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For Immediate Release

## **Campbellsville University students experience Native Americans in South Dakota**

By Christina Miller, office assistant

CAMPBELLSVILLE, Ky.— Campbellsville University students traveled to South Dakota for the Native American Experience to learn about the culture of the Native Americans by visiting the Lakota Sioux tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Native American Experience is a social work/sociology special topics class where students were able to learn by experience. The class was taught by Debbie Carter, assistant professor of social work, and Dr. Jackie Sandier, assistant professor of criminal justice.

Sandifer and her husband, David, have been connected to the reservation through ministry to the Lakota since 1988, and what she calls “a continuation of the Lord’s work.”

Sandifer said, “The class was in many ways the fruition of a long-held dream of getting Campbellsville University involved with this people group and continuing efforts to build bridges of understanding, friendship and relationships.

“The most exciting part of the trip for me was seeing and talking with young adult Native Americans who as children had come to Vacation Bible Schools and had accepted Christ through ministry efforts over the years.”

Eleven Campbellsville University students visited agencies, schools, a jail, hospital and a mission for those people in need.

Carter said, “We visited social service agencies to learn the differences between their agencies and ours in rural Kentucky.”

Before leaving for the trip, students read books about the culture so they would be prepared to serve in a place of cultural and social problems such as extreme poverty, alcoholism,

child abuse, social service and criminal justice, a troubled tribal government system and the historical trauma this people group has experienced.

Juliana Brown, a graduate student in the social work program, said, “The trip to the Pine Ridge Reservation was a very broadening experience. It really helped me better understand the culture, history and oppression of the Native Americans. Because of this trip, I am a more culturally diverse social worker.”

While in South Dakota, the class provided worship activities for neighborhood children and served lunch at a rescue mission for homeless and alcoholic Native Americans.

Dr. Linda Trollinger, associate professor of sociology/family studies, who also went on the trip, said, “The folks from Pine Ridge made a huge impact on our students, and I think they came home with Pine Ridge a part of their heart.”

Along the way, students also visited Wounded Knee Cemetery, the Badlands, Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial and Custer Park.

Students attending the trip to South Dakota include: Barbara Crew of Science Hill, Ky.; Brandi Marsh of Carrollton, Ky.; Lindsey Hammers of Fairdale, Ky.; Juliana Brown of Nashville, Tenn.; Tom Finley of Campbellsville, Ky.; Melissa Reh-Thompson of Campbellsville, Ky.; Laura Johnson of Rockport, Texas; Dwayne Staley of Somerset, Ky.; Tonia Skaggs of Campbellsville, Ky.; Erica Stevens of Taylorsville, Ky. and Jacob Stickle of Bowling Green, Ky.

Campbellsville University is a widely acclaimed Kentucky-based Christian university with over 3,000 students offering 45 undergraduate programs, 16 master’s degrees and five postgraduate areas. The website for complete information is [campbellsville.edu](http://campbellsville.edu).