

RISE Grant Essay

Sovereignty and Survival: Lakota Resilience since the American Indian Movement

By: STUDENT NAME

Upon completion of my Senior Capstone Project titled Sovereignty and Survival: Lakota Resilience since the American Indian Movement at the end of Session 2, I will have researched one of the most famous American Indian nations extensively and will be able to explain how they have survived bleak circumstances. Since I plan to attend a graduate program at either the University of Kansas or the University of Arizona to extend my passions for American Indian culture and history, a trip out West to see landmarks of the Lakota Nation would be an invaluable experience to prepare me for the continuation of my academic journey. If I can obtain a RISE grant for this enriching experience, my academic and Senior project advisor Dr. PROFESSOR NAME will join me on the trip. We plan to visit famous landmarks in the Black Hills region of South Dakota like the Crazy Horse Memorial and Mount Rushmore, with the latter constructed on stolen Lakota lands. In the neighboring state of Wyoming, we plan to stop at Devil's Tower, which remains a site of Lakota cultural and spiritual practices. We would also like to visit the locations of the Wounded Knee Massacre and the Battle of Little Bighorn, formerly known as the site of U.S. General George Armstrong Custer's Last Stand. At the Pine Ridge and Standing Rock Reservations, I seek to arrange interviews with tribal leaders of the Oglala and Hunkpapa bands of the Lakota Nation. Through these discussions, I can gain a deeper understanding of how the Lakota Nation functions today. I can also see firsthand how they keep the spirit of their ancestral leaders alive in their opposition to intrusive oil pipeline projects seen at the Standing Rock reservation. The lives of the great Chiefs Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Red Cloud are

maintained, as is the leadership of the American Indian Movement (AIM) members like Russell Means (Lakota) and Dennis Banks (Ojibwe), who brought forth new visibility to the tribulations of American Indians throughout the United States.

There is no debating that the Lakota are still struggling with high rates of alcoholism, missing and murdered indigenous women, and suicide. The United States has repeatedly failed to uphold its end of binding agreements like the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. I believe in the value of improving the relationship between the original inhabitants of the country that we share, and this is only possible through listening to indigenous voices. Witnessing the majestic landmarks that I am currently studying will also enable me to see their value for the Lakota Nation and why land back movements continue for the Black Hills region of South Dakota.