

Professor works to increase Native American business majors

Native Americans are largely absent from corporate boardrooms, executive positions in major corporations as well as many small and medium-sized businesses, but Amy Klemm Verbos, Ph.D., J.D., an assistant professor of management at the University of South Dakota, is working to change that.

Verbos and educators from institutions across the United States, including Deanna Kennedy, assistant professor of operations management at the University of Washington

Bothell; Joseph Gladstone, assistant professor of public health management at New Mexico State University; and Dan Stewart, associate professor of management at Gonzaga University; are developing strategies to attract Native American students to business majors as part of The PhD Project.

Founded in 1994, The PhD Project is a program that supports African American, Latino American and Native American students into Ph.D. programs with the

goal of putting more professors of color in front of business students. Last year, according to The PhD Project, only 12 Native Americans were in enrolled in business doctoral programs.

"The great news is that we've been enormously successful as our graduation rate for students in the program is better than 90 percent," said Verbos, who is a member of the Pokagon band of the Potawatomi Indians. "The problem is improving those numbers for Native American

students, who have been largely overlooked when it comes to doctoral programs."

Verbos and her colleagues' work was highlighted nationally in the publication "Diverse Issues in Higher Education" (<http://diverseeducation.com/article/49678/>) outlining their mission of increasing Native American students majoring in business and directing graduates toward doctoral programs. For the last five years, Verbos, Kennedy, Gladstone and

Stewart have traveled the country presenting at conferences and publishing papers on the importance of Native American values and the impact those principles have in encouraging Native American students interested in business as a major.

"At USD, we present to First-Year Experience students and talk about why they may wish to consider business as a major," added Verbos, who has taught at USD since 2009. "We show them what they can accomplish with business

degrees and that there's a tremendous need for people with business degrees.

"Business, as a major, has been a little less important in the tribal community generally," Verbos continued, "but the importance of those degrees is becoming greater in South Dakota and across the nation."

For more information about the PhD Project, please visit <https://www.phdproject.org>.

Read & Recycle!

New USD Veterans Center fulfills students' needs

By Travis Gulbrandson
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It has only been a few weeks, but since the new Student Veterans Resource Center opened on the USD campus, it has rarely been empty.

"It's rare that I'm the only one here studying," said Eric Gage, former president of the USD Veterans Club. "This room is probably one of the biggest deals for veterans on campus that I can think of."

Located at the Temporary Student Center, the room had its official ribbon-cutting Nov. 13 and offers student veterans a venue to study, interact or just take a break between classes.

"Veterans can come and

do their homework, print off a study guide, have a cup of coffee, get benefit information and just feel safe and belong," Gage said. "It's quiet here, and everybody here is in this room for a reason. It's not that we're trying to segregate ourselves from everybody else, but in a common space it can be very loud. It's very uncomfortable, and veterans don't like to be in crowds."

"We each have our own unique needs and things we have to deal with, and in this room, it's safe," he said.

If a student veteran has gone there once, they most likely will be there again – and often – Gage said.

"Everybody is welcome," he said. "Even if it's somebody you've never

met before, you strike up a conversation because you know you have things in common with that person."

USD's veterans coordinator Jason Dean said the acquisition of the room is the culmination of 10 years of work in assisting the university in the implementation of other veteran-related programs.

The first of these was the reestablishment of the USD Veterans Club in 2004, which helped veterans to increase their on-campus visibility.

Further advances were made when Dean was installed in his current position less than two years ago.

"In my office, students come in, and if they're eligible for benefits I help

them along to file applications, to fill out the necessary paperwork, to get the information that they need in order to get their GI Bill benefits rolling," he said. "I'm the first person they need to see if they have any military affiliation, and I'll point them where they need to go, or figure out how many of their services I can offer."

Justin Smith, project director for the Fides Grant, said Dean's role is a big one.

"Before, there would be just somebody in the registrar's office would handle veterans' benefits, and every year or two, whoever did it would change. So there was very little consistency," Smith said.

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