



DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges application guidelines at

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-community-colleges>

for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Standing Rock Lakota/Dakota Language Project  
Institution: Sitting Bull College  
Project Director: Michael Moore  
Grant Program: Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges

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## **Project Summary**

Sitting Bull College (SBC) proposes a three-year humanities initiative designed to record a dwindling collection of fluent speakers of the Lakota/Dakota language on the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota. These recordings of elders, who began their lives speaking the Lakota/Dakota language, are an invaluable part of efforts to reinvigorate the endangered Lakota/Dakota language. Fluent speakers, immersed in “Lakota/Dakota thought” speak differently and it is important to record this to create a “bridge” between a dwindling generation of fluent speakers and a new generation of young speakers who are learning Lakota/Dakota as a first language and will one day seek to draw on these resources. The project, guided by Sitting Bull College faculty and staff in cooperation with the speakers themselves, will create a vast well of primary source recordings in both audio and video for future generations to draw on.

The three part project will engage local speakers in conversation involving two or more fluent speakers at a time on various topics such as history, culture, humor and the language itself to gather the nuance and detail inherent in Lakota/Dakota language. Secondly, it will create transcripts and in English and Lakota/Dakota to allow greater access beyond fluent speakers. Finally, it will archive, store and preserve these precious creations at Sitting Bull College Library for the use of language revitalization efforts at the college, humanities initiatives and access by the wider world.

## Introduction

Sitting Bull College is proposing a three year humanities initiative designed to bolster the humanities at Sitting Bull College and build primary source language resources to fuel Lakota/Dakota language revitalization efforts. Although other efforts have recorded a piecemeal assortment of fluent speakers using the language, this is the first time a comprehensive project will gather extensive recordings of the language on a variety of topics in an attempt to mine the depths of Lakota/Dakota language and thought. In addition, this will be the first project to record Lakota/Dakota speakers engaging in natural conversation to record the language in its “natural state”, so that future learners can benefit from hearing language as it was originally used and learn from its context and content.

The Lakota/Dakota language is inseparable from the culture and identity of the people. It is this that makes the language of immeasurable importance in helping a people healing from the wounds of history. Boarding schools, forced assimilation and other historical factors have led to a limited and dwindling number of contemporary speakers at a time when the language is undergoing resurgence with younger generations. It is imperative to create these recordings to provide a bridge from a fast disappearing generation to one that is gaining fluency.

One only has to look at many of the translated place names in the Dakotas, Minnesota and other northern states to realize the importance of documenting the Lakota/Dakota language. For example, a place such as Devils Lake in North Dakota was derived from the name *mniwakhǎŋ* (pronounced roughly mini walk on) in the Lakota/Dakota language. The original means something quite different from what the English name would suggest. The meaning is more akin to “sacred water” and yet this is still not quite conveying the meaning of *mniwakhǎŋ* to someone steeped in Lakota/Dakota language and the unique way of thought that is intertwined with it.

It is imperative that we are able to record the last fluent Lakota/Dakota first language speakers to document the language and the knowledge intertwined with it before they are gone forever.

The four part project will:

- A. Engage fluent Lakota/Dakota language speakers in natural conversation with each other regarding their lives, history, culture, humor and the language itself in an effort to record natural Lakota/Dakota language as spoken by a dwindling group of fluent speakers
- B. Create English and Lakota/Dakota transcripts for the audio and video files created during the project to allow non-speakers as well as language learners' access to these important recordings.
- C. Archive, preserve and make recordings available at Sitting Bull College Library for Sitting Bull College courses, current and future language learners, students, researchers and humanities projects.
- D. Present findings and discuss future directions during a special seminar devoted to the recording project at the 2018 Lakota Summer Institute at Sitting Bull College

### **Intellectual Rationale**

The last generation of Lakota/Dakota speakers is slipping away. As each elder is lost, an entire “archive” of language as well as cultural and historical knowledge tied to the language disappears forever. This project seeks to gather, archive and organize this precious record of how the language was spoken before the pervasive influence of English by recording the last of a dwindling group of fluent speakers who spoke Lakota/Dakota as their first language. The project will create a record of the ways of speaking and thinking intrinsic to those who spoke Lakota/Dakota as their first language. It is necessary to record this to create a “bridge” between a generation that is quickly passing on and a new generation of young speakers that is emerging through the efforts of various language initiatives at Sitting Bull College.

This project seeks to gather, archive and share life histories and stories in Lakota/Dakota language that will enliven the humanities with engaging narratives and conversations in the Lakota/Dakota

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language. Transcripts of the interviews will be made in English and Lakota/Dakota to make these recordings accessible to those not conversant in the language.

One of the primary purposes of the project is to record ways of speaking that due to the unique quality of the language are not readily and easily translatable for future reference. Additional information about the state of the language can be found in the appendix.

Sitting Bull College, a tribal community college, is a leader in the revitalization of Lakota/Dakota language. In addition to enriching one of the most expansive course offerings in the language anywhere in the world, resources created during this project will benefit other “cutting edge” language revitalization efforts hosted at the college. Sitting Bull College is host to the annual Lakota Summer Institute <http://www.laksummerinst.com/> , a three week intensive immersion in the language that has become a model for other language efforts. In addition, the college is the home of the Lakhóli’yapi Wahóhpi (Lakota Language Nest) <http://www.sittingbull.edu/community/nest/> an

innovative immersion program that is starting children early and involving the whole family in language acquisition.

**Intended Audience**

The students and faculty of Sitting Bull College, language learners, the members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the local community are the primary intended audience for these materials. Secondly, the citizens of the United States and the world will benefit from the important resource that will be created. Over time, the long term value of this archive will increase as it becomes a well to draw on for a new generation of language speakers, teachers and learners.

**Improvement in Quality of Humanities Teaching and Learning**

All courses at Sitting Bull College incorporate Lakota/Dakota history, culture and language as an integral part. Primarily, these resources will benefit a long list of courses listed in the appendix that have a focus on both learning and teaching the Lakota/Dakota language. For

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example, instructors can utilize video and audio clips to highlight specific aspects of language for Lakota/Dakota language learners. Currently, no resources of this kind exist to draw on for use in coursework.

As explained above, the college serves as an internationally recognized leader in the teaching and revitalization of the Lakota/Dakota language with its many programs and offerings.

Providing a collection of primary source resources upon which to draw will increase the efficacy of each of our ongoing efforts to reinvigorate the language.

**Content and Design****Humanities Content**

The history, culture and language of Lakota/Dakota people of Standing Rock remains an important and cherished part of their being. The history, language and knowledge that make up this historical tapestry needs to be recorded and preserved, because they are important links in our American and global human story. Language, intertwined with the stories and historical context bound within it, expresses the very essence of who a people are uniquely through language. As noted above, each of these interviews will become an important part of ongoing efforts at Sitting Bull College to revitalize the language. Each of the courses listed above will benefit from these primary source recordings of a fast disappearing resource.

**Project Activities**

The project consists of two parts:

- Part one will utilize a mix of local fluent speakers to “interview” other fluent speakers and each other while engaging in natural Lakota/Dakota conversation while discussing their lives, memories, history, humor and the language. This format will allow the language to be recorded in its “natural state”. The process will not only allow the recording of essential language, ways of speaking and gestures, but it will record important elements of history and culture in the local language, preserving important

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nuance and differences in meaning that are untranslatable and unique to the Lakota/Dakota language.

- Part two will create transcripts in Lakota/Dakota and English to allow access to non-speakers as well as learners.
- Part three will archive both the video and audio files created during this project at Sitting Bull College Library, preserving and making them accessible for future generations of language learners.
- Part four will present the findings of the project during a seminar at the 2018 Lakota Summer Institute. In addition to presenting findings and sharing some of the great content that was created, the seminar will probe many of the best minds in Lakota/Dakota revitalization about future directions and potentialities for the recordings.

**First Component**

The initial phase of the project will involve preparing fluent speaker interviewers for work in the field. Speakers of both the Lakota and Dakota dialects will conduct interviews and engage in natural conversation in the language with other fluent speakers. By allowing fluent speakers to talk to each other, a more natural recording of the language can be created. Since women and men use different forms of the language, it is also important to record this as well.

Interviews will be conducted both at Sitting Bull College and in the field in each of the 8 districts on Standing Rock. A total of 30 speakers have been identified to be interviewed for a possible total of 1200 hours of recording time. We will pay fluent speakers at a rate of \$25 dollars per hour plus mileage (if applicable) for sharing their knowledge. Some elders will require more interviewing and others less depending on their availability and the type of knowledge they have to share. This small group is shrinking each year and time is of the essence. Interviews will be recorded in both audio and video to allow for the archiving of both. It is hoped, that at least two hours of sustained conversation can be recorded with each participant.

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Sitting Bull College already has the equipment needed for this project including audio and video recording equipment, sound room, computer software and storage. The college currently engages in recording and producing audio and video for various purposes, including interviewing elders. This project will allow our efforts to go beyond the piecemeal toward a comprehensive project that will preserve the language. The most important thing is that we are able to accomplish the preservation of this language heritage before it is lost.

**Second Component**

The second part of the project involves transcription of the recordings to create transcripts in both English and Lakota. The work will be done by a combination of Michael Moore and the Interview Coordinator, who will do most of the actual work in producing recordings. Michael Moore may serve in the role of Interview Coordinator as time allows in addition to other staff and students with the language expertise necessary to conduct these interviews. The primary reason for the summer interview schedule is to work with Michael Moore's busy schedule and allowing maximum use of his expertise. Michael Moore is a veteran of oral history projects as well as a fluent speaker of the language, making him the perfect choice to guide this project to fruition.

**Third Component**

The third part of the project involves storing, archiving and preserving these recordings and making them available at Sitting Bull College Library. This part of the project will be facilitated by Library Director Mark Holman. The component, while established by the completion of the project, will continue for perpetuity, preserving these priceless recordings for future generations.

**Project Personnel****Staff Members**

The overall project will be managed by Sitting Bull College Library Director Mark Holman in conjunction with the Director of Sitting Bull College Lakota/Dakota Language and Native American Studies programs Michael Moore. Because of the technical nature of the different

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phases of the project, both directors are needed to apply their skills to the aspects of the project that apply to their skill set. In addition to the directors, an Interview Coordinator will be hired to organize and do the extensive fieldwork and recordings. As noted above, this person may be Michael Moore or another qualified individual as schedule allows. A resume for each director is included in the appendix. Since the activities involved in the grant fall within the job descriptions of the directors, no salary is included for them in the budget.

Mark has been the director of Sitting Bull College Library for the past 14 years. He brings a wealth of experience both in grant management as well as the local language and culture. His passion in the library has been in building a collection of primary source recordings that help with the ongoing language revitalization efforts going on at Sitting Bull College. For example, the library is home to audio recordings by Francis Densmore and George Herzog done on the Standing Rock Reservation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is also home to 3,500 pages of Lakota text written in the 1880's by George Bushotter. Mark was instrumental in ensuring that this important resource was digitized by the Smithsonian and made available for language revitalization needs.

Michael Moore has been Director of the Native American Studies Division at Sitting Bull College for the past decade and has extensive experience with projects just like the one currently being proposed. Michael B. Moore has more than 30 years of experience working with topics related to Lakota history and culture, including both ethnographic and historical research. Having worked with the Lakota language for some 23 years, and taught it for 14 years, he has conducted numerous interviews with Lakota elders as part of his own research, as well as experience in transcribing and translating Lakota narratives in both written and recorded forms. Moore is eminently qualified to direct the project, including giving shape to the topical content of the questions and interviews as well the recording and transcribing phases.

## **Institutional Context**

### **Relationship to Mission/History/Students Sitting Bull College's Mission**

Sitting Bull said: *“Let us put our minds together and see what we can build for our children”*.

These wise words remain the foundation of everything at Sitting Bull College. In addition, the mission statement: *“Guided by Lakota/Dakota culture, values, and language, Sitting Bull College is committed to building intellectual capital through academic, career and technical education, and promoting economic and social development”* makes it imperative that we take all steps necessary to secure the future of the language by documenting the present.

### **SBC Humanities Program and Resources**

Sitting Bull College is a leader in the revitalization of the Lakota language. For the 9<sup>th</sup> year, Sitting Bull College has hosted a three week intensive language training called the Lakota Summer Institute. In addition to both beginner and advanced courses in Lakota, it has offered sessions in Hidatsa, Mandan, Arikara, Crow and Maori and has become the model for many language revitalization efforts elsewhere. SBC also has a Lakota Language Immersion Nest preschool that will soon expand to the elementary and beyond.

The extensive list of courses infused with Lakota/Dakota language included in the appendix is the most extensive anywhere and cements Sitting Bull College firmly in the vanguard of efforts to revive one of America’s most fragile languages. The recordings will allow beginning Lakota/Dakota language learners to hear the language spoken in context as well as allow advanced learners and speakers to learn from complex nuances within the language. In Zaz The primary role within courses will be to support language learning with extensive and concrete examples.

### **Follow Up and Dissemination**

The video and audio will be archived at Sitting Bull College Library. The only restrictions will be when there are activities or cultural content where it may not be appropriate to share. Local

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media will be alerted to the project and encouraged to do stories on the activities at Sitting Bull College. A story in one of the quarterly issues of Tribal College Journal, the journal of the tribal college movement, on the project will make the wider tribal academic community aware of the resources that are available.

The most important dissemination will be allowing the larger Lakota/Dakota language community to become aware of these new and exciting resources. During the 2018 Lakota Summer Institute, a seminar will make participants aware of these resources and solicit advice on next steps to take to improve access to these resources. Future projects might include indexing and adding metadata within a database to allow precise word and subject access and/or embedding some of the recordings within web content to allow for online access.

**Long Term Impact**

This project will lay the foundation for the future of the Lakota/Dakota language. It is hard to underestimate the importance of these resources to the future of the language. As the recorded generation slips away, these recordings will remain, allowing those carrying on the language to draw on the language as it was used among the last speakers who spoke Lakota/Dakota as their first language. The recordings, maintained at Sitting Bull College Library, will become important components of language and culture courses at Sitting Bull College as well as become integral to the Lakota Summer Institute and Lakota Language Nest. In addition, these resources will be available forever for the wider world to visit Standing Rock and learn about the people in the language that expresses the very essence of what it means to be Lakota/Dakota.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation will be ongoing as the project develops. Each recording session will be an opportunity to adjust methods to make the final product better. We will monitor each recording for sound, image and content quality and make adjustments as necessary.

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The most important evaluation of this project will be when we have up to 1200 hours of high quality language recording that not only document the language, but culture, history, thought, humor etc. as spoken in that language. The final product will provide a living record of Lakota/Dakota language before the loss of the majority of the last fluent speakers. If we accomplish this, the project will be considered a success.

**Work Plan and Schedule of Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Prepare equipment, hire Interview Coordinator and coordinate with summer 2016 interviewees	Jan. 2016-May 2016	Project Director(s)	Equipment ready, staff in place and interview times/places set
Interview year one group	May-September 2016	Interview Coordinator	Interviews conducted/archived
Prepare equipment, hire Interview Coordinator and coordinate with 2017 interviewees, organize, edit and transcribe recordings, add subtitles to video.	September to May 2016-2017	Project Director(s)	Equipment ready, staff in place, interviews set and year one videos available to public
Interview year two group	May-September 2017	Interview Coordinator	Interviews conducted/archived
Prepare equipment and organize, edit and transcribe recordings, add subtitles to video. Finalize organization and transcription of recordings	September 2017-June 2018	Project Director(s) and Interview Coordinator	Interviews finalized with both English and Lakota/Dakota transd
Present a symposium on the project during the 2018 Lakota Summer Institute at Sitting Bull College	June 2018	Project Director(s)	Future directions and publications

- [Professional Development Chair, North Dakota Library Association Executive Board](#) (2006 to 2009) (current committee member)
- [Read North Dakota](#) committee member (2006-Present)
- Member Tribal College and University Librarians Association
- Member [North Dakota Library Association](#)
- Member [American Indian Library Association](#)
- Member [American Library Association](#)

### **Institutional History and Data**

Sitting Bull College (SBC) serves the residents on and near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota and South Dakota. Founded in 1973 and chartered by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, SBC was one of the first of six tribal colleges to be established in this country and was also one of the first to be awarded ten-year accreditation status through the NCA-Higher Learning Commission. SBC continues to achieve ten year accreditation status with the last comprehensive visit in 2014. SBC is listed with the U.S. Department of Education as an eligible accredited *postsecondary minority institution* (Unit ID 200466). Its mission is guided by Lakota/Dakota culture, values, and language, in addition to Sitting Bull College commitment to building intellectual capital through academic, career and technical education, and promoting economic and social development. The enrollment at SBC has been fairly consistent at approximately 300 students. SBC enrolled 306 students in the Spring Semester of 2014.

Programs of study at SBC include twelve certificate programs, twenty associate programs, seven bachelor programs, and one master's program. Of these programs, SBC Division of Education offers an associate degree in Teacher Education and Early Childhood

Education, along with bachelor degrees in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Secondary Science Education. In addition, to the bachelor programs students are able to double major in Special Education (MR).

## **State of the Lakota/Dakota Language**

There is a need to revitalize the Lakota/Dakota language on the Standing Rock Reservation, which is in rapid decline. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gauges the health of a community's language using nine criteria, each rated on a 0 to 5 point scale. From these criteria, a community's language is deemed to be: 5-safe, 4-unsafe, 3-definitively endangered, 2-severely endangered, 1-critically endangered, or 0-extinct. From these nine criteria the Lakota/Dakota language on Standing Rock would be considered to be between "2-severely endangered" and "3-definitively endangered". Speakers of Lakota/Dakota are mostly members of the grandparental generation and represent only a small percentage of the total population, with little to no intergenerational language transmission. (Project Attachments – Page 37, "Current Status of Lakota Language")

In 2010, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST), via an ANA Language Maintenance and Preservation Planning grant, conducted a community wide door-to-door survey of all residents living in the eight (8) districts located on the Standing Rock Reservation. The survey was conducted in order to assess the current state of the Lakota/Dakota Language on Standing Rock and to gauge the support of a Lakota/Dakota Immersion School for birth to 5 year olds. There were 990 surveys collected with only 9% of the respondents stating they themselves currently speak Lakota or Dakota. The survey gauged three (3) areas concerning the Lakota/Dakota language:

- (1) fluent speakers in the family and home;
- (2) personal fluency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing;
- (3) support of an immersion preschool.

Of the survey participants that listed someone currently speaking in their family, most often the respondent listed an aunt, uncle, grandmother or mother – an older relative.

Given the average age of the survey participants (40.7 years of age) one can deduce that a majority of the known speakers remaining on Standing Rock are of an age of at least 50 years old or older (in 2010).

The average life expectancy for men on Standing Rock is only 47 years and 58 for women, a vast contrast when compared to the life expectancy of their white American counterparts of 76 and 80 years respectively. It is fair to say most remaining speakers of the Lakota/Dakota language on Standing Rock are near the end of their estimated life expectancy with very few living to reach “elderly” status.

One of the most alarming findings of the survey was the identification of only two (2) fluent 1st language speakers of Lakota/Dakota under the age of 30. In 2010, at the time of the survey, there were no children speakers of the Lakota/Dakota language on Standing Rock. This number has risen through recent efforts since the start of the the Lakhóli’yapi Wahóhpi, or Lakota Language Immersion Nest at Sitting Bull College in 2012. This and a few other efforts are creating new speakers, but the rate may not be fast enough to stem the loss.

In 2011, a new bachelor’s program at SBC was instituted to produce a new generation of language teachers and assist those current language teachers with the best practices in teaching Lakota/Dakota as a second language. Also, in 2013 the college took another step to assisting the learning of the Lakota/Dakota language as well as language teaching efforts by creating an Associate’s degree for the courses offered during the Lakota Summer Institute.

Nearly every tribal organization, educational entity and business on the Standing Rock Reservation has their vision, mission, or goals tied to Language and/or Culture. This illustrates that the preservation, maintenance, and growth of the language and culture is a community value and a community goal.

**Courses offered at Sitting Bull College that will benefit from this project.**

- Lakota/Dakota Language 1-4
- Lakota/Dakota Culture 1-2
- Native American History Since 1763
- Lakota Music and Dance
- Introduction to Native American Studies
- Lakota Tradition, Philosophy and Spirituality
- Lakota/Dakota Oral Tradition and Storytelling
- Native American Women
- Introduction to Lakota Linguistic Analysis 1-2
- Lakota Language Immersion 1-3
- Lakota/Dakota History
- Current Issues in Native North America
- Lakota/Dakota Social and Kinship Systems
- Standing Rock Culture and History
- Teaching Lakota/Dakota Methods Levels 1-5
- Teaching Lakota/Dakota Grammar 1-3
- Lakota/Dakota Phonology
- Intensive Lakota/Dakota for Beginners 1-3
- Intensive Lakota/Dakota for Elementary 1-3

- Teaching Lakota/Dakota Methods Levels 1-5
- Lakota/Dakota Inflectional Morphology
- Lakota/Dakota Syntax, Lakota/Dakota Phonology
- Immersion Methods 1-6
- Lakota/Dakota Reading
- Discursive Narrative and Recording 1-2
- Field Methods/Transcription 1-2
- Indigenous Language
- Lakota/Dakota Song and Dance
- Lakota/Dakota Syntax
- Neologism Development
- Classroom Materials Development
- Video Material Development
- Technology Development
- Dakota Materials Development
- Lakota/Dakota Drama Performance,