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CHEROKEE NATION

P.O. Box 948 • Tahlequah, OK 74465-0948 • (918) 456-0671

Wilma P. Mankiller
Principal Chief

John A. Ketcher
Deputy Chief

July 6, 1993

Duane Champagne, Director
American Indian Studies
University of California
3220 Campbell Hall
406 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1548

Dear Mr. Champagne:

Thank you for your letter dated June 7, 1993 expressing interest in beginning a program in Cherokee Language and Culture at the University of California at Los Angeles. I am so pleased that you and others at the university have taken an interest in promoting the Cherokee language.

Maintaining and promoting Cherokee oral and written language skills is a priority at the Cherokee Nation. We have just completed the development of curriculum for the early grades, are working with the State of Oklahoma on certification of teachers and certification of the curriculum and are working on the development of a computer software program which will dramatically increase the number of non-speakers who can speak Cherokee. In addition, on June 10, 1993 we held a language summit in Tahlequah which will help shape language program and policy development in the future.

We do not, however, have any program or funds to support a Cherokee language class at UCLA. We have had similar appeals from other universities. Most of those universities have been able to locate funds from private foundations or the state higher education system to provide language classes. Here in Tahlequah, Northeastern Oklahoma State University offers two Cherokee language courses and even with the budget cuts will maintain those courses.

The Cherokee Nation is a government, and as such, we adopt a budget each year and have little discretionary power to change the budget once it is set. We do not now have nor do we anticipate having in the budget a program to support university level Cherokee language courses.