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BMCC is the only tribal college to present at Lilly Conferences

By Sharlene Myers
Bay Mills News

Dr. Ildiko Melis

BAY MILLS — Tribal colleges are seldom represented at scholarship conferences but Dr. Ildiko Melis, an English professor at Bay Mills Community College is changing that reality.

BMCC is the only tribal college that has presented at Lilly Conferences on University and College Teaching, said Melis, working their way up from smaller presentations. She was scheduled to speak at the next conference to be held Oct. 17 to 20 in Traverse City on "Metaphors our students live by — The cognitive power of analogies in teaching."

Previously, the end of May, she held a session at the Lilly Conference in Washington D.C. on "Teaching grammar to college students with engaging activities." This presentation arose from the development of a Jeopardy-based game put together with the help of BMCC students under an American Indian College Fund Mellon Fellowship Grant of $34,000, awarded in 2010.

The grant was intended to target under-represented populations at scholarship conferences. To fulfill grant requirements, Melis hired two students, Shavon McKerchie and Tamie Munz, as assistants in conducting research into the teaching of writing and grammar.

They started out at smaller venues, with the first presentation at the annual retreat of Mellon Fellowship recipients held in Denver in August 2011, followed up with a session in Marquette in October of that same year. Then came the big 101st Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Chicago in November 2011 with 10,000 participants, where they took part in a panel discussion of "Error and identity: Implications for grammar instruction and student's use of their own language."

At this conference, Munz was very helpful, said Melis, and saved the day when there was an overhead projector glitch. The presentation was very successful and a surprise to many who had formerly held a negative perception of the quality of research able to be done at a small tribal college, she added.

Not everyone is asked to present at Lilly Conferences, Melis explained. "National conferences are very competitive to get an invitation to present."

But the success of their earlier presentations resulted in an invitation in September of 2012 to attend a Lilly Conference in Traverse City where Munz again assisted Melis. McKerchie had already graduated after completing a research paper.

The two presented "Jeopardizing grammar instruction or playing grammar jeopardy? Teaching grammar to college writers with engaging activities." With the grant funding ending, Melis went alone to the Lilly Conference in Washington D.C. the end of May to present a similar topic based on the Jeopardy game activity.

With the success of the two students in conducting research, Melis said she had fulfilled the requirement of the funding. Now, she is looking into some Mellon Fellowship grants earmarked to support tribal college faculty who are working on finishing their dissertations.

Melis, who was born in Hungary and became a U.S. citizen in 2006, earned her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition and the Teaching of English from the University of Arizona in Tucson. She currently teaches English composition and research writing at BMCC. Previous to coming to the tribal college in 2005, she was a professor at Lake State Superior University in Sault Ste. Marie.

Although Melis admits it is more difficult to do research into teaching English than into the sciences, she continues to face the challenge. The American Indian College Fund is launching a research journal in November and has accepted an article from her about standardized testing in tribal colleges.

Changes to impact commodities program

BAY MILLS — There have been positive changes made to the commodity food guideline. There is now a standard utility/shelter deduction of $400.

Those over 65 and/or disabled can deduct medical expenses that are over the amount of $35, and, if medical insurance is paid out of your income, it can also be deducted from your overall income.

If you feel you may now qualify, stop by the Commodity Food Office. Bring all income for anyone in the household over the age of 18, a utility bill and rent or mortgage receipts. If you have medical expenses, bring those receipts as well. For more information contact Kristine Schwiderson, Bay Mills Commodity Food Program Director at 906-248-2527.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS (FDPIR)
NET MONTHLY INCOME STANDARDS
(Effective October 1, 2013)

The net monthly income standard for each household size is the sum of the applicable Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) net monthly income standard and the applicable SNAP standard deduction.

48 Contiguous United States: **Use this Amount**

Household Size	SNAP Net Monthly Income Standard		SNAP Standard Deduction		FDPIR Net Monthly Income Standard
1	$958	+	$152	=	**$1,110**
2	$1,293	+	$152	=	**$1,445**
3	$1,628	+	$152	=	**$1,780**
4	$1,963	+	$163	=	**$2,126**
5	$2,298	+	$191	=	**$2,489**
6	$2,633	+	$219	=	**$2,852**
7	$2,968	+	$219	=	**$3,187**
8	$3,303	+	$219	=	**$3,522**
each additional member					**+ $335**

Alaska: **Use this Amount**

Household Size	SNAP Net Monthly Income Standard		SNAP Standard Deduction		FDPIR Net Monthly Income Standard
1	$1,196	+	$260	=	**$1,456**
2	$1,615	+	$260	=	**$1,875**
3	$2,035	+	$260	=	**$2,295**
4	$2,454	+	$260	=	**$2,714**
5	$2,873	+	$260	=	**$3,133**
6	$3,292	+	$274	=	**$3,566**
7	$3,711	+	$274	=	**$3,985**
8	$4,130	+	$274	=	**$4,404**
each additional member					**+ $420**

Workshop offered at Bayliss Library

SAULT STE. MARIE — On Oct. 21, 6:30 p.m., Early Childhood Literacy Expert Saroj Ghoting will present Opening Young Minds to the Culture of Language, a workshop for parents, teachers, childcare providers, and anyone who works with young children. This is a free program. Sign-up is encouraged at 906-632-9331 or bayref@baylisslibrary.org. The program is funded in part by a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Ghoting will also present workshops that week at three other Superior District Libraries — Curtis, Engadine, and Les Cheneaux, co-sponsored by Pickford — as well as at Tahquamenon and St. Ignace libraries.

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