# Description: FSonllyDescription: umlogostretch450mwThe National Native Children’s Trauma Center, 2015 Review

Summary of Five Year Center Review Report

The National Native Children’s Trauma Center (NNCTC) is one component of (IERS) and indeed, as noted by the External Reviewer, “It is not possible to address the NNCTC in isolation from its role as component of the Institute for Educational Research and Services (IERS) at the University of Montana.” Although the NNCTC has a Director, IERS leadership plays a significant role in managing the NNCTC.

Since the pervious review, the National Native Children’s Trauma Center (NNCTC) has developed into a leader in trauma-informed care of children and adolescents in Native populations; this is reflected in the name change from The Montana Center for the Investigation and Treatment of Childhood Trauma to one that more accurately reflects the Center’s focus and expertise: The National Native Children’s Trauma Center. The Five Year Center Review Report (October 2014) submitted by The National Native Children’s Trauma Center (NNCTC) details the history and current operations, including budgetary information, of this Center. Professionals from a variety of disciplines both on and off campus deliver and/or support the culturally relevant delivery of an array of evidence-based trauma-informed interventions to client systems of all sizes, from individuals and families to tribal communities.

Purpose

NNCTC identifies its purpose as “…to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families, and communities throughout the United States, with particular focus on American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations” (NNCTC, 2014, p. 2). The Center is designated as a national Category 2 Trauma Services Adaptation Center within the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and is the only one with a focus on American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Objectives

NNCTC objectives have not changed in the past five years, and are identified in the Center’s Five Year Center Review Report (October 2014) as the following:

1. Provide training in trauma awareness and evidence-based treatment to mental health personnel, educators, police officers, and related service providers.

2. Adapt trauma treatment services for American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth with trauma, maintaining the fidelity of the evidence-based practices used while simultaneously drawing on the wisdom of community experts in Native languages, healing, and cultures.

3. Contribute to the national understanding of trauma-informed interventions through original interdisciplinary research that generates resources for the University of Montana and for the NNCTC’s tribal partners.

4. Train graduate students in Psychology, Education, and Social Work.

5. Serve as a leader in the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and create new tribal partnerships, allowing us to expand our work to additional reservations and reinforce all of the above objectives.

(pp. 6-7)

Summary of External Review

Dr. Christopher Blodgett of WSU served as an external reviewer of the NNCTC. He utilized staff interviews, review of written work, and his familiarity with the Center through his similar work and cooperative projects to provide a detailed assessment of the NNCTC. Dr. Blodgett noted that the NNCTC is a national leader in trauma work in Indian Country, and has developed into a robust and respected center for policy, practice, and research in the field. His review is supportive and enthusiastic of the work of the NNCTC.

Dr. Blodgett provided three recommendations as part of his review, and they are:

*1. Consider development of a plan to balance one time training efforts with the strategic*

*development of programs in specific communities and service sectors.*

*2. Determine how to create unobligated funding that can support the work needed to anticipate and develop new lines of work. While the NNCTC is a healthy organization, the increasingly restrictive nature of grants’ terms and conditions make it harder and harder to have funds that can explicitly support development and innovation. The University may choose to consider how to directly support this or to provide the fund development supports through its foundation arm to reach this goal.*

*3. Review the current decision making process to consider if a more inclusive decision- making process would increase staff engagement even further and help advance the effectiveness of program implementation.*

The NNCTC has not made a request of the University for funding, and it has a record of external funding but the second recommendation seems noteworthy. The third recommendation reflects concerns about leadership, and this appears to be related to leadership at the level of IERS. We are hopeful the Center sees a smooth transition in leadership with the recent departure of Ms. Marilyn Bruguier Zimmerman and subsequent appointment of Maegan Rides At The Door as Director.   Ms. Rides At The Door was previously the School Behavioral Health Specialist at the Center and a career counselor with the University of Montana.

Review in terms of the University’s mission.

* Comments:

In the Five Year Report, NNCTC identifies how their work aligns with the University of Montana’s Strategic Plan, and particularly in the areas of **Partnering for Student Success, Education for the Global Century, and Discovery and Creativity to Serve Montana and the World.**

NNCTC’s strength is in the ability to bring together the diverse strengths and resources both at the University of Montana but also in the communities served by the Center. The respectful collaborations that the NNCTC has developed with tribal communities allows important and relevant education to flow in all directions, and therefore professionals and students have benefitted from the expertise gained by this exchange of information. The NNCTC enhances the educational and professional experiences available at the University of Montana and therefore enhances the reputation of the University.

* Does ECOS/Faculty Senate consider this center controversial? No.
* Is the relationship with academic units beneficial? Yes. In addition to the student opportunities mentioned above, the faculty involvement from the Department of Psychology and the School of Social Work is noteworthy.   The Center's Principal Investigator reports to the Dean of the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Services.
* Is the program revenue neutral or does it consume more resources than it generates? If so, is the use of University resources justified? The program is revenue neutral, with an excellent record of external funding.
* Is the entity making progress toward objectives? Yes. The Center has been successful in securing a diversified and enduring array of federal funding, from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.  This has resulted in 11 peer-reviewed or major national publications in the past six years. The affiliated Co-Teach Preschool has served as a practicum or employment site for 124 students during the review period, and an additional 13 students in Social Work and in Psychology have been provided with clinical supervision and training opportunities. While there are other regional centers addressing trauma in native communities, notably work based at the University of Oklahoma, the NNCTC is widely recognized as a principal voice for this work nationally.

Recommendation: Continue.

Justification: The National Native Children’s Trauma Center is an established and successful Center that has emerged as a leader in the field of trauma-informed care. Their research and publication record is impressive, external funding is secure, students gain important educational experiences, and the work of the National Native Children’s Trauma Center is making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and their communities.