

Mike's letter Before leaving 10/07

1) I have submitted my letter of resignation effective November 16, 2007.

2) My intent had been to stay much longer at Evergreen but circumstances and personalities, unfortunately, do not leave that as a viable option for me. My ability to perform my work is undermined by the words and actions of others. My personal character defects are such that I respond to unwarranted criticism by developing resentments. It is these resentments, rather than the initial attacks, that get in my way. I have noticed myself falling prey to that unhealthy pattern of behaviors. That is not who I want to be, nor how I want to live. Therefore, rather than participate and descend further into inter-Indian conflict (which is one of the things this program is supposed to be helping our practitioners climb out from under) I am choosing at this point to remove myself from the situation.

3) I have concerns regarding the direction the program is heading. I will list those here and they can be discussed at Friday's meeting if you choose.

- a) Succession planning
- b) Course delivery changes
- c) Attempts to drive a wedge between MPA and TMPA
- d) Quality of teaching/value of degree
- e) Divisiveness; in the classroom, between faculty, between faculty and staff
- f) Alan's replacement in NIARI and in TMPA
- g) Responsibility to the tribes whose energy and funding allowed for the creation of this program

4) I believe the program would benefit from an external advisory board. I think that the Tribal MPA Alumni/Managers Association could fill that need admirably. Local tribes came to campus and requested the creation of this program. Local tribes contributed funding to get this program started. Local tribes should continue to have a voice in the way this program operates and the skill sets its graduates obtain.

5) In Oregon we had a large group of Native faculty from universities, colleges and community colleges across the state, and the Education Directors from the nine Oregon tribes who would meet quarterly to discuss various issues regarding post-secondary education and Indian students. When a particular school would have an issue with policies or faculty or administrators at their school, The Coalition would schedule its next quarterly meeting at that school and invite its President and top administrators to join them. It was, and continues to be, a very effective mechanism for creating change in an institution.

This model could be utilized on a smaller scale here at Evergreen, in direct relation to the TMPA program. You as the Tribal MPA Alumni could establish that relationship directly with the President and maybe the Provost. It is your tribes who created this and you are all familiar with its creation and the intent behind that creation. You have power as an outside voice that those within the system will never have.

6) Because I am too personally involved in the inter-personal dynamics here I no longer trust my ability to maintain objectivity. I think it would be wise for this group to meet with the current cohort and get their perspective on the quality and delivery of the program. If you are interested I could set up a dinner at Little Creek on a Friday or Saturday evening when the cohort gets done with class for you all to chat with them informally. I would not need to be there, perhaps it would be more open communication if I was not.