

Indigenous & Native Studies Meeting
May 3-5, 2007
University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma

Robert Warrior

FRIDAY PLENARY CLOSE

This evening at 5:30 our committee has scheduled an open meeting for the purpose of discussing the practical challenges of starting an academic association and the speed with which we as a group might want to proceed. We are prepared, if it is the sense of the group tonight, to continue on as a steering committee for this process and bring to Athens next year whatever it is that we collectively see as the next steps in this process, including the legal documentation that it will require to incorporate as a new scholarly association. I think it is fair to say that we are willing to see this work through as long as it takes to move us from being an informal group with mutual interests to an effectively organized group with its own membership, by-laws, and elected leadership.

We could have, it's worth saying, come to Norman with documents of incorporation already in hand, but we chose not to. While this effort has succeeded at many levels on a "if you build it, they will come" basis, we have opted in regards to establishing an association more to the idea of, "if they come, you can build it— together." You have indeed come, and now we can proceed to the work of creating an organization that institutionalizes our work and reflects the best of who we are as scholars.

This morning we have time before the lunch break to get the discussion moving in that direction, but before giving you the floor, I want to say something briefly about who you are. You are 227 scholars on our program and over 50 more people who have chosen

to just take part by registering and attending. You are from public and private research universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, tribal colleges, museums, tribal government programs, not-for-profits, and private industry. You are graduate students, holders of endowed professorships, tenured and untenured professors, program directors, department chairs, and associate deans. You are seasoned veterans who have witnessed multiple generations enter our field, newly credentialed scholars just coming into our midst, and senior scholars from other fields who want to know more about what is happening in Native American and Indigenous studies.

You are historians, anthropologists, education scholars, linguists, and literary critics—this is a list anyone might expect. But you are also philosophers, psychologists, film scholars, geographers, sociologists, political scientists, rhetoricians, African American studies scholars, Chicana and Chicano studies scholars, and social work scholars. You come from the northern and southern parts of this hemisphere, the Pacific, Australia, Europe, Asia, and more. I have not tried to count, but you are citizens of scores of Indigenous nations and peoples.

In short, you are—we are—Indigenous and Native American studies, and we are, collectively, the best argument for why we need our own academic association and the best guarantors of why such an association can succeed. Thank you for your attention. Thank you for attendance. Thank you for your work.