**Development and Management of Oregon's Tribal Archives**
**LSTA grant 12-06-4m**
**Year two/final peer evaluation**
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**Summary:**

The project assessed the needs of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon for training in archives and records management, and planned, implemented and assessed a week-long institute to provide in-depth training in formal and sustainable archives and records management. Additionally, the project was able to provide funds to each tribe for supplies and equipment to begin to put into practice what had been taught.

**Project objectives and methods:**

Objective one: Needs assessment
During the summer of 2011, as part of the year one project, site visits were arranged and made to each of the nine federally recognized tribes to assess their needs for archives and records management training.
Arrangements began by making initial contact with the communities. Aspects included discovering who the appropriate people to talk to were, making assurances that the visitors did not want to take, or even necessarily see, artifacts and records, but just to help the tribal communities manage them, and setting meeting times that accommodated the academic calendar of the University and the social and ceremonial calendars of the tribal communities.
Logistical arrangements were made primarily by the project's intern, Laura Cray, and where overnight stays were necessary, lodging was taken at tribally owned hotels or casinos when possible. An agenda was drafted and sent to participants in advance.
Visits were made by Larry, Natalia, Laura, and in some cases James Fox, Larry's counterpart at the University of Oregon. Tribal community members attending included anyone who had an interest in the topics discussed.
During the visits copious notes were taken, and reports were written and shared with those who attended the meetings.

Objective two: Develop curriculum
A curriculum planning committee was formed, including Larry, Natalia and Tiah and meetings were held weekly to develop the curriculum. Jennifer O'Neal, a Grand Ronde tribal member and at that time the head archivist for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, assisted.

University of Oregon Special Collections and University Archives staff were partners in the curriculum.
Curriculum content was broad, including facilities planning, policies, managing various kinds of collections, access and outreach, disaster preparedness, digitization, and grant writing and funding. Binders were made up for each of the attendees with printed copies of all materials.

Objective three: Plan the conference elements
Arrangements were made with OSU's University Housing and Dining Services for lodging and meals and two special meals were planned. An opening dinner with Jennifer O'Neal as guest speaker was held on the OSU campus and a closing dinner was hosted by Grand Ronde's Spirit Mountain Casino with Dr. George Wasson, a Coquille tribal elder with archival research experience as the guest speaker.

Objective four: Host the institute
Eighteen tribal members, representatives of all nine of Oregon's federally recognized tribes attended. They stayed in the residence halls and usually ate at the dining halls.
Classroom activities at OSU alternated with field trips to the Benton County Historical Society and both the Siletz and Grand Ronde Tribal Archives.
Sessions were video recorded for the participants' future use.
It was noted that there is a gray area between providing needed conference items and giving gifts (i.e. a bag to carry conference materials) to attendees and that the grant did not allow for gift giving, but that there are cultural elements involved in that activity, both with respect to professional conferences (conference swag is one term I've heard) and among tribal peoples. Through a combination of OSU Library contributions and personal purchases, the institute team provided the attendees with bags that contained a number of practical items for use during the week. Especially successful were flash drives that not only held the institute materials, but were used to share materials among the participants.

Objective five: Create and implement an assessment of the institute
On the last day a written evaluation, developed from evaluations created for similar programs, was distributed and a discussion was held. Plans were made for telephone interviews with participants five months after the institute.

Objective six: Build relationships between OSU archives and tribal communities
Not only were relationships built between the archives and the tribal communities, but also between members of the tribal communities as well. The TAI also continued the strong and enduring collaboration between OSU's Special Collections & Archives Research Center and the University of Oregon's Special Collections and University Archives.

**Results**

Attendees reported that they gained information, remembered things they had learned but forgotten, were better able to take on projects, to advocate for more resources, and to do things more professionally than they had been. They also formed a network through which they will support each other. A public Facebook page and a private listserve have been created to facilitate networking.
There were funds remaining after the institute, and the decision was made to use them to buy archival supplies and equipment, with the tribes selecting what best met their needs, and the archives ordering them.

**Impact:**

Professionally managed and maintained archives and records are an asset to any organization but may be especially important to the tribes. For the federal government to recognize tribal governments one requirement may be the availability of archival records which meet the standards that the federal government expects.

**Observations:**

Early in the planning some consideration had been given to having evening events, and there were two dinners. But it was later concluded that the days were long enough as it was, and people did need to have down time. All participants drove to the institute, and so had transportation, and were provided with information about the community.
One the first day came the realization that it was better to keep the schedule flexible based on the attendees responses.
Staying in the residence halls had mixed results. The participants probably would have been more comfortable in a hotel. But there is a sense of camaraderie developed under such circumstances, and it is considerably less expensive.
The project was under budget at the end of the first year, and the extra funds were used to purchase memberships for attendees to Northwest Archivists, a regional professional organization, which provides networking opportunities. Although not initially as well received as expected by attendees when discussed during the institute, during the final assessment interviews with the attendees in January 2013, most attendees expressed an interest in learning more about NWA.

**Possibility of replication:**

One aspect that seems particularly important is that the institute staff acknowledged that they were not Native and that their attendees were, and the staff listened carefully to what was important to the attendees.

Site visits to the nine tribal communities were challenging. A different approach might be necessary for an area with more tribal communities.

The planning and implementation of this project was so successful that it could well serve as a model for undertaking a similar project.

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