

WILMA MANKILLER

RT. 1, BOX 945
STILWELL, OKLAHOMA 74960

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of a grant application from Lane Community College's for their Native American Longhouse project. During my visit to the Northwest I came to understand the profound difference a Longhouse structure can make on a college campus. Dr. Strickland and I taught our fall class in a Longhouse at the University of Oregon. Teaching a class in the Longhouse completely changed the dynamics of the class meetings. When not in use by the university the community uses the Longhouse structure for meetings, naming ceremonies, potlucks and other cultural activities.

Lane Community also wants to build a Longhouse for its students and community members. As a community college, Lane is truly a remarkable institution with a very strong Native American presence. The college continues to reach out to native students through various programs, including the introduction of a two-year language program in Chinuk-wawa.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "today every university in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho has a Native American curriculum, as do many of the two and four year colleges." Through its new language program and its campaign to build a longhouse, Lane Community College is taking important steps to develop a model for Native American studies and to support Native American students attending community colleges.

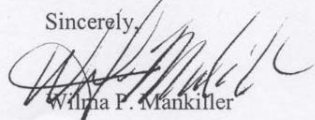
Besides serving as an entrée into four-year colleges and universities, Lane Community College plays the pivotal role of educating and providing critical job skills for the populace. A Longhouse would be more than just a building in a community college environment. It would serve as the center of life and support for Native Americans of the Northwest. It is also a place where Native Americans can teach and share with others in a mutual environment of respect and diversity.

Many Native American community leaders and students have informed us that the Longhouse will foster a sense of belonging for Native students and a place to share knowledge and information with non-Native Americans. It is the ideal setting to learn about and enrich the diverse minds and imaginations that make up the many communities of Lane County. The longhouse has broad support in the community and among the tribes of Oregon. Since the Board of Education approved the project in early 2002, the community has raised over \$500,000 toward its \$1.2 capital target.

I am very familiar with Lane's excellence in education and diversity. My niece and nephew both attend the college and I had an opportunity to visit the college on two occasions during my stay in the Northwest. I was impressed by the diverse student body and the commitment of the school faculty and administration to strengthening its already impressive Native American outreach efforts and programs.

Best Wishes,

Sincerely,



Wilma P. Mankiller

January 9, 2006