

An American Indian Studies Program in a Post-9/11 “Learning-Centered” Urban University

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Achieving academic freedom always has been a major challenge for bicultural First People scholars¹ working within AmerEurocentric schools. More recently, at least within the last four decades, American Indian and Native American programs and departments have been created in public and private colleges and universities. This scholarly paradigm is dedicated to teaching the truths of colonization, genocide, and the Doctrine of Discovery. However, efforts to silence the truth-tellers have increased both overtly and covertly. Beginning with a preliminary theoretical framework followed by two examples of the resistance to exposing the king's nakedness prior to 9/11, this essay focuses on a post-9/11 description of the systematic and individualized types of techniques used to curtail academic freedom for the discipline of American Indian studies (hereafter referred to as AIS) as well as those used to silence its scholars. It should be mentioned at the outset that I serve as an associate professor and coordinator of the American Indian Studies Program at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), a commuter urban university serving over 31,000 students that is widely noted for a major student demonstration in November 1968 against uneven support of diversity in its myriad forms,² in specific, First Nation Peoples. This is particularly noteworthy to the discussion that follows in that the urban setting and its surrounding area has the largest First Nation urban population in the United States.

As a theoretical framework for understanding the techniques of academic neutralization within the university, I offer the following exploratory and adumbrated discussion on the intersections between the privatization of postsecondary education and the creation of what I have labeled the “education industrial complex” (EIC)—labeled so because of its striking institutional and ideological parallels to the prison industrial complex (PIC) and the military industrial complex (MIC). Further, I suggest that apart from the individual concentrations of power, the education, prison, and military complexes also intersect, which is to say that all three contribute collectively to the growth and maintenance of each other while also undermining the educational opportunities (as well as the life quality) of those experiences for First

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Nation students, other students of color, and students of lower socioeconomic status.³ This unholy triad is connected not only through failures in the educational institutions at all levels, but also through larger economic forces and the ideological or willful blindness of upper-level personnel. Groundbreaking scholar and antiprison activist Erica Meiners points out that “the prison industrial complex (PIC) constitutes a geographic and economic solution to socioeconomic problems while maintaining the state’s commitment to white supremacy” (61). Meiners’s comments on white supremacy buttress the intersections between the three industry complexes and what Charles Mills has called the *Racial Contract*, that is, a “political system, central to contemporary social practices, institutions, disciplinary ways of knowing, and more” (Meiners 43).

It may suffice at this time to point out the connections that can be seen in the following four harsh realities: (1) Funds are being taken in alarming amounts from the schoolhouse to pay for the jailhouse and military barracks; (2) Increased postsecondary tuition impacts lower-income families more heavily than higher-income families; (3) The diminishing quality of privatized “public” postsecondary education limits employment opportunities disproportionately for students of color as well as those of lower socioeconomic statuses; and (4) First Peoples, African Americans, and Latino/as, among others, are overrepresented in our correctional institutes and the military, while remaining less visible on college and university campuses.

For example, in terms of correctional and postsecondary educational expenditures, “Nationally, from 1977 to 1995, the average state increased correctional funding by two times more than funding for public colleges [. . .]. Tuition rates rose to account for 25 percent of White families’ incomes and a full 42 percent of Black or Latino families” (Fine et al. qtd. in Meiners 59). Meiners also cites California data from the Justice Policy Institute’s *New Report: State Spending on Prisons Grows at 6 Times the Rate of Higher Ed* that reveals in

1980-81 higher education accounted for 9.2 percent of the state’s General Fund expenditures while corrections was only 2.3 percent of General Fund Expenditures [. . .]. [I]n 1996-97 higher education is apportioned 8.7 percent of the General Fund while corrections received 9.6 percent. (Meiners 59)

More recently, in an e-mail to me, California Faculty Association Chapter President Theresa Montano reports, “In 1990, the California corrections budget was equivalent to [one-third] of the budget for the University of California system and in 2008, the Corrections budget exceeds the budgets of the community colleges, CSU, and UC systems combined” (n. pag.).

Raising tuition costs and other postsecondary expenses hits lower-income families harder than middle- and upper-class families. The California Postsecondary Education Commission provides documentary evidence of this trend to show that between 1971 and 2005, the percent of annual income a family in the low-income group would need to pay for college has nearly doubled. In 2005, a family in the lowest 20 [percent] spends 82 [percent] of its annual

income to support a student at UC and 55 [percent] of its income to support a student at CSU (1). Yet in light of these stark realities, administrators continue to claim that tuition for low-income families is “practically free.”

Generally, higher education may not play as significant and direct a role in moving students of color and lower-income students into the PIC or the MIC as do the public schools,⁴ but they most certainly contribute to the maintenance and growth of the police/military state. Financial realities force students, all too often encouraged by college and university personnel, to join ROTC to help pay for their education and later, as lower-ranking officers, to play Russian roulette with their lives as they become human fodder for empire-building war games and profit making.

As growing numbers graduate from college—not only those in criminology, but also those in administrative studies and other related fields—often most of the available work that they find is to construct, staff, and maintain multibillion-dollar public and private departments of correction. Furthermore, a growing number of college graduates of EIC schools are trapped into “professional” work within the criminal “justice” enterprise: employment that is marginal in terms of status, lower- to middle-management/administrative positions for the most part (albeit corrections jobs do often pay extremely well).⁵ Each semester, I take informal surveys in my criminology and AIS classes and have found that an important number of these students are students of color. For instance, 37 percent of the 1,529 sociology majors at the university where I teach are currently enrolled in the criminology option. The majority of those students who take my criminology courses are students of color and/or students of lower socioeconomic status. Over 90 percent work part-time or full-time in addition to taking out student loans.

The employment limitations result partially from underpreparation in terms of writing and developing analytical skills, a process which begins in grade school, continues through high school, and follows into college. For instance, increased class sizes have driven faculty to use “objective” tests based on rote memorization and machine grading as the primary means of evaluating student mastery of subject matter rather than using extensive writing and research projects which, in contrast, provide meaningful opportunities for students to think analytically and write critically. An important number of students who are also working and taking care of family responsibilities are never able to fully catch up in terms of writing skills. When they graduate, they are often limited to “professional” positions that are only a few steps up from the low-paid work/service industry jobs in the United States, largely performed by other people of color—in many cases, their own family members and elders. The focus on the bureaucratic goals and money-saving measures of the EIC rather than on student well-being reveals another facet of the hypocrisy of the so-called “learning-centered university.” Perhaps that is just the point: The university may indeed be “learning centered,” so the next logical question is: *What type and what quality of learning, and for whom?*

Secondly, students are often required to stay longer in school because of the EIC tactic of canceling “underenrolled” classes in the

name of financial expediency instead of recognizing the intrinsic worth of the course offerings. This unnecessary extension of a student's college career requires them to sign for additional student loans. Thus as Jeffrey Williams and others have discussed in this volume and elsewhere, huge student loan debt further prevents students from moving fully into the middle class. Among this population are an important number of First Nation students from the United States, Mexico, and South America.⁶ In my survey research I have also found that since August 2000, when I first came to the CSUN campus, the majority of students are first-generation, of color, working 20 hours and more per week, and have taken on student loans to further their education.

When I sought university-wide data on the numbers of low-income and first-generation students, I was informed in a June 6, 2008, e-mail that the university's research office "does not have good data, largely because such information is only required of students seeking financial aid" (Huber n. pag.).⁷ The recommendation was made to contact the Educational Opportunity Program office since they have "an *estimate* of the percentage of low income students" (Huber n. pag.; emphasis added). The data on first generation students was more specific:

Data we started to collect on our incoming first-time freshmen *last summer* do allow us to say something about the number of first-generation students attending CSUN. These data indicate that the number of first-generation CSUN students differs significantly by the way the term is defined. If it is narrowly defined (i.e., both of their parents have no more than a high school education), 31 [percent] of the just-over 2,800 incoming freshmen who responded to the Freshman Survey in Summer 2007 qualify as first-generation. If one uses the broader federal definition (i.e., neither parent has a four-year college degree), the percentage rises to 55 [percent]. Since we do not have comparable information for our newly enrolled transfer students, I cannot say whether they are more or less likely to be first-generation students. (Huber n. pag.; emphasis added)

Ignoring these and other financial realities facing students, a number of administrators, educational policy-makers, and politicians continue to view students as consumers of a service and to speak of their higher learning in terms of a "purchased good" rather than "as a rite and a right."⁸ Above and beyond this obvious corporatized model, the same administrative strata erodes educational opportunity by recommending that students incur additional debt by taking supplemental loans to pay for their education. Few will openly acknowledge that the ideology of privatization in education is code for racialized thinking, which uses tropes for scapegoating certain underrepresented student populations, in this case, First Peoples and persons of color. The consequent justifications for shutting out those groups from higher education undermines and/or destroys "ethnic studies" programs, and thus excludes or silences the voices of the less powerful.

Upper administration accumulates political capital by taking advantage of the willful ignorance of the uninformed by using the

jargon of capitalism to justify the undermining of the ideals of higher education. Using the idealistic “Fonzie days” for a theoretical backdrop, I tell my students that students of my generation were taught that an essential premise of a democracy was predicated on an “informed electorate.” We were also told by educators and administrators alike that a universal or broad-based education was valuable because of the intrinsic worth of the various knowledge bases.⁹ At present, this rhetoric often is not even given lip service. The focus in the privatized university is often less on educational integrity, and more on how to find money to support the university or college infrastructure.

The corporate mentality of the bottom-line therefore impedes adequate funding necessary for the development of programs such as AIS, or the support of its scholars. Compounding the matter further, AIS has found that if donations are brought in to develop the plans to hire more faculty and eventually offer a major, those funds cannot be deposited to a source that earns interest for the program. Rather, they must go into a university foundation account that keeps the interest to finance non-AIS administrative costs. At one point, the foundation even tried to charge us for handling our own monies. Although we were unable to access the interest on the earnings obtained by our own fund-raising activities, we were able to stop the second form of funding embezzlement.

Nor were we successful when we sought federal research funding. Previously at different universities, working with the respective research offices, I had written and received funding for private and government research grants and more recently have reviewed grant proposals in Washington, D.C. In one case, our effort to obtain a research grant was sabotaged after I insisted that if the grant were to be funded we would not be required to pay over 25 percent to the university for “handling charges.” When I was finally given a copy of the grant that was rewritten by college-level research personnel before they submitted it to the federal agency, I knew that it would never be funded. And it was not. Reflecting on all of the time and energy that an advisory board member and I had spent in writing the initial grant proposal, I decided that until there were administrative changes put in place, there would be no point in seeking other funding.

Within postsecondary education, the three-tiered educational system in terms of academic status—research universities, teaching universities, and, at the bottom of the hierarchal schema, community colleges—has produced a racialized tracking system fed by the public schools. The “products” of this system, faculty and administrators who all too often suffer from what Meiners describes as “cognitive impairments” (50) are now being seen more often in policy-making positions in the very institutions which created them. Within colleges and universities, the replication of the stratified socioeconomic class system of the larger U.S. society has been strengthened. The presidents, vice presidents, and provosts serve as the top elite, the “one percent” of the wealthiest who receive CEO salaries at the expense of the “lower-class” faculty and students. Deans and department chairs make up the upper middle class; Professors, instructors, and program coordinators and other mid- and lower-level administrative staff form the lower working class. At my “teaching university,” many faculty, rather than taking personal responsibility for insisting upon

change, are instead looking for “saviors” within the California Faculty Association union (CFA) or depending upon administrative direction because they do not recognize their own leadership potential or have been so filled with fear that they have no confidence in their ability to exercise those skills.

The balance of this paper will be devoted to identifying and briefly describing pre-9/11 techniques of academic silencing. The focus will now be to contextualize recent history in order to understand better the current post-9/11 realities faced by those who point out inconvenient truths about racism, classism, and the other “-isms” in the EIC.

Pre-9/11 Techniques of Silencing

As noted earlier, full academic freedom for nonassimilated First Nation scholars, as well as others who have seen beyond the Amer-Eurocentric concepts of Western Expansionism, continues to be denied. Here, I will provide both an individual-level and a programmatic-level example of academic silencing, both of which are reflective of larger patterns attributed to pre-9/11 university conditions and those that intensified after 9/11.

In 1984, I was a grandmother of two when I received a grant and drove alone from Montana to the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque to earn my PhD. Early in my academic career, I learned that, for the most part, in order to keep my scholarships and grants I needed to keep my mouth shut when I took certain courses in certain disciplines, such as anthropology and psychology, when references were made to First Peoples. I naïvely thought that the situation would change when I did my doctoral work. While teaching full time as an underpaid instructor at Kansas State University, Manhattan, I was working on my dissertation, whereupon I examined the victimization and survival strategies of Plains Indian women from a Northwest reservation. During the process of submitting drafts, one of my committee members required me to “tone down” (written in red ink) statements such as “[t]he women in this study are the children and grandchildren of those who were first forced onto the reservation” (Baird-Olson, “The Structural”).¹⁰ He also insisted that I not use internal colonialism as a theoretical explanation and that I substitute “social disorganization” theory, a mid-level theory which leaves the source of the disorganization open to inaccurate interpretations. Finally, he and another committee member questioned my sample primarily because the fifty-two respondents reported that all but one had been victimized structurally (i.e., through discrimination and institutional racism), interpersonally (via rape, assault, etc.), and/or “both ways,” and that the majority of the offenders had been non-Indian. One white male committee member was personally very offended about the women’s anger against white men. Fortunately, my outside committee member—a well-known American Indian scholar—defended me by stating that my findings were correct. Although much grumbling was done by two of my committee members, I was able to complete my dissertation and receive my PhD in December 1994, nearly ten years after I had begun the doctoral program. In 1999, a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) research report

was published replicating my findings on the exceptionally high rates of victimization and the high number of non-Indian offenders, thereby vindicating my small exploratory study (Greenfield and Smith).¹¹

On a programmatic level, a brief overview of the history of the CSUN AIS Program will suffice to demonstrate systematic means of silencing. On November 12, 1960, the Foundation for American Indian Rights was chartered on campus. The United Native American organization was chartered on November 8, 1971, and in 1972 pushed for program funding and campus representation. Sister Grace Ann Robideau (Chippewa) was hired one week later. (She would remain for nine years until she finally resigned because of the constant frustration resulting from work overload and her consequent inability to fully meet student needs. Since her resignation, four other First Nation coordinators have come and gone, all agreeing that the primary reason for leaving was the lack of support and the general lack of sensitivity.) An Educational Policies Committee was formed in the spring of 1973 to develop a Native American studies program. The following year the American Indian Student Association (AISA) was chartered, and the first annual CSUN powwow was held in April 1976, the same year the AIS Program received formal CSUN approval. On April 22, 1986, "minority" clubs and faculty marched against budget cuts, and on May 9, 1990, AISA rallied outside the administrative building in support of the AIS Program. The AIS Program continued to struggle. AISA was revitalized eleven years later, and during November 2001 the Indigenous Resistance Week prompted the recognition of the annual Indigenous Awareness Month on campus. In February 2005, the CSUN powwow was revitalized by students, faculty, alumni, and the larger community.¹²

Thirty-seven years after the formation of the first American Indian student organization—and still working under conditions of scandalously limited financial resources and administrative staff support¹³—First Nation students, alumni, faculty, and friends, step by step and inch by inch, have maintained a student organization and interdisciplinary AIS minor providing culturally sensitive courses, speakers, and other educational activities for the campus as well as the larger community. Since 2000, the interdisciplinary minor has been improved by creating and offering four AIS courses. A fifth course has been created and if funding is provided, as promised, will be offered for the Spring 2009 semester. For the past four academic years, the annual operating budget has been \$2,500. My position is divided half-time in sociology and in AIS and, in addition to serving as the unpaid AIS coordinator, I also teach four AIS courses.

Post-9/11 Systematic Techniques of Silencing

It bears reiterating that corporate bureaucracy is a direct corollary to academic privatization. And in a related sense, each person, each educational institution, struggles to maximize short-term financial gain at the expense of long-term educational well-being ("long-term" is generally interpreted as the near future, circa five years). Bureaucratic hierarchy therefore creates a social context of dominance, compulsory

submission, and competition for power, all forms of coercive violence. This coercion, through the use of privatization and administrative/legal controls, has co-opted and totally corrupted the original mission of higher education. Financial and bureaucratic policies and ad hoc acts (not mutually exclusive categories), functioning in “silent” collusion with the *Racial Contract*, are used by administrators and politicians alike to silence dissenting voices.

And what was once supposed to be the bastion of preparing fully informed citizens required for a successful “democracy” and capitalistic society now resembles at nearly every sensory level a quasi-thought reform school prevalent during the Cultural Revolution of China, or more recently, the Chinese government institutional practice of “patriotic education” in Tibet monasteries. To point out the parallels in U.S. schools is seen as heretical by the power brokers. The push to “weed out” the “enemies” of corporate thought, the cant of capitalism and democracy, and right-wing “moralism” has intensified and can be seen quite clearly in the treatment of AIS programs that have relatively limited political capital and in the EIC treatment of scholars such as Ward Churchill and Andrea Smith, particularly.¹⁴

The following discussion illustrates how the academic and human rights goals which brought me to this “teaching university” have been sabotaged through its increasing privatization. CSUN may sit on top of the Andreas fault, but it also is located in an area that has the largest urban First People population in the United States. All too intimately acquainted with the high national rates of poverty, criminal victimization, and suicide, and also aware that nationally only 60 out of 100 American Indians will graduate from high school or earn a GED or that the numbers of American Indians earning doctorates is decreasing, I wanted to help make a difference in meeting these educational needs. I was also keenly aware of the necessity as Ricardo Torres (Wintu) later in 2006 would graphically point out: “We are not trying to teach our students to be white; we are trying to teach them how to be Indian [at the universities and colleges]” (Baird-Olson, *Summary Report 2*). Less than a year after having been hired by the university and in addition to continuing to create and to teach the first AIS courses in the interdisciplinary minor and to teach half-time in sociology, I was also asked to assume the position of coordinator of AIS.

AIS, a scholarly discipline formed within the last four decades, challenges patriarchal values and colonial epistemologies instead of reproducing and disseminating “imperialism, individualism, republicanism, [and] capitalism” (Meiners 48) and, I will add, the cultural imperialism of Christianity. The influence of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery still shapes not only governmental policy but also education (Miller and Newcomb). The AIS academic paradigm inverts what “Indian education” was originally meant to be in terms of assimilation and the creation of internalized oppression (also called postcolonial thinking) and becomes even more of a threat when AIS courses are taught and programs/departments are run by bicultural scholars, especially women. For example, I have found that many younger men did not know how to work respectfully with a woman in her 60s who recently completed her PhD.

At first, the revamping of the AIS Program went relatively well, albeit requiring 70-80-hour-long weeks necessary for the coordinator to fulfill her administrative tasks in addition to maintaining responsibilities associated with teaching, publishing, and service. The former coordinator and I formed an advisory board. Two advisory board members and I wrote the following mission statement, program goals, and student learning outcomes, which along with AIS course descriptions are now embedded in the university catalog:

The Minor

The American Indian Studies (AIS) minor provides access to the unique cultures and historical and contemporary experiences of sovereign Indian nations. Topics that will be examined in the interdisciplinary minor include American Indian law and policy, internal colonization, contemporary social issues, metaphysics, art, music, and literature.

The program is designed to enhance the understanding and respect of First People cultures and the unique sovereign status of First Nations. Many of the courses will satisfy requirements in several majors [. . .].

Mission

Through its commitment to traditional indigenous approaches, AIS education is learning-centered. AIS aims to provide access to the unique cultures and experiences of sovereign Indian nations and to educate a critical mass of students with knowledge of the voices and metaphysical systems of First Nation Peoples. Through AIS courses, student organizations, research and community partnerships, CSU, Northridge will provide an invaluable resource to the larger indigenous Southern California communities.

Program Goals

By completing the minor, students will have the essential proficiency and skills necessary to acquire an appreciation of historical and contemporary multiplicity of First Peoples' experience within the framework of internal colonization. The program objective is to develop in every student the following qualities:

1. Skills to question and evaluate one's own attitudes and beliefs about American Indians.
2. Knowledge of the diversity of American Indian cultural experiences and the shared commonalities.
3. Knowledge of the impact of colonization upon American Indians' social institutions such as family, education, economy, governance, and religion.

Student Learning Outcomes of the Undergraduate Program

Graduates of the AIS Program will be able:

1. To demonstrate the ability to further refine critical thinking, written and oral communication skills, and other creative endeavors.
2. To develop a critical and reflective perspective on Western interpretations of the experiences of First Nation Peoples, in particular an understanding of internal colonization.

3. To demonstrate an appreciation of the commonalities and the uniqueness of indigenous cultures and nations.
4. To demonstrate a commitment through effective community service to work cooperatively with indigenous peoples.
5. Demonstrate an enhanced ability to respect indigenous communities. (California State 79)

This approach, of course, seriously threatens AmerEurocentric scholarship and the social construction of knowledge in disciplines such as history, anthropology, education, religious studies, political science, American government, women's studies, sociology, and pre-law as a significant number of scholars, not limited to whites, in these fields are "cognitively impaired" (Meiners 50). Scholars in the aforementioned disciplines often resist or have difficulty in moving beyond the canons of cultural imperialism found in the various permutations of western expansionism that they teach and justify in their publications. Implicit in this lack of awareness, of course, is Meiners's view of the *Racial Contract*. This racialized thinking clearly has become more visible itself in the treatment of AIS programs located in most state and privately run colleges and universities.

Privatization of postsecondary education and the *Racial Contract* work well together by using the threat of economic scarcity and number counting to continue to exploit First Peoples (as well as immigrant populations), including scholars and program coordinators who are expected to provide cheap (or sometimes free) labor, as has been the pattern since the initiation of the colonization in the Americas. The legal origin of this pattern of exploitation can be found, locally,

[i]n 1850 [when] the California legislature passed the Government and Protection of the Indians Act, which can only be described as legalized slavery. The act provided for the indenture of "loitering, intoxicated, and orphaned Indians" and forced regulation of their employment. It also defined a special class of crimes and punishment for these Indians. Under the act, California Indians of all ages could be "indentured or apprenticed to any white citizen." (Ogden 63)

Although it is difficult at times to distinguish between the "work overload" long expected of First Nation scholars and the new expectations brought by the proponents of fear and control since 9/11, I am providing only four examples of the different expectations for teaching, research, and service that I have had to fulfill for the past seven and a half years. I have taught 11 different courses in AIS and sociology/criminology. Never have I taught multiple sections of the same course. Secondly, in May 2008 after other colleagues and I had expressed our concerns for years about this type of demanding teaching load, a memo was sent from the dean's office indicating that it is now prohibited to require faculty in their first five years probationary status to be required to teach 4 different preparations per semester.¹⁵ I also have served as a committee member for 6 sociology and interdisciplinary studies theses and 24 AIS and sociology

independent study projects: all of this in addition to the administrative overload. When I have received release time for one course, the hours required to fulfill all of the required responsibilities¹⁶ quickly outnumber the 130 hours that are considered to be equivalent to the time required for teaching one course. For instance, during the Fall 2007 semester, one week before the annual powwow held during Thanksgiving weekend and over a month before the end of the term, my administrative hours already had totaled 148.75 hours.

Simultaneously, I have had to deal with a not-so-covert and increasing push toward substituting one of the five following self-described AIS models rather than supporting the indigenous voice that describes and analyzes empire, the role of Judeo-Christianity as an arm of the state, genocide, and internal colonization. This thrust is fueled by territorial and economical greed in vying for another faculty line in addition to once again achieving ideological control rather than teaching factual reality. The five models provided below are not rank-ordered in terms of which departments have the most power in achieving their goal of co-opting the AIS Program and faculty line:

- (1) The "sick" model embeds AIS in social welfare or psychology.
- (2) The "cultural" model places AIS in the humanities or anthropology where First Peoples could sing and dance for the colonizers and the new breed of "more sensitive" cultural anthropologists and humanists could still interpret traditional ways primarily through the lens of Amer-Eurocentric analysis. Through this co-opting, anthropologists could also tack on a few, typically inadequate or inaccurate, descriptions of contemporary social issues and ignore more important issues.
- (3) The geographical determinism model à la Jared Diamond's model, which basically denies human agenda and serves as an apologia for Western imperialism, finds a welcome home in geography or political science.
- (4) The watered down, "more sensitive contemporary" western expansionism model returns AIS to the historical and the sociological studies of race and ethnic relations.
- (5) The "urban Indian" model situates AIS in urban studies where the historical and contemporary struggles are glossed over by using the reductionist rationale that a majority of First Peoples (slightly over 50 percent) now live in urban areas, albeit many retain close familial and cultural ties with their "rural" homes on reservations.

Considering these criteria, those working in AIS are often asked, "So what is to be done to offset the ravages of privatization supported by the *Racial Contract*?" Faculty typically offer few answers. Because of post-9/11 fears, institutionally learned dependencies, and the desire for material security and status, many are no longer a "herd of cats impossible to herd" but often, with the exception of an important number of CFA members, mindless sheep easily controlled by the bureaucratic rod that is reinforced by the willful ignorance of world affairs. Further burdened by technical "advances" that typically make more work, faculty have made no major protest to the requirement to sign a "business form" releasing the university from responsibility for the loss of teaching and writing records in case of emergency.

This is yet another example of not only the manifest upper-level administrative/legal controls present in the EIC superstructure, but also of how university CEOs emulate the political, financial, and operational insouciance of their corporate siblings.

During a Spring 2008 semester university-wide informational meeting with the president and provost, the latter indirectly addressed questions about privatization while ironically sharing his thoughts about ways to reduce costs. Most telling was his following remark, hauntingly reminiscent of the means by which corporations target retirement-age employees for layoffs: "We can't shoot people over 65." I did not stay long enough to ask if that reference included 71-year-old program coordinators employed by the university.

Post-9/11 Individualized Techniques of Silencing

The following microtechniques of silencing, which overlap with systematic strategies, are roughly listed in chronological order, though most are on-going situations rather than one-time incidents. The significance of each may be interpreted differently by different viewers. What is not in question, however, is that the overall effect clearly has created a chilly climate and thereby impacted negatively the growth of the CSUN AIS Program and the morale of all dedicated to its expansion.

- **Violation of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** When I took over as the AIS Coordinator in 2001, an MOU was drawn up and approved by the dean. Without prior consultation, the new dean in less than a year unilaterally changed the provisions designed to provide release time each semester to handle the administrative responsibilities and to protect me when I came up for tenure.

- **Labeling:** During my first year, I was branded "hostile" for politely questioning a senior faculty member who claimed I was not teaching enough theory, i.e., his image of "the right kind of theory" in criminology courses. I have been referred to by a colleague as "financially irresponsible" because of a bankruptcy resulting from the murder of one of my granddaughters and my open-heart surgery (congenital heart defect and rheumatic fever valve damage), and therefore unsuitable to handle AIS funds. I was deemed "insubordinate" when an unannounced person was sent from the dean's office to summon me to report to her office immediately after I responded that I would come as soon as possible as I had a student in my office and others waiting. And recently, a sociology chair said that I was "noncooperative" when I defended the AIS Program.

- **Stereotyping:** Colleagues and administrative staff have told me that I would be more effective and taken more seriously if I "looked Indian," a common challenge for "mixed bloods" (Baird-Olson, "Colonization").

- **Falsification of Facts:** My salary was misrepresented in print as being higher than the actual record in the *Report of Gross Pay for Fiscal Year* provided by the CSUN Office of Human Resources. Despite my polite inquiries that went all the way to the top to correct

the error, it was not until I appeared for an interview on a campus-produced TV show run by one of our First Nations students, who was also one of our AIS minors, that the factual record was set straight. Additionally, a former sociology chair erroneously blamed me for a male sociology faculty member choosing to leave the campus (see "Baiting Tactics" below).

- **Baiting Tactics:** Two sociology colleagues who claimed that I was not doing enough in my half-time AIS position started sending e-mail messages asking for information about American Indians. Realizing that I was "damned if I did and damned if I didn't," I responded with a list of potential sources. One male who specialized in sociology of education discounted my reading recommendations and suggested a source by a non-Indian whose work revealed little knowledge about First Peoples. When I asked in an e-mail if he regarded American Indian work as less scholarly than non-Indian work, he expressed great indignation in a group e-mail and stated that I had called him a "racist," a label that I had never used in our written or oral communication. Shortly after, he chose to leave the university.

- **Attempt to Grant Tenure without Promotion:** When I came up for tenure, I received strong support at the department and program levels for my outstanding teaching record, my service overload, and my publication record, which fully met the standards required by both the sociology department and the university. The college-level committee headed by a sociology colleague (see "Racialized Harassment"), who along with other colleagues have labeled me an "activist" rather than a "scholar" (Baird-Olson, "Reflections"), recommended that I receive tenure without promotion. When I appealed the decision and appeared with two CFA union representatives and AIS Advisory Board advocates before the college committee, the chair informed us that he knew of no MOU (included and discussed in my tenure file) and then claimed that my research and publications lacked scholarly credentials.¹⁷ Another member said that my file was not in the right order, even though it was arranged in the same manner that a colleague had used the previous year, an arrangement for which she was highly praised by committee members who were still serving. The committee chair again denied promotion. Later, the university committee and the provost both approved my tenure with promotion to associate professor on the grounds that all of my work in the requisite areas under review was determined to be more than sufficient.

- **Racialized Harassment:** The sociology colleague who sought to deny me promotion and whose office is next to mine placed on his door a picture of a known Indian killer from the nineteenth century, Philip Sheridan, subtitled "An American Hero" (see fig. 1, 2).¹⁸ When I first saw the picture located beneath a slogan stating "Guns Don't Kill People; People Kill People," knowing that this colleague was aware of my three-year-old granddaughter's murder, I felt physically sick. Several days later on October 19, 2006, the hands of the young indigenous student photographer, who has survived the streets of L.A., shook as he took pictures of what was posted on my colleague's door.



Fig. 1. Expanded View of Sociology Colleague's Door

Photo Credit: Rolando Roman-de Leon

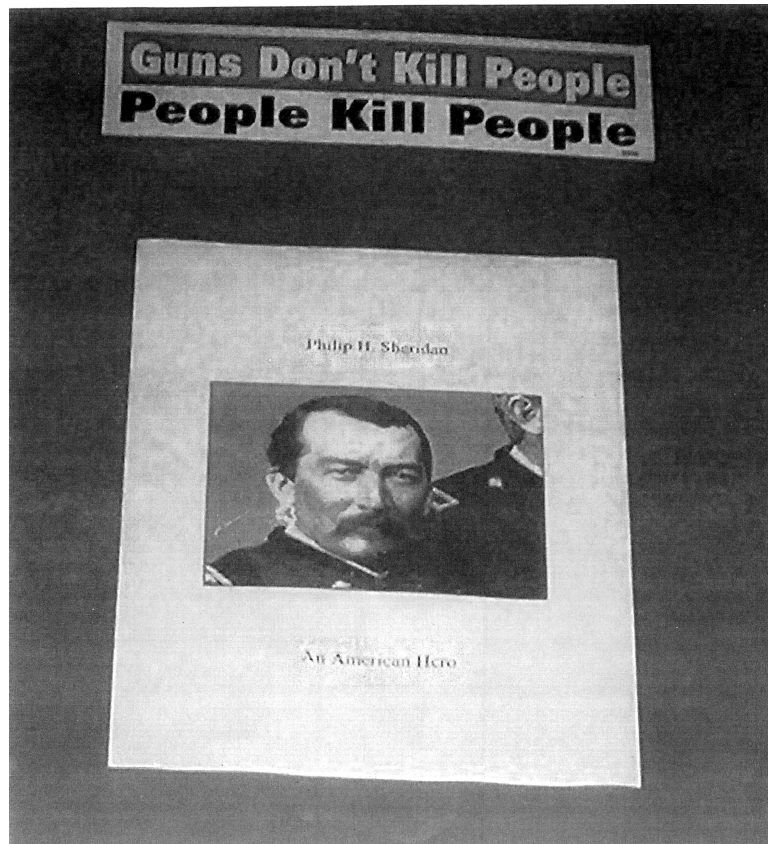


Fig. 2. Close-Up View of Sociology Colleague's Door
("Guns Don't Kill People; People Kill People"
and "Philip H. Sheridan: An American Hero")

Photo Credit: Rolando Roman-de Leon

- **Denial of Sabbatical:** I have been twice-denied sabbatical leave. I requested the time to rewrite my dissertation and to complete a book on the American Indian Movement (AIM) from the dual perspective of a social scientist and a human rights activist. When I asked for explanations, the inaccurate reasons written by the same chair who had recommended tenure without promotion (the same man who admires killers of Indians) indicated that my sabbatical requests were either not read or that the reader(s) had extremely limited reading comprehension skills. Three members of the college committee have come to me unsolicited, asking me to maintain their anonymity and reported that they did not support the decisions. One told me that the “cognitively impaired” (if we defer to Meiners’s terminology here) committee chair was coached by a college-level administrator. Once again, in the ongoing appeal process, I have spent time and energy that could have been used for other purposes.

- **Cultural Imperialism:** One form, often not noted, is the continued effort to mimic the historical model of “converting” First Peoples. Extremist Christians consistently have approached me asking to speak with American Indian students attending CSUN. One of the encounters occurred when two Christians came to my AIS office during my second or third year serving as coordinator. During the discussion of biblical teachings, one of the men, an American Indian, revealed that he had not read the Bible and was dependent upon his white counterpart and others for their interpretations. I then gently but firmly told them that I would not prevent them from speaking to the students if they would promise not to psychologically harass them. In great indignation, both replied that they would never do that. I replied that if they told the students that they would go to hell if they did not convert, then they were doing so. I have never heard from the two again. However, I did learn that they complained to upper administration.

In March 2008, Rudy Ortega, Sr., tribal president of the Fernando Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (upon whose land CSUN sits), sent a letter to the dean of social and behavioral sciences stating that they had been recently informed of their ancestral remains being held by the university and that they were seeking more information and a solution. Negotiations finally began during summer 2008 and are moving slowly.

- **Administrative Cognitive Impairment:** Shortly after I came to CSUN, I was told by administrative staff helping me arrange to bring Russell Means to speak on campus that I needed to fill out international forms because he lived in New Mexico at the time. I immediately realized that I had a huge battle to face in combating general ignorance. Later that year, I received an e-mail from an assistant dean teaching a U.S. government course. She expressed concern because she heard I was teaching that American Indians not only have sovereignty, but that they are also mentioned in the Constitution. After catching my breath, I replied politely by e-mail that indeed I was, explained why, and recommended relevant reference sources. Although I seriously thought about it, I did not suggest that since she was teaching a U.S. government course she should read the Constitution. I have also been challenged on teaching about the

variety of traditional women's roles which were and are more often complimentary rather than subordinate to men's roles and about the leadership and spiritual roles of traditional women.

When I protested the racial harassment committed by the colleague who admires Indian killers, the director of the Office of Equity and Diversity (a black woman and retiree of the military), after first berating me and informing me that the "Army must do what they must do," eventually acknowledged that she knew nothing about First Peoples and the history of the colonization and genocide. The director also told me that she had never experienced discrimination and eventually ruled that I had no case. I was not surprised given her knowledge base as well as the reality that her primary responsibility was to protect the university: the old adage "the fox guarding the hen house" certainly comes to mind.

- **Economic Discrimination:** I am told each year that the AIS Program does not receive more funding or administrative support because I am not doing enough in terms of raising the numbers of students in the minor as well as in all of the AIS courses. In addition to providing documentation of what is needed, I reply that a business cannot be built without adequate resources. A spring semester ritual began several years ago when the dean arrives announcing that she must take over our overflowing office space to use for other purposes. Once again students, alumni, advisory board members, and I are forced to spend time and energy responding and combating the proposed attacks on the AIS Program.

- **Hyper-Surveillance:** During the immediate post-9/11 period, multiple copies of a "Homeland Security" poster disappeared from one of the bulletin boards located outside of the AIS office and several indignant faculty and students harassed AISA students and AIS minors about its message. Eventually the last copy of the poster was posted inside the office. The poster is titled "Fighting Terrorism since 1492" with a background photograph subtitled "Geronimo and his band of 'hostile' Apaches." Before each AISA meeting, a ceremony using the smoke from burning sage is used to "purify" all who participate so that we meet with open minds and "pure" thoughts. Since the pleasant scent of the sage may drift outside of the meeting room, the dean was informed about the ceremony. Nevertheless, she later burst unannounced into one of the AISA weekly meetings and accused the students of smoking pot. Using Foundation policies as an excuse, the students have been hounded for selling packaged foods and drinks as a fund-raising source. Apparently, this small-scale capitalistic endeavor provides serious competition to the Foundation-sponsored fast-food enterprises on campus.

- **Marginalization and Exclusion:** College-level administration, with a few notable exceptions, routinely ignores requests for information as well as leaves AIS out of the informational loop. The program accomplishments and vision specified in the *AIS Annual Reports* have never been formally acknowledged. In fact, at the end of my first year serving as the AIS coordinator, I had to ask if I could submit an annual report, and if so what form it should take. When communication between departments does occur, AIS concerns are

glossed over and our visions are trivialized. Following the untimely and tragic death of a nephew in late November 2007, and needing time to take care of a medical concern, on January 30, 2008, I e-mailed upper- and mid-level administrative heads asking for support and help with administrative responsibilities: no one responded. During the Spring 2008 semester, I requested a meeting with the president regarding the future of the AIS Program. Her assistant eventually replied that she did not have time to meet with us and recommended that we meet with the provost. At the time of this writing, I have not scheduled a meeting with him. A year ago in December when I met with him about the denial of my sabbatical request, he acknowledged that the college committee chair (the same man who posted the picture of Sheridan on his door), should have recused himself when considering my sabbatical leave requests and advised me to talk with the university attorney. The provost then advised me to be patient, because according to him the attitudes about American Indians are so deeply ingrained into the American psyche that it will take a very long time to erase them. (*Déjà vu*—I was instantly transported back to 1972 in the BIA building auditorium with other Trail of Broken Treaty participants listening to Russell Means. We had just received word that upper-level federal administrative officials had asked us to be patient. Russell raised his right arm and hand forming the Peace symbol and called out, “Patience?! Four hundred years of your goddamned glory and you ask us to be patient!”) The provost did not appear to notice my brief “absence.” I soon quietly excused myself and several days later left for Montana for a much-needed break from the procedural and political imbalances of the EIC.

As I have reflected upon the educational, prison, and military industrial complexes and their negative recursions for university life generally and academic freedom specifically, I am reminded of the truism: All empires have contributed to their own decline or suicide. And I find myself thinking about the reports in the criminological study of policing and deviance of a social phenomenon known as “suicide by cop,” meaning that a police officer indirectly assists a person who, wishing to die, “provokes” a law enforcement officer into killing him. From the ideological perspective of law enforcement and social contract, the officer who shoots the victim seemingly has “no choice” but to perform the act as his life is regarded as having more value than that of the suicidal “offender.” I see a parallel, a comparison, albeit at a far more macro and abstract level, to a nation that is creating its own nemesis through its own governing bodies, part of which is being accomplished by its open support of the EIC, the PIC, and the MIC.

Although some faculty, administrators, and general policymakers fail to see such structural connections, or at least profess blindness as the due course, the vast majority of my politically sophisticated, street-wise L.A. students all too readily see how the unholy triad of industrial complexes is hastening the decline of the United States. We talk about possible means to thwart the social suicide before us. One possible policy step in the process of finding a solution has been offered by Meiners:

In a nation with no adequate or affordable childcare system, no universal health care, expensive to prohibitive costs for higher education, and a minimum wage that is not a living wage, we have no registries for the politicians and employers, who routinely implement or execute policies that actively damage all people. (138)

And I would add EIC, PIC, and MIC policymakers to her list, especially those EIC policymakers who advocate taking out more student loans and joining the ROTC as a means of dealing with tuition and other expenses of postsecondary education.

My students and I agree with another solution proposed by Anyon, who argues that education policy should include “strategies to increase the minimum wage, invest in urban job creation and training, provide funds for college completion to those who cannot afford it, and enforce laws that would end racial segregation in housing and hiring” (13). Someone in our classroom will then usually point out that in so doing the ideological justification and the implementation of the three industrial complexes might be destroyed. When these words are spoken, we remain silent. Our eyes tell each other what we are thinking collectively: “Is this possible? Can we stop the cataclysm into hopelessness and build a new world where equality and freedom of thought are given full substance?” I tell the students that one of the primary reasons I teach is because I know that in the face of such overwhelming structural power, change is always possible.

Notes

Special thanks to Jennifer M. Woolston for additional editorial suggestions.

¹ Given the widespread historical and continuing contemporary use of American Indian and Native American, I am still forced at times to use the terms as equivalents for the connotations implied by First Peoples or First Nations, which I prefer to use. I rarely use “indigenous peoples” as it can apply to anyone born on the land.

² In a “History Timeline” posted on the CSUN Web site (retrieved 27 May 2008), the short reference to the protest is a telling example of revisionist history: “November 1968. About 150 LAPD officers are called to campus when members of the Black Student Union take more than twenty staff and administrators hostage. No one is injured and the hostages are released after the administrators agree to minority enrollment and staff, and to investigate complaints of racism” (n. pag.). Faculty who were present at the time have informed students in the American Indian Studies Association, members of the AIS Advisory Board, and members of the First Nation Alumni Association that several of the young black men were imprisoned and beaten. Later, one committed suicide. In addition, other students had joined the black men during the protest. Finally, promises to create and staff an AIS department were never kept.

³ Most recently my conceptualization of the industrial complexes referred to herein has been influenced by Erica R. Meiners’s successful demonstration of the connections between the failures of public school education and the growing PIC in her book *The Right to Be Hostile: Schools, Prisons, and the Making of Public Enemies*. My original analysis was shaped by my training, research, teaching, and nonacademic professional experiences in criminology

and educational pedagogy; my teaching and administrative experiences of the last seven years as professor and coordinator of an AIS program; and decades of information and insights gleaned from conversations with countless educators and students (public and private) ranging from preschool to post-doctoral levels.

⁴ Except for the departments of Chicano/a studies, Asian American studies, black studies, and AIS, administrative and faculty sensitivity to what students of color face in dealing with the hyper-surveillance of local law enforcement and the "gang" witch hunts is limited. To provide only one example, several years ago Eric Lara, an excellent student majoring in criminology, who was several weeks from graduating and planning to earn his masters, was charged with murder and currently is serving a draconian sentence in Soledad. The other three involved were given life sentences. It could be argued that in the state's eyes, Eric's only "crimes" were being a first-generation Mexican American, having a brother who was affiliated with gangs, innocently picking up his brother who had called asking for a ride after a murder had been committed, and coming from a family who could not afford an adequate defense. Although friends, neighbors, classmates, and supervisors in the probation office where he was doing his student internship all testified on his behalf during the trial, only two of his sociology professors openly supported him. One of the two also was the coordinator of an "ethnics" study program. No other administrative staff came forward.

⁵ Tragically, this means that a significant number of such students end up facilitating the oppressions of their own peoples in law enforcement as well as in the PIC.

⁶ Contrary to popular myth, only a handful of students are from successful gaming nations.

⁷ Circa eight months ago, after requesting American Indian student enrollment data from other personnel for years, Bettina Huber, the person who sent this helpful information, was also instrumental in directing the Institute of Research to provide the AIS Program for the first time an adequate list of self-identified American Indian students attending the University.

⁸ See Hellenbrand. I am indebted to Provost Harry Hellenbrand for this wording, which he used in an June 5, 2008 e-mail attachment titled, "Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye: Budget, CSU, CSUN."

⁹ Of course, in the 1950s, AIS was not a separate academic discipline. What little we learned in school was taught from the colonists' perspectives in anthropology and history courses.

¹⁰ A page is not cited as I am here referring to a working draft of my dissertation.

¹¹ Because of the changes I was forced to make, I have never listed my dissertation. However, copies are available upon request. See Baird-Olson, "The Structural."

¹² This historical outline is based primarily on the research of Tim Belfield, former AISA president and CSUN Associated Students president who is now a First Nation Association alumni and AIS Advisory Board member.

¹³ It is important to note that AIS programs are not alone in terms of underfunding and underrepresentation. Programs such as women's studies and others suffer similar systemic marginalization.

¹⁴ A telling example of how right-wing moralist doctrines impact educational opportunity was shared by one of my brothers who taught for years and served as a public school principal for twenty-five years in Oregon. One of his superintendents of schools had implemented a computer program that screened for morally offensive words. One of those was "breast." Consequently, the students have been unable to do research on topics such as breast cancer.

¹⁵ At this point in time, I am not aware of any new First Nation faculty having been hired at CSUN since I arrived in 2000.

¹⁶ We have no administrative assistant, secretary, receptionist, nor janitorial service. Once I was able to find monies to hire a work-study student who had the needed skills; however, she could only work part-time.

¹⁷ Two of the articles were published in the *American Indian Research and Culture Journal* housed at CSUN. See Baird-Olson, "Reflections" and Baird-Olson and Ward.

¹⁸ Philip Sheridan was amongst the former Civil War military misfits who went to the Frontier and became infamous for being proud "Indian killers."

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III. The Image and Reality of Teaching the Israel-Palestine Conflict

