

Statement on Behalf of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College

04.22.2015

As Chairman of the Board of Regents for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College (CATC), I announce the closing of the tribal college located on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) effective the end of the 2015 spring semester. The decision to dissolve was made by a vote of the members of the CATC Board of Regents, its governing body, at a meeting on March 27, 2015. This action was prompted by a lack of continued funding from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. The tribal college has existed in partnership with SWOSU since its opening ceremonies held August 25, 2006.

Prior to that in 2002 the tribes founded an Education Authority Board to represent the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in all educational matters, including the establishment of schools, colleges, and education centers. Preliminary work by the Board resulted in a Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal council vote on October 4, 2003, directing its tribal government to establish a tribal college.

Implementation of the people's directive led to a cooperative agreement in 2006 between SWOSU and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College Board, whereby CATC officially came into existence. The tribal college has since grown incrementally and its curriculum consists of forty-six courses and four Associate in Science degree options in Tribal Administration, Children's Teachers, American Indian Studies, and General Studies. It has graduated 55 students, and its student body has represented 22 tribal nations.

With the exception of those courses taught by the three full-time CATC staff each semester, the remainder were taught by adjunct faculty. The tribal college has offered a range of 6-12 courses per semester, and it has served approximately 950 students on a semester basis. CATC was founded "to provide a quality cultural-based and academically rigorous general education for tribal and non-tribal citizens." Four basic cultural values have guided its development, which are respect, cultural integrity, competence, and hope.

The three-person staff worked on two distinct tracks. One was working toward accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission and toward membership in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). The other was operating essentially as a college within a college in accordance with SWOSU policies and a Memorandum of Understanding between the two partner institutions. SWOSU provided umbrella accreditation and academic endorsement by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for all CATC courses and its four degree options.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Henrietta Mann, Mr. Alden Whiteman, and Ms. Gail Wilcox for their dedication and commitment to the higher education of American Indian tribal youth, primarily those from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. I also wish to express confidence in our students to positively continue their education as our future leaders and future guardians of our languages and cultures. Finally, I would like for SWOSU administrators, faculty, and staff to know that I have always felt a deep

sense of gratitude for how they cooperated with us in our mutual vision of tribal higher education.

Pauline Harjo, Chair

Board of Regents

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College