Proposal for Faculty Learning Community AY 2013-2014
Enhancing Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Communication and Education in STEM

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Description: This topic based Faculty Learning Community (FLC) will focus on enhancing cross-cultural communication and education within the STEM and biomedical curriculum by exploring methods to increase exchange of knowledge of diverse cultures in Alaska and the professional cultures of STEM and biomedical students and professionals. This FLC is open to any UAF faculty or instructional personnel.

Justifications: Alaska's Native people comprise eleven distinct cultures, speaking eleven different languages and twenty-two different dialects. Rich in heritage and tradition talented Alaska Native students offer diverse world views and are poised to enrich scientific inquiry and medical practice in culturally sensitive ways.

Goals:
• Offer a meeting every 3 weeks to build a community and facilitate exchange of ideas on means to enhance exchange of cultural knowledge
• Implement a trial cross-cultural buddy system to facilitate exchange of cultural knowledge

Outcomes:
• Obtain feedback from a minimum of 3 trial buddy pairs to develop a plan, timeline, and budget to administer and implement a large scale cross-cultural exchange between STEM and biomedical professionals and diverse Alaskan Native cultures represented at UAF
• Expand networks in STEM and biomedical disciplines into Alaska Native communities and vice versa

Gatherings and other details:
• Every three weeks - Discussion group located within Rural Student Services or Murie Life Sciences Building
• Trial buddy pairs: Professional and social network exchange will revolve around partnerships between Alaska Native and nonNative faculty, post-docs, graduate and undergraduate students to facilitate professional development in STEM and biomedical careers and share knowledge of Alaska Native cultures. Network Buddies: Neuroscience graduate students will request an Alaska Native cultural mentor through our local chapter of AISES, ANSEP and UAF’s Rural Student Services as well as the summer RAHI program. In this process Alaska Native cultural mentors with interests in neuroscience will be paired with neuroscience graduate students, post-docs or faculty. The neuroscientists will invite cultural mentors to neuroscience events including seminars, thesis defenses, lab meetings, and opportunities to observe research activities. Likewise it is expected that cultural mentors will invite neuroscientists to cultural events such as community potlatches, AFN, World Indian Eskimo Olympics and the Festival of Native Arts.