

'It's disheartening and shameful'

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intention was for inclusion and equity to "be infused into the everyday commonplace interactions at this university."

However, since Alex-Assensoh arrived in Eugene in August from the University of Indiana in Bloomington, those "commonplace interactions" have not included the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, which received no warning and had no input regarding the changes.

Neither the Tribes nor anyone else, it seems, knows who had a voice in the restructuring. Alex-Assensoh did not respond to questions asking who was involved in the decision and when it was made.

However, a 1996 gubernatorial Executive Order made state-Tribal government consultation the rule. In 2001, Senate Bill 770 made it law.

Strictly speaking, said Karen Quigley, executive director of the Oregon Legislative Commission on Indian Services, neither the 1996 Executive Order nor the 2001 state law codifying the requirements applies to individual Oregon uni-

versities.

"The Chancellor's Office, not separate institutions, was part of the government-to-government process," Quigley said.

Still, the University of Oregon is not backing away from obligations in the Executive Order or state law, saying instead that Tribes were not consulted because the restructuring "largely involved a personnel decision rather than the elimination of Native American programs or initiatives on campus."

The restructuring ended positions held by three assistant vice presidents, a director, an executive assistant and a support position, though there was no clarification on which were strictly personnel decisions and which were part of a restructuring that should have been discussed beforehand with Tribes.

Since the restructuring was announced, Ball has received kudos from all over.

"The guy is amazing," said Dr. CHiXapkaid (Michael) Pavel (Skokomish), professor of Native American Studies and Education. "He is everywhere doing everything for everyone, and he has been doing

it for many years."

Tribal member Kevin Simmons, a 2012 master's in Special Education graduate from the University of Oregon and a former Hatfield Fellow, remembers Ball traveling to Bend to lend support to a presentation of his Oregon Tribal Disability Project.

Simmons remembers Ball teaching his son, Makai, to play stick games. Most diffusely, but maybe most importantly, he remembers the support Ball provided when times were tough.

"He's paramount around here," said Simmons. "He's kind of the foundation for Native students."

Ball's wife, Dr. Alison Ball, who is president of the Oregon Indian Education Association and project director for the Sapsik'walá program, the university's well-regarded Native American teaching program, also noted examples of her husband's concern for what Native Americans consider important.

"A student was homeless," she said, "and Tom lent her \$450 to get an apartment. Another time, a student had a baby and couldn't make class. He went over and babysat for her."

"Dr. Tom Ball comes here as family," said Pavel. "There is no instance where we see ourselves as individuals. We see ourselves as a family."

The university's Native American Student Union sent an e-mail to its members in the wake of the restructuring.

"If you haven't heard yet, Dr. Tom Ball's contract is not being renewed," the e-mail said. "You may have seen (Ball) opening up our ISD event, attending our weekly meetings or jamming with us at stick game practices. He's always there with a warm pizza, to offer encouragement and sound advice. Maybe he's made a profound difference in your life as a student here at the University of Oregon. Or maybe you've been living under a rock in a far distant land from the Native community here in Eugene for the past 10 years. Either way, NASU is imploring you to help us combat some serious injustice that has transpired.

"Why are students not being told

about these decisions that directly affect us, our programs, our events, our experiences as students here at the University of Oregon? Why is our voice not being taken into account? We want a say in our Native representation, do we not?"

The e-mail led to many letters and a protest march on the President's Office.

For good reason, the Ball family is not overly concerned about Tom's personal future.

"We do have job offers," said Alison, getting to what she believes is the heart of the matter. "It's about eliminating three high-profile people of color without accountability," she said.

Beyond the blackout on information, Ball and a close circle of colleagues also are outraged at how he was treated after the changes were announced.

"She (Alex-Assensoh) did offer me another job (that she did not offer either of the other assistant vice presidents)," said Ball. "It was a demotion. I would no longer be an assistant vice president, but a director of outreach or something," with apparent responsibility for all three assistant vice president positions, but with no job description.

"That to me was trying to cause a split between me and my colleagues and our communities," Tom said. "Why not offer it to others? I'd be representing the Latino community, but I don't even speak Spanish."

"Dr. Tom Ball is an Elder, a revered human being by everyone here at the University of Oregon," said Pavel, "and how we treat a man like that reflects how we respect and honor the Native people."

"It's not just me," Tom said. "It's my colleagues too. It's disheartening and shameful, and at the University of Oregon, it's a pattern."

Ball said that this episode could end with the loss of four Native American administrators in the last four years. "And they're going to make this a better place for Indians?"

"Inklings" appeared in recent years that changes were coming.

Tribal Council member Cheryl

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Attention All 6th-12th Grade Students

It's time to start thinking about Spring Break! The Youth Education Department will be hosting the annual Spring Break trip at Camp Westwind in Lincoln City on Monday, March 25, through Wednesday, March 27, for middle and high school students. This is one of our most anticipated activities every year and space is limited. Permission slips will be available on Friday, Feb. 15. Students must turn in a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian to reserve a space. Spaces are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact the Youth Education Department at 503-879-2101 for more information.

Attention All Enrolled 6th-12th Grade Students

Please remember that we are offering our Incentive Program to middle and high school students who are enrolled members of CTGR for a chance to earn rewards!

For a student to be eligible, he/she must turn in a copy of his/her report card as well as attendance records. The deadline to turn in these documents is Friday, Feb. 1. Due to the Willamina School District offering a different grading system to sixth-grade students, a separate program has been established for these students.

Upcoming Rewards:

6th Grade Students-Friday, Feb. 8: Dinner and a Movie Trip

7th-12th Grade Students-Monday, Feb. 11: Snow Trip

Details of these programs may be obtained by contacting the Youth Education Department at 503-879-2101. ■



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