

Center opens

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A 16 year old dream has become reality with the opening of the Center of American Indian and Minority Health as part of the UMD Medical School.

The center, which focuses on service, education and research is now under one administration that joins four existing American Indian Programs in the medical school. These include the American Indians into marine sciences program, the Native Americans into medicine program, the Indians into research careers program, and the Howard Rockefeller program for high school students.

The center brings all the Indian programs in the school under one umbrella to serve students better said department head Joanne Black.

"I will be dealing with American Indian students who are problem students -- in that they perceive things differently, solve problems differently, and for whom English is not a first language," Black said. "I hope to meet their needs in everything from filling out paper work and understanding the bureaucracy to learning the system."

Black, newly appointed director of the center, is the first in her family to get a full education. Black said that her cultural background -- she is half Chippewa -- is an advantage in the position.

Born in Canada, Black received her Ph.D. in social welfare and preventive medicine/epidemiology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She earned a masters of social work and bachelors of social work from UMD, with minors in preventive medicine/epidemiology.

Black said she would like to act as a role model to show American Indian students that they can succeed in a "majority culture" without leaving their culture behind. One of Black's biggest hopes is that the center will nurture

a coordination and continuity that will help minority students throughout their education.

The center is the first in the nation with minority health as a focus at a departmental level. It is equal to all the other departments in the school of medicine, which Black said is unusual for a minority program.

The center also includes four existing programs:

American Indians into Marine Sciences (AIMS) is a program designed for academic recruitment and support for undergraduate American Indian students in their last three years of a baccalaureate program in marine sciences. The program's objective is to prepare these students for graduate opportunities and marine science careers.

Native Americans into Medicine (NAM) is designed to recruit, provide preliminary education and facilitate entry and retention of disadvantaged students into the schools of medicine, optometry, dentistry, veterinary medicine, osteopathy, pharmacy, psychiatry, public health, and health care administration. NAM provides an academic year program at UMD, Arrowhead Community Colleges or Bemidji State University and an on-campus summer program at UMD.

Indians into Research Careers (IRC) is a two-year undergraduate academic and research honors program for American Indian students working toward bachelor's degrees in a science field. IRC encourages and prepares students for biomedical research careers by providing financial and biomedical research opportunities.

The Howard-Rockefeller program for high school students is a six-week summer program for American Indian high school students on the UMD campus. The program exposes the participant to bio-

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medical research and offers them hands-on lab experience.

Currently there are 25 students affiliated with the center.

One problem the center has faced is funding. The Federal government has been funding the center for two years, but help from the state legislature is needed. So far, the state has not funded small

programs such as this but early in 1988, the legislature will again vote. Black said that she has a good feeling that they will vote for funding for the program.

Although figures from the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board show a 19 percent increase in the past four years in the area of minority enrollments, Black said that American Indian enrollments have declined.