Student Diversity in the NAU School of Forestry: Recruitment and Retention Efforts
A Little Background and History

- SoF only offers degrees in Forestry (B.S., M.F., M.S., Ph.D.)

- NAU is in a region with significant Native American and Hispanic populations
  - NAU strategic plan explicitly addresses these groups

- Don’t have reliable data on number of NA and Hispanic graduates
  - Currently have a list of approximately 70 NA alumni

- Many of our NA alumni are well placed in their tribes, BIA and other agencies
### Enrollment Data: Fall 2011

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**Note:** Data is for degree-seeking students only.
“Routine” Recruiting Practices

- **Occasional visits to tribal high schools**
  - Plan to expand to Phoenix and Tucson high schools

- **SIPI articulation agreement and visits**
  - Plan to expand to other NA-serving 2-year institutions

- **Inclusion of students from under-represented groups in all new recruiting materials**

- **Video projects on the experience of these students**
“Routine” Retention Practices

- Encouragement to use specialized university services
  - e.g., Native American Student Services
“Routine” Retention Practices

- Encouragement to use specialized university services
  - e.g., College Transition Courses

**NAU 100 TRANSITION TO COLLEGE (1)**
Interactive course designed to facilitate student success through exploration of academic, navigation, and life skills, familiarize students with campus resources and services, and assist students in forming a support network. Letter grade only.

**NAU 102 BRIDGE TO NAU: TRANSITIONING FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1)**
This course is designed to provide students a seamless transition from a community or tribal college to a four-year state university and serves both traditional and non-traditional students. Pass-fail only. Prerequisite: Admission to Transitional Student Group
“Routine” Retention Practices

• Other Examples:
  • Help finding summer jobs
  • Engagement with Native American, Hispanic and other diverse professionals
“Routine” Retention Practices

- Special attention from Student Services Coordinator?

- Recruiting
- Academic Advising
- Career Services
Externally-Funded Initiatives

- Native American Forestry Program (1989-2004)
- USDA Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program (2002-2007)
- US Forest Service-funded Diversity Coordinator (2011-present)
  - Funded through USFS F&AM Workforce Diversity Program
  - Region 3 F&AM, Coconino and Kaibab National Forests
Role of Diversity Coordinator

1. Recruitment, with emphasis on Native American, Hispanic, other minority, and female students... especially those with an interest in fire-related careers

Tips for Successful High School Visits:

1. Plan on doing some hands-on activities

2. Get to know the long-term dedicated teachers and work with them
Role of Diversity Coordinator

2. Retention

1. Get to know the students, their family situations, etc. Reach out to them

2. Encourage the students to seek help soon enough

3. Encourage faculty to keep an eye out for problems and let her know about them

4. Don’t emphasize the problems associated with where they come from (“the rez is home”)
Role of Diversity Coordinator

3. Assistance with employment
   - Commitment by Coconino and Kaibab NFs

4. Academic Advising?
Some Challenges

• The Students
  • Academic preparation, financial situation, family issues, adjustments to being away from home

• Staff Support
  • Turnover
  • Expertise and commitment

• Financial Sustainability of Programs