

Award to fund Native American ECE



Chemeketa received \$120,660 in funding from the Oregon Department of Education, American Indian/Alaska Native Educator Success Initiative.

The project will provide tuition, technology stipends and textbooks for 25 Early Childhood Education students who are Native American or working with Native American children. The students will learn together in a cohort focused on culturally responsive teaching appropriate to Native American communities. The project will partner with Native American professionals

working in Native American serving early childhood programs to pilot and test culturally responsive curriculum that will then be distributed statewide.

Dean R. Taylor explains, “I’m excited to work with our Native American community to address the need for certified early childhood providers who reflect the culture and identity of the children and the families they serve, and the need for all educators to have training to be culturally responsive to Oregon tribal communities.”

The goal of this project is to increase the number of ECE certified Native American teachers. According to the Oregon Educator Equity Report, students from AI/AN populations are less likely to have a teacher who shares the same cultural background than white students. There is a statewide shortage of high quality early childhood educators, with much of the state deemed a “childcare desert.”

For many adults aspiring to earn early childhood degrees, going to college while working is a challenge, both financially and academically. To meet AI/AN students’ needs, the program will provide cultural relevance, one-on-one advising, embedded developmental supports, financial assistance, all-remote courses, access and training in technology and courses scheduled for working students’ convenience.

The cohort will help design and test curriculum materials that will then be published by Chemeketa Press and distributed to early childhood educators and colleges statewide. The cohort is enrolling now, with classes set to begin February 16, 2021.

Jessica Howard, Chemeketa President says, “This project is part of Chemeketa’s long-term work toward making higher education accessible and relevant for our entire community. We look forward to what we will learn from this collaboration that will help us serve all of our students.”