

Creek students Adam Recvlohe and Lacey Logsdon convinced the university to establish a new course of study in American Indian and Indigenous Studies.

J. Down

## students at the **university of florida** can now enroll in a **native american studies** minor

(one of two in the state) thanks to the dedication and hard work of undergraduates Adam Recvlohe and Lacey Logsdon.

The American Indian and Indigenous Studies minor offers students the opportunity to learn more about the history and culture of Native Americans. But by creating the minor, Recvlohe—a political science major—also hopes American Indian students will be encouraged to embrace their heritage.

As a child, Recvlohe said his father, a Creek, pushed him away from his Native American heritage, advising him to identify more with his mother's English-Canadian ancestry. But Recvlohe followed a different route. "I don't feel like that is how you should live, by neglecting who you are as a person, neglecting where you came from," he said.

Recvlohe recently spent nine weeks in Oklahoma with Creek Native Americans to study the traditions and language in an effort to reconnect with his background. "Part of being American Indian is being around your community," he said. In addition to his work establishing the minor, Recvlohe is the head of an indigenous student group, 500 Nations, which aims to raise indigenous consciousness at UF.

Lacey Logsdon, a political science and history major, co-led the effort to create the new

minor. After hearing Recvlohe speak on the topic during a public debate in June 2006, the Student Government Senator of Creek heritage decided it was time to take action.

"In late April of 2007, the American Indian and Indigenous Studies minor got final approval from the University Curriculum Committee and officially became a part of our university's academic programs," Logsdon said. "It was a long road but with a rewarding result."

The American Indian and Indigenous Studies minor became available for students to pursue at the end of summer 2007. Housed in the Department of Anthropology, the minor is a compilation of courses already offered at the university and is expected to serve as a focal point for indigenous students, providing them with a sense of identity and community on campus, while also educating the general student body about American Indian history and culture.

The 15-credit minor requires students to take AMH 3660 and AMH 3661—Native American History to 1815 and Native American History Since 1806—as well as nine hours of electives, which include courses such as Aztec Civilization, Peoples of the Arctic, and American

Indian Art. For a full course list and description of the minor, visit [www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/programs/minors/amindian.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/programs/minors/amindian.html).

The new minor joins several other undergraduate courses of study in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences dedicated to exploring the perspectives of groups often marginalized in American society, including African American Studies, Asian Studies, Jewish Studies, and Women's Studies and Gender Research.

"I hope the program will foster a new respect for Native American culture in UF students," Logsdon said. Her partner on the project, Recvlohe, agrees. "This is a great starting point for the university, particularly students, to appreciate a greater diversity of all racial groups on campus."

—Jared Griffin & Buffy Lockette

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