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UNIVERSIDAD NGÄBE-BUKLE FINISHING ACCREDITATION

Final Steps Being Achieved for Establishing Independent
Comarca-Run University

(Panama City, 20 de July, 2006) The Universidad
Ngäbe-Bukle yesterday completed a key step in obtaining
accreditation in the Republic of Panama when Rector
Bernardino Sanchez and President of the Fundación Cultural
Ngäbe-Bukle Cleto Montero officially presented the required

documents and fees required by the University of Panama for the evaluation of the curriculum.

The Ministry of Education has already given its official approval of this innovative university. Professor Raymundo Gurdian, representative of the Extension Vice-Rectory of the University of Panama declared that they now have everything needed and that they can now go forward in evaluating the curricular content. The law permits ninety days for the University of Panama to review the documents before issuing the approval required for accreditation.

"Hundreds of high school graduates have enrolled or expressed interest in attending," said Mr. Sanchez, " and now we are seeing the results of years of work by hundreds of people."

The Comarca is home for the majority of Panama 200,000 Ngäbes and Bugles. Even though primary school education in the area is high by world standards, the Panamanian Government provides the Comarca much lower levels of high school and higher education than in the rest of the

country. "On a national level, the Government provides one educator for approximately every 24 potential secondary students," said Foundation President Montero. "In the Comarca there is one professor for every hundred potential students. This could be remedied if there were more Ngäbe university graduates available to teach in high schools, but in the Comarca the Panamanian Government has never provided a university nor extension classes."

Even though the authorities of the Comarca Congress requested exoneration of the costs for approving the curriculum, they were denied because the university will be a private institution. When asked if he was disappointed that the Ngäbe people are not only required to build their own university, but must also pay the University for the privilege of being allowed to, Mr. Sanchez said, "We are grateful for all the cooperation that the University of Panama is already able to offer and we understand their limited resources. We have obtained a loan to pay the first half and we are looking for the other funds."

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If you would like further information about this topic, please contact Bernardino

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Photo attached:





Left to Right Carlos Espino, lawyer for the Universidad Ngabe-Bukle,

Raymundo Gurdian, Cleto Montero and Bernardino Sanchez, at the University of Panama
Wednesday.