LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP CENTERS
The American Indian Student Center

CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE AND TAKING BOLD STEPS FORWARD.
COMMITTED TO HISTORY’S PLACE IN OUR FUTURE.

Montana’s original residents are a vital part of our history. As our state’s first land-grant institution, we are proud to celebrate and support the Native American community and its influence on our shared identity.

Today, 13.5% of Montana’s school-age children are Native American, and many dream of the chance to one day get a college education. Montana State University is more committed than ever to serving the sons and daughters of Montana’s tribal communities by helping provide access to the education they deserve.

This representational sketch was produced by Dennis Sun Rhodes of AmerINDIAN Architecture, and member of the Northern Arapaho tribe, in collaboration with ThinkOne, a Bozeman architectural firm.
WHAT IT TAKES TO BUILD A CROSSROADS OF CULTURE AND LEARNING.

In its location at the heart of the Bozeman campus, the new American Indian Student Center will raise the visibility of our Native American Studies programs and serve our academic mission. It will act as the interdisciplinary connection point between American Indian culture and a number of academic areas, such as history, law, policy and education.

The Center will create a space where anyone in our community can come to learn more about the history, languages, arts and cultures of the first peoples of Montana. It will also be the central location on campus for American Indian students to get the crucial support services they need to succeed in college.

WITH PRIVATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF $8 MILLION, WE WILL MAKE THIS CENTER A REALITY. AND THROUGH YOUR COMMITMENT AND PASSION, YOU WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

REACHING OUR GOAL.

Building on the success of Indian Education for All, and with a focus on improved learning in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, the American Indian Student Center will enhance and expand the programs that are already providing American Indian students with targeted assistance. It will also enable students and members of our community to learn about the state’s diverse tribal communities and their rich traditions.

Additionally, our efforts will advance the university’s strategic goals by:

- Increasing the number of underrepresented minority and Native American students enrolled at MSU.
- Supporting student success and increasing graduation rates for all, particularly in the STEM fields.
- Increasing opportunities for all MSU students to participate in cross-cultural study, work or service experiences, incorporating both academic preparation and post-experience reflection.
- Providing support for a capital project that offers state-of-the-art classroom, studio and other space-related resources to a growing community of scholars and artists.
- Improving university learning spaces and providing current educational technologies that enhance student-learning outcomes.
Growing up as an American Indian, Dani Morrison was often bullied in school. She enrolled in college, but had trouble adjusting and withdrew from classes. At that point, she chose to work and raise her family before moving to Bozeman and enrolling at Montana State University.

Dani struggled in the beginning at MSU like she had with her first college experience. So she sought out support services through MSU’s American Indian Council and the Native American Studies program. There, she found a community of student peers, tutors and faculty mentors to help her succeed. With this support, Dani has realized success as an education major minoring in Native American studies. Her goal is to improve how all teachers—native and non-native alike—educate and inspire Montana’s growing population of American Indian children.

Selected as a McNair Scholar, Dani is now preparing to pursue a master’s degree before attending law school. As the first member of her family to graduate from college, Dani hopes that the support she found at MSU will be there for more American Indian students in the future.

Throughout his experience at Montana State University, Steven Davis often found himself reaching back to his American Indian heritage and his strong connection to the Blackfeet community. “The day I was dropped off at MSU, my father reminded me that our ancestors’ bones are interred here in this earth and that we are today’s warriors, fighting today’s fight. Truly understanding that mission inspired me,” Steven said.

As a chemical and biological engineering major, Steven combined the importance of American Indian culture with academics as president of MSU’s American Indian Science and Engineering Society and by becoming a mentor through MSU’s Engineering Minority Program—EMPower. He appreciates that “Coming to MSU was a way for me to be connected to my community and to give back to that community.” Steven’s commitment to others in strengthening the support networks for Native American students has created a strong legacy for students who follow.

“When you add in all the support I’ve had from the faculty and programs here at MSU, it has felt like home.”

Learn more about how to write your own page of Montana State University history.