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Discrimination charged

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

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DISCRIMINATION CHARGED

MISSOULA—

Tribal leaders, Indian agency heads and University of Montana administrators were faced with the problem of racial discrimination during a panel discussion on the UM campus convened to review the Indian training program.

Jim Littlebird of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, stated that he had returned his daughter to the Reservation after the girl had had trouble of a racial nature in one of her classes. Littlebird said that the social life in Missoula was nearly non-existent for the Indians quartered on the campus.

Despite removing his daughter from the campus, Littlebird remains as a student himself. He was one of several students on the panel answering questions put to them from the floor. While one or two others registered mild complaints about discrimination, most felt the self-improvement gained in the program tipped the scale in their favor.

In response to a question from the floor, Dr. Jim Hall, UM director of the program, said that they had consulted with the Missoula Chamber of Commerce and city officials to counter discrimination prior to the program and had endeavored to work with local news media to present their story.

Hall noted that some of the discrimination might be of an academic nature and said that he had been a victim of this during his schooling. He said there is sometimes discrimination between academic disciplines.

Dr. Carling Malouf, UM Anthropology professor, backed up Hall's statement by adding that there is sometimes a discriminatory attitude by a community toward a university.

Most of the students felt the program was very worthwhile and indicated they would probably find better paying jobs as a result of the training they had received.
Earlier the seminar participants had been welcomed by UM President Robert Pantzer who mentioned that the University was combating discrimination.

Dr. Allen Pope of the UM Adult Education Center, outlined the criteria for admission and described the aims of the program. He reviewed the subjects being taught to the Indians and described their progress.

Hall said that they are planning to continue the program next year providing that funding is available. He stated the UM program has retained 70% of the original enrollment and felt that this is perhaps the highest rate in the country.

Plans for a new Training Center on UM property at Ft. Missoula were unfolded by Hall. The plan would call for classrooms and living quarters to be constructed there.

Hall said that the plan would require a great deal of money but that ultimately it would result in a savings to taxpayers by removing many Indians from welfare rolls.