

Tribe hires Reeves as new curriculum specialist

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

The Tribe hired Tribal member Mercedes Reeves, 25, as its new curriculum specialist on Aug. 7, five days after she completed her one-year Master of Education teaching degree from the University of Oregon.

Reeves wasn't exactly an unknown quantity. She has long participated in Tribal programs. For three years, two during her undergraduate years at Western Oregon University and for a year after, she worked at the Tribe's K-5 program.

Last year, for her student teaching requirement, she taught the pilot year of the Tribe's fourth-grade Tribal history curriculum at Willamina Elementary School.

"She played an important role in teaching the pilot year," said her supervisor, Bryan Langley, the Tribe's Higher Education manager.

Reeves and others provided classroom feedback to Trinity Minahan, former curriculum specialist, who was instrumental in developing the fourth-grade curriculum. Minahan then modified the curriculum to improve its effectiveness in the future.

This was the Tribally-developed curriculum, the first Indian history curriculum to meet state standards.

Reeves' experience made her a great choice for the curriculum specialist position recently vacated



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Mercedes Reeves is the Tribal Education Department's new curriculum specialist.

by Minahan, Langley said.

"Before student teaching," said Reeves, "I knew I belonged in the education field, but since student teaching I have realized that it's exactly where I'm meant to be and there isn't any other type of work that I'd rather be doing. I may not be working with children directly anymore, but I still feel like I am contributing to their education and creating material to empower them."

She said it was a "tough decision" to give up the opportunity to have her own classroom. "But once I started to think about the bigger picture and the role I could play

empowering our youth, I knew I wanted this position," she said.

As she enters the position, Reeves already is thinking about development of the eighth-grade curriculum. "My major goal is to continue Trinity's hard work and distribute the fourth-grade Tribal history curriculum all over Oregon and give educators the support they need to teach this material and be successful. And also, of course, to create the eighth- and 10th-grade Tribal history curricula, and have it be just as great as the work that Trinity produced."

Before this year, Reeves said, she hadn't realized just how much Oregon's education system is lacking in regards to Native American curriculum and teaching youth about local Tribes.

"Many students see Indians as people of the past," she said. "With this new position, I am looking forward to changing that perception."

As a teacher, Reeves said, she could be busy with many problems at once. "When I was teaching, I had to write an e-mail, tie a kid's shoe, comfort a crying child, eat my lunch on the fly and read 28 other children a story, all at the same time. OK, not really all of that at the same time, but some days it

sure felt like it."

Now, she says, she is challenged to be at a desk most of the day. "When you're teaching, multi-tasking starts to become the air you breathe. So, once I started this position I had to learn that it's OK to be at a desk working on one thing at a time."

Ongoing work is to keep the fourth-grade Tribal history curriculum moving all over Oregon and support educators in successfully teaching the material.

"As I start to think about the eighth-grade curriculum I want to take it in a new direction," she said. Her goal is to integrate Grand Ronde's history into other subjects, not just history and social studies.

"There's a wonderful opportunity here to incorporate Tribal history into math, science, music, art and language arts," Reeves said. "The more you can incorporate culture into a classroom the better, and if we are able to create an authentic and meaningful curriculum then we should be doing it."

"By developing this Tribal history curriculum, we are presenting teachers with material that will empower their students and create analytical thinkers."


As she enters this position, she very clearly sees the contributions she can make.

"I bring a fresh and new outlook and vision of what education is becoming and what it can be. Through my program at the University of Oregon, I was taught various tools and resources to incorporate multicultural education into the classroom with culturally responsive pedagogy. I think I also bring creativity and fun ideas to the table."

She is enjoying learning about the history of her Tribe. "Since I didn't grow up around the Tribe there's so much I don't know, so this position is also teaching me a lot," Reeves said. "I hope to learn how to extend my enthusiasm and get other educators excited about the movement in multicultural education."

Reeves grew up in Roseburg and now lives in Salem. ■

Stories of Tribal Veterans Honoring our Warriors



**Land & Culture Department
Oral History Project**

In honor of our Tribal Veterans, the Tribe would like to memorialize their stories for our future generations.


Who: All Tribal Veterans and their families

What: We would like to record your story for inclusion in the Tribe's cultural and historical collections.

Where: We have dedicated a room at Chachalu for recording oral histories. It is set up for both audio only and video recordings. Additionally we have mobile audio equipment for those who wish to participate but are unable to travel to Chachalu.

How: Contact Reina Nelson at 503-879-2226 to schedule a time to record your history.










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Dedicated to the memory of all who proudly served and protected their country



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Public Safety Ordinance Open for Comment

The Tribal Council, in consultation with the Tribal Attorney's Office, is considering adoption of amendments to the Public Safety Ordinance. The proposed amendments were given a First Reading at the July 23, 2014, Tribal Council meeting.

The primary purposes of the proposed amendments are to (1) transfer enforcement authority for public safety violations to the Tribal Police Department; (2) incorporate provisions for permitting concealed carry of firearms on Tribal lands; and (3) incorporate a process for obtaining retraining and protective orders. The proposed amendments may also include minor technical (i.e., typographical, housekeeping) modifications.

The Tribal Council invites comments on the proposed amendments to the Public Safety Ordinance. For a copy of the proposed amendments please contact the Tribal Attorney's Office at 503-879-4664. Please send your comments to the Tribal Attorney's Office, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, Grand Ronde, Oregon 97347 or by e-mail to legal@grandronde.org.

Comments must be received by Sept. 15, 2014. ■