

Drumbeats Alaska Consortium

Providing education equity for food and energy security since 2005

A USDA NIFA Program with Demonstrated Impact



The *Drumbeats Alaska Consortium* of the five Alaska Native serving campuses of the College of Rural and Community Development is responsive to community needs and continues to develop and deliver relevant and innovative curricula. *Drumbeats* courses support educational equity for Alaska Natives and enhance the sustainability of rural Alaskan communities.

Strengthening Alaska Native Stewardship, 2019-2021, assists rural communities to be more self-sustaining through the sharing of knowledge with students and community members on ways to increase food security and sovereignty. Courses in **High Latitude Range Management**, **Tribal Stewardship** and **Ethnobotany** offer an array of courses to this aim. **Tribal Stewardship** supports community and Tribal efforts to develop regional strategies through land use and resource planning. The **Food Security & Sovereignty** project teaches how to grow food in Arctic climates. **Sustainable Energy** courses increase security for power generation by teaching energy efficiency practices and alternative energy solutions in rural Alaska.

The **Environmental Science**, **High Latitude Range Management**, and **Tribal Stewardship** programs provide skilled workforce development in natural resources and in the environmental sciences. All *Drumbeats* courses build leadership skills that can benefit communities long after the courses are over.

To provide educational equity, the model for *Drumbeats* delivery is founded on the *Core Values of Indigeneity*.¹ Courses are designed to address student learning styles, to incorporate Indigenous and local ways of knowing and to include Native Elders and local experts as guest speakers. Faculty and staff rely upon strong community-based relationships and partnerships to ensure educational experiences that apply to the daily lives of participants. See the *Core Values of Indigeneity* framework on the back page.



Suggestions for Using the 4R's Framework *Tips for Teaching & Delivery*

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Drumbeats Contributors

*"What First Nations people are seeking is not a lesser education, and not even an equal education, but rather a better education --an education that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise responsibility over their own lives."*²

REDISTRIBUTION – RELEVANCE

- The intensive, in-person community-based courses are most successful because they make everything taught more applicable.
- Adults seek *Drumbeats* courses because they need to get an education to complete a home or community project that is incorporated into the class.
- Assignments can be meaningful and relevant to students. They have jobs, kids and a thousand things going on and they don't need exercises that are just for the sake of doing an assignment.
- Visuals can explain a complicated process with multiple layers, and tactile, hands on components help with relevance to engage students.
- Volunteers forge the way, pooling everyone's resources, knowledge and desire to make growing greens inside an energy efficient connexion successful.
- Students come up with hands-on projects that are plant and place-based that makes a bridge to the online virtual learning environment.
- Relevance is important for a student's motivation.
- Online archived recordings on ethnobotanical subjects in Rasmuson Library's Project Jukebox provide materials for students to use.

RECIPROCITY – IN RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

- When students are viewed as the whole person and are allowed the space to learn knowledge and skills to apply to their lives, it changes everything for them.
- Sometimes teaching is more of a conversation with students. It is important to listen to what students have to say and incorporate their feedback.
- Often real-life past projects shared by students are used as examples in future classes.
- It is only during the last 200 years that there are people who are not Alaska Native; First Alaskans have lived here for at least 14,000 years.
- A broad spectrum of methodologies works with Alaska Native students.
- Resources on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website upgrades teaching methods.
- Tribal Stewardship GIS students have a textbook, but the data and teaching is personalized for each student for their location.

This newsletter is a product of program evaluation.
The suggestions, themed into 4 core values of Indigeneity,
are paraphrased comments from the Drumbeats Contributors.



RESPONSIBILITY - THROUGH PARTICIPATION

- The heart of innovative educational delivery is high-quality curricula for students where they are at physically, socio culturally, and academically.
- Tribal Stewardship courses are delivered in conjunction with state and federal public meetings related to wild foods. Students have an immediate opportunity to participate in the meetings. They apply their knowledge as they watch decisions being made and use public speaking skills to testify.
- A variety of methods used to deliver *Sustainable Energy* classes broaden participation - from high school teachers using college curricula in their classes as dual credit, to distance delivered online courses and place-based classes in rural communities often delivered through intensive sessions.
- Online archived recordings on ethnobotanical subjects in Rasmuson Library's Project Jukebox provides materials for students to use.
- The Energy and Society course is delivered synchronously and asynchronously in the same semester. Recordings from the synchronous are used as material for the asynchronous course as students float between delivery styles as they fit their schedules. This increases class participation.

RELATIONSHIP – RESPECT

- Teaching without colonizing people is creating a space where students can speak freely and recognizing that people are experts, and smart, and knowledgeable.
- Recognize the strengths individual students bring to the class. Know they are capable and teach from there.
- Pay attention to the ways information is accessible to students.
- The curriculum is delivered with local experts and Elders with Indigenous Knowledge, or a variety of national tribal leader speakers.
- Alaskan Native students have more information and experience in one place and many are experts in food and energy science.
- Non-Native faculty work to center the Indigenous voice.
- Teaching is more than the curriculum content. It is how and when the course is delivered. Honor the subsistence harvesting schedule. Hold late start classes in the fall.
- In reference to teaching and working with Alaska Natives, you either believe they are a sovereign nation, or you don't. Too many people walk the line and deciding makes a huge difference.

Strengthening Alaska Native Stewardship - Key Impacts 2019-2021

...increasing capacity for food and energy security

Residents and workers in the Tribally owned business, White Out Reindeer Ranch on St. Lawrence Island, gained business knowledge. The Reindeer Ranch partnered with Kawerak, Inc., the regional non-profit Native corporation, and secured funding to expand and increase meat production.

...increasing leadership skills

After earning an OE in Sustainable Energy, a student pursued a solar electric system with battery backup in the community building in the village of Solomon, near Nome. The student wrote a grant for funding and was the project leader. Watch the slideshow on youtube and look for the one with *Boss Girl* on her hardhat at <https://youtu.be/ZOcbMckrUJM>.

...increasing educational equity

To serve the Bering Strait region effectively and equitably, Northwest Campus developed diversity equity inclusion activities for local residents. The Elder speaker series was established which has been expanding to include film showings. Campus staff are considering an Indigenous Knowledge speaker series with Elders, to share and show ways Indigenous Knowledge is scientific and of value to all.

The 4R's for Culturally Responsive Place-Based Learning

Drumbeats Alaska Consortium faculty deliver culturally responsive, place-based curricula that provides relevance and access to higher education from Kotzebue to Tazlina

...the cyclical obligation

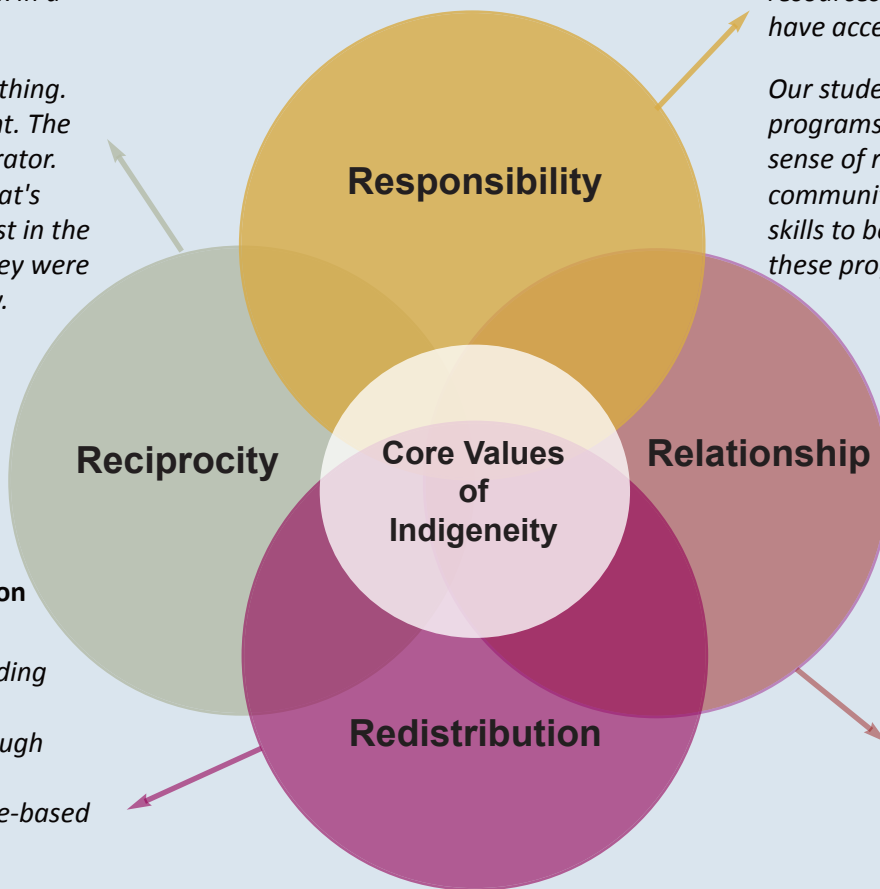
I have the education and privilege to make the education system work in a community.

Everybody gives something. Everybody. The student. The teacher. The administrator. It's very reciprocal. That's why our programs exist in the first place, because they were born out of reciprocity.

...the community obligation

As faculty, we use our responsibility to leverage resources for those that don't have access to them.

Our students engage in our programs because they have a sense of responsibility to their community, and we give them the skills to be successful through these programs.



...the sharing obligation

Our direct route of redistribution is providing educational access to education equity through tuition and travel scholarships and place-based courses.

Students and participants redistribute the knowledge that they're learning. If I ask why are you here? What motivates you? I hear, I want to give back to my community.

...the kinship obligation

We spend a lot of time with people. We invest the time to build relationships and trust so they come to us to ask for classes. Then we tailor the curriculum to their needs.

1. Harris, L. and Wasilewski, J. (2005). Indigeneity, an alternative worldview: Four R's of Relationship, Responsibility, Reciprocity, Redistribution vs. Two P's (Power and Profit). *Sharing the journey towards conscious evolution. Systems Research and Behavioral Science*. 21, 489-503. Wiley InterScience.
 2. Kirkness, V. J. and Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: Four R's: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*. Vol. 30, No. 3, May 1991, pp. 1-15.



Drumbeats Website
uaf.edu/drumbeats



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