October 11, 1974

TO: President Stith

FROM: Sam Myers

SUBJECT: Sabbatical Leave, Fall 1975

The purpose of my proposed sabbatical leave would be to interview Indians throughout much of the United States to obtain statements from native Americans of all points-of-view regarding the problems they face in our society.

These interviews would be taped so they could form the beginning of a valuable oral library collection pertaining to the native Americans, an important minority group which has not received enough attention on our campus. The tapes could then be used by all students and instructors.

I would aim at obtaining statements from Indians like William Keeler, President of the Phillips Petroleum Company - and Dennis Banks, one of the militant leaders of AIM at the Wounded Knee incident of 1973. But more important perhaps would be the comments of dozens of other native Americans whose views fall between these two extremes and who seldom have the opportunity to be heard.

Other personalities to interview would be Indians like Peter MacDonald, Navajo Tribal Chairman (slide attached); Billy Mills, 1964 Olympic Champion (slide attached); Hank Adams, a militant Assiniboine who visited Hanoi (slide attached); Louis Ballard, Cherokee composer (slide attached); or Preston Monongye, the outstanding Hopi silversmith. Still others would include the Sioux man named only "Elmer" who lives at Wounded Knee, where he told me this summer that his house was riddled with so many bullet holes you could not count them, and whose wife still suffers from a stroke brought on by the traumatic experience.

Many others come to mind because I have spent several summers making quick trips where I could see these people, but they cannot all be mentioned here. The point would be to get comments from native Americans of every possible point-of-view.
A case in point would be the young Navajo who guided me through the Canyon de Chelly this last summer. His name is Larry Tso and he is going down to Phoenix to college this fall. He has grown up using both languages. Attached is a letter he wrote to me in September along with two pictures he enclosed of "his" canyon. I am anxious to get a tape from him to hear his views.

I would also visit colleges, such as the Navajo Community College at Many Farms in Arizona, the school at Ganado and the Rough Rock Demonstration School. There is another in South Dakota which should be included on my itinerary. Then there are the people like Emory Sekaquaptewa, the Hopi who is now head of the Department of Indian Studies at the University of Arizona at Tucson. I once had the opportunity to write the review of a book about his remarkable mother for the Journal of Arizona History.

My own experience with my classes here convince me that these contacts with the people themselves make for very valuable learning opportunities. I am confident most of my students from the American West classes would enthusiastically confirm my opinion.

I would prefer to take a one semester leave, the Fall semester of 1975, so I can get an early start during the summer. I would visit many, if not most, of the reservations in the Western half of the United States; and I would seek out other personalities wherever they are, e.g., some Mohawks in Brooklyn, Choctaws in Mississippi and Seminoles in Florida.

The travel expense would be my own problem (tax deductible at least) since I have no other grants in view now. If some funding for travel expense should become available that would help me personally and would make some of the more extensive trips easier; but regardless of such possibilities I feel the results would be worth the effort and cost.

As for a description of my previous service, I hesitate to recite all committees and other work, etc., but will proceed with confidence that my record speaks for itself. In the pertinent field, however, I will mention my starting the American West class which has continued to be successful. The Community Service series on the American Indian has reached many more people. In my class again this semester are teachers from the elementary and high schools in the surrounding area. Also, the Hazelwood School District conducted a summer workshop for its staff sponsored by Santa Clara University at which I represented Florissant Valley Community College with a presentation on American Indians.

All these activities have, I do believe, broadened and helped build the good image of our college in the opinion of many citizens of our area.

All these comments must indicate how very valuable this experience will be to me and my effectiveness with my students and thus the District.

If my Department and Division Chairman agree we can omit the American West class and the Community Service series from the schedule for the one semester;
the omission, I think, will be of minimum inconvenience to prospective students since we will have the opportunity to advise many in advance and promise them a resumption of these classes - improved - in the Spring semester, 1976. If however, these two gentlemen prefer the two classes, or one of them, be continued without a break, I will provide another instructor with the materials I have developed over the past several years to carry on with one or both of the classes.

Incidentally, I will also take slides of the people and places I visit such as the slide attached of Mrs. Darlene Peters, a Klallum Indian in the state of Washington. A taped conversation with her is also attached (must admit that background noise reduces the quality of this tape - so I will get expert advice from our I.R. staff on how to avoid this kind of mistake).

Another example of slide possibilities to accompany the interviews is indicated by the two slides attached of the Church at Wounded Knee. The one is from the cover of Vine Deloria's book, We Talk, You Listen. The other slide, dated 8-16-1974 is one I took of the church remains as they were in August. -- -- Or, perhaps the last slide of the little boy in front of his Pine Ridge home - tells us something we should hear. Can we be aware of this and not listen?