

A CULTURAL EXCHANGE:
THE AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-
EAU CLAIRE

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History 489
May 16, 2012

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to trace the start and development of the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Developing ethnic programs in the newly formed University of Wisconsin-System, was one of the agendas of Wisconsin Governor Patrick Lucey, after he took office in 1971. His objective was to follow the national trend in higher education and start ethnic programs in the newly formed UW-System. UW-Eau Claire had a difficult time at first finding a program that would attract and retain minority students. After the university found the right program and people to run that program, simply called The Indian Program, events took a positive turn. At first, the program's objective was to help Native American Students transition from high school to college. As the program grew, a minor was offered in 1977 and by 1996 the program offered a major earning full credit toward a bachelor's degree. This paper will explore how UWEC addressed the needs of Native American students and show how the university solved the problems implementing the program and how the program grew. Many people were involved in the development of the American Indian Studies Program, the Board of Regents, individual faculty members, and concerned allies in both the administration at UWEC, and the Eau Claire community. The success of the program was simply: A Cultural Exchange.

Introduction

Many Native American students came to the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire during the late 1960s and 1970s. Many had problems adjusting to university life because their fellow non-Native American students and the UW-Eau Claire administration did not understand Native American culture. In 1971 with the newly created University of Wisconsin-System, came a mandate from Governor Patrick Lucey to implement African-American, Native American, and Chicano programs system wide. There were many problems developing these programs, because of cultural differences. The purpose of the programs was to help minority students adjust from high school to college. UW-Eau Claire was no exception to having difficulties implementing, in their case, an Indian Program and an African-American program.¹ This paper will concentrate on the inception and development of the Indian Program, which evolved into the American Indian Studies Program of today at UWEC. To fully understand how the program developed from the Indian Program, focusing only on helping Native American students transition from high school to college, into the American Indian Studies Program, a look back to the late 1960s is needed to find the roots of the program up to 1977. From 1977 it will be seen how the American Indian Studies Program evolved from offering, first a minor to offering a major as well, giving credit toward a bachelor's degree to the students majoring in American Indian Studies.

Amid the turmoil of the 1960s, the Civil Rights, the anti-war and anti-establishment movements, another movement was born in 1969, the American Indian Movement. The movement by Native American youth was aimed at telling the world about the need for American Indian Studies programs in higher education. The participants in this movement

¹ John M. Lavine, interview by author, Evanston, Illinois and Chippewa, Falls Wisconsin via Skype April 28, 2012. Recording of interview at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Special Collections and Archives McIntyre Library, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

believed that colleges and universities were not teaching Native Americans how to deal with relevant issues that they were facing.² Several journal articles and books have been written on this topic and have been utilized in this paper.

The time was right in 1969, first at the University of Minnesota and a few months later at UCLA; Indian Studies Programs were started and offered a curriculum that would revolutionize the way Native American students were taught.³ Then on November 19, 1969 the American Indian Movement took over and occupied Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. The Native Americans involved in the takeover, wanted to make an American Indian Education Center on Alcatraz, because the San Francisco Indian Center had been destroyed by fire.⁴ Other Native American students from the University of California-Berkeley and San Francisco State University, that were participating in the takeover, wanted to bring attention to their wanting of American Indian Studies and Ethnic Studies Programs to be started in colleges and universities.⁵

Lucey, on October 8, 1971 merged all of the universities in the Wisconsin State University-System with the University of Wisconsin, and created the University of Wisconsin-System.⁶ The UW-System mandated that all of the member schools start Native American, African-American and Chicano programs. The collection of John M. Lavine, in Special

² Steve Talbot, "Indian Students and Reminiscences of Alcatraz," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 18, no. 4 (1994): 93-102. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire American Indian Studies Office Hibbard Hall Room 150, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

³ UCLA American Indian Center webpage. <http://www.aisc.ucla.edu/admin/about.shtml>, (accessed March 20, 2012).

⁴ Marie Lynn Mierzejewski, "The Imprint of One Woman: Veda Stone's Influence on Wisconsin Native Americans" (History 489: Research Seminar, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2006. Minds@UW 2012<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/852>, accessed January 20, 2012), 7.

⁵ Talbot, 93-102.

⁶ University of Wisconsin Board of Regents Collection. University of Wisconsin Digital Collection. <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/UWBoR>, (Accessed May 2, 2012).

Collections and Archives, and in an interview with Lavine, pointed out how difficult it was in the early 1970s to get these programs in place. Lavine described how difficult it was for Chancellor Leonard Haas to find a program that would work. These programs were to be implemented by 1976, and as that date approached UW-Eau Claire was having difficulty implementing a program that would attract and retain minority students. Other schools in the UW-System were experiencing problems as well. Hearings were to be held at all of the universities in the system, in order to determine what was needed to help the minority students and implement the programs.⁷

UW-Eau Claire already had been working with the Native American community to bring Native American students to the Eau Claire campus. The university had utilized the Upward Bound Program with only moderate success in 1966 and 1967.⁸ In 1969 the university abandoned Upward Bound and opted for Inter-Cultural Education Program. The Inter-Cultural Education Program offered more cultural diversity, because many different minorities were represented on campus for the summer, African-American, Mexican-American, Native American, and other economically disadvantaged children were all represented.⁹ The decision to change programs was one of many of the hard decisions Haas had to make. Haas tried many different approaches to fulfill the mandate of 1971 and had many failures along the way. Haas knew he had a problem and was trying to find the solution. After Haas found the proper approach, the Indian Program and eventually the American Indian Studies program became

⁷ Report dated February 27, 1976, John M. Lavine Papers, MSS DD, Box 16 Folder 1. University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁸ Mierzejewski, 16-17.

⁹ Campus School Records, Inter-Cultural Education Program Handbook, 1969 Summer Session, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

successful and had a firm ally in Haas.¹⁰ 1976 saw many changes in the program. Haas was introduced to Veda Stone and Haas realized Stone would be the right person to make the Indian Program work. Haas made Stone the coordinator of the program. Stone understood the Native Americans and their culture. Stone had worked with the Bad River Reservation, in northern Wisconsin, most of her adult life, and the tribe adored her. Stone's personal papers and two 489 capstone papers, one by Marie Lynn Mierzejewski and the second by Erica Volkers reflect this and show how she understood Indian children and Indian culture.

Stone retired in 1980, but still remained an advisor to the American Indian Studies Program and worked with the Native American Student Association, or NASA. From memos and other documents that are archived in the American Indian Studies Program Office, located in Hibbard Hall room 150, the evolution of the program is laid out through the 1980s to 2000. Through using these memos and an interview with retired English Professor, and former Director of the American Indian Studies Program, Dr. Michael Hilger, I was able to trace the development of the American Indian Studies Program at UWEC through the 1980s and 1990s.

Many people were involved with the program from 1972 to 2000, first to create a program that was only designed to help Native American students transition from high school to college. With the efforts of many people this little program developed into the American Indian Studies Program at UW-Eau Claire, which would eventually teach about Native American history and culture to both Native American and non-Native American students. It is time to explore in detail how the American Indian Studies Program, started, and developed through: A Cultural Exchange.

¹⁰ Lavine, interview, April 28, 2012.

The Upward Bound Program

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Higher Education Act of 1965 Title IV part A, subpart 2, on November 8, 1965. The Higher Education Act was designed to strengthen resources to colleges and universities. It also offered financial assistance to students pursuing higher education. The Higher Education Act also gave underrepresented minority groups a better chance to participate in post-secondary education.¹¹ The Johnson Administration believed that through better educational opportunities all minorities and underrepresented groups could improve their position in life.

The Upward Bound Program was part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 Title IV Part A subpart 2. Upward Bound was part the part of the Act that was designed to take middle and high school children to a university and give them a feel of what would be like to attend a college or university. Wisconsin State University-Eau Claire was involved in the Upward Bound Program during 1966 and 1967. Many Native American students from all over Wisconsin came to the Eau Claire campus for six weeks during the summer. “The coordinators of the Upward Bound Program at WSU-Eau Claire felt that the Upward Bound Program was an invaluable asset to the WSU- Eau Claire campus.”¹² The classes that were offered were designed to help the participating students to improve their ability to do schoolwork. Native American students between the ages of 16 to 18 were taught classes in mathematics, english, science, social studies, the fine arts and Native American culture. The professors and coordinators of the Upward Bound Program on the campus of WSU-Eau Claire, the believed the program was invaluable and a

¹¹ U. S. Department of Education Upward Bound website.
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>. (Accessed March 5, 2012).

¹² Mierzejewski, 16-17.

wonderful asset to the campus. In 1969 the university administration believed that the program was ineffective in reaching and supporting the Native American communities in Wisconsin, so the Upward Bound Program was cut. “According to Jim Williams, a professor at WSU-Eau Claire, “It was like a slap in the face for Native Americans. Some people felt that the university was showing that [Native American] students were not welcome on the campus.”¹³ The decision made by Chancellor Leonard Haas of the WSU-Eau Claire was a tough decision because Upward Bound was not producing the desired result, which was that Native American students would return to Eau Claire as university freshmen. So, Haas decided to try the Inter-Cultural Education Program. This program brought many different minorities to the WSU-Eau Claire campus. Haas believed this program would help attract more minorities to WSU-Eau Claire.¹⁴ Haas wanted to have more minority representation on campus, but was unsure of how to attain it. Haas realized there was a problem, but was not sure of the proper course of action to solve the problem.¹⁵ The Upward Bound Program moved to the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point where it flourished for many years to come. This gave the WSU-Stevens Point a good relationship with the Native American tribes of Wisconsin for many years.¹⁶

The Demand for American Indian Studies Programs Nationally

An American Indian Studies Department was thought of at the University of Minnesota in the 1960s. A small ad-hoc committee presented a formal report to the administration to the U of M and started the process of incorporating existing curriculum and creating new courses to

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Lenard Haas interview by Richard L. Pifer, July 1991, 28:7 University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

¹⁵ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

¹⁶ Veda Stone American Indian Reference Collection 1940-1995, Eau Claire, MSS AP, Box 56 Folder 5. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

deal with Indian issues. The report created the necessary aid to assist American Indian students academically and established contact with the eleven tribes in Minnesota. The purpose of the outreach was to develop scholarly and community programs that dealt with important issues those native communities were facing. In June 1969 the Board of Regents of the U of M approved the establishment of the American Studies Program. This program has continued to grow through today and has the distinction of being the oldest American Indian Studies Program in the United States. The program was designed with a commitment to the development of theories and methodologies from the Native American point of view. A departmental base of formally educated faculty and the institutionally trained academic is supplemented by the Native American Community's resource people, including traditional leaders, elders, American Indian artists, writers, film makers, and musicians. With the incorporation of the diversity of the contributors, the teaching program acknowledges a unique cultural wisdom and skills that are not available at western institutions.¹⁷

UCLA was the next university to offer American Indian education. UCLA's approach was different than Minnesota's in that it created the American Indian Studies Center in late 1969. The initial beginnings of the Center started when Native American students asked UCLA to create a curriculum and research facility concentrating on Native American history and culture. Many Native American students and community members believed that UCLA was not conducting and releasing accurate research results pertaining to Native American issues, history, and culture. The Center was an Organized Research Unit and its mission was to promote research, education, and community service in an academic framework. The Organized Research

¹⁷ University of Minnesota American Indian Studies webpage. <http://amin.umn.edu/about/>(accessed March 20, 2012).

Center was headed by a tenured member of UCLA's faculty. Later in 1970 Chancellor Young wrote a five-year Ford Foundation Grant to support the Center. The focus of the program became two fold; its initial focus, to do accurate research on Native American issues, history, and culture, but now it also included Native American recruitment and retention.¹⁸

On November 19, 1969 Native American students from San Francisco State University and the University of California Berkeley started the occupation of Alcatraz Island. These Native American students had been reading protest literature written by Vine Deloria. Deloria's book, *Custer Died for Your Sins* and Stan Steiner's book, *The New Indians* helped to create a militant spirit in these students. According to Steve Talbot, in his journal article "Indian Students and Reminiscences of Alcatraz" in volume 18 number 4 1994 issue of *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, said that Jack Forbes, a professor of minority research, and student activists of the UC-Berkeley campus presented a well-reasoned proposal to the administration of the school to start ethnic studies programs at the university. Asking for a program seemed to make the activists to want to get the word out about what they wanted. Richard Oakes made the same type of proposal to the administration of SFSU. In October 1969, on the eve of the Alcatraz takeover, UC-Berkeley created an ethnic studies program. Forbes had taught a class in the fall semester and UC-Berkeley called Indian Liberation. The Indian Liberation class fueled the fire for more ethnic and Indian Studies type of curriculum, at the UC-Berkeley campus. By November the students wanted to bring attention, nationally to what they felt was needed in Indian education

¹⁸ UCLA American Indian Center webpage. <http://www.aisc.ucla.edu/admin/about.shtml> (accessed March 20, 2012).

and decided to occupy Alcatraz Island. The occupation was as much about education as it was liberation.¹⁹

The University of Wisconsin System was formed in 1971 and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire became a part of the system. The UW-System was also following the national trend in creating American Indian Studies programs and Ethnic Studies programs. The UW-System mandated in 1971 that all of the schools in the system were to establish the following programs: an American Indian Program, an African-American Program, and a Chicano Program. The programs were to help high school students from these minority backgrounds to transition from high school to college. These programs had to be implemented by 1976, by order of Governor Patrick Lucey.²⁰ The programs were also intended to help these students through their college careers, retain these students, and help them to graduate. The UW-System also issued an outline to all of the schools in the system giving a description of the responsibilities of the Native American, African-American, and Chicano coordinator. A description of what the offices should look like and what a meeting room for small group use should look like also was included in this outline.²¹

At UW-Eau Claire the American Indian program was not working to its full potential in 1976. UW-Eau Claire had forty percent fewer Native American students and only a two percent retention rate.²² A committee of regents, John Lavine, Edward Hales, and law professor Dr. Jim Jones started working with Haas to find a solution on the Eau Claire campus. The committee was

¹⁹ Talbot, 93-102.

²⁰ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

²¹ John M. Lavine Papers, Box 16 Folder 1.

²² Ibid.

not only working with Eau Claire they were also working UW-System wide to get the necessary programs started and running smoothly as ordered by Lucey in 1971. Haas knew there was a problem on the Eau Claire campus and it would take the regents committee and Haas to find the proper solution to the problems.²³

The Regents Committee on Minorities and Disadvantaged Students 1971-1976

When Governor Lucey took office in 1971, he had an agenda with two parts he wanted to accomplish during his term as governor. First Lucey wanted to merge the Wisconsin State University system with the University of Wisconsin. Secondly Lucey wanted to start Ethnic Studies Programs throughout the newly formed University of Wisconsin-System. A committee of regents was going to be needed to get the Ethnic Studies Programs started right away. In the spring of 1971, Lucey chose Edward Hales, an African-American lawyer from Racine, Dr. Jim Jones a law professor that had worked in administration of the late President John Kennedy's as an advisor, and John M. Lavine.²⁴ Lavine lived in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin and was the owner publisher of the *Chippewa Herald Telegram*. Lavine is currently the Dean of the Medill Communications and Journalism Department at Northwestern University. Lavine was a journalism educator and also was the publisher-owner of the Lavine Newspaper Group. The Lavine Newspaper group also owned the local newspaper in Shawano, Wisconsin and two more newspapers on the east side of the state.²⁵ Lucey told Lavine, he was selecting him to be a regent and serve on the Committee on Minorities and Disadvantaged Students, because the editorials

²³ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Greg Kocken, "New in Special Collections" 7 *Off the Shelf* (October 2011) 2.

that ran in Levine's newspapers were not either pro Republican or pro Democrat, but were attacks on the government in general, concerning education. The editorials that ran in the Lavine Group papers simply stated that the government in general was not doing their part to help educate minority students. Lucey told Lavine that he now had his chance to do something about the education of minority students.²⁶

The Regents Committee on Minorities and Disabled Students started to look for a place to start an ethnic program and decided on the Wisconsin State University-River Falls. The merger had not occurred yet, but Lucey wanted the regents to start right away on setting up ethnic studies programs. The merger would not happen until October 8, 1971 but the ethnic studies programs needed to be started right away.²⁷ The committee contacted Veda Stone from Mount Scenario College in Ladysmith, Wisconsin to help them start a program. Stone had been successful in improving the primary education of Native American students on the Bad River Reservation, and the regents wanted to see if she could help increase the retention rate of Native American students at WSU-River Falls.²⁸ Stone also had started a successful American Indian Program at Mount Scenario College.²⁹

Veda Stone and the Indian Program at the Wisconsin State University-River Falls

Stone was a social worker and educator who had worked with improving the education of Native American students. Stone graduated from the WSU-Eau Claire in 1943 with a bachelor's

²⁶ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Erica Volkens, "Thunderbird sky Woman: A Legacy of Education and Leadership," (History 489 capstone paper University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire D12/3e-4b Box 7 folder 36), 14. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

degree. Stone's husband passed away in 1946, and she devoted the rest of her life to social work and education. Stone then attained her master's degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin, located in Madison, Wisconsin in 1956. After Stone attained her master's degree she set out to work in social work, teaching, and community service.

Stone always had a deep concern about the education of Indian children. In 1958 Stone began working with the tribes in northwestern Wisconsin as a community service consultant. Stone became attached to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewas, and that is where she developed her interest in the education of Indian children.³⁰ The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewas eventually adopted Stone into their tribe and gave her the name "Thunderbird Sky Woman."³¹

Stone wrote an article for the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare Office of Education, in which she talks about the special needs and the differences of Native children in the classroom. This article appeared in *The Journal of Indian Education* in May of 1964.³² Stone said in this article "There are differences between Indian and non-Indian children which teachers must understand, one of the main differences is the way in which the world is perceived, the non-Indian reacts to a made world, while the Indian reacts to the world as it is." Stone felt it was the responsibility of every educator to fully understand the needs of all children in the classroom, not just Indian children. She went on to say that the most important need for children in the classroom is to be seen as they are. Stone felt that many times educators were guilty of looking at students and not seeing their needs. She went onto say "What value is to the child is the cold

³⁰ Mierzejewski, 10-11.

³¹ Volkers, 20.

³² Veda Stone, "The Indian Child in the Classroom," *The Journal of American Indian Education* 3(May 1964).

figure of a low I. Q, on a piece of paper if we have failed to observe that the child can [not] see or hear, or has been at the breaking point because he has gone to bed actually cold and hungry too often?” Stone’s thoughts on a solution to these problems in the classroom were “Not only must the teacher have the ability to observe or really ‘see’ the child but he must have something else of equal importance: he must have a kind of attitude toward children that allows a certain climate to develop in the classroom—a climate of acceptance and respect—yes, let’s say it, a climate of love.” Stone went on to say that “Indians are the fastest growing ethnic group in our country today (1964) and in [Wisconsin]. We have approximately 600,000 Indians in the United States; the 1960 census shows 14,297 in Wisconsin.”

Stone went on to point out that, “Some gains have been made in Indian health and education. While more Indians are voting and taking part in the social and political life of the communities, the number for whom these changes have not taken place is still large and is increasing rapidly. Regardless of our differences, we have taught him in these few hundred years to seek and to be given—rather than to achieve—and so began the generations of poverty.”³³ These statements by Stone were what she believed would help Indian children and eventually Indian young adults in college to learn better and empower them to become more independent. She became a leading authority on how to educate Native American children and adults by being sensitive to their needs and views of the world; this is something conventional educational systems had been overlooking. Stone believed education was the future of the Indian people.³⁴

The Regents Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged students contacted Stone and wanted her help in starting an Indian Program at WSU-River Falls that would help attract and

³³ Stone, 15.

³⁴ Ibid.

retain more Native American students.³⁵ The problem that was occurring on the WSU-RF campus concerning Native American students was a lack of understanding Native American culture. At certain times of the semester the Native American students would have to leave campus to go home to help their families with certain aspects of their culture. Events like wild rice harvesting time, or maple sugar camps and other aspects of typical Native American life, required the Native students to leave campus regardless of what was occurring on campus. The Native American students would leave campus to go home, even if it was mid-term test time. Many professors told the Native American students, “you cannot leave at this time,” but they did. Most of the Native American students, after they left WSU-RF simply would not return to school. The lack of understanding of the Native American cultural practices and costumes was contributing greatly to the low retention rate.³⁶

The program Stone and the regents committee, developed was designed to enroll Indian adult students to a weekend offering of classes. It was hoped that, as these adult learners would enroll and succeed in college, and would eventually enroll as full time students and attract not only more adults but students graduating from high school to the WSU-River Falls. If the adults successfully completed college courses, then completing a college education became part of the tribe. So when the Native American students had to leave WSU-RF to help their families, they simply could not stay at home and not return to campus. The tribal elders would tell the students we have finished a college education now, so you must go back and follow in our footsteps. Stone knew how to make getting a higher education important to all concerned in the tribe. All of

³⁵ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

³⁶ Ibid.

the problems with retaining Native American students were solved by a simple cultural exchange.³⁷

The program at WSU-RF started with 60 students in the fall of 1971 and by 1974 had grown to an enrollment of 200. The Bureau of Indian Affairs funded the program which was jointly administrated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Great Lakes Intertribal Council, where Stone was an employee. The enrollment range of age in the program was 18-65.³⁸ Stone was accomplishing what she believed was most important at the WSU-River Falls, and that was to educate Native Americans to help them better themselves. Stone understood what Native Americans wanted out of an education and knew how to make the younger students stay in school.

While the American Indian Program was starting at WSU-RF, and by late 1971 became UW-RF, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire added two new courses to the Course Catalogue for the 1973-1974 academic year, English 142, “Introduction to Native American Literature” and History 240, “Native American History from 1492-1900.”³⁹ English 142, “Introduction to Native American Literature” was offered and taught in the fall of 1973 taught by Professor Saxson Gouge. The class was unique in that it recognizes that Native Americans have Literature. English 142 was the first class taught at UWEC dealing with Native American culture.⁴⁰ History 240 was only added to the Course Catalogue at this time, it was not taught until the 1980s. By 1976

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Veda Stone Wisconsin Demonstration in Indian Education Opportunities,” *Leader Telegram*, Eau Claire Wisconsin, August 13, 1974.

³⁹ Course Catalogue of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Catalogue. Vol. XLXVII Eau Claire, 1973-1974, 87. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁴⁰ Michael Hilger, interview by author, Altoona Wisconsin, April 12, 2012. Recording of interview at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Special Collections and Archives McIntyre Library Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

ethnic programs had to be up and running in the UW-System as ordered by Lucey. The Indian Program at UWEC was not having much success in attracting or retaining Native American students despite offering English 142, Introduction to Native American Literature. A change was needed but no one knew the solution.

Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged Students Hearing at UW-Eau Claire

A few months before the hearings by the Regents Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged students at UWEC, Leonard Haas was introduced to Veda Stone by the members of the regents committee. Haas did not know Stone at all and was amazed to find out she live so near the UW-Eau Claire campus.⁴¹ Haas, after meeting and talking to Stone was amazed at her knowledge of Native Americans and her success at working with them in education. After reviewing her accomplishments at UW-River Falls, Haas decided to offer Stone the position of coordinator of the Indian Program at Eau Claire.⁴²

On March 9 and 10, 1976 the Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged Students headed by Regents John M. Lavine and Edward Hales, along with law professor Jim Jones, held a hearing on the problems that the Native American students were encountering at UWEC. These hearings were to examine the problems with the Indian Program and determine how to fix the problems with the program. The hearings at UWEC on March 9 and 10, 1976 were to deal specifically with problems at UWEC, even though hearings were being held throughout UW-

⁴¹ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

⁴² Ibid.

System. By 1976 individual schools had their own issues to work out. The program still was a system wide effort to establish ethnic programs.⁴³

The hearing heard testimony from several Native American students including Charity Thunder, a 1975 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. In a letter to the Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged Students Thunder stated:

The problems that have been discussed thus far, [I am] sure are not new but are merely being echoed at a new time and under new circumstances. Meaning statistics concerning the Native American student visibility or should I say invisibility has become so obvious that it can no longer be ignored and more or less swept under the rug.

This testimony will not dwell on the past, but by all means the past should not be forgotten because the various incidents that Native American students have [experienced] within this educational system is why the Native American student population has drastically decreased. Speaking of these experiences is the one reason why I have decided to testify because I do not want to see my fellow Native Americans to experience what I had experienced whether it includes counseling, financial aids, or just making the adjustment from one diverse world to another. This adjustment is sometimes the most drastic experience, especially for someone who has known only one way of life and is the only way that is significant and important. This is where Native American Programs become arteries in recruiting and retaining Native American students.

Self-determination has become more prevalent within the past several years and now it has been formed into an act. But the challenge remains to be seen as to whether the amount of autonomy and self-determinism we as Native Americans will be allowed to possess. And this particular hearing is one avenue which we as Native Americans can make recommendations as to our destiny within this educational system.

Getting to local affairs, I would like to express my feelings on the newly organized Advisory Council to the Minority American Program, of which I am a member, here at UW-Eau Claire. I graduated from here a year ago and I became well aware of the needs, therefore the chairperson, Mrs. Veda Stone asked if I would serve on the Committee. I accepted, although I am not sure if I represent Native American students or Native Americans in general. I was hoping I would represent myself as a Native American and who was a student, therefore possessing some understanding of their needs.

I want to say that I feel honored to have such a great lady, Mrs. Veda Stone, on the staff here at UW-Eau Claire and she has accomplished so much since she has been here. Her concern and interest for Native Americans goes back a long time which is probably why her accomplishments are many. Also the members of the Minority American Program Committee I want to praise because their interest and concern has been consolidated into a commitment which is essential. The people to whom I am referring are: Sarah Harder, Jim Williams, Georgia Houston and Helaine Minkus. With all of these talented people the Committee came up with some significant recommendations.

⁴³ Ibid.

Of these recommendations I want to emphasize my own and the first includes the Native American coordinator's job description. Included in that job description should be membership to the Native American Studies Committee which is in direct relationship to any Native American Program. Some universities acknowledge their programs as Native American Studies Programs and all services to Native American students stem from there. Another recommendation is that a Search and Screen Committee be formed in order for the Advisory Council to possess some veto power as to who gets hired or fired because when a group of people make recommendations that alone may not be adequate in order to maintain a good viable program. Also all positions that are formulated and installed should be on a full-time basis for the purpose of again, maintaining a viable program. Employment here means to have individuals within the Program there at all times because keeping a program to where it is effective needs full commitment and needs to be an ongoing process. If a position is seasonal it cannot be successful and/or effective, for example, if Veda's position ends with the [spring] semester and continues next fall, one whole summer is wasted because she could do a great deal during that time. Recruitment or just a continuance of what she did in the [spring] would be most effective and progressive if she were able to do it during the summer and continue right into the fall. If any Program is to accomplish its goals it must be continuous without any interruptions because it affects a number of People as to whether they succeed or not and that is important.⁴⁴

In another statement from a Native American student, Mrs. Myrtle Long said:

Presently I am a student in my third year, here at UW-EC and have attended here since I began my higher education.

Since the time when I first registered as a student, I have had problems in applying for, and receiving, financial assistance, through the financial aids office. Although often applying quite early and getting all necessary forms sent in prior to deadline dates, I have still had this problem. The reasons often given by the financial aids office for the delay of problems was either, they forgot to send the financial aids form in or they failed to properly fill out the financial aids form.

After repeated problems such as these, I often wonder if this is just accidental or purposely done. I have heard also, that other Native American students have, or have had this same problem. It would seem that with the small number of Native American students that are attending school here, there would be some effort made so that these problems [would not] keep occurring, and the students [would not] have to keep calling [the] Higher Educational Aids Board for help in these problems.⁴⁵

Haas also testified before the Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged Students and stated all of the problems he had experienced over the previous nine years with retaining Native

⁴⁴ Veda Stone American Indian Reference Collection 1940-1995, Box 51 Folder 1. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁴⁵ John M. Lavine Papers, Box 16 Folder 1.

American students. Haas said that he realized he had a problem but did not know what the solution was. At that moment Jones, of the committee, looked Haas in the eye and said, “Mr. Haas if you have a problem, I suggest that you fix it.”⁴⁶ The room became deathly quiet. Jones did not mean the statement in a malicious way he just meant that if you see a problem you should fix it. Haas did not realize it but he had already solved his problem by appointing Stone as the Indian Program coordinator. Haas from that moment on became a valuable ally in the success of the Indian Program.⁴⁷

Stone and the regents committee, in the Fall Semester of 1976, started the Indian Adult Education Program at UW-Eau Claire. The program was like the one that was designed at UW-River Falls, to get Native American adults to enroll into weekend classes to be an example to the younger members of their tribes. The adult program at UW-River Falls was very successful at attracting and retaining full time students from the reservations. During the fall semester of 1977, Stone setup and started with the help of Haas and the Board of Regents a minor to be offered for the school year of 1977-1978.⁴⁸ The Indian Program had evolved into the American Indian Studies Program.⁴⁹

The American Indian Adult Education Program and Minor at UW-Eau Claire

Stone’s first action as Indian Program coordinator was to provided progress toward an Associate’s Degree, rotating three courses offered on Fridays and Saturdays every semester. The

⁴⁶ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Course Catalogue of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Catalogue. 1977-1978, 57. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁴⁹ John M. Lavine Papers, Box 16 Folder 1.

program was offered from 1976-1979, and as of 1979 five Native American students went on to become full-time students at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, seeking and attaining a bachelor of arts degree. Other Native American students in the program had reported that they had improved their reading and writing skills in their jobs away from the university.⁵⁰ This program was designed to attract the adult students in the program to become full-time students and hopefully inspire their children and other Native American Community members to come to the UW-Eau Claire. The Native American Communities which took the most advantage of this program was the Stockbridge-Munsee and the Ho-Chunk Communities of eastern Wisconsin.⁵¹

Stone, Haas, and the regents continued to develop the course curriculum for both the Indian Adult Education Program and the minor in American Indian Studies. These classes consisted of for the fall semester of 1977:

Instruction 101: composition (English as a second Language), Sociology 101: Introduction to Sociology, Business Administration 101: Introduction to Business, Medical Terminology 260, and Introduction to Medical Terminology. For the summer of 1977 the course offering consisted of: Psychology 100: Introduction to Psychology, and Sociology 291: Contemporary Indian Issues. For the Fall Semester of 1977 the course offering consisted of: Sociology 220: Interpersonal Skills, Enph 111: Community Hygiene III, Sociology 101: Introduction to Sociology, and Psychology 100: Introduction to Psychology. By the Spring Semester of 1978 Veda Stone added to this curriculum the classes of Psychology 250: Psychology of Adj. and Social Work 420; Social Work in Families.⁵²

Implementation of these programs was a hard task, but was accomplished with a group effort. Stone and Haas hand-picked the faculty that would teach the classes, especially the faculty

⁵⁰ American Ethnic Coordinating Committee 1977-1980, Eau Claire AS 408 Box 1 Folder Adult Program Charity 1979, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid.

that would teach in the Indian Adult Education Program. Faculty that would be teaching these adult learners had to understand, like Stone did, the circumstances that affect the Indian student. The program obtained the nickname “special project” program because of the great care that was taken to match the right professor to the right class so, the adult students could get the most of their class time at the university. By 1978 the outgrowth of these programs were now completing the process to offer a fully accredited Associate Degree (64 credit hours).⁵³

A University Bulletin explains how the Indian Adult Education Program worked: 64 university level credits could be earned for an Associate’s Degree in General Education. These credits could then be applied toward a Bachelor’s Degree. The Associates Degree certified a student as having satisfactorily completed one-half of the number of credits required on a Bachelor’s Degree. In order to qualify for the Associate’s Degree, the student must:

1. Earn a minimum of 64 credits, including the completion of English Composition and General Education requirements and at least one credit in Physical Education.
2. Earn a grade point average of 2.00 or better.
3. Earn at least 32 semester credits, including the last 13 and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.
4. Count toward the degree no more than 12 credits on a satisfactory of fail basis.
5. Apply to the Registrar in writing for the Associate Degree.⁵⁴

The Indian adult classes met eight weekends during the semester beginning on Fridays (1:00pm-4:00pm and 6:00pm-9:00pm) and on Saturdays (9:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-4:00pm). The hours involved meet the requirements for the number of hours needed for six university credits.⁵⁵

In order to meet the needs of the Indian adults the creation of an advisory committee was necessary. This advisory committee was to be made up of Indian adults. The committee’s

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

responsibility was to promote Indian education at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, in order to benefit all of the Indian people of Wisconsin. The commitment of the adult advisory committee was also charged with the responsibilities of:

course recommendations for future classes, informing other Indian adults of the program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, (by either brochure or word of mouth) and being a representative of the Indian people that were interested in attending college and expressing those needs necessary to expanding their education in the Indian Adult Education Associate Degree Program at the University of Wisconsin-eau Claire.⁵⁶

By 1979 the American Indian Adult Program was nearing its end.

Stone and Haas had developed a rigorous curriculum of classes. UW-Eau Claire had developed a minor in American Indian Studies and soon would be the only component of the American Studies Program, because the Adult Indian Program was being phased out. While these developments were happening at UWEC, something else exciting was happening at the University of Arizona. In 1979 Dr. Vine Deloria Jr. had a different idea about American Indian Studies Programs and American Indian Education at the UA. According to David Wilkins, while he was a student enrolled in Deloria's first program at the UA (and is now a professor of Political Science and Native American Law at the University of Minnesota), Deloria's approach was to teach the unusual relationship between the United States government and the Native American tribes. The course that Deloria taught at the UA consisted of writing three, thirty-five page research papers on any treaty, which any tribe had made with the U. S. government. The first part of the project the students had to do was choose a treaty. Part two, consisted of researching the treaty and writing a thirty-five page paper on what the treaty was about. The next thirty-five page paper was to determine if the treaty was still valid today. Lastly, a thirty-five page paper was to determine if the treaty was still enforceable today. Through this type of curriculum,

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Deloria believed that teaching Native American students the peculiar relationship between the tribes and the U. S. government was the best way to teach leadership skills to Native American youth. Another asset Deloria felt the program would bring about is that the tribes would become more independent and end extreme poverty by being able to negotiate with the U.S. government. The program that Deloria developed at the University of Arizona was the first master's program offered in American Indian Studies.⁵⁷

By the Fall Semester of 1980 the Indian Adult Program disappeared from the UWEC curriculum and the American Indian Studies Program now only offered a minor for any student. Both Native Americans and non-Natives Americans could enroll in the program.⁵⁸ In 1980 Stone stepped down as the coordinator of the American Indian Studies Program. She always felt that Native Americans should run their own programs. Stone remained an advisor to the program until her death in 1996. One thing that all Native American students learned about Stone was that when they came to see her about a problem they were having with the UWEC administrative offices or staff, and would come in to see her and say "I am being treated so badly around here because I am an Indian." Stone would look at the student and say "You have to learn to stand up. You need to confront the people that are causing your problem and work it out." Stone had a tough love attitude toward the Native American students. She would help them but made them find their own solutions. Stone believed this was just as good of an education, "learning to stand up" was as important as learning from books.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ David Wilkins, "What I Learned from Vine Deloria" (lecture, American Indian Cultural Center University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, November 11, 2011).

⁵⁸ American Ethnic Coordinating Committee 1977-1980 Box 1 Folder, American Indian Adult Program 1979. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁵⁹ Hilger interview, April 12, 2012.

The American Indian Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, in 1979, now began to set its standards for the director position and the faculty that would teach the classes in the program. The qualifications to be director:

- Terminal degree in an academic field
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with tribal communities
- Evidence of administrative ability, including effective communication skills
- Demonstrated scholarship of creative activities in American Indian Studies
- To be Native American or part Native American⁶⁰

Teaching Native American Culture

At UWEC everyone involved with the American Indian Studies Program was learning how to teach Native American culture. In the book *Spirit & Reason: The Vine Deloria Jr. Reader* an anthology of Vine Deloria's writings, edited by Barbara Deloria, Deloria said:

Indian students who come from traditional homes have considerable difficulty assimilating the practices and beliefs they learned as children with the modernist attitude of science. And among Indian students who grew up in urban areas and whose experience in reservation communities is limited to sporadic summertime visits, an even greater difficulty in assimilating this exists. They believe certain things about tribal knowledge of their own tribal past and practices as possible, so the problem becomes emotional as well as an intellectual dilemma.⁶¹

Stone and the Indian Studies Committee, at UWEC, understood these problems with Native American students and along with people involved with the program set up standards for the director and faculty.⁶²

⁶⁰ American Indian Studies Committee Notes. Start of Program Box. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire American Indian Studies Office Hibbard Hall Room150, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁶¹ *Spirit & Reason: The Vine Deloria Jr., Reader*, Ed. Barbara Deloria (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 1999), 130. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire American Indian Studies Office Hibbard Hall Room179, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁶² American Indian Studies Committee Notes. Start of Program Box. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire American Indian Studies Office Hibbard Hall Room150, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

UW- EC was no exception in experiencing cultural problems. On February 23 and 24 1978 the UW- System held a Select Conference on the Future of Minority Centers. A published paper written by Christopher Jones titled, *I am not Indian, I am Oneida* talking about the difficulties in teaching diverse Native American Cultures was presented at the conference.

At the beginning all intuitions make the same mistake that alienates Indian students, from participation because the institution assumes that “Indian” refers to one fixed race of people. So we incorporate “Indian culture, Indian food, dancing, art, mythology, etc.” without allowing for the diverse and varied of “Indianness.” Comparison to the specific names of Europeans, to show difference in culture the task for multicultural programs is to recognize the inherent diversity of indigenous people. Many of the Indian students we come in contact with are acutely aware of these differentiations. Arising out of that relationship are attitudes and feelings which must be dealt with by our programs. We in the academic support services are most likely to work with Indian students who identify as Indian, but went on to need a non-Indian education in order to cope with the non-Indian world. Because we claim to represent all cultures we must be aware of these attitudes and the reasons for them. From the Indian point of view multiculturalism is a lofty deal; cultural pluralism was a reality before the Europeans arrived.⁶³

Jones and Deloria are talking about how difficult it is to operate an American Indian Studies Program with non-Native American faculty. Most of the programs around the United States are administered in this manner. As David Wilkins points out in an article he wrote, “Contemporary American Indian Studies” appearing in the winter 2009 issue of the *American Indian Quarterly*: “The requirement that faculty members to have doctorates, a requirement based on mainstream ideology, automatically disqualifies most Indians in favor of white instructors with little or no knowledge of tribal ways of knowing and being.”⁶⁴

Haas had for many years hired Native American professors to try to attract as many Native American students to the UW-Eau Claire campus and at first had little success. Haas explained to the Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged Students that he had spent a lot of

⁶³ Christopher Jones, *I Am Not Indian, I Am Oneida* (Oshkosh: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, 1978), 46-47.

⁶⁴ David Wilkins, “Contemporary American Indian Studies,” *American Indian Quarterly* 33(Winter 2009): 18-32.

money trying to hire qualified Native American staff to help attract and retain Native American students. That approach had little success.⁶⁵ It was not until Stone was appointed Indian Program coordinator that the Native American students, that the university was able to retain the Native American students. The reason was that Stone formed and got approval of the university and the Board of Regents, the necessary culture classes and some of those classes were being taught by Native American professors.⁶⁶ One class was started in the fall of 1973 and by 1980 was still being offered and taught, was English 142, “Introduction to American Literature,” taught by Saxson Gouge, a Native American professor from the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation near Hayward Wisconsin.⁶⁷ After Stone arrived on campus in 1976, she contacted Professor Michael Hilger about developing a class called “The Native American in Film.” Hilger agreed and by the fall semester of 1983 Hilger had developed English 242, “The Native American in Film.” The course was approved by Haas, and the administrative boards of the university, and the Board of Regents.⁶⁸ The beginning of the 1980s saw the American Indian Studies Program beginning to grow. Not only were more students enrolling into Indian studies class but the retention rates of the Native American students were getting better. The program had been maintaining itself from its start, but was yet far from flourishing. The program was constantly looking for more ways to spark interest in students and faculty.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

⁶⁶ Hilger interview, April 12, 2012.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Letter in the American Indian Studies Committee Notes. Start of Program Box. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, American Indian Studies Program Office, Hibbard Hall Room 150, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

The Growth of American Indian Studies Program from 1980 to 2000

By the spring semester of 1983 the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire had six students enrolled in the minor program. The advisor and director of the program at this time was Helaine Minkus, an Anthropology professor.⁷⁰ Previously in the fall semester of 1982, the *Spectator*, the UWEC weekly newspaper, ran an article about the minor program in American Indian Studies. The article was titled, *Few Aware of Program, Indian Culture Minor Offered*. The article's author David Grist talks about how UWEC is offering a minor to keep alive the culture of American Indians. Grist quoted director Minkus, "To start out, it was somewhat political, but it was necessary to redress an imbalance," she went on to say, "We should know the history of this continent if [we are] claiming to be Americans."⁷¹ Minkus went on to say that three of the five students enrolled in the minor were Native American and that the program was stronger than it was in 1981. Minkus attributed this to the enthusiasm of new faculty members who are interested in and qualified to teach courses about American Indians.⁷² Denise Panek, a junior English major and a student enrolled in the minor, said that she chose to enroll in the minor to be better prepared to teach minority students. She said that "she was not well-informed about American Indians prior to attending UWEC." Panek went on to say, "The faculty involved in the minor is sensitive to the issues of the Indian people. [I am] just real impressed with their sensitivity."⁷³ Minkus added "society is generally misinformed about American Indians and their

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ David Grist, "Few Aware of Program, Indian Culture Minor Offered," *University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Spectator*. October 21, 1982.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

role in society.”⁷⁴ From its beginning the American Indian Studies Program had been hidden within the university, but now was gaining some notice.

The American Indian Studies Committee was growing as well. In 1976 when Stone arrived, the committee only consisted of eight members.⁷⁵ By 1984 the committee had grown to thirteen members.⁷⁶ The American Indian Studies Committee had by 1984 drafted a mission statement and made a statement as to its role in steering the program. The director of the committee was to administer the minor, promote research, discussion, and scholarly exchange. The committee was to include faculty, staff, and students. Faculty interested in either teaching or doing research in American Indian Studies was to be appointed by various schools and departments of the university. The program coordinator, outreach, and extension staff with responsibilities in Indian Studies, are to promote communications. The representatives of the Indian Student Council and the students enrolled in the minor are also on the committee. Only two students are eligible to vote on issues and the Indian Student Council selected those two students. The responsibilities of the committee were to determine the requirements for the minor and the core courses of the minor. The committee also wanted the schools and departments of the university to develop new courses for the minor. Any changes in the minor were to be decided by a majority vote by the committee. The committee was also charged with making sure the courses were offered every semester. The chairperson and the recording secretary were to be chosen at the first meeting of every academic year. The work of the

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ John M. Lavine Papers, Box 16 Folder 1.

⁷⁶ Meeting minutes from January 1984 of the American Indian Studies Committee Notes. Start of Program Box. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, American Indian Studies Program Office, Hibbard Hall Room 150, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

committee was to be done by subcommittee, with members being appointed by the chair, as much as could be done by subcommittee.⁷⁷

Other good things were happening in the American Indian Program by the mid-1980s. The retention rate was getting better. A report filed by Deborah A. Harris of the American Ethnic Coordinating Office stated that, the wide variety of positive experiences on the UW-Eau Claire campus from 1982-1986 had encouraged American Indian Students to come back to the Eau Claire campus. The program had provided Indian Students to share their expertise with non-Indians through a variety of cultural events and activities on campus.⁷⁸ The report went on to say that:

In 1979-80 most minority students at UW-EC were freshmen and sophomores. Low retention resulted in few juniors and seniors. The latest Factbook data shows that retention for minority students has increased. However, it is most significant that the greatest change is in the increased retention for American Indian students. In 1979-80 only 28 percent of the American Indian undergraduate students were juniors and seniors. In 1983-84, 45 percent of the American Indian undergraduates were juniors and seniors. No other minority population at UW-EC has shown more than a 5 percent increase in the portion of juniors and seniors.

The minority retention program for American Indians has played an important role in increasing retention among these students. This proposal seeks to continue this successful program and develops similar components directed toward Hispanic and Black student retention.⁷⁹

Harris was submitting a grant to the West Central Wisconsin Consortium to continue the work of the American Indian Studies Program and to try modeling other ethnic programs at UWEC based off the American Indian Program. What was started in 1976 was now working well in the mid-1980s and the American Indian Studies Committee started to look at creating a major.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Deborah A. Harris, *UW-Eau Claire Minority Student Retention Program* (Eau Claire, WI: American Ethnic Coordinating Office University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, October 3, 1986).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

By 1993 the advisory board of the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire was ready to offer a major in American Indian studies. By now the American Indian Studies Program Committee had increased to 30 members. According to Michael Hilger, “as the committee became larger and more interest by students, both Native and non-Native to enroll in the minor, the idea to create a major for a bachelor’s degree just kind of evolved.”⁸⁰ The committee started designing a program, working with the administration of the university, and the Board of Regents.⁸¹

In 1983 Dr. Ronald Satz, joined the faculty of UWEC. He was an Indian scholar and taught the American Indian History 240 class. He also was the chair of Graduate and Professional Studies. Satz was very helpful and supportive to the American Indian Studies Committee. Satz became a committee member and played an important role in designing the major. Satz went on to write the book *Chippewa Treaty Rights*, he knew and understood the needs of the Indians as well as Stone.⁸²

The committee also consulted two outside experts, Dr. Rayna Green of the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of the American Indian and Professor David Wilkins of the University of Arizona, who had helped to develop the PhD. program at the UA. Both Wilkins and Green looked over the proposed American Indian Studies Program, major at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and gave advice on the curriculum proposed. Wilkins suggested more classes in American Indian history and political and legal courses. He believed that

⁸⁰ Hilger interview, April 12, 2012.

⁸¹ American Indian Studies Committee Notes. Start of Program Box. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, American Indian Studies Program Office Hibbard Hall Room 150, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁸² Ibid.

understanding the unique relationship of the United States government with the tribes was a very important relationship for Native American students to learn.⁸³

The fall semester of 1996 UWEC offered a major in American Indian Studies.⁸⁴ A lot of hard work and many different drafts of the program were presented to the university, Provost Office, and the Board of Regents. It was the crowning achievement of many years of work and contributions of many people. Also in 2000 Ojibwe Language was offered for the first time.⁸⁵ The program is continuing to grow today. Methodology classes and contemporary issues Native American Communities are facing today have been added to the curriculum.⁸⁶ The program has grown in the number of students enrolled in both the major and minor programs. From six students enrolled in the minor in 1983 to 20 students enrolled the major and 18 students enrolled the minor for a total of 38 students enrolled in the American Indian Studies Program in 2012, this is a substantial gain.⁸⁷ The administrators of the American Indian Studies Program are always looking at ways to improve the program and better serve the Native American community.

Conclusion

The turbulent climate of the late 1960s and the early 1970s made minority education difficult and created a demand for ethnic studies programs. The call for a more responsive higher education system that dealt with minorities and taught an understanding of their culture was in high demand. Many universities responded either on their own or by ethnic student demands for

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Catalogue. Vol. 80 Eau Claire, 1996-1997, 52. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library, Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁸⁵ Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Catalogue. Vol. 82 Eau Claire, 2000-2001, 56, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library, Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁸⁶ University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Course Catalogue. Vol. 94 Eau Claire, 2011-2012, 57, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library, Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

⁸⁷ American Indian Studies Committee Notes. Start of Program Box. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library Special Collections and Archives, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

an education program to teach and be sensitive to their cultural needs. By 1971 when Governor Lucey of Wisconsin took office, his top priority was to merge the WSU-System with the University of Wisconsin and create the UW-System. Along with the merger, ethnic studies programs for the minorities that attended these universities were to be started. These programs were to help attract minority students and to increase the retention rate of these students. The ethnic studies programs started as a system wide initiative.

In 1966 the then WSU-Eau Claire, under the leadership of Leonard Haas, attempted to get minority students to come to the WSU- Eau Claire campus by becoming involved with the Upward Bound Program. Upward Bound brought many Native American students to the WSU-Eau Claire. By 1969 the Upward Bound Program was not producing the desired result. Haas switched to the Inter-Cultural Education Program, which brought many different minority groups to the WSU-EC for the summer. The Inter-Cultural Education Program was only moderately successful at upping the enrollment of minority students but the retention rates did not get any better. Haas realized there was a problem and admitted he did not know the solution.

After the Regents Committee on Minority and Disadvantaged Students began their hearings on this issue throughout the UW-System, Haas found his solution. By a chance introduction of Veda Stone to Haas by the Regents Committee in 1976, Haas found the answer. After Haas asked Stone to become the coordinator of the Indian Program that had been formed in 1972, and after Stone joined the program the desired results began to occur. By the mid-1980s the enrollment and retention rate among Native American students had increased by 45 percent. The program started out with an Indian Adult Program and a minor offered to full time students at the university. The program improved the retention rate among Native American students and kept growing to include a major by the late 1990s. Many people were involved in getting the

program working and to get the word out about the program. For many years very few people on the Eau Claire campus were aware of the existence of the American Studies Program. Today the American Studies Program is highly visible on the UWEC campus.

John M. Lavine said, “On the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire campus were the Indian students of that campus treated badly? YES. Were the Indian students shunned and ostracized? YES. Did certain administrative offices and certain administrators ignore the needs of the Indian students and not advise them well? YES.” Lavine went on to say, “It took a lot of work and understanding to make the program at UWEC. It took people like Veda Stone, who understood what was culturally needed to make the Indian students come and return to the UWEC campus. After Leonard Haas understood the situation and knew what to do and how to do it, he became a strong ally to the Indian community. All that was needed to make an American Indian Program that would be successful was A CULTURAL EXCHANGE. That was what happened at UW- Eau Claire a long time ago, “a cultural exchange,” that was all that was needed to make the program work, to understand each other’s culture.”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Lavine interview, April 28, 2012.

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