

think it is important to begin active implementation as soon as possible. An optimal timeline for the dissertation project is:

- 10/15/93 to 12/15/93: Program preparation
- 1/5/94 to 4/5/94: Mentor Training and Mentor Alliance
- 4/15/94 to 5/15/94: Initial data collection and preliminary analysis
- 5/15/94 to 7/15/94: Completion of analysis

Research results will be used to complete my dissertation and to evaluate the program. Otherwise the data will belong to the Cherokee Nation. Complete confidentiality will be rigorously maintained and only key researchers will have access to participant identity.

I believe this project is important because it attempts to liberate people and restore the balance of the old ways among them. I realize I need to give you reasons why I think this project is worth your consideration. In this regard I do not want to appear arrogant — I believe you know more about these reasons than I do.

You do not need me to tell you about the tragedy of elders who have been left outside of the loop as modern mainstream society stampedes forward. You do not need me to tell you about the tragedy of children and youth who are being seduced by a system of mainstream values that forges in them a burning desire for material things they have little chance to obtain, and often leaves them with a spiritual emptiness. You certainly do not need me to tell you about the systemic injustice and environmental unbalance created by politically powerful, but morally bankrupt, special interests operating within the majority governmental mechanism that all too often leaves Indian youth with diminished career opportunities.

As a person who has tried to follow the teachings of his elders; to respect and honor nature and the fragile balance of all things within her domain, I believe we need to enter the current system in a proactive manner and do what we can to restore natural order and cultural harmony. I believe we need to empower individuals to become more self-reliant in their own culture, and to enable them to see that personal self-efficacy can lead to cultural self-determination. I further believe that, sometimes, the best way to help oneself is to help someone else. These beliefs underpin the design of the project in which I invite you to participate.

I would like to thank Georgia Calico for being generous with her time and information regarding the possibility of actualizing this project for the Cherokee Nation. She exhibited enthusiasm for the ideas in the approach, and indicated that, from her standpoint, there would be no problem in working with this program. She further indicated there would be potential space and supplies available through her office of Vocational Rehabilitation. However, in this regard, Georgia suggested contacting someone higher in the chain of responsibility — I approached my friend