Statement in Opposition to the “Cornell University Genetic Ancestry Event”

According to a document distributed on campus for response: the “Cornell University ‘Genetic Ancestry Event’ [is] hosted spring semester 2011 by the Cornell Center for Comparative and Population Genomics (3CPG) and National Geographic Society’s Genographic Project.” Citing language from the National Geographic documentary “The Human Family Tree,” the document states:

“Regardless of race, nationality or religion, all of us can trace our ancient origin back to the cradle of humanity, East Africa. What did our collective journey look like, and where did it take your specific ancestors? At what point in our past did we first cross paths with the supposed strangers living in our neighborhood? Now, in The Human Family Tree, the people of this quintessential American melting pot find out that their connections go much deeper than a common ZIP code.”

In keeping with this “melting pot” agenda, the “goal for the Cornell Event is to get 200 Cornell undergraduate volunteer participants as a core group [whose DNA will be collected through the use of ‘cheek/saliva swabs’] as a way to see just how much human diversity really is present on campus.”

The American Indian Program (AIP), after forwarding the description of the proposed Cornell/National Geographic Genetic Ancestry Event to our faculty, staff, and student representatives, is unified in our opposition to the event.

Since 1492 Indigenous peoples around the world, including Native Americans, have focused their attention on resisting an ongoing genocide, which has over time taken various forms, including preemptive war, ethnic cleansing, forced assimilation, and biogenomic projects including the kind represented by the Genetic Ancestry Event. The 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples bears witness to this ongoing history.

In marked contrast to the goals of the Cornell Ancestry Event, which seeks to define “diversity” biologically in terms of universal genetic codes, Indigenous peoples customarily define themselves not biologically but socio-culturally and politically in terms of varying ideas of nationhood. These communal identities predate the intervention of Western biology, which arrived in the early nineteenth century in the form of scientific racism (used to assert the

Continued on page 2
superiority of Europeans and thus rationalize genocide) and now seems to have taken the apparently benign form of arguing for a universal if genetically diverse humanity, a kind of “family of man.” This homogenizing fantasy of a diversity where we all somehow wind up being the same only serves to overlook the vital national and cultural differences between peoples and the manifest injustices in the world against which Indigenous communities continue to struggle. That is, the result of this kind of “diversity” project is to deconstruct communal identities by individualizing, or atomizing, the members of these communities, who are bound by political and socio-cultural ties (extended kinship, for example).

Thus, we believe that the perhaps unintended effect of the Cornell Ancestry Event will be to encourage people to overlook the communal identities of Indigenous nations, the distinctive political and cultural patterns that define these identities as diverse, and the ongoing historical conflicts that remain central to the lives of Indigenous peoples, both here in New York and globally, who in many ways are still living under the regime of European and Euroamerican colonialism.

It is the stated mission of the AIP to teach Cornell students about the history and ongoing life of these communal Indigenous identities and to support them on campus and beyond. The AIP program house Akwe:kon stands as both a symbol and a practical example of Indigenous nationhood in its Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) forms. While the Mohawk word Akwe:kon means “all of us” and welcomes the participation of all members of the Cornell community and beyond, the idea of “all of us” in this sense does not overlook the distinctive identities of peoples around the world but invites all of us to understand these identities in their differences as diverse if parallel paths to mutual coexistence in a spirit of peace based in justice, a justice that, clearly, is yet to be realized either here at Cornell or in the world at large.

The AIP, then, views the Cornell Genetic Ancestry Event as a fundamentally assimilationist project of the kind that Indigenous peoples have been struggling against historically. While it is up to individual faculty, staff, and students whether or not they wish to participate in this event, the consensus of the AIP is that we oppose involvement in the Event precisely because it overlooks issues of Indigenous diversity and justice both here at Cornell and beyond.

The AIP would also like to note that we were never consulted about the project at its inception, in which case we would have voiced our deep concerns and would have had the opportunity to enter into a discussion with the faculty and administrators who have now presented this project to us as a fait accompli about which we are invited to comment after the fact. This lack of consultation, along with the agenda of the Ancestry Event, is a sign to us that Cornell’s understanding of the term “diversity” is at present divergent from our own.
Recent AIP Events

Diné Archaeologist Visits the AIP

On Tuesday, February 15, Ettie Anderson spoke to students in Professor Jordan’s class, AIS 2350: Archaeology of North American Indians. Afterward, she joined students, faculty, and staff for an enjoyable lunch, providing insights into her field of expertise and her experiences.

Ettie Anderson is Diné (Navajo). Her clans are Tsénaabílníí, Hashdl’ishníí, Bilagááná and Tá’néézsá’níí. She is the Supervisory Archaeologist for the Chaco Protection Sites Program of the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department. She has worked with the Navajo Nation as an archaeologist for over 18 years, starting as a student intern worker. She has been a full-time archaeologist since her graduation from Northern Arizona University in 2000.

Her professional goals are to create a place where researchers can go to get valid information on the Chacoan outlier sites within the Navajo Nation, and to create a digitized database for site forms and prehistoric road maps. Her goals also include promoting the oral histories in the official documents that tie the Chaco sites to Diné ancestors.

More information about the Chaco Protection Sites Program of the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department is available on their website at http://www.hpd.navajo.org.
On Saturday, February 5, members of Akwe:kon visited the New York State Historic Site of Ganondagan for its annual Winter Games and Sports event. Attendees visited a reconstructed 17th century Seneca longhouse, tried their hand at the traditional Haudenosaunee winter game, “Snowsnake,” visited sled dogs, and sampled Iroquoian foods.
Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendar!

March

Tuesday, March 1
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Wednesday, March 2
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

Friday, March 4
Ribbon Shirt Project
3:00pm-5:00pm
Akwe:kon Community Room

Tuesday, March 8
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Wednesday, March 9
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

Tuesday, March 15
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Wednesday, March 16
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

Friday, March 18
Dragon Day
Ribbon Shirt Project
3:00-5:00pm
Akwe:kon Community Room

Saturday, March 19-28
Spring Break

Tuesday, March 29
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Wednesday, March 30
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

April

Friday, April 1
Ribbon Shirt Project
3:00-5:00pm
Akwe:kon Community Room

Tuesday, April 5
Faculty Fellows Dinner 5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Wednesday, April 6
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

Tuesday, April 12
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Tuesday, April 12
Cornell v. Syracuse Men’s Lacrosse Game
4:30pm-10pm
Syracuse University

*Email akwekon@cornell.edu to reserve a space. $5 for non-residents and non-Out of House members

Wednesday, April 13
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

Friday, April 15
Ribbon Shirt Project
3:00-5:00pm
Akwe:kon Community Room

Tuesday, April 19
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery
Annual Akwe:kon Frybread Competition - 6:30pm
Ecology House

Tuesday, April 26
Faculty Fellows Dinner
5:30pm
RPCC Marketplace Eatery

Wednesday, April 27
Tutoring Program
Lafayette High School
Leave Akwe:kon at 2:30pm

Friday, April 29
Ribbon Shirt Project
3:00-5:00pm
Akwe:kon Community Room
INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center Internship
March 1, 2011: Crow Canyon Archaeological Center – Research Internship Program deadline. Crow Canyon Archaeological Center’s mission is to initiate and conduct archaeological research and public education programs in partnership with Native Americans and institutions with common interests. Offers internships in Field Archaeology, Laboratory Archaeology, Environmental Archaeology.

For More Information:
(ph) 970.565.4859
(e) hresources@crowcanyon.org
(url) www.crowcanyon.org/about/research_internships.asp

Health Communications Internship
March 8, 2011: Health Communications Internship Program deadline for Spring Term. HCIP interns are paid a monthly training stipend through a Cancer Research Training Award. There are two internship terms per year: Spring (January to July) and Fall (July to December). Six-month and one-year internships are offered.

For more information:
Phone: 301.435.8524
Fax: 301.402.3509
E-mail: HCIP-CONTACT@mail.nih.gov

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

International Order of the King’s Daughters & Sons Scholarship
March 1, 2011: International Order of the King’s Daughters & Sons - North American Indian Department Scholarship deadline. Scholarships are supplemental aid for technical, vocational or college training.

For more information:
Joyce Morris
(ph) 843.795.6744 no collect calls
(e) jmmjoyce@aol.com

NAIEA/NY Scholarship
March 1, 2011: NAIEA/NY Scholarship deadline. This scholarship provides financial assistance to New York State Native American students who demonstrate a need and academic merit. Two scholarships are given annually.

For More Information:
Monica Antone-Watson - (ph) 315.363.9517 (after 5:00 PM)
Carol Kissam (application) – (ph) 315.229.5112; (e) ckissam@stlaw.edu

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Scholarship Program
March 1, 2011: Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Scholarship Program deadline. Since 1924 the foundations has been awarding scholarships to students from Western New York. From the year 2000 on, we have awarded over $8 million in scholarships to thousands of local college students.

For More Information:
Johnna Mauro
(ph) 716.852.2857
(e) johnnam@cfgb.org
(url) www.cfgb.org

Udall Scholarship
March 2, 2011: Udall Scholarship Program deadline. This foundation was established in 1992 to honor Congressman Morris K. Udall whose service was distinguished by civility, integrity, and consensus. He instilled love and respect for the environment and natural resources. Congressman Udall championed the rights of Native Americans/Alaska Natives and strengthened tribal self-governance.

For more information:
Mia Ibarra
(ph) 520-901-8564
(e) Ibarra@udall.gov
(url) www.udall.gov

Catching the Dream Scholarships

Native American Leadership in Education (NALE): NALE is for Indian people who are working in schools as paraprofessionals. The program provides financial assistance to help them earn teaching
credentials, counselor certification, or administrative credentials.

Tribal Business Management Program (TBM): TBM provides financial assistance to Indian people who plan to work in economics development for tribes.

For more information: (ph) 505.262.2351 ext. 116 (e) nscholarsh@aol.com (URL) www.catchingthedream.org

**Truman D. Picard Scholarship**

March 18, 2011: Intertribal Timber Council, Truman D. Picard Scholarship deadline. The Intertribal Timber Council is dedicated to supporting American Indian and Alaska Native students pursuing higher education in the natural resources by sponsoring a scholarship in honor of Truman D. Picard

For more information:
(ph) 503.282.4296
(e) itc1@teleport.com

**FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Peabody Essex Museum Residential Fellowship

Dear colleagues,

The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts is seeking candidates for it’s Native American Residential Fellowship Program in museum practice.

The term is from June 1 – August 12, 2011 and applications are due by*February 28, 2011*. The Native American Residential Fellowship Program offers paid fellowship opportunities for Native American, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native students and early-career, in-service cultural professionals. It provides participants with a comprehensive perspective on the theory and practice of museums aimed at helping to develop skills in cultural object stewardship and museum practices. It will offer individuals the opportunity to gain expertise and will prepare them for employment positions in the museum field and/or the cultural, nonprofit sector.

New this year is an option for self-directed research in PEM’s collection and library.

For Program Guidelines, Description of Positions and the Application Form, please visit our website at www.pem.org/naf.

For further questions, or if you have difficulty downloading the attachments posted at the site, please contact me:

Rosario Ubiera-Minaya, Program Director
Museum Action Corps (MAC) Internship Program
Peabody Essex Museum
East India Square, Salem, MA 01970
Tel: 978-745-9500, ext. 3217
Fax: 978-741-8793
rosario_ubiera-minaya@pem.org

For additional information about the Peabody Essex Museum, please visit our website, www.pem.org

The Peabody Essex Museum presents art and culture from New England and around the world. The museum’s collections are among the finest of their kind, showcasing an unrivaled spectrum of American art and architecture (including four National Historic Landmark buildings) and outstanding Asian, Asian Export, Native American, African, Oceanic, Maritime and Photography collections. In addition to its vast collection, the museum offers a vibrant schedule of changing exhibitions and a hands-on education center. The museum campus features numerous parks, period gardens and 22 historic properties, including Yin Yu Tang, a 200-year-old house that is the only example of Chinese domestic architecture on display in the United States.

Native Americans in Philanthropy Call to Action

REGISTRATION OPEN!

Registration for the 6th Annual Native Philanthropy Institute is open.

This year’s Institute is April 4-5, 2011 at Tulalip Resort and Casino, in scenic Tulalip, WA. We will gather people from Native and non-Native nonprofits, Tribal-giving programs, and foundations for dialogue, interaction and co-learning on:

- Leadership,
- Strategic Grantmaking, and
- Organizational Capacity-Building

Plenary speakers include: Billy Frank, Jr., Nisqually; Brian Cladoosby, Swinomish Tribal Chairman; and many others. The two-day event will feature keynote addresses, silent auction, awards dinner (see below for nominations), and entertainment.

In addition, the meeting will have forums that explore opportunities and challenges of transition & next generation leaders, as well as discuss current NAP research findings and share resources.

Register now to take advantage of early bird
discounts. NAP members enjoy special discounts! Early bird registration closes March 4, 2011.

*The 2011 NPI is a solicitation-free event
JOIN US ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY JOURNEY
Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) celebrates 20 years as vibrant and active nonprofit organization and affinity group of the Council of Foundations. From its humble beginnings promoting a progressive and inclusive national agenda it now serves a broadened membership, partners, and allies. The theme for the yearlong Journey across the nation is Weaving Leadership, Indigenous People and Resources.

On the stops NAP will launch its Regional Action Networks through:
• Enhancing Native leadership in philanthropy,
• Sharing stories and resources in Native philanthropy,
• Assessing issues and opportunities within the region,
• Growing resources for Native led causes and concerns, and
• Honoring the philanthropic work in Native communities.

NAP will call its membership and allies to action to expand the Native philanthropic network virtually and on the ground, as well as explore future partnerships.

Please click on your region’s link below to register for FREE.
RSVP by clicking the link below and registering:
Southwest Region - February 15th Institute for American Indian Arts, in Santa Fe, NM
Pacific Region - February 22nd at Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa, Palm Springs CA
Pacific Region - February 25th at Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation Community Center, Brooks, CA
Northeast Region - March 2nd at Time Warner, New York, NY
Northeast Region - March 4th at New England Foundation for the Arts, Boston, MA
Central Region - TBD
Northwest Region - TBD
Southeast Region - TBD

Underrepresented Minority Summer Undergrad Research Fellowship Program
March 11, 2011: Underrepresented Minority Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program deadline. The program consists of a research project in one of several laboratories in the Department of Pharmacology (University of Colorado); students will attend weekly seminars and present their research results at end of program.
For More Information:
Melissa Adams
(ph) 303.724.3286
(e) melissa.adams@ucdenver.edu

Newberry Library Fellowship
March 1, 2011: Newberry Library – Susan Kelly Power and Helen Hornbeck Tanner Fellowship (Short-Term) deadline. Supports residential research in any field of the humanities using the collections of the Newberry Library.
For More Information:
(ph) 312.255.3666
(e) research@newberry.org
(url) www.newberry.org/research/felshp/short-term.html

CALL FOR PAPERS
“The Power of Stories: Authority and Narrative in Early America”
An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference

This conference will bring together a diverse group of graduate students to discuss the power of stories and their relationship to authority in early America and the Atlantic world before 1850. Addressing written, pictorial, oral, or other narratives, papers might consider examples of how groups or individuals decide what stories to tell about themselves; why some narratives come to predominate over others; how narratives change over time and across generations; and the ways in which stories can strengthen or undermine political, ethnic, religious, economic, or other communities. At a broader level, papers might address how scholars can harness the power of stories in their own writing as a means of evoking past worlds.

We seek papers that will engage a wide range of
disciplines, including history, anthropology, Native American studies, literature, American studies, African American studies, political science, art history, geography, material culture, and race and gender studies. In order to be considered, applicants should email their proposals to mceas.stories.2011@gmail.com by March 15, 2011. Proposals should include a one-page c.v. and a prospectus of no more than 250 words. Paper presentations will be limited to 20 minutes. Limited financial support is available for participants’ travel and housing expenses. Decisions will be announced by May 15, 2011. Please direct conference-related questions to Whitney Martinko at mceas.stories.2011@gmail.com.

GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES

American Indian Law Center, Inc. Pre-Law Summer Institute
March 25, 2011: American Indian Law Center, Inc. – Pre-Law Summer Institute deadline. The institute is an intensive two month program that prepares students for the rigors of law school; four law school courses; research, writing, and analysis. Classes are Monday-Friday; attendance is mandatory; outside classes and employment are not permitted. For More Information:
(ph) 505.277.5462
(e) plsi@law.unm.edu

Native Student Organizations

American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES)
Co-Chair: Kyle Coulon
Co-Chair: Jake Swamp
Treasurer: Rey Campusano
Secretary: Joshua Crofton-Macdonald

Native American Students at Cornell (NASAC)
Co-Chair: Jake Swamp
Co-Chair: Joshua Crofton-Macdonald
Treasurer: Tawnee Cunningham
Secretary / Historian: Alyssa Sagel
IVY Coordinator / PR: Courtney Evans

Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA)
Chair: Tacey Atsitty
Treasurer: Michael Carpentier
Secretary: Andrew Curley

Native American Law Students Association (NALSA)
Co-Presidents: Mary Beth Williams and Lossom Allen
Vice President: Joann Sledge
Treasurer: Jennifer Holsey
Secretary: Sheldon Clark
2L Activity Coordinator: Erin Agee
2L Representative: Toshira Johnson
3L Representatives: Candice Andalia, Clint Scott, and Mike Pillera