

Michigan Tribal Governance Education

“Building a Rock Solid Future”
NACDEP 2015



“Building Strong Sovereign Nations” lessons

- We’re not...”here to help”
- What is “sovereignty”, and how does it apply to Extension work?
- “The” question
- Most important point – approaching tribal audiences (all audiences for that matter) with a spirit of sharing information that they might decide is worthwhile for them to use to improve their lives



History of MSU Tribal Governance Programs

- Chairman Ettawageshik, MSU faculty, Grand Traverse Band, 2% grant
- Early big programs
- Transition to short program and health programs
- Growth of programs for individual tribes
- Youth leadership programs
- Biggest struggle is investing the time to build relationships



Discussion questions:

- What lessons have you learned programming with tribal audiences?
- What types of programs have you done?
- What new programs would you like to start?
- What questions do you have for others today?



Michigan Tribal Governance – Program History and Description - 2015

The Michigan Tribal Governance education program is celebrating 10 years of building partnerships with and between leaders of tribal nations in Michigan in 2015, equipping new and experienced tribal leaders with training to provide culturally appropriate, effective, high quality governance for their citizens, and to better communicate with and engage their citizens.

Early in 2005, a group of tribal leaders and MSU Extension (MSUE) educators responded to a request from a tribal leader for an educational program for newly elected tribal council members. The idea was to create a program honoring the cultural uniqueness of serving as leaders of tribal nations, patterned after programs already in place for newly elected county commissioners and newly appointed local planning and zoning officials. Several MSU and MSUE educators worked with tribal leaders to survey a larger group of tribal leaders and use their combined wisdom and tribal governance experience to develop the curriculum for the Building Strong Sovereign Nations (BSSN): Anishinaabek Leadership for Seven Generations program.

The first BSSN program was a two day event in 2009 that covered 10 modules. A subsequent program in 2010 had an even broader agenda that included other current topics of interest to tribes. With feedback from program participants, the program was later re-envisioned as a half day training covering the four most critical modules of the original curriculum. Another important innovation was to connect the program to the fall meeting of the United Tribes of Michigan (UTM), with the goal to deliver the most important information to newly elected tribal council members in a format that could be sustained over time. The first program in the new format was held in the fall of 2011, and has been conducted annually since.

Since 2011, Michigan Tribal Governance programs have grown to include three distinct types of educational efforts, *BSSN, Tribal Youth Leadership, and Good Governance*.

1. Building Strong Sovereign Nations: Anishinaabek Leadership for Seven Generations

Michigan Tribal Nations all have different styles of government; yet have similar positions of leadership. Often times, elected or appointed tribal officials have minimal to no experience in public service. Therefore, the BSSN program, in collaboration with UTM, provides a capacity building training curriculum based on the needs identified by key tribal stakeholders. The four primary modules are: Tribal Council Roles and Responsibilities, Fiscal Management in Indian Country, Historical Overview: Anishinaabek Tribes in Michigan and The Interaction with State and Federal Governments, and Conducting Effective Meetings. All of Michigan Tribal Nations leadership is invited to attend this training. Through the partnership with UTM, BSSN has been conducted in conjunction with their fall quarterly meeting in October, which is hosted by a different tribal nation each year.

In 2014, BSSN was hosted by the Lac Vieux Desert Chippewa Tribe located in Watersmeet, where 16 participants attended. Participants expressed in evaluations that they are more prepared in their role of leadership within their tribal communities and they are more knowledgeable about their role and their tribe's role in intergovernmental relationships. In addition, participant's knowledge was reconfirmed or increased in determining strategies to effectively manage fiscal stress and understanding their role as a contributor in creating effective meetings.

Follow-up evaluation results from the programs held in 2012-2014 are still being gathered, and long term impacts are yet to be determined. The high rate of turnover in Tribal Governments has contributed to a lower evaluation response rate than desired. Evaluation results to date show significant learning has occurred.

2. Tribal Youth Leadership

The MSUE 4-H Tribal Youth Leadership program creates an environment for youth to experientially explore and gain leadership skills toward future participation in civic settings through broadening their cultural viewpoint. This program is offered to both native and non-native high school youth. It helps high-school aged students expand their knowledge of local government, while also exploring the intricacies of Tribal Government and its structures. The participants attend the 4-H Capitol Experience and are enrolled as 4-H members.

The program, varying from three to eight hours, includes activities, discussions, speakers and presenters, hands-on projects, simulations, reflections, and final presentations. Throughout the year, students attend both a Tribal Council meeting and a County Commission meeting. They learn about the history of the Tribal Government along with the services it provides to its membership. Students also engage in learning about the history of their county, the role of local government, and differences in funding sources for county and tribal government. Field trips include on-site visits to both county and tribal governmental buildings as well as incorporating 4-H Capitol Experience to provide a broader state-wide perspective.

Evaluation results show significant percentages (45-81) reporting they are more open to different points of view, can discuss ideas with others, know who to contact to get things done, can think critically about public policy issues and suggest ideas for improvement, think more positively about government, and agree that individual teens can influence government policies. During the 2013 program, a Pellston high school student wrote the first Penumbra Newsletter, which focused on student leadership.

3. Good Governance

Another major programming area that has been developed as a result of the BSSN program is the provision of educational programs designed to encourage good governance and effective community engagement at the tribal level. Programs delivered to date include:

- A 3-day “good governance” training for The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians with a focus on participatory government, transparency, and increased participation of tribal citizens.
- “Good Governance” training and establishment of a referral system for future trainings for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan’s Honoring Our Children Initiative.
- Education about how to do strategic planning and a review of their current plan for the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Human Services Department.
- MSUE educators are currently assisting Bay Mills Community College, a Tribal Land Grant institution, with an update of their strategic plan.

Additional facets of the Michigan Tribal Governance program include: ongoing feedback from the United Tribes of Michigan and Bay Mills Community College, discussion of services for students with Michigan Tribal Education Directors and community partners, governance webinars in 2013 and 2014, trainings at tribal governments and organizations, and inclusion in a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant for the Honoring Our Children Initiative supporting tribal governance education programs.

The BSSN program has adapted curriculums through the inclusion of cultural materials and individual tribal nation documents, featured native presenters as part of MSUE educational events, secured resources through in kind contributions from Michigan Tribal Governments, and nominated Frank Ettawageshik as a Friend of Extension at both the state and national levels, both of which he was awarded.

The Tribal Governance Education program has a network of field based educators in and near tribal communities who work to build relationships with those communities. These relationships are critical to beginning new programs and retaining audiences.



Building Strong Sovereign Nations Anishinaabek Leadership for Seven Generations Tribal Governance Training Four Core Modules

Module Title: Leadership: Ethics, Roles, and Responsibilities

Module Description: This module will provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of tribal elected officials as specified in the constitutions of the Michigan tribes. The Executive, legislative, and judicial functions of government will be examined using examples from Michigan tribes. Tribal Councilors' roles as policy makers rather than day to day managers will be examined. Ethics in government will also be a topic.

Module Title: Fiscal Management in Indian Country

Module Description: This module will provide an overview of how to read government and for profit financial statements and examine models for revenue allocation, fiscal planning, and financial investment.

Module Title: Conducting Effective Meetings in Tribal Communities

Module Description: This module will emphasize processes for running effective meetings. Participants will develop skills for using Robert's Rules in Indian country. The importance of good meeting facilitation and record-keeping will also be emphasized.

Module Title: Historical Overview: Anishinaabek Tribes in Michigan and The Interaction with State and Federal Governments

Module Description: This module will emphasize strategies for working effectively with federal, state, and local governments, becoming an effective advocate for tribal issues, and applying the principles of sovereignty to government to government relationships



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