



# *SAIGE Annual Report*

*Fiscal Year 2007*

## **Letter from the SAIGE Co-Chairs:**

Dear SAIGE members,

We – Pat Broyles and Cheryle C. Zwang - were elected as your Co-Chairs this year. The past year has brought a lot of positive change to SAIGE and our membership has grown. The wonderful success of our national Training Conference in June is an overall reflection of SAIGE as an organization. So without further delay, let us share a few of the accomplishments we, as a young organization, have made.

### **INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP:**

Through several fronts, we are strategically working to build our membership and it appears this is paying off as we have greatly increased SAIGE membership and we hope to see even more new members join through our National Training Conference and independently in 2008

- **We helped to sponsor a job fair and free lunch for American Indian/Alaska Native interns in Washington DC.**, along with the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Native American Bar Association. There were 20 Agencies represented. It is important that our native students see and meet native professionals who are doing good things in Indian country. The vision for a job fair was that American Indian/Alaska Native interns and other students in Washington DC for the summer interested in working in Indian Country and on tribal issues had an opportunity to talk to Federal employees who work in these areas. The professionals worked as tribal Liaisons or program managers and the students learned about what each Federal agency does for tribal communities, what programs affect the Tribal communities, and what jobs are available at those agencies.

**The 2007 National Training Conference** Planning Committee was Chaired by Millie Tittle of the USDA. Millie and her committee members are to be commended for an outstanding job! Conference attendees received a complimentary paid membership in their registration which boosted our membership considerably. The NTC was held in Tucson, Arizona June 25-29, and it was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the local native desert peoples' culture for our over 400 federal and corporate participants. We held our first ever public career fair and had several students hired on either permanently, or in SCEP or internship positions.

- **Lifetime members:** We also had six SAIGE members step up their support by becoming Lifetime Members of our organization. We greatly appreciate their commitment to this organization and we appreciate this visible display of support.
- **Partnerships/Cooperative Agreements:**
  - SAIGE signed a partnership agreement at our recent NTC with **Grantham University**. Through this agreement, Grantham provides a 4-year scholarship to their online University. SAIGE members also receive a reduced rate for credits through the University.
  - We also signed a partnership agreement (MOU) with USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.
  - We are extremely proud of all of these partnership efforts. We can do much more together than we can alone!

- **We publicized SAIGE in a myriad of venues:**
  - SAIGE contributed to the Encyclopedia of American Disability History, an exciting and culturally important contribution from Indian Country.
  - Shana Barehand represented SAIGE and presented at the the annual 2007 National Conference on Native American Rehabilitation, February 19 - 21, 2007 in Washington, D. C. The conference was co-sponsored by the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation, Inc. (CANAR, Inc.), Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and other rehabilitation agencies. Participating were representatives from 73 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) projects across the country, American Indians with disabilities including family members, State VR agencies, Client Assistance Programs, tribal government leaders and program administrators, educators, researchers and professionals involved in rehabilitation services, as well as Federal agency reps.
  - Cheryle was interviewed at the Blacks In Government (BIG) National Training Conference in August, 2007 by a syndicated Christian radio station. She represented SAIGE and participated as a panel member at the conference where 3,000 participants heard about SAIGE and our activities.
  - Cheryle was the keynote speaker during American Indian Heritage Month at three different federal agency events where she talked about SAIGE and our organization's goals and services. **October/November, 2007**

#### **INCREASING MEMBER SERVICES:**

- We have **established several standing committees** and they are working on putting products and/or services together for our members. We encourage our members to contact the chairs of these committees if you wish to help serve this organization by being involved; the committees and email addresses are listed on the SAIGE website under Organization. <http://www.saige.org>
- We have **established a SAIGE scholarship fund** to assist current AI/AN government employees to gain credits toward a Bachelors, Masters or Doctorate degree. Recent OPM statistics show that American Indians have the lowest average grade level among Federal employees and fewer Indian employees have college degrees. We hope that this fund will assist SAIGE in turning these numbers around. Scholarships provided this year amounted to two \$1000 scholarships to assist with tuition and books and one 4-year online scholarship with Grantham University. We hope that in the future we will be able to expand the number of scholarships we offer to our membership and native students.
- We continue to **provide vacancy announcements to our members** so they are aware of career advancement opportunities both inside and external to the federal government.
- We **provide scholarship announcements** so that our members can apply for scholarships to enhance their professional growth and development. Members also share this information through their Native networks and with their family/friends to assist Native students in securing college scholarships.
- We **provide an annual training conference** focused on providing presentations and workshops which emphasize professional growth and development topics. Our next conference will be held in Traverse City, Michigan at the Grand Traverse Hotel from June 2-6, 2008. We will soon have pertinent information and online registration available from our website. Please watch the website and help us to market this exciting training, recruitment, and networking opportunity!
- We **assist organizations to set up SAIGE chapters** within their own regions or agencies/bureaus/departments. The Southern California SAIGE Chapter has been chartered this year. Currently, there are other organizations that have begun working on getting their local SAIGE chapters recognized.
- We have an established **partnership with AVUE Technologies, who are** making their services available free of charge to our members (resume building, KSA tips,

Leadership competency helpers, etc.). We are working on a web portal and video with them for expanded marketing opportunities for both organizations.

- SAIGE is providing resources including speaker's information for American Indian Heritage Month.

#### **RECRUIT MORE YOUNG AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES INTO CAREERS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:**

- SAIGE, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, held its first Youth Track as part of our Second National Training Conference. Ten American Indian and Alaska Native students were selected based on their applications and essays and earned their attendance to the 2005 conference. In 2006, we had several more students participate in Anchorage, and in 2007, we had approximately 20 students participate. They were sponsored by several agencies as well as SAIGE. It is our goal in 2008 for our conference to host a youth track doubling the number of student participants. We hope you will encourage your organization to provide support to do this.
- We have invited the Government Relations Council (GRC) of American Indians in Science and Engineering (AISES) organization to work with us to develop a national outreach and recruitment strategy for Native students interested in federal careers. While we anticipate GRC will want to have an emphasis on career fields related to Science and Engineering, it is SAIGE's goal to expand whatever strategy is built for our use overall in recruiting AI/AN students into careers with the federal government regardless of academic emphasis. Also, representatives from the Bonneville Power Administration, Department of Veteran Affairs, Minerals Management Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Navy, Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Prisons, AISES, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and others participated in a forum and shared information to be included in the national outreach and recruitment strategy. Work is ongoing and we hope to have something to share at this year's National Training Conference.

#### **Organizational/Administration:**

- Conducted monthly conference call meetings of the board and a face-to-face board meeting at the conference of those able to attend.
- We conducted an election to replace retiring board members and to fill out terms beginning in January of 2008. New Board members are: Cliff Church, Phil Hamel, and returning members Fredericka Joseph, Danny Garceau and Jinny Shulenberg. We also want to express our great appreciation for the following outgoing Board members: James Bird, Kimberly Irwin, and Millie Titla. As evidenced by this report, much activity occurred and the services provided to our members were increased. Thanks to the Board and those members who worked tirelessly on behalf of SAIGE!
- We modified our bylaws to allow rotation of half the board members each year to maintain organizational knowledge on the board and continuity of action on issues before the board.
- We modified our bylaws to expand our membership from only Federal government employees to include State, Tribal and local government employees. While SAIGE will continue to emphasize the unique role and responsibility of the Federal government to Native people and governments, we welcome all government employees and retirees to our ranks.
- We updated our website to enhance our professional image and access by others.
- We circulated information on the listserv concerning conferences, training, etc. to enhance professional and personal development opportunities for our members and the people and communities they serve.

**We worked toward equitable and fair treatment of American Indians and Alaska Natives in government departments and agencies:** SAIGE Board members have met with the Regional Administrator, Capitol Region, of the GSA beginning in early 2004 regarding offensive murals in the EPA headquarters building in Washington, DC. Considering their placement in an historic building, GSA began the Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process to receive public comment on the disposition of the murals, including their potential removal. SAIGE and NCAI were invited to participate in this process as consulting parties. A letter was sent by SAIGE as part of the public comment process asking for removal of these offensive murals from the federal workplace and citing creation of a hostile work environment as a primary factor. We also solicited public comment on this subject from our membership and letters were sent by our NCEPS sister organizations asking for the removal of the murals. GSA completed the process in 2007 and decided to only interpret and to screen the most offensive of the murals – Dangers of the Mail. The GSA invited SAIGE to participate in the interpretation of the murals and we have agreed to continue to work with the GSA to ensure proper treatment under the circumstances. You may look at the website for details on all these developments as they took place.(Under News, Events)

**We developed and provided national training** for Federal employees on American Indian and Alaska Native issues and their relationship to the federal government. SAIGE successfully held its 4th annual National Training Conference (NTC) in Tucson, AZ with over 400 attendees. The NTC focused on implementation of the SAIGE mission – to promote the development, recruitment, retention and advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native employees; to learn about and assist our respective agencies in the implementation of initiatives and programs which honor the unique Federal-Tribal relationship; and to provide a national forum for issues and topics affecting American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) government employees and government employees in general.

Attendees were provided with plenty of learning and networking opportunities to enable them to develop professionally and to deliver quality public service. The training was approved by the Office of Personnel Management and the Departments of Interior, Defense, and Agriculture and the Bureau of Prisons sponsored individual pre-conference Diversity Forums in conjunction with the SAIGE NTC.

The conference included an opening reception and cultural presentation by the Pasqua-Yaqui Tribe which included traditional dancing and food. SAIGE, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) hosted a Youth Track and thirteen AI/AN students were provided scholarships to attend. An additional seven students also participated, sponsored by different agencies. They learned about careers in the federal government, were paired with mentors, and participated in the general session as well as focused presentations targeting youth. Participants also heard from national leaders within and outside of government.

**Summary:** This was a brief summary of the many actions we have completed in 2007. I hope that you feel like you are part of a proactive and successful organization. Again, every organization is only as great as its members choose to make it, so please find something that excites you in SAIGE and join in so that we all benefit from your special skills and knowledge. We all have something unique to contribute and you will ultimately be making a difference in the lives of many AI/AN people if you choose to step up and get involved!



*Cheryl Cobell Zwang*



*Patrick Broyles*