

In the twenty-five years AIO has been working with the complex issues faced by tribes, we have found TIMS to be the best method to facilitate in-depth and productive discussion. We are continually finding new ways to explain the system and to ease this type of discomfort.

Because distrust and fear, even in the subconscious, influence our feeling of self-worth and these feelings impact our ability to lead, faculty and staff are developing a strategy for the Third Gathering of 1994 in Santa Fe, New Mexico that will help us get to the root causes of some of our wariness. AIO wants the group to discuss why Indians are suspicious and distrustful so that the Ambassadors can recognize that this guardedness exists and learn to deal with it. Santa Fe is an appropriate time for this discussion because "identity" is the theme for the Gathering.

Each Ambassador is required to carry out two important assignments during the year. At Neah Bay, AIO staff and faculty introduced and explained these assignments. The first is the Field Project. The Field Project inspires the Ambassador to grow in ways he/she had not considered, to contribute to the welfare of the community, and to share his/her new understandings with others. In carrying out the Field Project, the Ambassadors will expand their skills, knowledge base, and circle of contacts. AIO encourages the Ambassadors to bring new solutions and approaches to old problems by creating something absolutely new or by redefining community issues. The most successful projects will be enriching to the Ambassadors at three levels: the personal, the community, and the larger world. The Ambassadors will submit proposals for their individual Field Projects on April 20.

Four members of the 1993 Class of Ambassadors (Michael Tsosie/Mojave, Elizabeth Woody/Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Rosalyn LaPier/Blackfeet, and David Sones/Makah) attended the Gathering, serving as Program Advisors and Mentors to the new class. These representatives of last year's class each made presentations on their successful Field Projects. This year's class responded very well to exposure to ideas and examples of projects developed by the previous group. They gleaned a great deal from hearing about the conceptual and evolutionary stages of the field projects. The group said that after hearing how these 1993 Ambassadors had acquired mentors, they were not as hesitant to approach a potential mentor as they had been. The 1994 Ambassadors also expressed that it was good to learn about Indian leaders from all walks of life and that friendships established amongst the 1993 Ambassadors had life long impacts.

The second requirement assigned at the First Gathering was the Family/Community History Presentation. Each Ambassador is expected to prepare a ten minute presentation on his/her family and community history to share with the group at the Third Gathering in Santa Fe this August. The presentation will emphasize the uniqueness of each particular tribe and/or community and explore the positive aspects of the family and community values, traditions, and leadership traits that have helped to maintain societies and families to the present. The Ambassadors responded positively to this assignment. They communicated their strong interest in focusing on the positive strengths of their families and communities.