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ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY SEATTLE NAMES TWO NEW SCHOOLS TO BOLSTER NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION

SEATTLE - Antioch University Seattle recently selected the Suquamish Tribe on Bainbridge Island and the Wellpinit School District on the Spokane Indian Reservation as two new participants in the Early College High School Initiative. This initiative is a nationwide effort to increase the number of first-generation, low-income and minority students who attain a bachelor's degree.

The schools will work with Antioch to redesign their curriculum to better serve Native American students - students with the highest dropout rates and the lowest college completion rates of any ethnic group in the country. Only about half of Native American students graduate from high school; of those, less than three percent will earn a bachelor's degree.

Suquamish and Wellpinit join three other schools - Medicine Wheel Academy in Spokane, Ferndale High School in Ferndale, and Tulalip Heritage School in Marysville - that are planning their early college programs. During the next two years, Antioch will identify, start up, pilot and transition three additional sites to serve Native American students.

"Our early college high schools for Native American youth plan to boost academic success through a multifaceted approach," explains Linda Campbell, Ph.D., project director and core faculty member at Antioch University Seattle. "Each school will feature a local, culturally relevant curriculum, integrate high school diploma and associate of arts degree requirements, promote family and community engagement, and provide academic advising. In addition, the schools will provide these services to students in their local communities, which should increase their chance of success."

The schools are part of a five-year, \$40 million initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Carnegie Corp. of New York and the Ford Foundation to create or redesign 100 early college high schools for underserved and low-income young people and neighborhoods. In these purposely small schools, students have the opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and two years of college credit toward a college degree.

"Nearly three-quarters of high school graduates begin some form of further education, but more than half who enter college fail to complete a degree; one-third never even make it to the second year," notes project director Nancy Hoffman of Jobs for the Future, which coordinates the early college initiative at the national level. "Established through a

partnership of colleges and high schools, early college high schools will couple rigorous instruction with intensive support to prepare students to take college courses once they are ready.”

Antioch chose its sites based on a written grant application and site visit. Each demonstrated strengths that suggest future success at implementing early college programs, including:

- small school size and personalized student support
- academic programs that integrate local native culture
- extensive family and community outreach
- partnerships with tribal or community colleges

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation identified Antioch University Seattle in March 2002 to participate in the Early College High School Initiative. Antioch has successfully worked with tribal communities in the state, especially in its graduate and undergraduate education programs. In addition to offering reservation-based degree programs, Antioch developed the state's first indigenous language endorsement. Antioch University also has a 150-year history of working to increase educational access for historically underserved populations.

Early college sites in Washington are:

THE SUQUAMISH TRIBE

Located on the Port Madison Indian Reservation on the Kitsap Peninsula, the Suquamish Tribe plans to start a new tribal school to serve 200 students in grades 6 through 12. The new school will integrate education, social and health services in an academically rigorous early college design. It will partner with Olympic College in Bremerton in delivering undergraduate college courses. The Suquamish tribe has made education one of its top priorities.

WELLPINIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Located in Wellpinit in the heart of the Spokane Indian Reservation, the Wellpinit School District will serve 200 students in grades 6 through 12. The school has an outstanding track record with native student high school graduation rates. The early college will enable the school to deliver college courses directly on site. Wellpinit selected Institute for Extended Learning of the Community Colleges of Spokane and Gonzaga University as its undergraduate college partners.

MEDICINE WHEEL ACADEMY

Located in urban Spokane, Medicine Wheel Academy is a public school that will serve up to 200 students, representing more than 30 tribes and bands. The academy's college partner is Spokane Falls Community College.

FERNDALE HIGH SCHOOL

Located in Whatcom County near the Lummi Indian Reservation, this public high school serves 1,500 students. The Ferndale early college high school will serve approximately 300 students consisting of a combination of economically disadvantaged, first-generation college students and Lummi tribal members. The high school's college partners are Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College and Whatcom Community College.

TULALIP HERITAGE SCHOOL

Located on the Tulalip Indian Reservation overlooking Puget Sound in Snohomish County, this public high school will serve up to 200 students, consisting predominately of Tulalip tribal members. Tulalip's college partner is Everett Community College.

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY SEATTLE

At Antioch University Seattle (AUS), adult learners find individualized, innovative programs with a commitment to academic excellence, community service and social justice. AUS is one of five campuses of Antioch University, founded in 1852 in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Primary responsibility for designing and operating the 100 early college high schools across the nation rests with nine partner organizations, coordinated by Jobs for the Future. In addition to Antioch University Seattle, they are: Foundation for California Community Colleges, Knowledge Works Foundation, Middle College National Consortium, National Council of La Raza, Portland Community College, Utah Partnership Foundation, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and SECME, Inc. For more information about these partners and the Early College High School Initiative, visit www.earlycolleges.org.