

Voices in Support of Native Eyes

Over the past year, Wade Chambers has shared with me his dream of a new curriculum in which Native American knowledge and culture would stand side by side with the great knowledge systems of the Western World. It is axiomatic that Native Americans stand on a chasm of change greater today than at any time in their history. Accordingly, it will fall to the arts -- more than ever before -- to evolve new cultural symbols that will reflect, interpret, and help to shape those accelerating changes. Artists, in this cultural role, will need to search their traditions for those truths that can be brought forward to enhance the field of human experience in the society at large while guaranteeing the ongoingness of Native American identity. It is also axiomatic that any organism that does not adapt to its changing environment eventually withers and dies. Art not only reflects cultural change but helps to guide its course into the future. It seems to me that this reciprocal relationship between art and culture lies at the heart of the new curriculum proposed by the Native Eyes Project, and I am pleased to support it.

Lloyd Kiva New (Cherokee)
Founding President, IAIA



As the Institute of American Indian Arts approaches its 40th anniversary, it gives me much pleasure to announce our newest educational initiative - the Native Eyes Project. This innovative curriculum addresses some of our community's most urgent educational needs. The courses offered, both in the classroom and in our anticipated distance education program, will allow us to fully explore core native values such as our relationship to the land, cultural aspects of human seeing and representation, and our commitment to interrogating history. As the only higher education institute in the country devoted to the arts of Native North America, IAIA is uniquely

qualified to lead this renewed interest in the culture, history and dynamism of native communities. Please join me in welcoming this most ambitious interdisciplinary endeavor to our school's legacy of artistic experimentation and accomplishment.

Della Warrior (Otoe-Missouria)
President, Institute of American Indian Arts



Nearly four decades have passed since the first days of the Institute of American Indian Arts. Eventually to become an institution that UNESCO would recognize as one of the world's leading centers of cultural education, I.A.I.A. is now entering its next stage of "becoming." The times are propitious, the opportunity great, and the challenge both exciting and daunting. The American Indian world is now at the threshold of a new "community building" process, the making of native nationhood founded on changes that open new options, but paradoxically call for a new incorporation of time-honored traditional institutions and values.

The Native Eyes Project is an exciting example of this process of "becoming". It explores general issues of knowledge and culture, incorporating a range of indigenous perspectives along with interdisciplinary academic perspectives combining the arts, sciences, and humanities. Its curriculum considers subjects and topics that engage students, faculty and community in a process of continuing research, applied studies, and principles of cultural education. I particularly admire the way that art images, cultural artifacts and oral histories have been used to enhance the Humanities content for online delivery.

Dr. Dave Warren (Tewa, Santa Clara Pueblo)
Former Acting President IAIA.

