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The Willow AGEP Alliance

Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate

University of Montana ♦ Salish Kootenai College ♦ Sitting Bull College

The University of Montana leads the Collaborative Research Project to advance Native American Faculty in STEM

MISSOULA - The Willow AGEP Alliance: A Model to Advance Native American Faculty in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (NAF-STEM) is a project funded by the National Science Foundation (Award Number: 1723248). The project is a collaborative effort to increase the success of NAF-STEM, while also advancing knowledge about the issues impacting their career progression. Alliance institutions include Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana; Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, North Dakota; and the University of Montana, in Missoula, Montana.



Willow Team members include (left to right): Shandin Pete, Jennifer Harrington, Ruth Swaney, Amy Kinch, Bertie Brown (External Evaluator), Blakely Brown, Laurie Walker, Ke Wu, Mason Niblack, Greg Gould (Director, Grants and Contracts, Salish Kootenai College), Rena Schmitt, Katherine Swan, and D'Shane Barnett. Not pictured: Michael Patterson, Maja Pederson and Anne Grant.

**The Willow AGEP Alliance
Advisory Board:**

Bill Swaney
Salish Kootenai

Karla Bird
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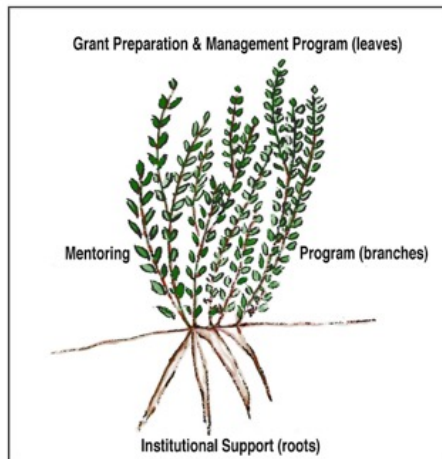
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Diné from Tólikan

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Bertie Brown
Northern Arapahoe
Northern Cheyenne



THE WILLOW PROJECT

MODEL has three interconnected components focusing on the support for Native American Faculty in STEM: **(1)** an Indigenous mentoring program (IMP); **(2)** a grant preparation and management program; and **(3)** an institutional support program.

The project launched in August 2017. During the first year the grant activities focus on the following areas:

The Development of the Indigenous Mentoring Program (IMP)

The IMP will be informed by interviews of Native American faculty, instructors, and post-doctorates in STEM. Participants were recruited from the Northwest, Southwest, and Southeast regions of the United States, at 4-year doctoral granting institutions, medical campuses, and tribal colleges. To date, 20 faculty have been interviewed. Data analysis is in progress to identify themes and trends that will guide the development and implementation of the IMP.

Circle Methodologies and Climate Survey

The Social Science Research team is collecting qualitative data from Native American faculty in STEM via an Indigenous Research Method called Circle Methodologies. The Circles focus on participants telling stories about their ancestors and academic mentors, experiences in academia that support and inhibit professional development and career advancement, and the strategies they use for their own promotion and advancement as faculty. The research team also developed a climate survey for all STEM faculty at the three alliance institutions. The climate study will inform suggested institutional policy changes, as well as a national survey of Native American faculty in STEM disciplines.

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