From tribal history to traditional arts and crafts, this trip certainly provided participants with a new way of seeing things on the Rosebud Indian reservation. Participating in the Rosebud Live and Study program at Metropolitan Community College was a truly amazing experience. So amazing that I participated twice! Setting up and sleeping in a tipi, making moccasins, drums, and dream catchers, while listening to stories of the Lakota people was both an enjoyable and enlightening experience. The opportunity to hear tribal educators and leaders tell about their history, religion, and cultural traditions and how their way of life clashed with the cultures of those who came to live and “settle the untamed the land”, was “priceless”. Left in near starvation with broken promises and treaties, their food source killed off to near extinction, forced to live on worthless land that they could not farm or earn a living from, their religion, language, and cultural heritage banned, their children removed to boarding schools where they could be taught to be “assimilated” into the dominate new culture, is an amazing story of survival. One could see from the native people’s perspective how these imposed “solutions” to the cultural clashes contributed to the poverty, addiction, and health problems prevalent on the reservations today. However, their message of hope - “We have survived” -- was also present in our discussions with these tribal leaders. We came away with a new understanding of the problems being faced and a respect for the perseverance of the Lakota people—how a culture on the verge of “extinction” is being revived and passed on to the next generation, and how their own Sinte Gleska University provides a leading role in this process.

- Cheri Vossberg