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The American Indian Law Center Welcomes the PLSI Class of 2010

ALBUQUERQUE, NM — The American Indian Law Center welcomes a new class of Native students to its Pre-Law Summer Institute, or PLSI. The admitted class members represent twenty-eight tribal nations across Indian country and represent the next generation of future Indian lawyers.

Founded in 1967, PLSI is the premiere preparatory Indian legal education program aimed at assisting American Indian and Alaska Native students for the rigors of law school. Students participate in an eight-week intensive replication of their first semester of law school, including exposure to a typical course workload and various law school teaching methods.

This year's program begins in June at the University of New Mexico's School of Law. Students will take courses in federal Indian law, civil procedure, property, and advocacy. As well as taking regular law school courses, part of the class structure requires students to read client interviews, write legal briefs, and argue before a panel of judges. The moot court exercise enables PLSI students to receive first-hand experience of the structure and process replicated in U.S. judicial systems.

The PLSI faculty is drawn from law school throughout the country. In most years, half or more of the faculty is Native, but the 2010 PLSI will be the first year in which every professor is Native. The 2010 PLSI faculty will include Angelique Eagle Woman (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Oyate, University of Idaho), Matthew Fletcher (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Michigan State University), Maymangwa Flying Earth (Gila River Indian Community), Michael Oeser (Ho-Chunk Nation, University of Wisconsin), and Rebecca Tsosie (Yaqui, Arizona State University).

According to Heidi Nesbitt, director of PLSI, students who have completed the program have been admitted to dozens of law schools across the country, including state schools such as UNM, Wisconsin, and Arizona and private schools such as Harvard, Stanford, and Cornell. "Every year I'm honored to help prepare future Native American lawyers to be successful in their first year of law school. Our success rate shows that our PLSI graduates are ready to hit the ground running on Day One of law school," said Nesbitt.

PLSI has a forty year long success record of providing a solid foundation to Native students interested in pursuing a career in the legal field. "One of our goals is to build a cadre of Native American lawyers and Indian law experts who are giving back to their communities and in turn strengthening their tribal governments," said Nesbitt.

The Class of 2010 will join an impressive list of PLSI alumni/ae including five Department of Interior Assistant Secretaries, a state Attorney General, a number of members of legal academia, and many others who serve in federal, state, and tribal government positions. PLSI graduates also serve as state and tribal judges, professors at law schools around the country, and in a wide variety of law firms. “We are very proud of all our graduates and their contributions to the legal community,” said Nesbitt.

PLSI receives funding from federal grants and private donations including a substantial grant from the Law School Admission Council. For more information please visit www.aile-inc.org.

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