

President Obama Announces More Key Administration Posts

President Barack Obama recently announced his intent to appoint several individuals to serve as members on the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. President Obama said, "I am proud to nominate such accomplished and dedicated individuals to fill these important roles. They will be valuable additions to my administration as we work to confront our challenges at home and abroad, and I look forward to working with them in the months and years ahead."

Sam McCracken, Appointee for Member, National Advisory Council on Indian Education

Samuel McCracken is a member of the Sioux and Assiniboine tribes in northeastern Montana on the Ft. Peck Indian Reservation. Mr. McCracken is the General Manager of Nike's N7 shoe, retail collection, and the N7 Fund, which aims to help create access to sports for Native American and Aboriginal youth in the United States and Canada. Mr. McCracken began his career at Nike as a warehouse worker and ascended to general manager of Nike's Native American Business, where he established the company's Native American Diabetes program. Mr. McCracken has also worked in conjunction with the Indian Health Service and the National Indian Health Board on their "Just Move It" program that promotes physical fitness on Indian Reservations. Additionally, Mr. McCracken serves as chairman of the Let Me Play on Native Lands Fund, a nonprofit organization committed to helping support the potential of Native American youth through the power of sport and physical activity.

Mary Jane Oatman-Wak Wak, Appointee for Member, National Advisory Council on Indian Education

Mary Jane Oatman-Wak Wak is a member of the Nez Perce Tribe. Ms. Oatman-Wak Wak was appointed Idaho's first Indian Education Coordinator by State Superintendent Tom Luna in 2007. She has since worked with state education and tribal leaders to raise Native American student achievement. In 2009, Ms. Oatman-Wak Wak was elected President of the National Indian Education Association. She is a graduate of Lewis-Clark State College with degrees in Justice Studies and Nez Perce language. Ms. Oatman-Wak Wak is currently working on her Ed.D. at the University of Idaho, College of Education.

Alapaki Nabale-a, Appointee for Member, National Advisory Council on Indian Education

Alapaki Nahale-a is the founder and owner of The Strive Company, a Hawaii-based consulting practice. Prior to this, he was the Director of a Native Hawaiian community driven public charter school Ka Umeke Kaeo for six years. Mr. Nahale-a is also the Executive Director of the Hawaii Charter School Network, a Department of Hawaiian Home Lands Commissioner, a Hawaii County Charter Commissioner, and a board member for the Kuikahi Mediation Center. In years prior, he held a series of community development positions with Hawaii Community College, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. He served the Hawaii County Council for five years as a legislative auditor assistant and fiscal/program review auditor. Mr. Nahale-a earned his B.A. in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania.

S. Alan Ray, Appointee for Member, National Advisory Council on Indian Education

S. Alan Ray is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, and serves on the tribe's Cherokee language immersion school advisory board. An attorney, teacher, and scholar, Ray has served since 2008 as President of Elmhurst College, a four-year liberal arts institution in Elmhurst, IL. He previously held the position of Senior Vice Provost for the University of New Hampshire. Prior to that, Ray was Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Harvard Law School, in charge of administering faculty hiring and curriculum planning, and also served in a variety of leadership roles in the Harvard University Native American Program. Working at the intersection of Native American studies, religious studies, and the law, Ray has taught at Boston College, Harvard Divinity School, and Harvard Law School, as well as UNH and Elmhurst College. He is a 1978 graduate of St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, CO; earned a master's degree in theological studies from Harvard Divinity School; and went on to earn an M.A. and Ph.D. in the study of religion from Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and a J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law.

United States Review of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Department of State has created a new website to enable public input during the U.S. review of its position on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. On April 20, 2010, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Susan E. Rice announced at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

that the United States has decided to review the U.S. position on the Declaration.

The Administration recognizes that, for many around the world, this Declaration provides a framework for addressing indigenous issues. During President Obama's first year in office, tribal leaders and interested non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) encouraged the United States to reexamine its position on the Declaration - an important recommendation that directly complements our commitment to work together with the international community on the many challenges that indigenous peoples face.

As part of the U.S. government's review, the U.S. Department of State, together with other federal agencies, will be hosting consultations with federally-recognized tribes and dialogues with interested NGOs and other stakeholders.

Forging a New and Better Future

by Kimberly Teehee

In his remarks at the White House Tribal Nations Conference last year, President Obama said, "I am absolutely committed to moving forward with you and forging a new and better future together. It's a commitment that's deeper than our unique nation-to-nation relationship. It's a commitment to getting this relationship right, so that you can be full partners in America's economy, and so your children and grandchildren can have an equal shot at pursuing the American dream."

During the conference, tribal leaders expressed their visions for the future and identified obstacles that must be overcome to achieve their goals. Soon after that historic gathering, I worked closely with Interior Secretary Salazar's staff to synthesize the input from tribal leaders. The following were the most common issues that emerged from this process:

- Strengthening the government-to-government relationship
- Health care
- Public safety
- Education
- Sustainable economic development
- Environment
- Respect for cultural rights

The White House Tribal Nations Conference Progress Report was developed by the participating agencies, provides a summary of the feedback we received about the conference, and provides an update on the progress the Administration is making on the issues of concern to Indian Country. Thanks to tribal input which helped focus the Administration, I am pleased to report that we are making progress in these areas. Some highlights include:

During the summit, the President signed a Presidential Memorandum directing the federal agencies to submit detailed plans on how they intend to fully implement Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Tribal Governments." The agencies are currently implementing these plans and will submit progress reports in August.

The permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health

The consultation and meeting schedules will be listed on the website: www.state.gov/s/tribalconsultation/declaration/index.htm. Tribal leaders, NGOs, and others are encouraged to contribute to the review by emailing declaration@state.gov, or by submitting comments via mail to the Department of State at: S/SR Global Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street N.W., Suite 1317, Washington, D.C. 20520. Written comments are requested by July 15, 2010 to ensure that they can be given due consideration in the review.

Care Improvement Act was included in the Affordable Care Act, which the President signed in March. We are working very hard to begin implementation of the many provisions in the Affordable Care Act.

President Obama supports the Tribal Law and Order Act, which would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the tribal justice systems and better prevent crime in tribal communities. In addition, the President supports initiatives to hire new Indian Country Assistant United States Attorneys to prosecute cases involving violent crime on Native lands and provide additional federal agents to support law enforcement efforts in tribal communities. Addressing crimes involving violence against women and children on Native lands is a particular priority of the Administration.

The President supports enhancing the role of tribes in Indian education by strengthening the tribal education agencies through the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance reauthorization.

The United States is formally reviewing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and is doing so in consultation with Indian tribes and with input from other interested stakeholders

All of these steps are part of President Obama's commitment to ensure that tribal voices are heard in Washington.

We are moving in the right direction, but our work is not done. To bring real change to tribal nations, we must continue to work together, on a nation-to-nation basis, in order to realize a future where Native people live long and healthy lives in safe communities, where they are able to pursue economic self-sufficiency, and where their children and grandchildren can have an equal opportunity at pursuing the American dream. We will continue to look to the wisdom and experience of tribal leaders to inform our policy agenda. ♣

Kimberly Teehee, a member of the Cherokee Nation, is Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs, White House Domestic Policy Council.