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Tribal College Announces New Certificate in Tribal Leadership

OKMULGEE, Okla. – The College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) is pleased to announce its new Certificate in Tribal Leadership program, which will be offered in the upcoming fall 2022 semester.

The specialized curriculum brings Native American cultural values to the forefront of academics and combines various disciplines to develop leadership skills tailored for modern Tribal communities. CNM's Tribal Services director and Muscogee Nation member, Matthew Yates, says the program is for a new generation of Mvskoke leaders.

"It takes the best aspects of administration and focuses more on developing leaders for the future," said Yates. "Proper leadership can completely change the way an organization functions. We are treating it separate from just the business functionality, to learning how to excel in a leadership role."

Yates says CMN's president is ambitious about his vision for the program. They are developing curriculum using leadership theories and real-world examples from traditional and western standpoints.

"We want to expose students to a wide range of leadership theories, including traditional concepts in real-world situations," he explained. "We will look at how our leaders handle situations, considering the history and trauma that is still playing out. Connecting these concepts in this specialization will be advantageous for our Msvkoke students when they become leaders."

The certificate program will have students make significant impacts in Muscogee communities, including a required community development capstone project.

"Our capstone in this new leadership program is a community development project where students will get hands on to produce something that benefits the community," said Yates. "I think sometimes we need a reminder to stay grounded. Remember who we're working for and that good leaders cannot succeed alone."

Exemplifying Exceptional Leadership

Few others are suited to push forward a leadership curriculum with cultural values at the forefront such as CMN's President and Muscogee community leader, Dr. Monte Randall.

Before being selected to lead the college in 2021, he served in various leadership roles in education after earning his bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. He is also a U.S. Navy

and Oklahoma National Guard veteran. He says his motivation to excel came from his military experience and Mvskoke culture.

"I have always had a strong foundation of Mvskoke culture. That, along with my military service right out of high school helped to shape the person I am today," said Randall. "I have experienced great leaders throughout my life and was eager to follow. I had people in my family, school, and military that inspired me to do my best."

In February 2022, the Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education published an article by Dr. Randall titled, *The Native American Leadership Model*. He writes about how cultural values with modern leadership styles will create more effective leaders who will maintain traditional cultures for future generations.

"While we have many great Native American Leaders today, leadership development was one of the most overlooked aspects of identity stolen from our people during the numerous policies and assimilation attempts," said Randall. "We still have many traditional and ceremonial ways to develop leaders; however, many of our tribal governments and the programs serviced require that same understanding of cultural values in leadership."

Dr. Randall says there are similarities and differences between Native American and mainstream concepts of leadership. The Certificate in Tribal Leadership program uses both concepts for enhanced personal development and organizational culture.

"The main tenets of character, values, community, and excellence exist between mainstream and Native American leadership, but the differences are purpose and culture," he explained. "The character and values of a person are the most important and should be rooted in Native American culture. Leaders can then positively impact the purpose and culture of the organization and distinguishes the difference between mainstream and Native American leadership."

For more information about the College of the Muscogee Nation, visit www.cnm.edu.

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