

5 May 2022

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Peter Chaillé, Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

RE: Undergraduate Certificate in Indigenous Traditional Ecological & Cultural Knowledge

The following proposal has been approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and is recommended for approval by the Faculty Senate.

You may read the full text of the program proposal, as well as Budget Committee comments, at the [Online Curriculum Management System \(OCMS\) Curriculum Dashboard](#).

## **PROPOSAL SUMMARY FOR College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**

### **Undergraduate Certificate in Indigenous Traditional Ecological & Cultural Knowledge**

#### **Certificate Type**

Undergraduate certificate: Earned at completion; admission to the University not required

#### **Effective Term**

Fall 2022

#### **Overview of the Program**

The ITECK (Indigenous Traditional Ecological & Cultural Knowledge) undergraduate certificate is designed to provide Native and non-Native students with a concentrated, decolonized study of Indigenous ecological epistemologies and their value within a variety of contemporary contexts. Central themes of analysis include the understanding, practice and implementation of Seventh Generation philosophy; recognizing the role of the sacred and that all land is sacred; reciprocity and interdependence; respecting cultural protocols and cultivating healthy relationships: "We are all related."; new partnership in education and land reclamation utilizing Indigenous cultural practices and holistic sustainability models; implications of ITECK on long-term land restoration and management practice and utilization of ITECK to restore the land on behalf of regional native flora and to deepen understanding, knowledge, and engagement through seasonal harvests, tending, culturally significant programming and community engagement with tribal, urban Native, historically marginalized, and other regional communities.

In recent years, Western Science has "discovered" what Indigenous People have known since Time Immemorial and Indigenous oral histories continue to confront and correct inaccurate and incomplete historical accounts. Indigenous Ways of Knowing centers kinship and the reciprocal relationship between people and our environment. Through critical analysis of socially constructed narratives, the certificate will explore contemporary themes, such as community health, food sovereignty, Indigenous land management and practices, community development, resilience, and self-determination. Furthermore, opportunities will exist for building and strengthening equitable, long-term collaborative partnerships with Indigenous

communities, NGO's, as well as local, regional and federal agencies, including an increase in paid internships and the fostering of diverse professional career pathways. In addition to theoretical work in Indigenous and Native American Studies, disciplinary foundations include community-based learning and high-impact student experiences such as collaborative opportunities with existing community partners.

### **Evidence of Need**

In an effort to get a fuller sense of the demand for ITECK at Portland State, we reviewed the previously distributed petition and a six-question survey created when conducting research on the need of the now implemented INNAS Major. In the survey of 227 respondents, 85.5% expressed that they would like to see ITECK curricula when asked the question, "What topics and themes would you like to see implemented in a Major of Indigenous Nations/Native American Studies?" This was the highest-ranking response with Contemporary Issues & Experiences (Food Sovereignty, Environmental Racism, Community Health, Advocacy, etc.) being the next highest with 84.6%.

Traditional ecological practices and contemporary issues and experiences are the focus of the proposed ITECK certificate. Furthermore, when asked about how they were currently utilizing the knowledge gained from completing the INST minor, 69.9% of respondents mentioned that it had a direct bearing on their professional lives/careers; 60.2% mentioned Volunteer/Service/Advocacy Activities, and 57.5% mentioned personal/family life. In an intriguing testament to the importance of intellectual life, 45.1% mentioned that they utilized their minor in preparation for graduate/post-baccalaureate studies. We expect that the proposed ITECK certificate will hold equal weight in its utilization.

Evidence of need is apparent with the passage of HB2825 requiring Ethnic studies K-12 and SB13 requiring Indigenous curriculum K-12. As outlined elsewhere in this proposal, with the recent November 2021 White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and Council on Environmental Quality memorandum to initiate new federal guidance on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK), we anticipate an increase in demand for the skills, Indigenous perspectives and practices, history of land policies, partnership and relationship-making needed to implement these fresh commitments to federal land management and policy-making centered in ITEK. Indigenous Director of the Department of the Interior and the new Indigenous Director of the National Park Service are supportive of this movement to integrate Indigenous practices and ITEK into their offices.

As it currently stands, many of our community partners express what the National Indian Child Welfare Association so clearly writes in their letter of support, "Too often we have to hire employees educated in Western linear thought and find they have to unlearn mainstream thinking to be effective in our culturally based organization. The ITECK concept recognizes the potential career pathways and collaborative work emerging regionally, nationally, and internationally."

We want to stress that the issue of need cannot be viewed exclusively in terms of markets. There is an overwhelming need for understanding the cultures, geography, and philosophy of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge in a

meaningful way. As PSU's international footprint grows, we should also ensure that our Native and Non-Native students have a diverse set of programs that are specifically attuned to Indigenous perspectives. Native communities, as well as those Indigenous persons outside of these communities, can progress in the healing process of past and current traumas as well as understand the effects of genocide against numerous populations throughout Indigenous and Native American Diasporas. It is a way for Native people to have significance and hold value as visible beings who exist within their own right as defined by themselves and their cultural ways.

The need for an ITECK certificate is crucial in helping develop a deeper and more meaningful common space in the Pacific Northwest as it pertains to our unique climate, geography, and lands. As our city borders meld into our Tribal spaces, we all need to have a mutual method of understanding each other. As a university, we must uphold our motto of bringing knowledge to the city and beyond.

### **Course of Study**

#### ITECK Core (28 credits)

- NAS 201 Intro to Native American Studies (4)
- NAS 342 Indigenous Gardens and Food Justice (4)
- NAS 348 Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability (4)
- NAS 349 Indigenous Leadership for Sustainable Futures (4) (new course)
- NAS 392 Indigenous Ways of Knowing (4)
- NAS 422 First Foods of the Pacific Northwest (4) (new course)
- NAS 424 Cultural Ecology: Indigenous Science and the Natural World (4) (new course)

#### Experiential Learning requirements (8 credits)

- NAS 404 Cooperative/Education Internship (4)
- NAS 407 SEM: Traditional Ecological Healing Practices (4)

Total credits: 36

Minimum passing grade: C- (Pass credits allowed)