First Annual Studio a Success

by Dara Smith

Spirit Lake Dakota Nation

For three days this November, students from reservations across North Dakota and Minnesota gathered in Grand Forks for the first annual Native Community Studio. The Studio is a workshop, held November 2-5, for Native American high school students interested in careers in the field of journalism. Most importantly, the students got a hands-on experience in the different areas of journalism.

Holly Annis, assistant director of the Native Media Center (NMC) at the University of North Dakota School of Communication facilitated the Studio. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation grant that funded the Studio was co-authored by Dr. Pamela Kalbfleisch, director and professor of the School of Communication, and Holly Annis. The grant enables the NMC to host the Studio for three years.

The Studio exposes students to journalism and helps fulfill the NMC mission, which is “to promote diversity in the field of communication by increasing awareness of American Indian issues among mainstream media professionals and attracting Native students into Journalism and Communication careers.” The Studio also aims to get the students to understand their responsibility to their community by reporting culturally balanced stories to the public.

On Wednesday, ten students arrived in Grand Forks for the Studio. There were three students from the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, one from the Spirit Lake Nation, two from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and three from the White Earth Band of Chippewa. They spent a few hours that night eating pizza and getting to know each other.

The next day started early with breakfast, followed by a tour of the Grand Forks Herald. While at the Herald, the students learned about the different people that contribute to a newspaper. After the tour, students headed back to the NMC to play a game of BAFA BAFA. The game taught the students to not be so critical of other cultures and realize that there are cultural barriers that may prevent a person from really getting to know and understand another culture.

In the afternoon the students participated in three sessions. The first session was News and Feature Writing, session two was Interviewing, and session three was Columns and Editorials. Next came the tour of WDAZ-TV, where the students got the chance to watch the 5 o’clock news from inside the studio and control room. Later that night the students attended another two sessions, one on Visual Journalism, and the other about Layout and Design. After these sessions, the day ended with the students deciding on topics to write about for the next day.

The second day of the Studio began with a session on Accuracy, Editing, Ethics, and Plagiarism. After that the students attended a Photography and Graphics session, and later a session on Creative Writing.

The students went on two tours later that day. The first tour was to the North Dakota Museum of Art, where the students got to see artwork created by artists from all over the world. The students also went on another tour, this time of the UND campus. Prospective students had the chance to get a feel of the school.

The rest of that evening was spent writing and finishing up articles the students had been working on throughout the day.

Saturday began with a breakfast at NMC, where the students then presented their work. Awards were given out and everyone said their goodbyes. When asked about how she thought the first Studio went, Holly Annis said, “I consider it very successful and am looking forward to next year’s Studio!”