

IT - NEW MEDIA

February 1, 2015

Service Learning Project – Oral History Project

PROJECT

Developing an oral history project involving the Crownpoint Rug Auction. The oral history project will be facilitated by the Navajo Weavers Association of Crownpoint (NWAC) and will detail the Auction's history and its impact on the local community. Students will work closely with NTU marketing in carrying out the project - with oversight and suggestions provided by the class instructor.

BACKGROUND:

The Diné, or Navajo, are a resilient people who have endured conflict and struggle throughout their immersion into present times. While oral history and stories account for the Diné's existence since the beginning of time, archeology and written history can only trace Diné origins to the Southwest around 600 A.D. when evidence showed that the Diné had ties to the Athabascan people of the north. Each history describes ruthless hardships the Diné had to endure to exist and such resilience has manifested into modern day practices of survival; such as the Crownpoint Rug Auction - an informal market that allows Diné weavers to maintain the traditional practice of rug weaving in modern times. While the Rug Auction has been successful in bridging gaps between the past and the present, it's faced with a modern-day crisis since the traditional practice of weaving has dwindled, and the socio-economic context that the Diné are situated in is negatively impacting the youth and their access to resources.

It's crucial to take action in turning trends of poverty by supporting programs that encourage or are geared towards cultural revitalization. In Crownpoint, this begins with the revitalization of the Crownpoint Rug Auction, which has the greatest potential to create multiplier effects that will catalyze reservation-wide change.

Crownpoint is in control of its future and with community support and collaboration, it could transform into the regional jewel of the Southwest. The creative arts market is wide open in New Mexico, as previous regional powerhouses such as Gallup and Santa Fe have given way to commercialization and commodification. Richard Florida notes that the future of the world's economy lies in creativity and innovation, and if the NWAC is able to mobilize its unique assets of culture, nature and traditional local knowledge around the Rug Auction, it could help fortify Crownpoint on the international scale in order to sustain the Rug Auction and improve the quality of life of the Diné people.

SCOPE:

The project will feature a 25-minute video that details the history of the Auction and its importance to the Crownpoint community and the Navajo Nation. The narrative will be told through local oral histories and background provided by the NWAC. Students will be expected to film the interviews and edit them into a meaningful end product that could be used for various purposes – such as fundraising. B film and shots can be provided by the NWAC, but it is encouraged that students participate in the entire film process.

TIMELINE

The semester-long project will involve: (1) second-hand research of the Crownpoint Rug Auction and the history of Navajo rug weaving (2) brainstorming and script development (3) filming, editing and production (4) and finally integrated distribution and promotion.

Important Dates:

February 3rd – Briefing by NTU Marketing

February 10th – Decide on a Project

February 17th – Creative Brief

February 24th – Script Brainstorm

March 2 – Script development (NTU Marketing)
March 7 (Monday)- Presentation of idea to NWAC
March 10 – Record at the Auction
March 16 – Editing begins

April 6 – First Draft
April 20 – Second Draft
April 27 – Final Draft

May 4 – Presentation to instructor with NTU Marketing

DELIVERABLES

At the end of this project, students will be able to provide (in conjunction with NTU Marketing) a PowerPoint presentation on their experience for the instructor's review. The presentation will include an unveiling of the oral history project.

This project might also be conducted in collaboration with the School of Diné Studies. More information will be provided at a latter date.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Familiarity with the process of producing an oral history project and its value
- Understanding the scope of informal economies and the importance of Navajo Rug Weaving and its relation to the survival of the Navajo people
- Clarity of the role of new media and its impact on history, place-making and fundraising
- Understanding of digital production – from recording, editing, manipulation and output

ASSESSMENT

Progress of student in regards to learning objectives will be tracked by NTU's Marketing department. At the conclusion of the project, NTU Marketing will provide statistics on the benefits of the collaboration and the effectiveness of the campaign.

Questions? Please contact me at dvandever@navajotech.edu.