

Report of the
Native American Outreach
and Inclusion Task Force

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
NOVEMBER 2014

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Task Force: Its Purpose, Membership, and Activities | 1 |
| Introduction to the Recommendations | 3 |
| Recommendations | 4 |
| Response to the Report of the John Evans Study Committee | 9 |
| Appendix A. | 11 |
| Appendix B. | 12 |
| Appendix C | 14 |
| Acknowledgements. | 18 |

Report of the Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force

TASK FORCE: ITS PURPOSE, MEMBERSHIP, AND ACTIVITIES

Northwestern University established the Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force (NAOITF) in fall 2013. Its purpose was to recommend strategies to strengthen Northwestern's relationship with Native American* communities through recruitment efforts, academic programs, and campus support services. The University also charged the task force with reviewing the *Report of the John Evans Study Committee (the Report)*, published in May 2014, and to consider how the University might respond to its findings.

The membership of the task force included Northwestern faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and alumni and members of the Native American community in Chicago. A list of the members is provided in Appendix A.

The task force met nine times from February to October 2014. Guiding principles were developed at the beginning of its work to ensure respectful, honest, and transparent engagement on the members' parts.

The work of the task force encompassed the following:

- Reviewed the *Report* and met with two of the authors.
- Discussed Native American studies programs and support services for Native American students with representatives of other universities.
- Collected and evaluated benchmarking information concerning peer institutions' practices in recruiting Native American students.
- Interviewed members of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ho-Chunk, and Menominee tribes.
- Participated in a town hall meeting sponsored by the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative at the American Indian Center.

*The NAOITF has chosen to use the term "Native American" to refer to tribes, nations, and people who are in the United States and the term "Indigenous" to encompass tribal communities within the United States and from lands outside of the United States, including those on other continents. We realize that no single term can fully encompass the variety of experiences, self-definitions, and political identities within these groups. We invite our readers to see these terms as reflective of our intentions for clarity and inclusion.

In developing its recommendations, the task force focused on the following six areas: alumni outreach, academic and research opportunities, on-campus support services, pipeline efforts, communications, and historical relationships. Preliminary recommendations were shared with leaders in the local and national Native American communities for their review and input prior to submitting them to the University.

Throughout its work, the task force listened to members of Native American communities—some of whom either distrust the University (in part because of the historical relationship with John Evans) or do not understand its motives today. The task force believes that if Northwestern is going to pursue sustainable outreach initiatives, the efforts must be premised on a foundation of truth, trust, and integrity.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Northwestern is a community of learners situated within a network of historical and contemporary relationships with Native American tribes, communities, parents, students, and alumni. It is also in close proximity to an urban Native American community in Chicago and near several tribes in the Midwest. Consistent with the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the task force recommends that Northwestern build relationships with Native American communities through academic pursuits, partnerships, historical recognitions, community service, and enrollment efforts.

The task force conducted research into the activities of peer institutions, including Stanford, Harvard, Dartmouth, and the University of Chicago (Appendix B). We concluded that Northwestern needs to begin formulating a strategic approach to grow the number of and retain Native American students, faculty, and staff; conduct research on topics related to Indigenous scholarship; provide support activities for students; and build relationships with Native American communities that will enrich our campus and keep Northwestern competitive with our peer institutions.

The following list is a compilation of recommendations of the six working groups. Since there was overlap among ideas from the working groups, the recommendations were aggregated into the following categories:

- Working Relationships with Native American Nations, Institutions, and Communities
- Alumni Outreach
- Academic and Research Opportunities
- On-Campus Support Services
- Pipeline Efforts

It is our hope that these recommendations will assist Northwestern in broadening its knowledge of historical and contemporary relationships between the University and Native American tribes and communities; in gaining a greater understanding of the need for Native American presence at Northwestern; and in conducting collaborative teaching and research on matters that impact Native American populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIVE NATIONS, INSTITUTIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

In order to build sustainable relationships with Native American communities and tribes, relationship building and collaboration with them are critical. Accordingly, we recommend the following:

1. Ensure that the Native American population is visibly represented in the “Northwestern Diversity” strategic plan.
2. Establish a stronger relationship with Native American communities and nations by creating a Council of Elders advisory board, with members from regional tribes meeting annually with the president and the provost.
3. Identify an office to serve as the Native American liaison; it would develop a relationship with the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative and affiliated organizations, other Native programs in the Chicagoland area, and the broader Native American community.
4. Evaluate annually and report publicly the progress of Northwestern in meeting the task force’s recommendations.

ALUMNI OUTREACH

Northwestern prides itself on its alumni and their contributions to society. Native American alumni must be reconnected to their alma mater by inviting them to participate in University-sponsored activities and by celebrating their achievements. To accomplish the reengagement of Native American alumni, the task force recommends the following:

1. Create an accurate Native American alumni database.
2. Engage Northwestern’s Native alumni to serve as a resource to the University throughout the implementation of the task force’s recommendations.
3. Engage Northwestern’s Native alumni in recruiting and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students.
4. Involve Northwestern’s Native alumni on campus by inviting them to participate in leadership series focused on career choices and opportunities.
5. Invite Northwestern’s Native alumni back to campus for a networking/social event with the group Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance (NAISA).
6. Partner with the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative and affiliated organizations to create a volunteer program for Northwestern’s Native and non-Native alumni.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most significant ways of forging stronger working relationships with Native American communities is to provide an opportunity to further the understanding and knowledge of their history, health issues, culture, language, and sovereignty. These efforts would also be a way to educate the campus on Native American populations. Accordingly, we recommend:

Indigenous Research Center

1. Explore the feasibility of establishing an Indigenous Research Center that focuses on producing interdisciplinary research to serve the needs of Indigenous populations, both locally and globally. Research emphases could include sovereignty, law, health, education, resource management, global climate change, science, psychology, ethics, history, media, culture, business, and language.
2. Offer a tenure-track faculty line in each of the schools involved in the center, with emphasis on hiring Native American scholars.
3. Invite Native American scholars from tribal colleges to visit the center to develop new research collaborations and training opportunities.
4. Develop partnerships with Native American educational institutions to facilitate research relevant to contemporary national and Native tribes' concerns.
5. Establish a postdoctoral program for scholars interested in research associated with the center.
6. Through faculty associated with the center, determine a way to provide undergraduates a certificate or minor in Indigenous studies, and support graduate students' research with small research grants and assistantships.
7. Provide grants to encourage faculty to develop courses through the center for the certificate or minor in Indigenous studies.

Other Academic Opportunities

1. Expand the ongoing partnership in cultural and educational research with the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative, various tribal institutions on the Menominee reservation in Wisconsin, and other reservations in the region.
2. Sponsor an annual Carlos Montezuma Conference on Ethics and Research, named in honor of the Native American physician and author who graduated from Northwestern's Medical College in 1889, hosted and organized by the Indigenous Research Center.

Oral History Project

1. Undertake a National Native American Oral History project to interview Native American people, beginning in Chicago and expanding nationwide and potentially globally. The project would create a repository of filmed interviews and written profiles, would compile a digital database, and would mentor Native American students in oral history, interviewing methods, and media production.

Native American Art at Northwestern

1. Commission a Native American artist to exhibit an installation at the alumni center or the Block Museum.
2. Work with the Allen Center to better publicize and highlight its Indigenous art and artifacts.

Academic Collaborative Efforts

1. Develop or strengthen relationships with the Newberry Library Consortium in American Indian Studies, the Autry National Center of the American West, and the National Museum of the American Indian in order for faculty to conduct research and for students to participate in internships and research opportunities.
2. Deepen the relationship between Native Americans and Northwestern faculty at the Chicago Botanic Garden by working collaboratively on plant conservation and seed-collection training.
3. Partner with other universities, institutes, community organizations, and scholars who are actively committed to language revitalization efforts in order to obtain a critical mass for instruction in Native American languages and other subjects through the use of technology.
4. As tribes are sovereign nations, include American Indian tribes and tribal colleges in the study abroad program.
5. Allow Indigenous language instruction to satisfy the foreign language requirement.

Out-of-the-Classroom: Native American Teaching Series

1. Sponsor a series around Native scholar speakers and films and a tribal chairs' forum on education.
2. Provide small grants to current faculty to bring in Indigenous heritage guest speakers.
3. Offer small grants to undergraduate and graduate students to develop collaborative research projects with Indigenous organizations, communities, and tribes.

4. Collaborate with the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative and affiliated organizations in planning educational programs, such as a media literacy program for youth and commemorative events.

ON-CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES

One way to recruit and retain a larger number of Native American students is to have an infrastructure that provides them support, community, and purpose. With this in mind, we recommend the following:

People

1. Hire a staff member, preferably someone who identifies as Native American, in Multicultural Student Affairs to lead the coordination of support programs, build community, and create networking opportunities for Native American students at Northwestern.
2. Provide training, using the “listening session” method, for the student affairs and admission staffs and academic professionals on working with and recruiting Native Americans.
3. Create an identification system, similar to those of peer institutions, to determine how many Native American students are enrolled on campus.

Programs

1. Strengthen support for NAISA programming and provide meeting space.
2. Support the Colloquium on Indigeneity and Native American Studies, a graduate student organization dedicated to fostering scholarship, collaboration, and interdisciplinary dialogue.
3. Support the development of local chapters for national professional and student organizations, such as the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, the Native American Journalists Association, and the American Indian Business Leaders.
4. Host annual campuswide Native American events, in particular during Native American Heritage Month and on American Indian Day, that educate and celebrate Native American culture.
5. Include the Native American identity experience in discussions on diversity and inclusion on campus.
6. Host a series of events throughout the year that promote a sense of connectedness and community among Native American students, staff, and faculty and other members of the Northwestern community.

PIPELINE EFFORTS

Northwestern should address the current underrepresentation of Native American students, staff, and faculty on campus. In order to create a positive and reaffirming campus culture for future Native students, faculty, and staff, the task force recommends:

Increase Student Enrollment

1. Hire a Native American recruiter to focus full-time on conducting outreach to and recruiting Native American students.
2. Develop a communications plan that includes a statement of commitment to Native American families, students, and communities and introduces them to Northwestern through marketing materials focused on them that answer the question “Why Northwestern?”
3. Create a strategic outreach effort in which Native American prospective students can participate in preparatory programs such as the Center for Talent Development, Northwestern Academy, and the National High School Institute Cherub programs.
4. Develop working partnerships with organizations like Indigenous Scholars of Promise and College Horizons that are designed to support Native American high school students preparing for college.
5. Host a College Horizons conference dedicated to increasing the number of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students succeeding in college and graduate programs.
6. Support efforts under way by the Graduate School to recruit Native American graduate students by attending conferences, participating in job fairs that attract Native American students, and sponsoring Graduate Horizons.
7. Examine the possibility of creating articulation agreements with Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Midwestern tribal colleges to recruit transfer students from their respective schools.
8. Consider a special scholarship initiative for members of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Nation, as well as members of federally and state-recognized tribes that reside in the Great Lakes region.

Increase Faculty and Staff Presence on Campus

1. Increase the number of Native American staff by working with Human Resources to implement effective methods of reaching out to Native American communities and other institutions of higher education and by establishing relationships with Native American organizations in Chicago.

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE JOHN EVANS STUDY COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE NATIVE AMERICAN OUTREACH AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE

Early in 2013, members of the Northwestern community, current students, and faculty raised concerns about the connection between John Evans, one of Northwestern's founders, and the Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho by US Cavalry after the tribes were promised military protection. The massacre of primarily women, children, and elderly men occurred in Colorado in 1864 while John Evans was the governor of the Territory of Colorado and, ex officio, superintendent of Indian Affairs.

The University took seriously the questions surrounding Evans's involvement in and knowledge of the massacre and created a committee of leading scholars who spent a year digging deeply into the Sand Creek history. Their findings show that no known evidence directly connects Evans to the massacre. There is no record that he had prior knowledge of the planned attack or gave his permission or support to it. Noting that some statements from Evans's contemporaries "favored the total eradication of Native Americans," the scholars determined that "by the standard of such genocidal declarations, Evans was a moderate on the Indian question. Nothing he said, did, or believed suggests he would have conspired to bring about what happened at Sand Creek" (*Report*, p. 86). Nonetheless, the committee concluded that the actions and inactions of Evans before the massacre helped create an atmosphere conducive to it. Also, the committee did find evidence that in the months following the massacre, during Congressional hearings that would eventually lead to Evans's resignation as governor and in interviews in the years that followed, Evans never identified the massacre as a massacre or expressed regret or remorse that it had occurred while he was governor. In addition, the removal, containment, and slaughter of Native Americans in the West made room for railroad and business expansions that personally and financially benefited Evans.

Northwestern's long history of honoring its founders and recognizing the impact they had on the University, their professions, and the country is admirable. However, the committee concluded that the University has failed to provide a complete picture of John Evans—

"... his significant moral failures before and after Sand Creek. This oversight goes against the fundamental purposes of a university and Northwestern's own best traditions, and it should be corrected." (*Report*, p. 94)—

focusing solely on his achievements and absencing his failures and compromises. In the spirit of truth-seeking and truth-telling that is at the heart of the University, as seen in its motto and seal, as well as the impetus for academic inquiry, it is important for the University to provide a complete history of Evans.

As the University begins the process of more fully articulating and understanding its own past and the negative impact of relying on the incomplete narrative it has received, the following recommendations are given. These recommendations provide concrete steps that can be taken to form a University community whose perspective is characterized by integrity, curiosity, and nuance rather than by delimitation and ignorance.

1. Initiate a process to rename the honorary John Evans chairs established in 2007 and 2011.
2. Initiative a process to establish an Indigenous Research Center and hire tenured faculty who are affiliated with the center.
3. Include John Evans's approach to the Sand Creek Massacre and his attitude toward Native Americans in official documents related to Northwestern's founding.
4. Request that the University utilize unrestricted funds, including quasi-endowment funds, to support faculty and students as they work toward establishing an Indigenous Research Center.
5. Erect historical markers and revise existing ones to educate the campus community of the Indigenous history that existed on this land.
6. In addition to having a professorship in the name of 1889 Northwestern Medical College graduate Carlos Montezuma, a Native American, develop a Carlos Montezuma collection of papers, documents, and contributions linked to the work of Northwestern alumni in the field of medicine.
7. Commission a portrait of Carlos Montezuma to be hung in a prominent location on campus.
8. Initiate a process of renaming the John Evans Alumni Center building and the Evans Room in the Norris University Center.
9. Select a reading on genocide and/or colonialism for the One Book One Northwestern program, such as the *Report of the John Evans Committee* or a book on the Sand Creek Massacre.
10. Hold a commemorative event this year that highlights the 150th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre, and annually participate in one that commemorates all massacres of Native American tribes.

APPENDIX A

NATIVE AMERICAN OUTREACH AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Mallory Black, graduate student, Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications (Navajo)

Lesley-Ann Brown, executive director of campus inclusion and community, Division of Student Affairs

Forrest Bruce, undergraduate student, School of Education and Social Policy, and copresident of the Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance (Ojibwa)

Onis Cheathams, associate director of admission, Office of Undergraduate Admission

Mark Cleveland, Judd A. and Marjorie Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences alumnus (Cherokee descent)

Dona Cordero, assistant provost for diversity and inclusion, Office of the Provost

Loren Ghiglione, professor of journalism and former dean, Medill School

Phil Harris, University trustee and Weinberg College alumnus, NAOITF cochair

Sean Harte, Weinberg College alumnus (Menominee)

Bethany Hughes, graduate student, School of Communication (Choctaw)

Carol Lee, professor of education, School of Education and Social Policy

Sarah Mangelsdorf, dean and professor, Weinberg College

Ananda Marin, postdoctoral fellow in psychology, Weinberg College, and alumna, School of Education and Social Policy (African American, Choctaw, European American descent)

Doug Medin, professor of psychology, Weinberg College, and professor of education, School of Education and Social Policy

Heather Menefee, undergraduate student, Weinberg College, and former copresident of the Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance

Peter Powell, founder and spiritual director of St. Augustine's Center for American Indians, Chicago (honorary Cheyenne chief)

Mark Sheldon, assistant dean and distinguished senior lecturer in philosophy, Weinberg College

Pamala Silas, executive director of the Native American Journalists Association and former CEO of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (Menominee)

Sarah Taylor, associate professor of religious studies, Weinberg College

Patricia Telles-Irvin, vice president for student affairs, NAOITF cochair

Amy West, assistant professor of clinical psychology in psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago (Southern Cheyenne, European American descent)

APPENDIX B

TABLE SUMMARIZING NATIVE AMERICAN SUPPORT AND PROGRAMMING AT NINE PEER INSTITUTIONS

PREPARED BY THE NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY NATIVE AMERICAN OUTREACH AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE, 2014

| Institution | Student/Other Groups | Academic Programs | Other Programs | Other |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| University of Chicago | Native American Student Association | | American Indian Urban Families and Communities Conference Annual Native American Heritage Celebration | Staff and faculty recruitment guide includes list of Native American colleges |
| Columbia University | Native American Council Native American Law Students Association | | Native American Heritage Month Indigenous Studies Summer Program (through Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race) | |
| Dartmouth College | Native Americans at Dartmouth Dartmouth Powwow Committee First Voices American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Dartmouth Chapter Native Dancing Society Occom Pond Singers Native Women's Group Alpha Pi Omega Sorority (Native American Greek letter organization) Indigenous Living Languages at Dartmouth | Native American Studies Program (major and minor) | Native American Program (to support Native students) Dartmouth Bound: Native American Community Program Native American House (student residence) | Admissions Office includes staff assigned full-time to Native American student recruitment |
| Duke University | Native American Student Alliance | Native American Symposium (2010) Native American programming (through Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies), including film series, lectures, conference on Native American and Indigenous issues, workshops | Native American Heritage Month Native and Indigenous film series (2013) American Philosophical Society-Phillips Fund Grant for Native American Research in Linguistics, Ethnohistory, and the History of Studies of Native Americans | |

| Institution | Student/Other Groups | Academic Programs | Other Programs | Other |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Harvard University | Native Alumni Association Native Americans at Harvard College Native American Law Students Association | Nation Building Symposium American Indian Program (no major or minor): undergraduate senior thesis, graduate research grant, Nation Building fellowships; faculty research and publication grants; Nation Building Symposium 1665 Caleb Cheeshahteamuck Fellowship Program (for graduate students researching Native American issues) | Annual Powwow Native American High School Summer Program | |
| Johns Hopkins University | Native Circle (students, faculty, staff) | | Center for American Indian Health Annual Native Visions Camp | Strategies for recruiting diverse faculty include sources for targeting Native American faculty |
| University of Pennsylvania | Association of Native Alumni | | Natives at Penn (for students interested in Native issues) | Native American exhibits at Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology |
| Stanford University | American Indian Staff Forum Native American Alumni Association Native American Law Students Association | Native American Studies Program (major and minor) | American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Program/ Native American Cultural Center Native American Immersion Program (freshman and transfer student orientation) Muwekma-Tah-Ruk (Native American/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian-themed house) | Native American Collection at the Cantor Arts Center |
| Yale University | American Indian Science and Engineering Society, Yale Chapter Association of Native Americans at Yale Native American Law Students Association | Native studies courses (through Native American Cultural Center) Yale Group for the Study of Native America (interdisciplinary working group) | Native American Cultural Center (recruitment, mentoring, community building) | Exhibits on Native American cultures at Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History |

APPENDIX C

Comments on the “Recommendations by the Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force” and the “Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force Report”

BY W. RICHARD WEST JR.

INTRODUCTION

I very much appreciate being asked to look at the above-mentioned documents generated as a result of Northwestern University’s inquiry into the Sand Creek Massacre and any possible connection between it and one of the University’s founders, John Evans. The massacre occurred during Evans’s tenure in the 1860s as the governor of the Colorado Territory.

As a general matter, I want to emphasize that I thought all undertakings I reviewed were comprehensive and thoughtful. The foundational document, *Report of the John Evans Study Committee*, represents an almost encyclopedic treatment of the massacre itself, including the history preceding and following it, along with a discussion of Evans’s role in it—or the lack thereof. The two follow-on documents I reference above are a wide-ranging list of responses and recommendations to the *Report’s* findings.

I find the latter compelling for several reasons, some of which I will reference in my further discussion below. The “Recommendations” step up to the adverse allegations directly, acknowledge them, and suggest what responses might be appropriate. The “Recommendations” do not only confess error but also in very concrete ways comment on steps that might be taken by the University in the present.

The “Task Force Report” is equally substantive and concrete. The task force report’s recommendations for action are broad in scope, as I will acknowledge below. They build off what several other distinguished universities, including in particular Stanford University and Dartmouth College, have accomplished over the past generation in attracting and supporting Native students. (I should indicate here by way of lawyerly full disclosure that my daughter, Dr. Amy West of the University of Illinois at Chicago, served as a member of the Task Force.)

My discussion below is primarily for the purpose of emphasizing ideas, points, or recommendations contained in the two documents that I considered to be especially important in the overall scheme of things or with respect to which I may make further comments that might be helpful in future implementation. On the latter, and in order to try to be more helpful, I indicate what might be more helpful in the ears of the listener—i.e., members of Native communities. The documents are really in very sound shape, and my observations are thus somewhat peripheral—but well-intentioned!

COMMENTS ON “RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE NATIVE AMERICAN OUTREACH AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE”

Page 9 – For starters, I think that your summary here is a fair and accurate representation of the “Conclusions” section of the Study Committee’s Report. The historical record, as interpreted by the Study Committee (and as I myself believe to be the case), does not support an inference of conspiratorial participation by Evans in Colonel Chivington’s heinous crimes. Direct moral failure on Evans’s part sat much more in his behavior following the massacre in what he failed to say or do. Was he an “example of his times”? Perhaps. But even at the time, others were willing to step forward, and some, like Edward Wynkoop, ultimately paid with their lives for their moral courage.

Page 10 – But page 9 really serves as backdrop and context for what the recommendations suggest on page 10, which is very important. The recommendations made there have two characteristics that I believe are likely to generate trust by the Native community in the intentions and actions of the University. The characteristics are the following: recommendations #1, #3, #8, and #9, which are quite concrete evidence of the University’s willingness to hold Evans’s moral ambiguity, if not malfeasance, “accountable” in the present; and the several recommendation that are proactively present and future gestures on the University’s part.

The latter is represented in several of the recommendations. One set includes steps to be taken in honoring Carlos Montezuma. The second recommendation that I found especially apt, and that I believe the Native community will see that way, is #5. The Potawatomie community, which had major villages in the very area that currently is Chicago, was woefully treated in its removal and dispersion from this area on the way to its contemporary location, primarily in Oklahoma and Kansas, rather than in its Midwestern homelands.

Native communities, whether reservation or urban, have great respect for, given the place of land and place in Native cosmology, the recognition of historic tribal geography. I have not the slightest doubt that you might be successful in reaching out to the Kansas and Oklahoma Potawatomie communities for purposes of dedicating such recognition.

A similar thread of meaning is picked up in recommendation #10, where I also think reaching out to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation of Oklahoma would be equally efficacious. I believe I mentioned to Patricia Telles-Irvin—which she, of course, already knows (and already may have active contacts with Southern Cheyennes in Oklahoma)—that the Sand Creek Massacre carries great import to this day in the community.

One of my fellow Southern Cheyenne peace chiefs, Gordon Yellowman, would be a very useful contact, as would be Henrietta Mann, the current president of the Nation’s Community College. I would be happy to assist with any contacts of this nature for the asking.

COMMENTS ON “NATIVE AMERICAN OUTREACH AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE REPORT”

The Task Force Report, in terms of its breadth and depth, gives me very little to add. For me it touches all the right keys, including the following: it does not attempt to “reinvent the wheel” and draws upon the instructive experience of other universities; it sets forth some very real and concrete activities and initiatives on the campus itself, which include academic and research opportunities, the support of Native students on campus, and the Indigenous Research Center; it attempts to establish real connections between the University and Native alumni/ae; and it proposes outreach—and, conversely, “inreach”—between the University and Native communities and interests. The comments I make below really are in the nature of “addenda” and emphasis—you have already hit the main stops.

“Working relationships with Native nations, institutions, and communities”

I have two points of emphasis here. First, as I am sure you will, do be certain that the annual meetings of the Council of Elders is an activity of substance and does not gravitate toward “window dressing.” These days Native community participants are sophisticated enough to know the difference—and will let you know that they do. Second, “Good Works” do begin at home, and I believe you are wise to begin with Chicago and the American Indian Center and perhaps the tribes who are more your geographic constituents, such as the Ho-Chunks, the Oneida, and the Menominee—all of Wisconsin. But be sensitive to the fact that the center really needs to be very much a part of the mix, as urban Native communities are prone to feeling pushed aside, and you have one of the largest urban Native communities in the United States sitting right there.

“Academic and Research Opportunities”

This set of recommendations is creative and comprehensive, and a number of the items caught my attention in particular. First, the establishment of the Indigenous Research Center is important generally, but some of its nuances I found particularly attractive—creating certificate programs and an academic minor, as well as offering a tenure-track line in each of the respective schools involved with the IRC, for example. In addition to recruiting students, the recruitment of qualified Native faculty is a continuing problem and challenge for even the best-intentioned universities.

Second, I was enchanted, candidly, by the proposal of the National Native American Oral History project. So much is being lost so fast in contemporary Native communities, where the traditions are still primarily oral rather than written. My guess is that you could find ready collaborators in the academic or museum communities, too.

To that last point, your reaching out to local institutions generally, such as the Newberry Library, makes perfect sense. I also can assure you personally that the Autry National Center of the American West would be happy to oblige. The “Out of the Classroom—Native American Teaching Series” enfold the same principle into this public programming initiative.

“On-Campus Support Services”

No topic is more important to your effort than this one. I was at Stanford University in the law school when Stanford launched the large Native student recruitment program in the early 1970s—and honestly, it was a disaster. At one point I think the five-year graduation rate was approximately 20–30 percent. You have the great advantage of benefiting from Stanford’s disaster (and by the way, ultimately it did, too, as it now has one of the most effective such programs in the academy)—and you clearly have given the breadth and depth of what is set forth under this heading.

You are sensitive to a number of the markers for success in what you propose. First, you establish a clear internal staff infrastructure—a commitment on the part of the University per se—to provide the support you aspire to. Second, you set forth a number of activities aimed at maximizing the Native student’s academic integration into the University.

The only cautionary flag I would raise is that you remember the support you provide, in a sense, is not only “academic” but also “social.” The distance between a reservation in New Mexico—or even for that matter, in Wisconsin—and a university in Chicago sometimes can seem very far for a matriculating freshman. This point also goes to the question of “space”: one of the most effective aspects of Stanford’s program is that Native students actually have their own “place” on campus in which to gather and sometimes to simply “hang out.”

“Pipeline Efforts”

You recognize that your effort to increase a Native presence at the University includes not just students but also faculty and staff. Most universities never get beyond students, which misses the point by 67 percent.

You note the point, but I emphasize it briefly here: do focus on establishing good and strong ties with the tribal community colleges. You have an advantage that did not exist a generation ago when the system did not exist (and I appreciate your reference to the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal college in Oklahoma; both Amy and I know its president, who is an old friend and former charter trustee of the National Museum of the American Indian). The tribal colleges can serve as preparation and transition venues for the University that sometimes ease the otherwise more complicated journey from home to university.

CONCLUSION

Again, I very much appreciate your invitation to review the documents that sit at the core of your initiative. As indicated at the outset of my comments, my principal aim is simply to applaud what you have done—it is thoughtful, it is substantive, it is creative and forward-thinking, it is comprehensive, and last, but hardly least, it is genuinely good-hearted. I congratulate you sincerely, and you should feel free to come back to me at any time for assistance or further counsel as the University moves forward.

Rick West Jr.,

Director of the Autry National Center of the American West

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force was guided by the knowledge and greater understanding we gained from peer institutions that exemplify effective ways to include and sustain Native American teachings through curricula and activities and maintain the presence of Native American students, faculty, and staff. Our personal interaction with members of the Native American Collaborative in Chicago and consultation with representatives of several Native tribes, in both the Great Lakes region and Colorado, also informed our work.

We want to recognize the University's John Evans Study Committee for delivering the compelling conclusions of its report, which culminated a yearlong investigation of John Evans's role in the Sand Creek Massacre.

The task force also wishes to acknowledge Rick West Jr., director of the Autry National Center of the American West (see Appendix C), and Andrew Johnson, executive director of the American Indian Center of Chicago, for investing their time in reading and providing thoughtful input into the NAOITF's recommendations.



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