

FINDING D·QU

The Lonely Struggle of California's only Tribal College

Directed by
Chris Newman

26 minutes

USD



*Finding D·QU speaks powerfully and visually to a dream that has been persistently deferred—
self-determined higher education by and for Native Americans.*

Renee Tajima-Peña — Oscar Nominated Filmmaker, Former Film Critic "Village Voice" and NPR



pacific line
PRODUCTIONS

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"<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1523279/>"

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LOGLINE

In 2005 D-Q University, California's only tribal college, was shut down after a 35-year struggle, but its supporters fight to hold on to a dream that was never fully realized.

TRT: 26.17 minutes

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SYNOPSIS

In 2005, D-Q University, California's only tribal college, was shut down after a 35-year struggle. Since then, the school's board of trustees, past students, and community members have tried to reopen the school against all odds. This 30-minute video documentary is structured around a group of occupants who illegally live at the closed D-QU campus amid threats of arrest by the school's board of trustees. Finding D-QU looks at the often-conflictive relationship between the board and the occupants. This current struggle frames the history of the school, beginning with D-QU's establishment in the midst of civil rights activism in the late 1960s. The documentary outlines the original vision of D-QU as a space for self-determined higher education and the hope this dream brought to its many students. The film illustrates the ways in which D-QU's ongoing struggles reflect pressing issues in other American Indian communities.

Finding D-QU provides a lens through which to critically examine the wider American Indian movement toward self-determination and sovereignty in its historical context and as it exists today. Finding D-QU focuses on the historical struggle to maintain a self-reliant educational institution for Indian students and the hardships, successes and failures that come with the movement to reclaim education for Native people. The documentary explores questions concerning past struggles at D-QU, the current situation and the possible future of California's tribal college. The history of DQ-University reveals that the original people of the Americas continue to struggle to decolonize their culture, traditions and educational systems.



Programming Descriptors:

FORMS: Documentary, Short

GENRES: Independent, Culture, Social Issue, History, News, Educational

NICHES: Native/Aboriginal Peoples, Hispanic, Native American, Student

SCREENINGS

NOVEMBER 2009

LCI Skins Fest 2009- (Rough Cut)

JANUARY 2010

Slamdance Film Festival 2010- World Premiere

MARCH 2010

Davis Film Festival

APRIL 2010

Sacramento International Film Festival

Humboldt Film Festival

Cine Las Americas Film Festival

MAY 2010

DocMiami International Film Festival

Santa Cruz Film Festival

JULY 2010

San Francisco Frozen Film Festival

November 2010

American Indian Film Festival

Society for Visual Anthropology Film Festival



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

“My interest in D-Q University was sparked at an early age. I visited the campus grounds for the first time in the early 1990s on an elementary school field trip. At that time the college was in its heyday, hustling and bustling with students, teachers and a parking lot full of cars. We were led on a tour along with a history lesson of, mostly vanished, local American Indian tribes. D-QU intrigued me for years after that field trip, especially in its juxtaposition to my suburban hometown of Davis, California, just 8 miles away.

It was not until 2007, when I was thinking about making a film for my master's thesis project in the Social Documentation program at UC Santa Cruz that I decided to document something local. From newspaper headlines I learned of D-QU's closure in 2005 and the occupation of the campus grounds by students. After meeting with some of these students in 2007 and doing extensive research into the history of the school my initial 7-minute film blossomed into 26 minutes, two years later.

Finding D-QU is not only a contemporary story about American Indian self-determination but it's also about a community struggling for the right to education. With the economic downturn this past year I have heard stories about other educational institutions that have been forced to shut down. People involved with these schools have told me they see similarities in the story of D-QU and what is at stake if our basic right to education is taken away. As I allude to in Finding D-QU, the greatest defeat is that today's children really lose out in the struggle. It is my hope that this film speaks not only to American Indian audiences but to everyone hoping to keep their dreams alive for the next generation.”



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Christopher Newman is a recent graduate of the Social Documentation M.A. program at UC- Santa Cruz where he produced his first film, *Finding D-QU*. Before graduate school he worked for the Emmy nominated outdoor television show, *FLW Outdoors*. He has also produced action sports videos for the web and cable television. He currently resides in San Francisco, California.

CREDITS



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Marc Ramos

Toshiro "Tosh" Tanaka

Featured Interviews

(In Order of Appearance):

Christopher Yazzie

Consuela Moreno Vargas

Rosa Lee Martinez

Yomira Moreno Palacios

Vincent "Steve" J. Wyatt

Susan Reece

Tomas Reyes

Gregory Iron

Jack D. Forbes

Arthur J. Apodaca

Others featured:

Lupita Torres

Steve Dayan

Caske Limón

Maya Tschitt Lorosco

Special Thanks:

Amy Lonetree

Rita Montez Martin

Quanah Brightman

Steve Dayan

Esteban Villa

Sidonio Brenes Jr.

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Rough House Editorial

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San Francisco Bay Area
Television Archive

Vanderbilt Television
and News Archive

Additional Footage:

NewsTrak

KCTV News 10

Archival/Found Images:

Jack D. Forbes
Special Collection

UC-Davis Shields Library

Music:

Dirty Three

Floyd 'Red Crow' Westerman

Graphic Design:

Somos La Pera Inc.

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P R O D U C T I O N S

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