash Cultural Village. The Digital Booklets were individual digital ‘books’ composed of student essays, thoughts, and pictures, a cumulation of their media literacy skills. A lot of cultural workshops, activities, and fieldtrips were included in this year’s curriculum. *(See next page for chart 5).*

Chart 5: 2013 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Media	Category: Academics
Clapper Stick Workshop Daily Morning Ceremony with Elders Drum Making Flint-Knapping Native Herbs and Survival Skills Shawl Making Life Skills Native Theater and Stories Workshop Basket Weaving Planting at Chaffey Communities Cultural Center Tongva Garden Hawaiian Gardens Powwow and Bear Ceremony Chat with Dr. Lori Alvord, Graduation Speaker and Author of the Scalpel and the Silver Bear Native Plants Presentation and Planting Chumash Language Class Basket Making with Abalone Shells Chumash Plant Medicines Star/Constellation Stories	Blogging Digital Booklets	Essay Writing Scalpel and the Silver Bear Writing Workshops Edgar Heap of Birds Lecture Tribal Governance Dinner Talk Environmental Stewardship Talk
	Category: College Preparation	Category: Other Yoga/Morning Exercise Salsa Dancing with Kobe Women’s University Claremont Libraries Special Collections Surfing Class Elders Appreciation Dinner Mentor Training
	SAT Prep Discussion with a Pitzer Admissions Officer Resume Writing & SAT Prep	
	Category: Health Careers Gross Anatomy Lab Phlebotomy Native Iron Chef Competition Suturing and Surgery Health, Wellness and Fitness	

2014 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

The 2014 Program was characterized by a strong STEM/Chumash marine knowledge component of the curriculum, working with Wishtoyo’s Chumash Village, with the highlight of spending a few days on Limu (Santa Cruz Island). Aztec math using the Aztec calculator, called the Nepohualtzintzin, was the academic curricular strength this year. (See Chart 6 below).

Chart 6: 2014 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Media	Category: Academics
Daily Morning Ceremony Sweat Lodge Clapper Sticks & Tongva Culture Drum Making Workshop Intertribal Ocean Stewardship @ Wishtoyo 1. Indigenous Chumash Peoples of Santa Barbara Channel Region 2. Three Chumash Laws 3. Chumash Maritime History	Blogging Media Skills/Digital Literacy	Academic Writing Literature class on Sherman Alexie Nepohualtzintzin/Aztec Math Introduction to Shakespeare Indigenous Surfing Intertribal Ocean Stewardship @ Wishtoyo: 1. Oceanography 2. Flora and fauna of Santa Cruz Island 3. Coastal Monitoring 4. Formation of Channel Islands 5. Ocean Stewardship & Climate Change 6. STEM Careers
Category: Health Careers	Category: College Preparation	Category: Other
Surgery & Suturing Phlebotomy Workshop Health, Wellness, Fitness Gross Anatomy Lab	Common Application College Essays	Hike to Mt. Baldy Dance Session Mentor Training

2015 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

While seemingly overloaded on cultural programming, the curriculum of the 2015 Program session was quite balanced due to daily classes in Writing, Common Application, Theater Class, Blogging/Digital Books & WesternU health sciences. (See Chart 7 below).

Chart 7: 2015 Native Youth to College Program Curriculum

Category: Culture	Category: Health Careers	Category: Academics
Rattle Making Workshop Visit to Pomona College Museum Soapstone Workshop Rabbit Loom and Tongva Kiiy Bird Songs and Dances Native Foods Class Petroglyph Painting & Native Science Blue Corn Mush Workshop Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women Lecture Wishtoyo Cultural Curriculum – Dogbane Corns, Abalone Necklaces & Clapper Sticks Idle No More Rally	Population Genetics and Disease Follow up to PD and D Diabetes and Nutrition Pathways to Health Careers	Writing
Category: Media	Category: College Preparation	Category: Other
Blogging Digital Booklets	Common Application	Theater Class Generation Indigenous Challenge Mentor Training

Due to inclement weather, the planned visit to Wishtoyo in Malibu, CA was cut short and that much of the marine science curriculum did not take place. Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) is a national challenge to do something positive for Native youth by Native youth: program participants decided to make a booklet - *Native Youth Survival Guide to Preparing for College*.

Chapter 5: Analysis

After analysis of the interviews and program documents, a closer analysis of the Native Youth to College Program 2009-2015 was necessary in order to find any core curricular aspects within the programming. Nine core curricular aspects were found, with those results further divided into three sub-categories as identified by their duration over the years. The first category represents the core programming that has been present since the inception of the program – **academics, culture, media studies, and college preparation**. The second category lists three aspects that were introduced later on but have now become as central to the program curriculum as the core four topics – **health careers, intergenerational mentorship, & STEM**. The last category identifies curricular themes that are core to the program but aren't encapsulated into a single category or class – **life skills and telling your story**.

Core Curriculum

1. Academics

Academics has been identified as one of the core goals of the Native Youth to College Program from the beginning. The reality of education for Indigenous peoples has hardly been kind, and even in today's schools, the history and accomplishments of Indigenous people are hardly mentioned, or if at all, inaccurate. Adams (1988) wrote upon this very phenomenon: "Curricula in schools attended by Native American children have tended to ignore the culture, traditions, and strengths of the students themselves; indeed, curricula for schools attended by Native American children have traditionally been decided upon by non-Native Americans (as cited in Stokes, 1997, p. 576). Without culturally relevant curriculum, Native students are more likely to not engage with the textbooks and material learnt in school.

Such disengagement happens in all areas of learning, including writing, reading, critical analysis, etc. Within the Native Youth to College Program, writing was identified as particularly critical given its role in the college admissions process; student essays are the first indication of student ability that colleges get to judge. For that simple reason, they need to be strong and create a good impression of student academic abilities. Every student who came into the program came with different writing abilities, creating the need for an impactful writing class for all skill levels. However, the writing class in the Program is not the average remedial writing class either.

Within Writing, students are taught basic writing skills - outline, thesis statement, etc. -, continually re-writing their essays based on teacher feedback, and write about a topic they feel connected to. For the past four years, students have been using their program book – a book chosen by Program staff for all students to read – for writing exercises and essay topics. Past examples include: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie and *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear* by Lori Arviso Alvord. Both texts bring in themes that Indigenous kids are familiar with – reservation and/or urban life, ‘between two worlds,’ ceremony, Elders, family dynamics, tribal politics. More general themes such as belonging, identity, education, bullying, dreams, and more are also present. The incorporation of Native-relevant texts produces more engagement from the students and shows in their enthusiasm and writing skills.

The use of culturally-relevant texts has been gaining ground and is shown to improve student literacy, as Morrell (2002) and Mahiri & Sablo (1996) found. While focusing on African-American students, Mahiri & Sablo noted the presence of oral narratives and other types of written narratives that were closely related to the community and social/culture life but weren’t recognized in school as legitimate (p.165). Many Indigenous communities have long traditions of oral histories, traditions that are not recognized in mainstream education at all. While oral

tradition isn't incorporated into the Program's curriculum, the modern 'oral' tradition of Native American literature is. Morrell's (2002) research on using popular culture as critical pedagogy for urban youth is exactly the aim of the Writing component of the Native Youth to College Program curriculum. Although he used hip-hop music instead of American Indian popular literature, the results are the same:

Their critical investigations of popular texts brought about oral and written critiques similar to those required by college preparatory English classrooms. The students moved beyond critical reading of literary texts to become cultural producers themselves, creating and presenting poems that provided critical social commentary and encouraged action for social justice. The unit adhered to critical pedagogy because it was situated in the experiences of the students, called for critical dialogue and a critical engagement of the text, and related the texts to larger social and political issues (p. 74).

A connection is made between a formerly distancing subject and a culturally-relevant text, writing skills are improved, and students learn that their cultural traditions and history can always be incorporated into academia, whether or not it is called for.

Students can also take other academic type classes such as introduction to Shakespeare surfing and social justice and even media studies type lectures such as a screening and Q&A of *Seeds of Honor*, a documentary on tobacco use in Indian country. Most of the other academic classes have a strong social justice focused, fitting in with Pitzer's core values of Social Responsibility, Intercultural Understanding, Student Engagement, and Interdisciplinary Learning. These courses introduce students to a type class found in college that is different from their high school classes; the topics are more abstract, require critical thinking and analysis of the topic at hand, and are lecture or discussion based. Program students have the advantage of

experiencing and learning about this new type of academic environment among familiar peers. As one interviewee pointed out, the introduction to an intense academic schedule with college classes in the Program would help later on:

From my experience in college, you hardly get any free time. And the free time you get, you need to study. So it incorporates that experience into the program; it shows the students what to expect, and besides from what to expect, it shows them that they can do it. Because you did it in the program here, you can do it in college (Subject B, personal communication, January 18, 2016).

2. Cultural Activities

The incorporation of ceremony and cultural activities in the curriculum is considered to be the second key component of the overarching goal of the program, as exemplified by the program's motto *Tradition for Life, Education for the Future*. The transmittal of ceremony and cultural activities are very important to Indigenous communities because of the recent past - the deliberate destruction of Native lifeways through forced assimilation into mainstream American society. This assimilation was carried out through the separation of children from their families and communities to military style boarding schools. The atrocities - haircuts, punishment for speaking mother tongues, learning foreign skills and knowledge, among other actions - contributed to the sharp decline in native speakers and a disconnect between the older and younger generations. Without having youth to pass critical knowledge on to, many ceremonies and traditions have been lost.

Further complicating the matter has been the relocation of Native families in the United States as a result of federal policies. The 1956 Relocation and Termination Act moved thousands of Native people from their reservations to urban centers like Los Angeles or Chicago. As

Donald Fixico and Lobos and Peters write, the urban Native population created their own communities in the city, which were often intertribal in nature. While some were lucky enough to retain ties to their home reservation or be a part of intertribal urban ceremonies, many simply assimilated into mainstream culture.

The Native Youth to College Program has welcomed students who actively practice their culture, students who have no cultural knowledge at all, and all of the points in between. The goal of the ceremony and culture aspect is to introduce all students to a variety of cultural activities, no matter if they have had prior exposure or not. Having a wide variety of cultural workshops exposes the students to cultural activities of their own or of others, an important concept in helping students realize the intelligence and vision of all Indigenous cultures. Such exposure directly refutes the stereotypes/lies learned in school that portray Natives as backwards and primitive, shows that Native people and ideas are still here, and the contributions to all aspects of life/education, etc.

Many of the workshops and cultural activities are from the local tribal nations of Southern California - the Tongva, Serrano, Cahuilla, Chumash. Indigenous Elders have been brought in from 'international' places like Mexico to teach Aztec mathematics, not a far stretch given the multicultural and nomadic nature of Indigenous peoples on the West Coast past and present. All of the workshops are led by Elder(s) of the particular tribal nation or group. Incorporating Elders not only contributes to the intergenerational mentoring but the transfer of knowledge between generations and keeping current traditions alive.

Cleary and Peacock's (1998) interviews of Native students' teachers found that the incorporation of traditional culture has a positive role in developing academically successful

students. As one of the interviewed teachers stated: "The key to producing successful American Indian students in our modern educational system . . . is to first ground these students in their American Indian belief and value systems" (as cited in Reyhner, 2001, p. 101). Having knowledge of their culture and traditions is a unique cultural capital that helps Native students succeed later on in life, whether through college or beyond.

3. Media Studies

The use of technology in students' lives has become ubiquitous, with the most recent generations of youth described as 'digital natives' due to the high level of integration in their lives. Indigenous youth are no different, accessing Facebook from their smartphones, playing video games online, and uploading videos to YouTube. At the same time, Indigenous youth are using media to actively speak out against and navigate critical issues of politics, discrimination, social justice, belonging, and learning/preserving/traditional languages and practices. One such organization is Longhouse Media, an Native-led nonprofit that works with Native youth in the Pacific Northwest through the Native Lens project to "use media as a tool for self-expression, cultural preservation, and social change" (Longhouse Media, 2016). Internet, smart phones, and other tech devices have allowed Native youth to connect to a broader community, Indigenous or otherwise.

However, access to media and technology is often lacking for isolated and/or rural Native communities, creating a 'digital divide' - "the gulf in access to technology tools and related learning opportunities" (Bissell, 2004, p. 134). This divide stems from a variety of reasons: "poor infrastructure [that] makes the cost of obtaining fundamental telephone, cable, and computer service very high," neglect from the federal government, rural physical location, and jurisdictional regulations between telecommunication companies and tribal nations (Bissell,

2004, p. 129). This digital divide means that Native students can lack the knowledge on how to fill out a college application online or the most effective online research skills.

Furthermore, Native youth are constantly faced with discriminatory and/or racist depictions of themselves in films, television, and other digital works. Neil Diamond's (Cree) film, *Reel Injun: On the Trail of the Hollywood Indian*, is a journey through Hollywood film history that explores the stereotypes of Native on the silver screen.⁴ Diamond's inspiration for *Reel Injun* came from real life experiences during his youth in Canada:

They would ask if we still lived in teepees and if we rode horses and if we spoke Indian. I thought, where do people get these ideas about us? The only place we see Indians riding horses and living in teepees and speaking Indian is in movies, and I thought: this is where the majority of people get their ideas about native people (Skanderis, 2010).

Unfortunately, many of these negative stereotypes still exist in the media today and have been found to contribute to lower self-esteem and mental health in Native youth, as well as the development of further biases and prejudices (Qureshi, 2016). The persistence of such stereotypes comes as to no surprise considering that Hollywood and the film/TV industry today is dominated by white, straight, males, as a recent report by the Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA recently reported (Bunche, 2015).

Native Youth to College students actively combat, and directly refute, these negative stereotypes by creating and editing their own videos. Past video topics include: media portrayals of Indigenous peoples, the clash and/or balancing act between traditional culture and society today, the boarding school experience, and even one's

⁴ See also *Native Americans on Network TV* by Michael Ray FitzGerald (2013) and *Reservation Reelism* by Michelle Raheja (2013) for further conversation.

expression of sexuality and traditional culture. Photographs, digital books, and daily blogging sessions are further tools for student self-expression. It also allows students to develop their skills in computer literacy, Photoshop, social media, and strengthen their skills as writers. Mentors and the Media Studies Professor encouraged students to think critically about the stereotypes seen in the media, ways to respond, and simple helping students get the voices out in the public sphere of the program blog.

Media literacy gives these students the “ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms,” useful skills for future academic and workplace endeavors (Salvador & Sias, 1998, p. 58). For Indigenous peoples, the Internet and other digital tools have allowed for “an uncensored voice in which they can express who they understand themselves to be, regardless of the identity foisted upon them by external perspectives” (Andrews, 2012, p. 1). The Native Youth to College students are carving out a space on the Internet and through other media that allows them their own voice and perspectives, in which their online presence directly challenges the ‘digital divide’, stereotypes, and more.

4. College Preparation

As previously discussed in the literature review, college preparatory programs are popular and effective methods of supplementing and boosting student academic success where the educational system has failed. The main thrust of college preparatory programs is, of course, preparing the students for college and the college admissions process. The aforementioned *College Horizons* program is one of the best known college prep programs focused on increasing Native students, both in high school and graduate level, through rigorous workshops covering the college admissions process.

The Native Youth to College Program is no different, offering students classes in: the Common Application, SAT Prep, College Admission Writing. A tour of Pitzer College and the other Claremont Colleges is always scheduled each summer, giving students an idea of what a college campus looks like. Pitzer Admission officers come in to give a workshop on what the Admissions office looks for, interview tips, and financial aid options. Mentors often share their own experiences of going through college, serving as relatable role models. The goal is to help students be more familiar with the often-confusing college admissions process, especially for those who may be first-generation college students. Exposure means adding to Native students' cultural capital, as minority/underrepresented students often lack seemingly-commonplace knowledge on admissions, financial aid, and other related processes.

SAT preparation is particularly important, for standardized testing like the SAT have long come under fire for being racially biased against minorities and other underserved students in the United States. The same holds true for Native American youth, who are continually exposed to “culturally biased tests [like the SAT or the ACT that] are used to push them out of academic programs” as Rehyner (1992) noted (p. 2). Native Youth to College students actively work to dispel the numbers against them - that only 33.5% of Native American SAT takers meet the SAT benchmark, which is described as being ready for college classes without needing remedial classes (College Board, 2015). Not only have Program students taken actual SAT prep class but hone their test taking skills through their writing class and developing their critical analysis and reading skills through other academic offerings.

Secondary Aspects

5. Health Careers

Introduction to Health Topics and Careers has been one of the main programmatic aspects of the Native Youth to College Program since 2010, a partnership that wouldn't be possible without the participation of Western University of Health Sciences in nearby Pomona, CA. Much has been made about the health disparities affecting Native communities, such as the very high prevalence of diabetes. Furthermore, Native students are disproportionately underrepresented in the health fields, whether as researchers, public health officials, doctors/nurses, and other positions (Sequist, 2007).

Many Indigenous nations and groups are working hard to combat health issues in their communities, such as the Potawat Health Village clinic that serves Yurok, Tolowa, Wiyot, Hupa and Karuk Indians in Northern California (Brown, 2012). National campaigns, such as the Seeds of Native Health by the Shakopee Mdewakanton, work to bring awareness and change to Native communities on issues like health eating, diabetes prevention, suicide, and other health issues (Native News, 2015). Giving back to their communities, especially as health professionals and/or healers, is a popular career choice among Native youth, as many are motivated by personal experiences.⁵ However, there exists the aforementioned gap between the desire to be a health professional and actually getting in, and through, medical school and the required exams.

The health career curriculum exposes students to the different health issues and careers through a hands-on approach. WesternU doctors and medical students collaboratively lead lectures combined with activities, giving students an up-close and personal experience. This allows Native Youth to College participants to explore health career options they may not have thought of before, speak to a medical student and/or doctor about their own experiences, and

⁵ While I haven't been able to find any scholarly sources citing this, many of the students who participate in the Native Youth to College Program specifically come for the health career aspect of the program. Their personal essays for the application process often tell of their desire to go into nursing or similar due to personal experiences with family members dealing with health issues like diabetes.

learn firsthand about health issues affecting their communities. Day-to-day topics such as healthy eating and nutrition are covered, sometimes accompanied by a student cooking competition. Many of the Program students don't realize the wide variety of health career options available besides the common ones of nurse, doctor, surgeon, sports medicine, etc; exposure to the more 'uncommon' professions, such podiatry or optometry, helps students realize their importance in the health profession and as areas where Natives are needed.

One of the goals of the health career programming is to prepare these students to be health ambassadors in their own communities. The Diabetes Intensive, for example, gave students the tools to recognize easily-noticeable signs of diabetes, knowledge which they then could use to help a family or community member get medical care. A second, and critical goal, of the health career component is to help interested students learn how to combine Western and Indigenous healing practices as a health professional. Similar to that of science, there appears to be a divide between Western and Indigenous healing practices. Native students in health fields are still trained in Western-style medicine despite the growing interest in, and legitimacy of, traditional healing practices.

In one year of the program, students read *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear*, the story of the first Diné woman surgeon, Dr. Lori Arviso Alvord, and her experiences navigating both her Western medical training and traditional Diné practices. Students of the 2010- 2014 Native Youth to College Program sessions experienced the Gross Anatomy Lab at WesternU. In the Anatomy Lab, bodies from the Willed Donation program are used for student learning: for Native Youth to College participants, the learning was strictly visual and touch; no actual dissection of bodies by students occurred.

The Anatomy Lab in particular exemplifies the struggles in weaving together Indigenous and Western healthcare learning, practices, and models. The Diné (Navajo) have a taboo against dead bodies and certain traditions surrounding death, as do many other Indigenous cultures. Even for those students with no such restrictions, seeing and/or handling dead bodies is not to be taken lightly. Accordingly, Elders and other appropriate culture carriers are brought in to conduct ceremonies for the students before and after the Lab and to ask any questions on the topic. Here, students are exposed to the difficulties and possible solutions in combining two worldviews, two systems of healing. As Dr. Alvord noted, “The scalpel is my tool, as are all the newer technologies of laparoscopy, but my Silver Bear, my Navajo beliefs and culture are what guide me (American Indians, 2016, p. 1).

6. Intergenerational Mentorship

Since the incorporation of mentors in 2010, along with the continual presence of Elders, intergenerational mentorship has been an important aspect of the program curriculum. As Ahn (2010) states; “college mentoring programs, whether implicitly or explicitly, are based on ideas of social capital formation . . . one underlying assumption of mentoring programs is that the likelihood of college enrollment rises for low-income, urban, and underrepresented youth by increasing their social networks (p. 2). The formation of social capital is particularly important for the program participants, as many of them will be first-generation college students who need all the benefits and knowledge they can get to successfully matriculate through college. There are three different, possible, aspects of mentorship in the Native Youth to College Program: between mentors and students, between students and Elders, and between Elders and mentors. The students benefit the most from the double mentoring from Elders and mentors.

Elders/Students. Elders mentoring students is a positive experience for all involved.

Elders are known as the knowledge keepers, and given their long experience with life, can give wise advice to students. This desire to be useful is recognized by Brabazon & Disch (1997): "For elders, involvement with youth provides an opportunity to feel needed and to pass on the knowledge they have accumulated over a lifetime" (p. 128). However, the intergenerational mentorship with Elders goes way beyond being 'useful;' Elders also have important cultural traditions and specific tribal knowledge that the younger generations should know but don't. It seems intuitive that Native youth who are connected to their culture/live on the reservation or in their community would be talking to Elders all the time and that at least some would listen to their knowledge. But the reality is that there is a wall, a block, between the two. With families living apart, modern distractions like television, video games, and more, the generations don't get together as often. Or the younger generations don't realize what the Elders hold and seen them as embarrassing, old and out-of-touch, or some similar negative perception. Or simply the Elders are no longer there anymore: "Many elders with the tribal stories and knowledge have already passed, so connecting youth with elders is critical for the survival of customs and traditional healing ways (Barquis, 2014, p. 8).

Within the Native Youth to College Program, the divide between Elders and the students are broken down. The Elder in Residence is the program Elder; they are a part of the program 24/7 and serve as a resource for the students. Students can talk to the Elder in Residence in an informal manner about cultural topics, personal topics, academics, and anything else they may wish. Fostering such a connection helps students see the Elder's worth and expansive knowledge while the Elders get to reconnect with the younger generations. Many a Program student, at the end of the session, has sworn to go back to their home community and talk to their Elders there now that their eyes have been opened and barriers broken down.

Cultural workshops are another way that students can gain intergenerational mentorship with an Elder, especially during an informal gathering or workshop where the interpersonal interplay isn't as direct. Elder-led workshops in the Native Youth to College Program are expansive and quite popular: they range from drum/rattle/clapper stick making workshops, to a talking circle, or even an Aztec math or Chumash marine science course. Students get to see, hear, and make/produce a tangible item from an Elder's knowledge, the object or lesson usually a source of pride for students. The rattles/drums/clapper sticks in particular are always treasured by students and used throughout the whole program; they are living reminders of the bond that the students now share with the program Elders.

Elders/Mentors. Intergenerational mentorship also happens between program mentors and Elders, although it not as advertised as much as the student-Elder dynamic. Even though they are already going through, or have completed, the college process, program mentors may be in similar situations to their student mentees – needing guidance of an Elder, struggling in school/with stress/other situations, how to incorporate culture/ceremony into their lives, and even pride in their own Native culture.

Mentors/Students. The use of college-aged students to mentor high school students, also known as near-aged mentorship is a popular tactic in encouraging college attendance, such as the national program Big Brother, Big Sister. College-aged mentors bring a particular set of experiences to the mentoring relationship that other peer-aged or older adults cannot bring. Because of their college status, Native Youth to College Program mentors are easily able to relate with their mentees about the college admissions process, the first year, how to navigate classes, making friends, fitting in, and a whole host of related issues and questions about college

that may arise. They are able to give advice from an ‘insider’ perspective. As one interviewee noted, being a mentor was the best kind of role model for the students:

But when you see the mentors, you see young people doing mentoring. It is an example, it is an image to the students. They see young people, a little older than them, as mentors - they do it, they did it, they get what we’re going to go through . . . It is like the stages of life - it shows [the students] that (Subject B, personal communication, January 18, 2016).

The relationship between student and mentor usually lasts long after the program ends in the summer, serving as a constant, positive, reminder of the lessons learned during the Native Youth to College Program.

7. STEM - Western and Indigenous

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) is a popular topic in education and Indian Country today. A presidential push has coincided with educational and private sector demand and need for more STEM majors who are from underrepresented communities, including American Indians (Educate to Innovate, n.d.). Similarly, the current climate crises has researchers and scientists turning to Indigenous knowledge for answers to global warming, climate change, water scarcity, and other pressing issues (Raygorodetsky, 2011). Further providing credibility to Indigenous knowledge systems is the work of numerous researchers, both Native and non-Native, who highlight the intersection of Indigenous and Western knowledge (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Berkes, 2012; Medin and Bang, 2014; Nakashima and Roué, 2002; & Wildcat, 2009). Dr. Marie Battiste (2002), in *Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy in First Nations Education*, shows that there is a place for Indigenous Knowledge right next to Euro-Western thought all fields, including STEM:

As a concept, indigenous knowledge benchmarks the limitations of Eurocentric theory - ; its methodology, evidence, and conclusions - ; reconceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of indigenous peoples, and underscores the importance of their own philosophies, heritages, and educational processes. Indigenous knowledge fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric education, research, and scholarship (p. 5).

However, this acceptance of incorporation of Indigenous sciences has not completely reached the classrooms of the education system in the United States. A core assumption of a sharp divide between Indigenous and Western ways of understanding and doing STEM due to historical dominance of Western hegemonic thought still exists (Agrawal, 1995).

Native representation in the STEM fields is at a low of 0.4% (Landivar, 2013). This under-representation continues on to higher education, where only 3.3% of Native Americans and Alaska Natives aged 24 have earned a first university degree in the natural sciences or engineering (National Academies, 2011). It is a slow but increasing game of ‘catch-up’ in the educational system, as more educators and teachers realize the benefits of, and have started to incorporate, Indigenous STEM into the classroom alongside Western sciences (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Chigeza, 2011).

In the Native Youth to College Program, students are given hands-on opportunities to actively learn and experience the weaving together of Indigenous and Western STEM across a variety of mediums. Marine science and other environmental sciences (biology, etc) are mainly represented through the curriculum at Wishtoyo Foundation's Chumash Cultural Village, a working recreation of a Chumash village in Malibu, CA. There, students learn from a Chumash-Western view, as represented by both on-site Chumash Elders and a NOAA developed

curriculum. Indigenous mathematics was also represented one year when students learned Aztec Math on the Nepohualtzintzin (Aztec calculator) from an Elder flown in from Mexico. While not as obvious, other cultural classes present Indigenous and Western STEM working together, such as the Native plants class, basket weaving, petroglyph painting, and Native food production.

Such workshops help students see Indigenous science that isn't as obvious at first - such as the geometry skills needed in making a basket, the agricultural/botany knowledge needed in harvesting and cultivating Native plants, or even the chemistry skills needed to mix different minerals together to form paint. While seemingly 'basic' at first, students begin to see how Indigenous science is incorporated; they can then take this knowledge and apply it to higher level science topics, such as chemistry, astronomy, architecture. Aikenhead (2006) found that Native youth "[become] more interested in their science course and no longer approached it as content to be memorized" once TEK is successfully integrated into the curriculum (as cited in Kim & Dionne, 2014, p. 313). Furthermore, Gilbert (2005) found that Native students are shown to better understand and "excel in" mainstream science concepts if "culturally appropriate instruction" is provided, exactly the aim of the STEM portion of the Native Youth to College Curriculum (p. 31).

Tertiary Aspects

8. Life Skills

Life skills, such as time management, study skills, & healthy eating, are a fundamental part of the Native Youth to College Program curriculum. Development of these life skills are important for high school youth, as they teeter on the border between being a child and an adult. Those who do develop life skills may be better equipped to handle challenges in life, whether personal, emotional, or academic. For many of the participating Native youth, the program is the

first time they have been away from home for more than a day or two. Others are unused to living in communal situations, such as dorm life. Navigating interpersonal relationships between dorm mates, mentors, teachers, Elders, and program staff are also important for personal and social development.

The experience of living away from home with others simulates college life, the first year of which is often hard for Native students as they navigate a new environment, make friends, and find a support network. Time management and study skills are closely related to academics in the program curriculum. Academic success and stress levels are often tied to a student's ability to properly manage their time and associated study habits. Development of these skills is closely correlated to academic satisfaction, success, boost in test scores, and perceived ability/intelligence in school (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). High school is a critical time to properly develop such skills, which the Native Youth to College Program aids in. Time is specifically set aside in the evening as 'study hall,' with mentors available for help.

Healthy eating is a particular challenge for many of the Program students, especially faced with the regular option of pizza/hamburgers/fries for lunch and dinner in the Pitzer dining hall. Native American communities struggle with healthy eating among all age levels (Black, 2015). The corresponding health issues of diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, and other medical problems are a widely-recognized and discussed topic in Indian Country. Adding to the problem is that many Native communities are 'food deserts,' areas where it is difficult to access fresh and healthy foods regularly, thus limiting Native families ability to eat healthily, whether they want

to or not. The disappearance of traditional foods and hunting/gathering practices among Native Nations has also contributed to the growing health issues within Native communities.

During mealtimes, students are encouraged to think about their food choices, with mentors and Elder(s) in Residence suggesting that students to try a new vegetable, discuss portion control, benefits of a balanced diet, etc. These informal suggestions are combined with the information on healthy eating from the medical perspective as taught by WesternU medical instructors. Elders also lead workshops introducing students to traditional plants/traditional foods. Dinner in the dining hall is not the only chance for students to practice their healthy eating: during the 2012 and 2013 program sessions, students participated in a cooking contest, where groups were challenged to make meals with an array of ingredients. The 2013 cooking contest was particularly memorable, as one group made handmade tortillas and another, with the help of the Elder in Residence, made a whole grilled salmon.

9. Telling Your Story

Woven throughout each aspect of the curriculum is the theme of telling your story, the importance of self-expression in a variety of mediums. Self-expression is particularly celebrated in America and is ubiquitous into our education system and beyond. We are expected to ‘blow our own horn’ in college admission essays, job interviews, class presentations, and more, just to name a few. However, not everyone is comfortable/able to express themselves so openly. Part of this comes from the difference in societal notions of self-expression, as Heejun Kim noted in her research. She found that Individualistic cultures are more likely promote public self-expression, while collectivist cultures aren’t as encouraging (Kim, 2010). This is not to say that those from more collectivist cultures aren’t able to express themselves at all but the social norms regarding that self-expression are different than mainstream.

For Native students, self-expression can be difficult given their different cultural backgrounds. Often labeled ‘shy’ or ‘quiet,’ many Native students are less likely to speak up. Even Dr. Lori Alvord, the first Diné board-certified surgeon, recalled having a tough time expressing herself in school: “The very thought of exhibiting my skills and knowledge before others was disturbing. I could not bring myself to participate in class discussions and debates, or to volunteer answers to professors’ questions, although it was expected.” (Alvord & Cohen, 2000, p. 39). Thus, Indigenous students may struggle academically in college not because they don’t understand the material or aren’t smart but because they don’t speak up in class as expected by teachers.

While there are certain diagnostic tools and methods available for non-verbal learning, such as the Naglieri Non-verbal Abilities Test, it is most likely that the average college professor won’t have access to, or even bother to use, such tools. Accordingly, many of the activities in the Native Youth to College curriculum are geared towards helping the students learn to express themselves better in a variety of mediums. The theater class helped students be more comfortable expressing themselves physically through theater exercises, which can translate to speaking up in class or raising a hand.

Literally telling your story, whether through writing an essay, filming a video, a digital book, or learning to publically speak out and up, has always been a focus of student engagement in the program curriculum. The shyest and most-outspoken youth in the program share a common theme when they tell their stories – they are engaging in self- and tribal intellectual sovereignty: “stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430). A student’s story

legitimizes their presence, their self-identity, their role as a tribal nation citizen, all told through the deceptively simple lens of storytelling.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Over the past nine years, the Native Youth to College Program has become a fixture in the educational landscape of the Southern California Indian community. It has grown from its humble beginnings with only a few classes in culture, media studies, academics, and college preparation to a program boasting both an academic and culturally strong curriculum offering a wide variety of classes. Through interviews of program staff and analysis of program documents, the development of the curriculum has become clearer. Nine curricular aspects make up the backbone of the current and future sessions of the Native Youth to College Program. These nine curricular aspects - academics, culture, media studies, college preparation, health careers, intergenerational mentorship STEM, life skills, & telling your story – all contribute to the holistic development of the Indigenous youth who come each summer.

Figuring out what aspects work and what doesn't hasn't always been the easiest journey in the program. People cancel, workshops get moved around, or a class doesn't spark the attention and interest of the students. Certain topics can be considered off-limits or cause tension to the students by parents/program Elders/Program staff, however important the topic: "For example, when we used to do the Anatomy, it was difficult for some students because of their culture, their background . . . So you can't assume that everyone is just the same, we have to be conscious and sensitive to different ways of being" (Subject A, personal communication, December 29, 2015). Some cultural carriers, Elders, or even students themselves rub the wrong way with others, causing interpersonal strife that affects other student learning and class dynamics.

Future Recommendations

Despite the strength of the program curriculum during its seven years of development, recommendations are presented to make the program better. Some future recommendations come from the interviews themselves, where the following question was tailored for such responses: *If you could incorporate a subject/aspect (i.e. debate classes, certain cultural activities, or life skills such as how to manage personal finances) into the program curriculum, what would it be and why?* The interviewees shared a wealth of ideas and supporting reasons behind their choices.

Interviewee Recommendations:

- Life Skills Class
- Financial aid/scholarship/job application Class
 - “This is good for the students because it helps them over hurdles such as money, this way they aren’t discouraged in applying for colleges in which they can’t afford” (Subject C, personal communication, April 7, 2016).
- Meditation Class
- Indian Law Class
 - “I think political science and having a good grasp of the institutions that govern us is important. I think we have to be educated politically on the whole system. So many kids are so disenfranchised - they don’t want to vote. They lack civic engagement” (Subject A, personal communication, December 29, 2015).

Last Thoughts

Curricular aspects are all interwoven with each other – traditional cultural practices can be found in a STEM class or a student will incorporate their college essay into their digital book. Nor does the curriculum itself stand alone, isolated at Pitzer College. The involvement of the community has been a critical part of the curriculum development from the beginning with Elder-led workshops and the Elders-in-Residence and they will continue to influence program curriculum in the future. Incorporation of Elders has made the program, according to one interviewee:

The culture aspect brings in the Elders in Residence, the spiritual leaders who are part of the program. Because this is a Native American/Indigenous program, you have youth that look up to Elders and respect them. So having Elders in the program is a plus because they come with a lot of knowledge and they are able to share teachings with the students, making it very positive and uplifting. That is one of the reasons why I kept coming back because of the cultural aspect to it (Subject B, personal communication, January 18, 2016).

‘I came back because of the cultural aspect’ is a common phrase of the program attendees and shows how much hunger, how much need, there is among Native youth to become connected to their traditional culture in today’s day and age.

Villalpando and Solorzano critique the existing concepts of ‘cultural capital’ by Bourdieu (2011) and ‘cultural integrity’ by Jun and Colyar (2002), asserting that a reconceptualization is needed in analyzing the relationship between students of color, their culture, identity, and college preparation programs. Cultural capital is a system of advantages that one may possess, such as forms of knowledge or skills, to increase their societal standing; within education, it is knowledge that parents pass along to their children in order to navigate and succeed in the current educational system (Bourdieu, 2011, 92). Cultural integrity is an affirmation of students’ cultural identities by both themselves and their teachers as a positive and ‘critical ingredient’ in college success (Jun & Colyar, 2002 as cited in Villalpando, O., Solorzano, 2005, 211). Villalpando and Solorzano’s reconceptualization focuses on a lens of cultural wealth, which encompasses both different and unacknowledged types of cultural capital that a student may possess, both of which can aid in student empowerment in the transitional process from high school to college.

The curriculum of the Native Youth to College trades in Villalpando and Solorzano's concept of cultural wealth – the wealth of their traditional culture, incorporating ceremony into daily experiences at home and at school, Elders, college preparation skills, writing, and more. The education provided in the Program *definitely* provides students with the knowledge of “how to combine Indigenous notions of culture, knowledge, and power with western/European conceptions in order to actively engage in survivance, self-determination, and tribal autonomy” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 437). Essay writing, daily blogging, and creation of student digital books or films are all expressions of cultural wealth unrealized by students: simply by telling their stories through modern media, they are proclaiming their legitimacy as tribal people with unique backgrounds worthy of sharing. Within the program curriculum, “culture, knowledge, and power take on a new meaning when examined through Indigenous lenses,” lenses that Indigenous students are just learning to try on and use (p. 437).

Appendix

Interview Questions

1. What is/was your position(s) in the Pipeline Program?
2. For how long have you been involved in the program?
3. Were you involved in any aspect of curriculum development? If yes, please explain.
4. What do you consider to be the 3 strongest aspects of program curriculum and why?
5. What do you consider to be the 3 weakest aspects of program curriculum and why?
6. *Only for those who have been involved for 2+ years: Every year, the Pipeline Program curriculum changes, even if slightly. Please comment on your perceptions of these changes. (i.e. For the better or worse?, in response to certain stimuli, etc?)
7. If you could incorporate a subject/aspect (i.e. debate classes, certain cultural activities, or life skills such as how to manage personal finances) into the program curriculum, what would it be and why?
8. In your opinion, does the curriculum aspect of traditional culture woven into science learning – Western, Indigenous, or both – positively affect the students? If so, why or why not? Please give an example.
9. In my research, I have found nine (9) unique aspects of program curriculum:
Science, health careers, academics, intergenerational leadership, telling your story, media studies, ceremony/cultural activities, life skills & college prep. Do you agree/disagree?
Are there one or two aspects that you would like to expand on?
10. Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you would like to mention?

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