

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, OREGON

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR / CITY COUNCIL



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March 4, 2005

Kathy Thomas, Director of Annual Giving
Lane Community College Foundation
4000 East 30th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97405

Dear Ms. Thomas:

As Mayor of the City of Springfield I am writing in support of Lane Community College's Native American Long House project. This project would provide spaces for culturally appropriate classes and activities and would be a tremendous asset to Lane Community College and the Native American students.

Native American students face significant barriers to academic success including culture shock, loss of cultural identity and lack of social interaction. Because of these challenges, Native American students have the lowest college enrollment, retention rate and graduation rate of all minority groups.

Lane Community College, in collaboration with Oregon tribal officials, developed Lane's Native American Student Program in the early 1970's. Native American students are drawn to this program from all over the region because of the outstanding academic program and depth of culturally appropriate student services. Enrollment has grown from 50 to 617 students and now serves more than twice as many Native American students than any other Oregon community college.

Building a Long House is a logical next step in serving the diverse needs of the college. This multi-use facility, available to all students, would provide spaces for culturally appropriate classes and activities such as: American Indian Language; summer youth academy; classes on Native American culture; dancing and drumming; community and professional tribal gatherings and ceremonies.

The City of Springfield supports the efforts of the Lane Community College Foundation in its efforts to raise funding for the much needed Native American Long House Project.

Sincerely,

Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor