



For immediate release — February 27, 2015

Native Awareness Week still going strong after 40 years

This year's Native Awareness Week (NAW) brings a full schedule of activities designed to celebrate Aboriginal culture and the 40th anniversary of the Native American Students' Association (NASA) at the University of Lethbridge.

The Native American Studies program and NASA have been an integral part of the University of Lethbridge from its earliest days.

"We're very, very proud of our record here," says Dr. Leroy Little Bear (BASc '72, DASC '04), First Nations, Métis and Inuit advisor to the U of L president.

Little Bear says universities are about the search for knowledge and historically, Eurocentric thoughts about knowledge have dominated academic halls.

"There are many ways to interpret reality and many ways to look at things other than through Eurocentric windows," says Little Bear. "The ways that Blackfoot people validate their knowledge and the Eurocentric approach to methodology is very different. So the inclusion of Native American Studies into the University really is an attempt to enrich the overall experience of students, faculty and the University as a whole."

The weeklong celebration begins with a blessing by Wilton Goodstriker at 11 a.m. Monday in the Atrium of University Hall. That's followed by the grand entry and a naming ceremony. The Mini Contest Powwow begins at noon.

Monday also features two performances of *New Blood*, a play created by Strathmore High School dance, Blackfoot and glee classes. Produced by U of L alumni, *New Blood* features poetry, music and contemporary and traditional dance. Inspired by the Writing-On-Stone petroglyphs and the life of Siksika Chief Vincent Yellow Old Woman, the play highlights his experiences in residential school and his fight to reclaim his way of life. The first performance at 4:15 p.m. is free for students and NAW visitors to campus. A paid performance open to the public is scheduled for 8 p.m. Tickets, at \$15 each, are available at the U of L Box Office from Monday to Friday 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. and one hour prior to the event, by calling 403-329-2616, or online at uleth.ca/tickets.

Tuesday's events include fry bread and berry soup from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and medicine-bag making from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Atrium.

Wednesday features an open house and talking circle at Ikaisskini Gathering Place in the Paterson Centre from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. ART NOW will feature speaker Diane Landry from noon to 1 p.m. in the Recital Hall, W570.

On Thursday, Mike Bruised Head-Chief Bird (BASC '80, BEd '98), University of Lethbridge Alumni Association, FNMI chapter president, and Billy Wadsworth (BA '05), a Blood Tribe councillor, will be on campus Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon for a talk titled Bringing It Back and a special tribute to Narcisse Blood, who recently passed away. Brian Calliou, program director for The Banff Centre's Indigenous Leadership and Management program, will talk about Aboriginal Governance from 3 to 5 p.m. in Andy's Place. From there, the program moves to the Students' Union ballrooms for the Native American Students' Association's talent show and hand drum contest with Armond Duck Chief, beginning at 5 p.m.

Friday, the Blackfoot Digital Library project will be featured from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Recital Hall, W570, followed by ART NOW speaker Ruth Phillips from noon to 1 p.m. Phillips, a Carleton University art history professor and Canada Research Chair, will discuss works made to pay homage to Norval Morrisseau, a prominent First Nations artist. A round dance at 6 p.m. at the Friendship Centre brings the festivities to a close.

Throughout the week, documentaries will be shown daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the NAS department, A410.

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