American Indian Student Cultural Center

January 21, 2011

Fees Request for 2011 - 2012 Academic Year

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Address

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“We acknowledge that the fees committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any differences between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not of the fees committee.”

Larissa Littlewolf
Preparer’s Name Here

Catherine Carlson
Co-Preparer’s Name Here

Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes____ No ___ X____
If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):

General Operating Support:   X   Start-Up Costs:   Capital:

Project / Program Support:   X   Technical Assistance:   X   Other (List):

Budget

Dollar Amount Requested $30,000.00
Total Annual Organization Budget $47,550.00
Total Project Budget (apart from General Operating) $30,250.00
American Indian Student Cultural Center

Brief History

In a grassroots effort to establish a positive environment for American Indian scholars, American Indian students began to meet regularly in Jones Hall in the early 1970’s. Few resources and support services were available to American Indian students at the time, so they created their own space in an empty classroom building. The American Indian Student Cultural Center (AISCC) was officially established in 1978, however the group previously existed first as the American Indian Club and then as the American Indian Student Association (AISA). The cultural center and its atmosphere have been vital to American Indian students and non-Indian students for over 30 years. Our presence on the University of Minnesota campus is essential in fostering cultural understanding and educating fellow students on issues surrounding cultural identity and diversity on this multicultural campus.

Mission

In our 30 years we have developed a three-point mission to serve as an organization that:

- Meets the needs of American Indian students on our multicultural campus.
- Functions as an agent for educating the broader University of Minnesota community about American Indian cultures and traditions.
- Provides a bridge between American Indian communities and the University of Minnesota.

The AISCC’s leadership, cultural, and outreach programs retain American Indian students by making their education at the University of Minnesota relevant to their lives. Programming at the AISCC falls under five main categories, which correspond to the purpose of the AISCC and its constitution:

- Education
- Diversity
- Programs and Cultural Activities
- Leadership Development
- Community outreach

Examples of some of our past events that fall under these categories include the Ethel Curry Powwow, Winter Storytelling, Honoring American Indian Women Luncheon, Frybread Frydays and American Indian Student outreach with both Minneapolis Public Schools and Osseo Area Schools Indian Education Programs. A discussion of the specific programming events included under these categories is provided in the “program breakdown” section.

The AISCC builds understanding of American Indian people within the larger University community. We invite top American Indian scholars, writers, and educators to create high quality events that draw diverse crowds. We hope every University student graduates having learned something about the breadth and depth of American Indian cultures and their contributions to American society.

Beyond drawing a diverse University audience our programming attracts American Indian people from all over the Metro area. The American Indian community has looked toward the AISCC for providing annual community events where students from across campus can interact with one of the largest Urban Indian populations in the country. We also work with the American Indian Studies Department to develop curricula that are relevant to both students and other University community members.
Student Organization Student Services Fees Request  
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities  
American Indian Student Cultural Center  

The AISCC board oversees the programming that is funded by student fees. The AISCC members elect their board annually. The board holds weekly meetings, which are open to all students and other University community members. The board has established partnerships with several campus groups to increase the variety of events the board funds, in order to reach a larger diverse population and to enhance campus life. The board also oversees the student staff and works closely with them to enact the goals of the board, establish new initiatives, and create new projects for the cultural center. The AISCC serves as the medium for many American Indian campus events – and serves as a resource for all students by providing awareness of American Indian cultural history and contemporary issues.

**AISCC Relationships**

The AISCC has had numerous relationships with a variety of organizations and we continue to value and nurture those relationships. Having strong ties with most of these organizations helps us to provide large events and activities for the University community. Building a bridge among various groups allows everyone a chance to get to know one another and work together. We have developed opportunities to build community, celebrate diversity, and learn about one another. The AISCC has always worked closely with the Circle of Indigenous Nations (COIN) and the American Indian Studies Department in past years for various cultural activities and educational enhancement. The board has also worked with La Raza Student Cultural Center, the Queer Student Cultural Center (QSCC), the Women’s Student Activist Collective (WSAC), the Ojibwe Language classes, the Dakota Student Language Society, the American Indian Cultural House, and American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). This year we co-sponsored the Sexual Assault Prevention panel with the Women’s Student Activist Collective. The AISCC had a representative at each weekly planning meeting to provide input on the planning process and had a representative sit on the panel during the event. There was also information on the impact of sexual assault in different communities as well as prevention information. We also have a long-standing relationship with the QSCC and we feel that it was important for us to contribute on a regular basis to their very important events. The AISCC is also planning to contribute volunteers to aid the American Indians in Science and Engineering Society with their participation in their rocket launch competition. We continue to draw a very diverse crowd to our events, which gives our members a good opportunity to network and build relationships with other students and other groups.

**Illustration of Need**

At this time, American Indian students make up less than 1% of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities student population. The three parts of the University of Minnesota’s Mission Statement outline the University’s commitment to diversity. The University Mission Statement also emphasizes the University’s commitment to prepare students for, “active roles in a multiracial and multicultural world.” American Indian student enrollment enriches the University community and assists the University in fulfilling its mission and commitments.

In 2008 the University of MN Twin Cities had an overall six-year graduation rate of 65.7%. Students who identified themselves as white had a 68.3% six-year graduation rate. Students who identified themselves as American Indian had a 26.8% six-year graduation rate. This 26.8% six year graduation rate is a notable accomplishment for the University. American Indian students across the country have lower six-year graduation rates than all other minorities. The University of Minnesota Twin Cities has an innovative and extensive network of support for
American Indian students, which has led to the success of many of those students. However the six-year graduation rates clearly show that although American Indian students are graduating, the University needs to continue to make a concentrated effort to recruit, support, retain, and graduate its American Indian students.

The American Indian Student Cultural Center exists to provide cultural and academic support for American Indian students and to help facilitate awareness and outreach for all the students on the University campus. Many American Indian students at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities come from reservations, rural areas, and areas where a high proportion of the population are American Indian people. These students can become overwhelmed by the dramatic environmental change of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. The proportion of American Indian students to non-minority students is such that American Indian students are often very isolated on campus. The American Indian Student Cultural Center space and events create a sense of belonging for American Indian students, which positively relates to academic success.

Other University of Minnesota Twin Cities students may come from areas where there is a very low population of American Indian people and may not have any awareness or experience of American Indian peoples and cultures. Many students have never had an opportunity to attend an American Indian cultural event. The University requires students to actively learn about and expose themselves to cultures other than their own. The American Indian Student Cultural Center organizes cultural events, which are open to the entire University community. The American Indian Student Cultural Center is a vital part of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities because it is a space where American Indian students themselves become resources to each other and to non-American Indian students.

**How our Organization Meets the Need**

The American Indian Student Cultural Center is designed to create a space on campus for American Indian students and non-American Indian students to meet, study, and socialize together. The space is decorated with American Indian artwork and resources for students are made available in the center. The center is also a place where cultural events from the greater Minnesota community are advertised.

The AISCC is an important resource for new students. Interaction with older students assists incoming students in developing a real connection to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. The AISCC is also a popular place for older students to study, socialize, and find resources useful for planning life after college. The AISCC regularly meets with touring American Indian high school students who are looking into colleges. The AISCC and its programs leave a strong impression on the students and many University of Minnesota students have stated that the existence of the organization was a deciding factor in their choice to attend the University.

Students utilize the services that the American Indian Student Cultural Center provides on a daily basis. The center space provides a safe, welcoming, and clean study area to students with access to phone, internet, computing, and printing facilities. The AISCC is staffed by students who are equipped to assist others in utilizing the resources available at the center. The staff also welcomes new and visiting students to the center. The large events that the American Indian Student Cultural Center hosts, such as the Spring Powwow and the Winter Storytelling are attended by a wide variety of people from the University community. Smaller scale events like Frybread Frydays are opportunities for students to relax and socialize in more casual manner. The environment of the AISCC provides a space for building relationships essential for the growth of all students and the University of Minnesota community.
Derived Student Benefit

Listed below are the derived student benefits:

**Academic Support**
- Computer, telephone and internet access, printing
- Quiet, safe, welcoming study areas
- Growing library of American Indian journals, publications, newspapers, books, and other materials for students
- Place for students to hold study groups, particularly American Indian Studies and American Indian language studies students
- Tutoring hours for several American Indian studies courses
- Working in conjunction with American Indian Studies Department to provide meeting space for Ojibwe/Dakota Language study groups and Language Tables/Feasts
- Resource for non-American Indian students with questions and concerns regarding American Indian issues

**American Indian Cultural Awareness**
- Large annual events – Winter storytelling, Spring Powwow & Feast, and Honoring Indian Women’s Luncheon
- Host nationally acclaimed Indigenous scholars, artists, writers and educators at the University
- Work in conjunction with several Twin Cities campus groups in order to promote health awareness including sexual health resources, diabetes information, alcohol responsibility, and mental health information
- Work in conjunction with Admissions to bring American Indian high school students from the Midwest region to the University of Minnesota for campus and AISCC tours.

We also have a friendly staff available to provide information and resources to students looking for information about American Indian culture.

**Student Involvement**

We encourage all of our members to take an active role in the running of the American Indian Student Cultural Center. Our members have started volunteered their time to assist in staffing our cultural center. For many of our large events we have a number of students who volunteer to help with a variety of tasks. The members elect our board and the members are also welcome to attend meetings and inform our board of any problems/suggestions that they may have. All of our members are eligible to run for election. Also, all of our events/activities are planned with the students’ interests in mind. All members participate in fundraising done to benefit the AISCC.

**Organizational Chart**
**AISCC President Duties:** Preside over all meetings of the organization and serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee. Act as an official representative of the center at other meetings and events. Oversee all officer’s positions and duties, keep the board cohesive and together in making decisions.

**AISCC Vice President Duties:** Preside at meetings of the organization and the Executive Committee in the absence of the president. Succeed the president if the president becomes unable to complete his/her terms of office. Act as the coordinator of subcommittees. Be in attendance at all events in the absence of the president.

**AISCC Treasurer Duties:** Oversee all financial transactions of the organization. Maintain thorough and accurate records of all transactions. Produce financial reports as required by the organization. Reports transactions made and balances at weekly board meetings.

**AISCC Secretary Duties:** Record and produce minutes of all meetings. Handle the organization’s correspondence including: voicemail, e-mail, mail, agenda, meeting minutes and membership registration.

**AISCC Director of Center Duties:** Maintain the physical space of the AISCC, including maintenance and technical support. Maintain a filing system of all AISCC transactions. Order supplies with board approval, hire student workers and complete the schedule for AISCC with student worker hours as well as board member volunteer hours. Oversee student worker positions.

**AISCC Community Outreach Coordinator Duties:** Advertise for all AISCC events. Oversee all public relations. Assist the president in all representative matters. Meet weekly with AISCC members/students for feedback on events and concerns relating to the center.
AISCC Event Planner Duties: Organize events approved by the AISCC Board of Directors, including catering, facilities rental, etc. Be the connection between the AISCC board and possible event staff of any kind. Be present at each event.

Performance Report

The majority of all event participants are students at the University of Minnesota. Listed below are the participation and attendance figures for our annual events:

- University of Minnesota Spring Powwow
  
  2009-2010 (Actual): 800
  2010-2011 (Projected): 850
  2011-2012 (Projected): 875

- Winter Storytelling Event
  
  2009-2010 (Actual): 300
  2010-2011 (Projected): 325
  2011-2012 (Projected): 350

- High School Tours (All Year)

  On average we get about 300 Native American high school students from around the country coming to see the AISCC. On various days throughout the year American Indian high school students visit the U of M and our facility. This is our opportunity to showcase the programs and services that we offer to prospective students. It is great to have a welcoming space for them and we hear great things about our center from both the students and their teachers or family. American Indians are less than one percent of the U of M community and it is great to have a place to show that we are a smaller community within a much larger community. We also encourage and motivate students to attend the University!

- Frybread FryDays
  
  2009-2010 (Actual): 60 per feast
  2010-2011 (Projected): 75 per feast
  2011-2012 (Projected): 85 per feast

At the last Frybread Fryday of each academic year, we have the participants complete a survey with questions about how we can improve our organization to meet the needs of all students, not just American Indian students. Our board reviews the results of these surveys and the responses are recorded in an effort to constantly improve our organization’s programming and services to meet the needs of University of Minnesota students.
American Indian Student Cultural Center

- Honoring American Indian Women Luncheon
  
  2009-2010 (Actual): 96
  2010-2011 (Actual): 107
  2011-2012 (Projected): 125

- Film Screening
  
  2010-2011: Dakota 38 movie (Actual): 46
  2011-2012: Film TBA (Projected): 60
  2012-2013: Film TBD (Projected): 90

- Finals Daze
  
  2009-2010 (Actual): 25
  2010-2011 (Projected): 40
  2011-2012 (Projected): 45

- Tutoring
  
  2009-2010 (Actual): N/A
  2010-2011 (Projected): 45
  2011-2012 (Projected): 50

Reserve Accounts

At this time, the AISCC board keeps no separate bank account for reserve funds. However, the AISCC board does aim to keep a 15 percent reserve in our main bank account, to which only the president, vice president and the treasurer have access. The reserve amount is calculated each year when we are awarded fees; the reserve is 15 percent of what we are wholly awarded at the end of the student service fees process. Our ability to maintain this reserve is dependent on our fundraising tactics for the year, our ability to create and provide programming and services that are effective in reaching and educating the University community, all cost effectively.

Total Fees Request

The American Indian Student Cultural Center fee request is: $30,000.00. This amount is the same amount requested in our 2010-2011 fees request. The AISCC board believes if we are awarded the full amount of our fees request, we will be able to fully meet the goals we have set forth for our organization in the 2011-2012 academic year. The board members of the 2010-2011 year are currently planning on greatly expanding our fundraising, programming, services and collaborations with other student groups for the 2011-2012 academic year and beyond. We are continually building new relationships with various student groups and building bridges off campus into the community. The vision of the AISCC Board is to maintain, create and promote
American Indian leadership and cultural awareness to the students of the University of Minnesota and the Twin Cities Community at large.

At this time, the AISCC board has decided to remain open on a volunteer basis during summer 2012. One member of our board will be staffing the center for one day each month in order to check the mail and keep the physical space in a clean and orderly condition. We plan to work with the office of admissions to schedule tours and coordinate the hours of the AISCC in order to showcase resources available to the future students of the University of Minnesota. The services offered during the summer will be the same as those offered during the academic year, and summer students will benefit in many of the same ways all other students do from the presence and access to our organization’s services and space.

**Description of Impact at a 10 Percent Reduction in Fees Request**

With a 10 percent reduction our fees request, it will be significantly more challenging for our board and members to continue operating the AISCC at the same level of productivity that has occurred in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. For example, the hiring of student workers and the upgrade of our technology has greatly increased the degree to which our space is used, and the effectiveness of the services we offer to students. A decrease in funding would preclude our ability to hire student workers and keep our space open to students at the level of access provided now. Although a 10 percent reduction in our fees request would decrease the amount of revenue, the AISCC aspires to focus on improving the quality and amount of our fundraising ventures in order to ease the financial stress of operational and programming expenses. The services likely to be effected by a decrease in funding would be the daily services offered in our center such as free printing, access to computers with a variety of relevant programming, access to educational and health resources and general access to the space. Programming that would be effected by a funding decrease would be our larger events at which we are able to reach and impact a large number of University community members. Expenditures would be mostly limited to operational costs, and the cultural programming we provide to the University would suffer.