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Wednesday, June 03, 2015

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**IDAHO INDIAN EDUCATION SUMMIT SET FOR  
JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup> AND 11<sup>TH</sup> IN BOISE**

(BOISE) -- The 2015 Idaho Indian Education Summit is scheduled for June 10-11 at the Red Lion Downtowner in Boise.

Dr. Margaret Kovach, an associate professor at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education and author of a number of publications on education and the culture of North America's indigenous peoples, will be the keynote speaker for the conference. Her keynote address, "*From Where We Stand: The You, Me, and We of Indigenous Knowledge in Higher Education*," will begin at noon in the ballroom of the Red Lion Downtowner on Thursday, June 11, the second day of the conference.

Dr. Kovach is of Plains Cree and Saulteaux ancestry and a member of the Pasqua First Nations (the nomenclature used in Canada to refer to indigenous peoples). A researcher with a lengthy list of publications, Dr. Kovach's main interest lies in the field of indigenous research with a focus on the importance of upholding indigenous knowledge in post-secondary education. Her award-winning book, "*Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*," has received local, national and international readership.

In addition to her keynote speech she will present at two of the 25 workshop sessions at the summit, both on June 10. Her session on "*Bringing an Indigenous Sensibility Into Learning Environments – A Reflection on Teaching Practices and Institutional Supports*," will be held at 1:30 p.m., and the other session, "*Indigenous Research in Higher Education*," will begin at 4:25 p.m.

The focus of the summit, open to both educators and the general public, is to promote equity and best practices in K-20 education for Native American students by helping identify and understand culturally responsive teaching methods and the use of indigenous knowledge in the classroom.

The Idaho State Department of Education's Office of Indian Education, working in collaboration with Idaho's tribes, the State Board of Education and the state's higher education stakeholders, is hosting the summit as part of its efforts to sustain the unique status of American Indians by helping preserve their cultural identity and raising cultural awareness throughout Idaho. The summit will provide timely and relevant information on American Indian education through technical assistance, guidance and support to Idaho's educators, schools, districts, students, parents, business leaders and the community,

The summit will feature 25 sessions on subjects ranging from culture and curriculum to climate and community. Presentations include: "Strengthening Tribal Education Partnerships"; "Cultural Value Differences"; "Higher Education and Tribal Relations"; "Non-Native Teachers Working with Native Students"; "Strengthening Multi-Cultural Curriculum in the Classroom";



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and seminars on indigenous stories and storytelling in the K-8 classrooms, as well as workshops on preventing bullying and harassment in schools, methods on creating community and several on strategies for helping students advance to higher education and careers, among others.

June 10 will mark the first day of the summit, with registration and check-in from 12:30-1 p.m. in the main lobby of the Red Lion Downtowner. Idaho Indian Education Committee Chairman Bob Sobotta, Jr. will open the summit with a conference overview at 1 p.m. in the ballroom, followed by remarks by Dr. Bill Goesling, a member of the State Board of Education. Concurrent workshops will be held throughout the afternoon until 5:45 p.m.

On Thursday, June 11, a traditional opening ceremony, provided by the Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone-Bannock tribes and including dancers and drummers, will begin at 8 a.m. in the ballroom. The Post #48 American Legion Auxiliary unit from Owyhee, Nev., will provide the honor guard. The ceremonies conclude at 9 a.m. with welcoming remarks by Chairman Sobotta and Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra.

Besides a full day of seminars Thursday, four of Idaho's tribes will be represented at the conference with cultural exhibits on display for summit participants from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Craft vendors also will be available on Thursday.

A final general gathering, "Creating the Framework for Equity: Call to Action Community Session," beginning at 2:45 p.m. in the ballroom Thursday, will provide a wrap-up of the summit. It will be led by co-facilitators Dr. Yolanda Bisbee of the University of Idaho and Matt Eide of Education Northwest.

The cost is \$100 to participate in the summit and those wishing to attend can register at: [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/native\\_american/summit-2015.htm](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/native_american/summit-2015.htm). Workshop participants are eligible for Teachers In-service credit or University of Idaho graduate credits.

Early childhood educators and practitioners also can register for a special half-day early literacy workshop that will be held on June 10 at the conference, sponsored by the Idaho Commission for Libraries. Each "Idaho Child Care Reads" workshop participant will receive three free Idaho STARS child care provider credits and an assortment of materials.

The summit is hosted by the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education and the Idaho Indian Education Committee. Sponsors of the summit include: the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Boise State University, College of Southern Idaho, College of Western Idaho, Eastern Idaho Technical College, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, North Idaho College and the University of Idaho.

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**Included Photo:** Dr. Margaret Kovach

**Media notes:** Dr. Kovach will be available for comments to the media at 7:45 a.m. on Thursday, June 11, in the ballroom, just preceding the opening ceremonies featuring dancers in traditional costume.

The opening ceremony on Thursday morning, as well as the various tribal cultural booth exhibits available Thursday afternoon from 1:30-2:30 pm. in select rooms at the convention site, should be good opportunities for photography and film. Johanna Jones, director of the State Department of Education's Office of Indian Education, will be available at the Summit Resource Room in the Cottonwood Room. The "Call to Action" session in the ballroom from 2:45-4:15 p.m. will serve as a wrap-up summary of the convention.