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COMMENTARY

Developing an American Indian Studies Program: A View from Ground Zero

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The recent publication of *Native American Studies in Higher Education*, edited by Duane Champagne and Jay Stauss, marks a milestone in American Indian studies (AIS).[1] Not only does this volume commemorate the formal existence of programs focusing on this broadly (if vaguely) defined field at various academic institutions for more than thirty years; but the fact that there are so many long-standing Native/American Indian studies programs in North America indicates that the academic canon has changed, if only slightly and stubbornly. By the same token, virtually all of the authors who discuss their respective programs in this book describe less than perfect situations, in which institutional obstacles have often remained and questions about the extent and consequences of AIS programs constituting autonomous units or departments within these institutions remain unresolved. However, all the authors agree on specific guiding principles that make American Indian studies programs legitimate endeavors: that such programs must constitute holistic, praxis-oriented pursuits designed to serve and to work collaboratively with indigenous peoples in a way that complements and enhances tribal sovereignty, and that recognizes the legitimacy and value of indigenous knowledge.

Native American Studies in Higher Education understandably focuses on those AIS programs that have endured the test of time and "that have developed and deepened their philosophy about American Indian studies and

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their commitment to students, community, scholarship, and in many cases, traditional knowledge and language."[2] This essay will review a fledgling American Indian studies program that has embodied the guiding principles of these AIS programs throughout its brief existence. I am referring to the program that was created at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) in 1999 at the request of some of the state's indigenous peoples and that has been guided by a collaborative mandate ever since. It is essential to chronicle and report on such programs at a very early stage because this is the point at which some of the greatest obstacles to development present themselves, as do some of the most creative innovations for overcoming such obstacles and nurturing and sustaining programs. Such hindsight might provide a better perspective from which to develop generalized models and observations. However, it does not provide the best vantage point from which to observe the critical nuances and realities of what it takes to develop an American Indian studies program in the face of local institutional idiosyncrasies and individual (if not hostile) political climates. Although Virginia Tech's program (for which I serve as coordinator) might not be "time-tested," I believe that the initiatives we have put in place in a short period provide important models for holistic approaches to American Indian studies.

American Indian studies programs at land grant institutions (which have a legal mandate to serve communities within their home states) are theoretically well situated to gain institutional support as service-oriented programs. However, the irony is that those involved in such programs continually find themselves evoking the land grant mission and philosophy in attempts to gain university support.[3] Indeed, using the land grant mission as a rallying cry for more support of programs can serve as a mixed political expedient. In the case of Virginia Tech, which was established as a land grant college in 1872,[4] this proved to be a critical factor in creating our AIS program.

In June of 1999, the tribal council of the Monacan Indian Nation, located primarily in Amherst County, Virginia, sent a letter to then-Virginia Tech president Paul Torgersen and several other key administrators and state legislators suggesting that the institution consider establishing an American Indian studies program. In this letter, the Monacans provided a basic blueprint for a program that would not only educate the general public about American Indian history, cultures, and issues in a culturally sensitive way, but would—first and foremost—be of service to indigenous peoples. They envisioned a program that would: (1) treat Indians not as subjects, but as partners and colleagues in collaborative efforts to develop curricula; (2) engage the state's (and ultimately other) indigenous communities in joint ventures that would bolster their cultural, political, and economic autonomy; and (3) create a wider awareness and space in the academic canon for the legitimacy and value of indigenous knowledge.[5]

To realize the full significance of the Monacan letter, one must place their request and the subsequent development of our program in the historical context of Indian and non-Indian relations in Virginia. Following the 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation between the colony of Virginia and most of the tribes within its boundaries, Virginia Indians faded from political significance

in the eyes of European—and later, Euro-American—sovereigns. The 1677 treaty technically reduced Virginia Indians to the nebulous status of "tributary Indians,"[6] which meant that they were neither militarily nor territorially powerful enough to draw the political interest of the American government after the Revolution. Likewise, Indians were not distinguished legally from other persons of color in Virginia until 1866, when the General Assembly passed a law stating that "Every person having one-fourth or more Negro blood shall be deemed a colored person, and every person having one-fourth or more Indian blood will be deemed an Indian."[7]

Unfortunately, previous and subsequent renderings of Virginia miscegenation law seemingly negated the "Indian" portions of these statutes, beginning with a 1705 colonial Virginia law which declared that the offspring of an Indian and any person of African ancestry "should be deemed, accounted, held, and taken to be mulatto."[8] Although there is no question that some Virginia Indians engaged in sexual unions with people of African ancestry, the rising tide of the eugenics movement in the late nineteenth century led many prominent Virginians to launch a legal vendetta against the state's indigenous peoples for their alleged (and often unsubstantiated) violation of miscegenation laws.

Among those prominent citizens was Walter A. Plecker, the state's registrar (and hence, director of Vital Statistics) from 1912 to 1946. An internationally known eugenicist, Plecker devised a policy of "documentary genocide" that identified all surnames listed as anything other than "White" on vital records dating back to the Civil War and required county clerks, medical doctors, and midwives to classify anyone bearing these surnames as "colored."[9] Since many Indians—particularly those living outside reservations—had been forced to register as free people of color before the Civil War, this left them with little recourse in asserting unique tribal identities under the law. When the Virginia Racial Integrity Act codified this policy in 1924, Plecker became more determined to eradicate Indians from the record in Virginia, as shown by the multitude of hand-altered Indian birth certificates (changed to read "Negro" or "Colored") in Plecker's handwriting. This policy, in turn, was subject to some rather creative and discriminatory interpretations where Indians were concerned, especially in the context of local (county) political economies. Theoretically, Indians were free to attend public schools for blacks. In reality, they were no more welcome than blacks by officials and students in these schools, who perceived of them as "mixed race degenerates," and many Indians refused to attend such schools on the grounds that to do so would constitute an admission of racial degeneracy. For most tribes, church-operated mission schools offering only a sixth-grade education (on an irregular basis) provided the only option for formal schooling.[10] Even after public school integration in the late 1950s and early 1960s (depending on the county), Indians found it difficult to gain access to meaningful education for several years. For instance, in Amherst County, Indians were integrated into public schools in 1963 (although African Americans had been accepted earlier, and the county proposed a bond issue to build a separate school for Indians), but the first Monacan did not graduate from public high school until 1971.[11]

Although social, political, and economic conditions for Indians have improved significantly for Virginia Indians since the late 1960s, the policies of "racial integrity" and their peculiar manifestations created a formidable obstacle to Indian education in the state that continues to pose problems. Certain tribes, including the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, and Chickahominy, were able to send students to federally funded Indian schools in North Carolina (Cherokee), Kansas (Haskell), and Oklahoma (Bacone College) during the mid-twentieth century—largely through the advocacy of anthropologist Frank Speck.[12] As a result, these tribes have seen a significant number of members earn degrees in higher education since the 1950s. Tribes such as the Monacan, on the other hand, have had a longer road to travel in adjusting to changing political economic conditions, however positive, and have just begun to see a few members matriculate from institutions of higher education on an increasingly regular basis. In any case, it is important to realize that the state of Virginia did not make a solid commitment to Indians in the realm of education.

BIRTH OF VIRGINIA TECH'S PROGRAM

The state of Virginia currently recognizes eight tribes: the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi, Monacan, Nansemond, Pamunkey, and Rappahannock. As stated, none of these tribes is currently federally recognized, and only two—the Mattaponi and Pamunkey—have official reservations (established through colonial treaty). The total population of these tribes is approximately 3,400, compared with a statewide population of 21,172 American Indians and Alaskan Natives of all tribes according to the latest census estimates.[13] Thus, compared to most states with institutions hosting AIS programs, our indigenous constituency is small, yet nonetheless significant. Likewise, the development of Virginia Tech's program has paralleled, and in some ways worked in concert with, important political movements within Virginia's Indian community.

It is worth mentioning that until recently, no Virginia institution of higher education had formally reached out to the state's indigenous population since the College of William and Mary closed its Brafferton Indian School at the beginning of the American Revolution (of course, the Brafferton fund originated in England, not Virginia).[14] Fittingly enough, the first recent effort to include Virginia's Indians as substantive partners by an institution of higher education came from William and Mary, where anthropologist Danielle Moretti-Langholtz secured university approval for an American Indian Resource Center in the early 1990s. Although this center does not constitute an AIS program in any formal sense, it has provided a base for curriculum development and, most significantly, a conduit for collaborative research and teaching among scholars, students, and Virginia Indians.[15] The efforts of Moretti-Langholtz have provided a vital diplomatic link between Virginia's Indian nations and the academic community; Virginia Tech's program would have been much slower to develop were it not for its exemplary determination to work with Indians as colleagues, rather than subjects. As discussed below, its

work has fostered a climate of inter-institutional collaboration, rather than competition, in the development of our American Indian studies program.

The Virginia Tech AIS program, in fact, was born with a mandate for collaboration. In the 1999 letter that spurred the development of our program, the Monacan tribal council expressed two broad sets of interests that set the tone for future dialogue: "(1) we would like to foster an affiliation [with Virginia Tech] in order to educate our young people, and other Indian students, in Native American studies so that they would be well prepared for positions of tribal leadership, and would be educated in the issues facing Native people today; and (2) we believe that through such affiliation, we would be better able to develop tribal programs that would serve our members in the areas of tribal economic development, agriculture, land management, and social programs."[16] The Monacan, however, did not simply rehash the land grant mission, but insisted that such a program be based on true collaboration and partnership with indigenous communities.

Virginia Tech officials responded surprisingly fast to the letter, perhaps reacting in part to increased media coverage of public scrutiny concerning diversity at state universities in Virginia. Whatever the case, then-Provost Peggy Maeszaros contacted key administrators and heads of departments with potential interest or faculty with expertise in American Indian issues to determine what resources were available for the development of such a program, and which department or academic unit should house the program if developed. The group had little difficulty in determining that the program should be located in the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CIS), a unit within the College of Arts and Sciences that serves as a home for several ethnic studies and humanistic interdisciplinary programs, including black studies, women's studies, religious studies, and humanities. Although none of these programs constitutes an independent department, each offers minors and provisional majors under the interdisciplinary studies degree program.[17] Theoretically, this unit also serves as a point of incubation for programs that might be well-situated to become independent departments.

The next step was to determine the parameters of the prospective program. Accordingly, Maeszaros convened a meeting of all administrators, deans, and faculty with expertise and interest who might be potential affiliates with this program and representatives from the Monacan Indian Nation in the fall of 1999. Monacan Council Chief John L. Johns and Tribal Director of Social and Economic Development Karenne Wood attended the meeting and elaborated on the earlier letter. According to Johns and Woods, any AIS program would need to deal holistically with Native issues and be concerned, not only with educating the general public, but with bolstering the presence of Indians in the academy, and serving indigenous communities in ways that would enhance tribal sovereignty. This meant that providing services for Indian student recruitment and retention, and expanding outreach efforts to indigenous communities, were just as important as curriculum development. They summarized university tribal relations in one word: diplomacy. Significantly, Johns and Wood insisted that a legitimate AIS program must provide a conduit through which indigenous knowledge would be seen as

relevant and would find a space in the academy. The administration was quite receptive to this proposal, and encouraged the further development of the program, with one major caveat—the program must be developed *without* additional resources.

On paper, we were to develop an academic minor under the auspices of the humanities program in the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. In practice, we knew that we must develop a more holistic entity from the outset that served, and relied on, input from indigenous people statewide, and ultimately nationwide. Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences Myra Gordon oversaw the development of the program, relying on a core group of faculty from various departments and on sustained input from Monacan tribal representatives. The faculty on the steering committee included myself (then employed as a visiting assistant professor and teaching Appalachian studies through CIS, but an anthropologist with expertise on Southeastern tribes and indigenous politics), Elizabeth Fine (chair of humanities and a folklorist by training), Jeff J. Corntassel (Cherokee political scientist specializing in international indigenous rights), Harry Dyer (Cherokee instructor in English), Joanne McNeal (an instructor in CIS with expertise in indigenous art history), Clare Danneberg (a sociolinguist in English who specializes in Southeastern languages), and Tom Hammet (associate professor in wood science who specializes in development of non-timber forest products—herbs, baskets, etc.—and has worked extensively with indigenous groups in Latin America and Nepal). During the first year each of us developed proposals for curricula and the minor, each in our field of expertise. In the fall of 2000 we refined our proposals and submitted them through the review process of our respective departments and colleges. At that point, I became the official coordinator for the program, thus assuming the first and only full-time position reserved exclusively for American Indian studies.

Before addressing the obstacles we have confronted and the processes through which our program has developed during the past three years, I would like to summarize our accomplishments during this short period. In the fall of 2002, our minor program became official. Our course offerings included: Introduction to American Indian Studies, Oral Tradition, American Indian Literatures, American Indian Languages, American Indian Spirituality, and Indigenous Peoples and World Politics; as well as a variety of courses under the "Special Topics" designator, including American Indian Cultures and Societies, American Indian Law and Policy, American Indians in Film, American Indian Arts, and Native Peoples of the Southeast. While the courses and requirements might seem unusual compared to those of other AIS programs, it is important to realize that we had to develop this minor with no additional resources. Thus, we had to streamline the proposal by limiting the number of new courses, restructuring existing courses (as in the case with the Oral Tradition course), and including more specialized courses under the heading of "Special Topics" courses. These courses have been, and will continue to be, developed through increasing collaboration with Virginia's indigenous peoples, and eventually with other tribes in the region. This collaborative spirit, in fact, has been at the heart of all other initiatives, including the Virginia Indian Nations Summit on Higher

Education (an annual meeting between Virginia Tech students, faculty, administrators, and tribal representatives), a mentoring program for Indian youth in the state, and a multifaceted public education initiative tentatively referred to as "Virginia Indian Nations 101." However, these developments have not come without major obstacles and challenges from various directions, or without great sacrifices on the part of Virginia Tech faculty and tribal representatives.

THE CHALLENGES

Not surprisingly, our greatest challenge in developing the Virginia Tech AIS program has been financial. The administrative mandate to develop the program without drawing on additional resources remains in effect. The only permanent funding for the program is the coordinator's salary, which means that I spend many hours soliciting funds from internal and external sources in order to support our public and outreach programs. Likewise, we have only one permanent faculty line (which, perhaps, is as much as anyone can expect to emerge in such a brief period), and affiliated faculty—particularly Jeff Corntassel (political science) and Harry Dyer (English) —have devoted a disproportionate amount of time toward the development of the program. This situation is complicated by a prolonged financial crisis in the state of Virginia that has had a significant impact on Virginia Tech. In the spring of 2002 we were forced to take an across-the-board 17 percent budget cut, and in the fall of 2002 we had to contend with a 13 percent cut. A possible advantage of the American Indian studies program—which differentiates it from any other program on campus—is that our indigenous constituency is willing and able to mount formidable political pressure on the university. That is why our program exists in the first place.

A similar problem related to limited resources lies in the fact that those faculty most directly involved in the development of our program find themselves serving as de facto agents for outreach and recruitment in indigenous communities, and as the providers of services for indigenous students. As M. Annette Jaimes has argued, this can potentially cause faculty to compromise scholarly activity.[18] Indeed, most of us are aspiring toward tenure, but are not there yet, and are expected to fulfill a base research requirement. Indeed, it is safe to say that we put in more time on the university clock than many of our colleagues who are junior faculty, simply because of the integrated, holistic nature of our program. We have dealt with this reality in creative ways, understanding that our work on this program might be incorporated into our research agenda. For instance, all of us are concerned with the mission of nation-building, and for scholars such as Jeff Corntassel, work with Virginia's Indian nations on this and other programs has opened a new dimension of scholarly activity and collaborative research.[19] Nonetheless, we are both committed and overcommitted, and our determination to expand the program is fueled by the number of irons each of us has in the fire.

Finally, in spite of the initial enthusiasm that seemed to brim from Virginia Tech's administration when the Monacan sent their query, we have experienced certain political obstacles to the development of our program,

some of which reflect state and local controversies that are not devoid of racial overtones. First, some officials in the administration have expressed concerns that our program is developing in conjunction (rather than simultaneously) with a current campaign among six of Virginia's Indian nations for federal recognition through joint legislation. The initial concern reflected fears by several state lawmakers, and religious and social organizations that such recognition would open the door to casino-style gaming in the state.[20] While many AIS faculty members, including myself, endorsed the federal recognition project (and have served as consultants to it), these concerns from within the university seem to have subsided with the current bill (S. 2894), which prohibits tribes from engaging in gaming activities without state approval (an unnecessary reiteration of the 1988 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act that the six tribes were willing to live with in order to bolster political support).

Nonetheless, we continue to contend with bureaucratic implications that our program and curricula are over-politicized. For instance, our minor proposal and most of the courses that we developed would probably have matriculated much faster through the various layers of curriculum committees had certain individuals on the arts and sciences committee not suggested that our program was too closely aligned with local politics—specifically, with a movement to change the Blacksburg Indian High School mascot to something nonoffensive to Natives. Indeed, many of us did speak in favor of a mascot change (including Virginia Tech's vice president for multicultural affairs), but our immediate response to this scrutiny of our professional integrity was to point out the contradiction in the anonymous critic's implication—namely, that such a claim implied a disturbing possibility that the college curriculum committee had itself become a caucus for local (partisan) political interests. Fortunately, the chair of the committee and Dean Gordon tactfully reminded the committee of the proper parameters of its duties, and our proposal finally cleared this obstacle. While these obstacles have admittedly been frustrating, we have come to take them as indications of the urgent need for an American Indian studies program in the state.

DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE MODEL

The simple title of Duane Champagne's article, "American Indian Studies Is for Everyone," contains volumes of wisdom for those who understand the nature of our field.[21] American Indian studies programs do not exist in a vacuum, nor should they. Such programs necessarily involve cross-cultural interactions, as much as inter- and intra-cultural affairs. However, whether students, faculty, or other university representatives are American Indians or not, there is always a responsibility to the institution's prospective indigenous constituency which, if unfulfilled, nullifies any legitimate claim to holism that an institution might make. At Virginia Tech, we have tried to meet such obligations by keeping the state's indigenous peoples involved in our program at every step of development. Our approach builds on existing collaborative models emphasizing research methods, as we seek to transform not only scholarly approaches within the field, but the very academy of which we are a part.[22]

Without suggesting that we have developed a model that has advanced these goals, I would point out that the philosophy behind such a model forms the essence of the initial mandate for our program, as outlined in the letter from the Monacan Tribal Council. However, we realized early on that we had to get all of the tribes in Virginia involved as partners and colleagues in our program (and eventually, to move out in concentric circles and involve other tribes in the same manner). Thus, in the spring of 2001 we hosted the first Virginia Indian Nations Summit on Higher Education (VINSHE). The purpose of this gathering was to break the ice—to dissolve barriers between our institution and the state's Indian nations (many of whom were openly suspicious of any state institution in light of Virginia's previously mentioned track record of dealing with indigenous peoples). We invited representatives from each of the eight tribes to visit the campus at our expense and to engage in two days of informal and open dialogue. Although many tribal representatives were initially reserved, expressed their concerns, and adopted a "wait and see" attitude, the end result was overwhelmingly positive. We opened the summit with a powerful keynote address from then-chair of American Indian Studies Programs at the University of Arizona, Jay Stauss, who appealed to both tribal representatives and university administrators in his assessment of the obligation of land grant universities to indigenous peoples. Stauss' explicit emphasis on the obligation of Indian studies programs (and the institutions that house them) to make tribal nation-building a priority offered an important diplomatic catalyst that prompted many tribal representatives to feel confident in venting their concerns. In fact, an important component of the summit—one that has become a permanent part of this annual gathering—was a public forum called "What it Means to be a Virginia Indian in the 21st Century." During this session tribal representatives were invited to speak from the heart about their lives, cultures, and histories, and to convey to the general public what they thought was important to know about Virginia Indians and indigenous people in general. This forum gradually evolved into a frank conversation between tribal representatives and audience members, and constituted a remarkable ethnographic moment.

Besides opening an important channel for dialogue between Virginia Tech and the state's Indian nations, the first VINSHE yielded two important and highly positive results. First, we established a standing tribal advisory board consisting of representatives from all of the tribes in the state, as well as a few "at-large" members from other tribes. Members of the advisory board serve as a liaison between their respective nations and Virginia Tech, while exercising some oversight in monitoring activities directed by the American Indian Studies program. Champagne and others have commented on the difficulty of sustaining such community advisory groups, especially where institutional financial or infrastructural support is lacking, while participating faculty remain subject to the demand for research and publication.[23] To be sure, it has not been easy to "sponsor" this group and continue the joint initiatives that we have pursued with our advisors, especially since most of our funding has come from external grants or from hard-sought, internal "soft monies." Likewise, many of our tribal advisers are active members of the Virginia Indian Tribal

Alliance for Life (VITAL), an intertribal political lobbying group whose current focus is on the campaign of six Virginia tribes to gain federal recognition.[24] However, all of our advisers devote a tremendous amount of their time, energy, and money to our program, even if it is spread thin. In fact, they see the development of this program as complementary to, and part of, their larger political agenda. Indeed, the pressure these advisers have exerted—as a group and as individuals—on university officials has constituted a crucial element in sustaining our program thus far. Without their support, our program would be nothing more than a struggling academic minor at best.

A second important initiative stemming from the first VINSHE is the Virginia Indian Pre-College Initiative (VIPCI). At the first summit, tribal representatives expressed a qualified enthusiasm in assessing our desire to see more of their youth enter higher education. The main concern was that, although higher education might empower individuals, as with Western education in general, it had historically been a primary means of destroying indigenous communities. The representatives at the summit insisted that Virginia Tech (and other state institutions) should work with tribal communities to promote higher education, in a manner that recognized the importance and legitimacy of indigenous knowledge. By the same token, they were concerned that, while some of their students needed long-term guidance in preparing for college, all should be encouraged to make the most of whatever education they receive, regardless of whether they attend college or not. Thus, the VIPCI emerged as a two-tiered mentoring program in which Virginia Indian youth in grades eight through twelve are invited to our campus two weekends each year, along with parents and elders, to take part in specific programs that showcase the possibilities afforded through education. Such programs have included tours of our university's state-of-the-art virtual reality facility, natural resource management hikes at a remote wildlife preserve maintained by Virginia Tech, and an indigenous art exhibition. The presence of elders is crucial to this program, because their presence conveys a message to the youth—that the university values their knowledge and input. Indeed, these elders have been both enthusiastic participants and substantive critics of our program.

Meanwhile, each visiting student involved in the VIPCI is paired with a mentor, a current Virginia Tech student who maintains regular contact with his or her mentee by email and phone (we provide phone cards) on a regular basis beyond campus visits. While we initially hoped to use American Indian students as mentors, we discovered that using dedicated non-Indian students for this purpose provided an important cultural interchange. Indeed, many of our non-Indian mentors have altered their academic aspirations in order to pursue our fledgling minor, and have openly admitted that their involvement in this program has been the crucial factor in purging their minds of stereotypes concerning American Indians (notably, stereotypes concerning blood quantum). Likewise, at least five Virginia Indian students have entered (or will be entering) Virginia Tech who have taken part in the VIPCI since its inception less than two years ago—a rather impressive ratio, given the small number of Virginia Indians and the historic barriers they have faced in

pursuing higher education. Although some might argue that the VIPCI is an outreach program that belongs in a non-academic unit, we regard it as an integral part of the American Indian studies mission, regardless of whether participants are involved in the minor program or not.

Our latest initiative—conceptualized during the second VINSHE—is tentatively referred to as "Virginia Indian Nations 101" (VIN 101). This is a multifaceted project intended to provide various media through which Virginia Indians can educate both the general public and educators on Virginia Indian cultures, histories, and realities. In the future, we hope to develop summer symposia for schoolteachers in which Virginia Indians and other indigenous representatives will serve as the primary instructors in collaboration with scholars who have worked closely with these tribes for years. Eventually, we intend to develop a free online course with sophisticated modules on regional indigenous peoples. Currently, we are working with the tribal advisory board to develop a uniform set of standards for public school educators to teaching about Virginia and other American Indians. Our immediate goal is to develop a set of textbook/binders for school teachers at various levels, with sections for each tribe in the state containing information prepared in collaboration with (or by) members of each tribe. Using a binder will allow for frequent updates and expansion without the rigors and expenses of publishing a bound volume with each major revision. This project, in fact, was the focus of the last VINSHE.

THE FUTURE

The last academic year (2002–2003) was a bittersweet one for Virginia Tech's American Indian studies program. Budget cuts doubled the coordinator's task of soliciting soft money and external grants for our major initiatives beyond the academic minor. In fact, we were forced to ask tribal representatives to pay for their own lodging (with scholarships available for those who could not) for the 2003 VINSHE. Fortunately, most participants gladly agreed to this arrangement. Our greatest loss came in December of 2002, when Jeff Corntassel accepted a position as codirector of the graduate program in tribal governance at the University of Victoria. I fully supported his decision since his research and activism is globally oriented, and his new position will allow him to make the greatest impact in the field of American Indian studies.

On the positive side, our academic minor received full and final approval at a time when the top university curriculum committees at Virginia Tech were tabling or refusing to approve many new courses and minors in light of budget and personnel reductions. Likewise, other obligations notwithstanding, our tribal advisers—along with several of the chiefs from Virginia's Indian nations—attended the 2003 VINSHE with full force and vigor, and openly expressed their praise and concerns during a special session with university administrators. Their pressure yielded immediate results; the provost approved hiring a visiting assistant professor to take over Corntassel's courses on indigenous politics, and to expand the scope of special topics that we offer. Notably, this position is housed under the auspices of the American Indian

studies program, rather than in political science. Likewise, the provost readily endorsed the proposition that this candidate should meet the approval of our indigenous constituency. While there is no guarantee that this position will be made permanent, it is an important step in the right direction, given the number of nontenured faculty positions that have been eliminated with drastic budget cuts at our university.

In short, if we have done one thing right in developing our program, it has been to maintain an open line of communication with our indigenous constituency, thus fostering an important political lobby. In return, we honor our tribal advisers and their respective communities by acknowledging them as *colleagues*, and not mere subjects of academic fascination.

NOTES

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2. Champagne and Stauss, "Introduction: Defining Indian Studies Through Stories and Nation Building," in *Native American Studies,* 3.

3. Jay Stauss, Mary Jo Tippeconnic Fox, and Shelly Lowe, "American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona," in *Native American Studies,* 84–86; Patricia C. Albers, Brenda J. Child, Vikki Howard, Dennis Jones, Carol Miller, Frank C. Miller, and Jean M. O'Brien, "A Story of Struggle and Survival: American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities," in *Native American Studies,* 149.

4. Duncan Kinnear, *The First 100 Years: A History of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute Educational Foundation, Inc., 1972), 1.

5. Virginia Tech American Indian Studies Steering Committee, *A Proposal to Establish a Minor in American Indian Studies at Virginia Tech*, 6 June 2000.

6. W. Stitt Robinson, "Tributary Indians in Colonial Virginia,*" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 67 (1959): 49–64.

7. Commonwealth of Virginia, *Acts of Assembly, 1865–1866* (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia, Division of Resources and Supply, 1866), 84–85.

8. William Walter Henning, ed.*, Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia* (Philadelphia: DeSilver, 1823), 252.

9. J. David Smith, *The Eugenic Assault on America: Studies in Red, White, and Black* (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Press, 1993).

10. Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 219–242; Samuel R. Cook, *Monacans and Miners: Native American and Coal Mining Communities in Appalachia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 84–114.

11. Cook, *Monacans and Miners,* 114–116.

12. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People,* 233–239.

13. I base these estimates of the Indian population indigenous to Virginia (as opposed to all Indians living in the state) on figures gathered through surveys and consultations with tribal leaders regarding their current tribal rolls. According to the 2000 census, there are approximately 21,172 American Indians and Alaskan Natives of all

tribes presently living in Virginia. See "U.S. Bureau of the Census, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics" [http://www.factfinder.census.go]. Accessed 6 June 2003.

14. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People,* 168–170.

15. American Indian Resource Center, Virginia Indian Oral History Project, College of William and Mary [http://www.wm.edu/AIRC]; see also, Sandra F. Waugaman and Danielle Moretti-Langholtz*, "We're Still Here:" Contemporary Virginia Indians Tell Their Stories* (Richmond: Palari Publishing, 2000).

16. Monacan Indian Nation, Letter to Paul Torgersen, President, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 26 June 1999.

17. See "Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Virginia Polytechnic University" [http://www.idst.vt.edu/]. Accessed 21 January 2004.

18. M. Annette Jaimes, "American Indian Studies: Toward an Indigenous Model," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 11:3 (1987): 3–4.

19. See e.g., Jeff J. Corntassel and Samuel R. Cook, "Federal Recognition Strengthens Native Communities—It Is Not a License to Gamble*," Native American Policy Network Newsletter* 17:3 [http://www.majbill.vt.edu/polisci/corntassel/ NASAWinter2002.html]. Accessed 6 June 2003.

20. See, for example, Peter Hardin, "Groups Oppose Sovereignty for Tribes: Elks, Petroleum Marketers Cite Potential Economic Effect," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 5 November 2000, B1–B2.

21. Duane Champagne, "American Indian Studies is for Everyone*," in Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing About American Indians*, ed. Devon Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 181–189.

22. See generally, Luke E. Lassiter, "Authoritative Texts, Collaborative Ethnography, and Native American Studies" *American Indian Quarterly* 24:4 (2000): 601–611; Devon Mihesuah, ed*., Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing About American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

23. Champagne, "American Indian Studies at the University of California—Los Angeles," *Native American Studies and Higher Education*, 50.

24. See "Virginia Indian Tribal Alliance For Life, Official Web Site" [http://www.vitalva.org]. Accessed 6 June 2003.