

Syracuse University offers 'Haudenosaunee Promise'

Full scholarships to qualified students starting fall 2006

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SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Students of Haudenosaunee ancestry now have a strong incentive - a free college education - to study hard in high school.

Syracuse University announced on Aug. 19 that it will foot the bill for an undergraduate education to any enrolled Haudenosaunee student who qualifies for admission to the university.

"Education at its best is a two-way process," said Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor in a news release. "I am delighted that we will be building - and expanding - upon our historical relationship with the Haudenosaunee. The benefits and opportunities to be created are truly exciting."

"This is an extension of our hand of friendship and honor to the Haudenosaunee," said David C. Smith, the university's vice president for enrollment management and emissary to the Haudenosaunee. "We hope that this will be seen as an opportunity for inspiration."

Students qualifying for the Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship Program will receive full-time undergraduate tuition, on-campus room and board and payment of university fees. Based on current rates, the package is worth over \$38,500 annually. The scholarships will not be limited in number.

In return, students must qualify for admission to the university and must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5. Students must be enrolled members of one of the six Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) nations and also be citizens of one of the territories throughout New York state and Canada that are part of the Haudenosaunee nations. These include: Akwesasne Mohawk, Ganienke Mohawk, Kahnawake Mohawk, Kanasatake Mohawk, Kantatsiohareke Mohawk, Tyendinaga Mohawk, Tonawanda Seneca, Six Nations (Canada), Oneida (New York), Oneida of the Thames (Ontario),



Photo courtesy Stephen Sartori/Syracuse University -- Taddodaho Sid Hill and Faith Keeper Oren Lyons (left) welcomed Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor (right) to Syracuse University Nov. 5, 2004 at her inauguration ceremony at the Carrier Dome. On Aug. 19, members of the SU and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) communities announced the "Haudenosaunee Promise" program, which will offer full scholarships to qualified students from any of the six Haudenosaunee nations starting fall 2006.

Onondaga, Allegany Seneca, Cattaraugus Seneca, Oil Spring Seneca and Tuscarora.

Smith said that university and tribal officials are in the process of determining exact criteria for the enrollment and residency requirements. Since the announcement, the phones have been "ringing off the hook" with calls from prospective students, he said.

Smith told ICT that the impetus for the scholarships came from Cantor herself. The idea is to remove the financial barriers faced by many Native students while recognizing the cultural, political and historical significance of the Haudenosaunee.

"We sit here, six miles away from the center of the Haudenosaunee at Onondaga, and we might as well be on different planets," Smith said. "Now we're not any more."

"The last time Indians got a free education was at a boarding school," said Robert Odawi Porter, Seneca, director of SU's Indigenous Law Center.

"No other university has made this kind of commitment to neighboring Aboriginal peoples."

Porter said that there are several states and colleges around the nation that offer reduced tuition to American Indian students, but he knew of nothing on the scale of the Haudenosaunee Promise.

"This is different from any other scholarship initiative in that it supports helping the Haudenosaunee sustain themselves by educating some of their people who will live and work within their nations," said Odie Brant Porter, Seneca, assistant provost, in a news release. "We have turned the corner in the education process, where education can be used to sustain our distinct culture and values, rather than being used to destroy it."

SU will enroll approximately 12,000 undergraduate students for the upcoming fall semester; only 35 are of Native ancestry, 11 of whom are incoming freshmen.