Anonymous gift given to the Wabanaki Center will Wabanaki student higher education

Megan Ashe
Anonymous gift given to the Wabanaki Center will fund Wabanaki student higher education

Photo by Antyna Gould
In late November, an anonymous donor gifted $100,000 to the Wabanaki Center at the University of Maine. Working closely with the center’s coordinator, professor John Bear Mitchell, the pair created the Wabanaki Student Development and Success Fund at the University of Maine Foundation. The money in this fund will go towards Wabanaki students who are pursuing an undergraduate degree. Some money will be made immediately available while another portion of the donation will be used to promote success in the future.

According to the Wabanaki Center website, the center aims to help create better relations between UMaine and the local Indigenous communities.

“The Center is committed to building and sustaining a mutually beneficial relationship between the University of Maine and Native American communities. It is a gathering place for indigenous scholars engaged in advancing Wabanaki studies through teaching, research and publication,” the website reads.

The Wabanaki Center is home to the Native American Studies program on campus. Any student can minor in Native American studies, which aims to help students better understand Indigenous people, their culture and their fight for self-monitoring and governance after colonization, with a focus on the local Wabanaki tribes of Maine.

This donation is only one of the ways UMaine is continuing to financially support its Native American students. With proper documentation that a student is a tribal member or a descendant of a North American tribe, along with notification to the school, students can qualify for tuition assistance and fee waivers. Grants surrounding room and board can also be offered. It is unclear whether a portion of this donation will go to this program. Staff at the Wabanaki Center could not be reached for comment at this time.
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