

# Four years of STARSS coming to an end

**DEAR OHLONE CAMPUS COMMUNITY:**

As the school year is coming to a close, we are saddened to report that the STARSS (Students Towards A Smoke-free School) Project is also coming to the end of its four long, but accomplished years.

STARSS has been the driving force in making Ohlone College the first smoke-free campus in the Bay Area. We would like to take this opportunity to provide an overview of our journey by highlighting our achievements and challenges. And to graciously thank the many individuals, departments and agencies that have helped make our goal possible.

The STARSS Project, funded by a grant from the California Department of Health Services has three objectives: to counter pro-tobacco influences, to reduce the exposure to secondhand smoke and to increase the availability of cessation services. The ultimate goal of course, was to make Ohlone a completely smoke-free school.

Our first year focused on an educational campaign on what was then a 20-foot reasonable distance smoking policy. An advocacy campaign using petitions and surveys resulted in the creation of four designated smoking areas.

The following year, our new President Dr. Doug Treadway removed one of the designated areas (in front of Building 1) in order to

eliminate smoke residue affecting students and faculty occupying Building 8.

STARSS Club members participated in legislative meetings with Sen. Liz Figueroa and Assembly member John Dutra advocating for tobacco tax increases and earmarking such funds toward tobacco prevention efforts.

Sen. Figueroa presenting the group with a letter of support for a smoke-free campus. We have also been active on the Interclub Council and participated in numerous campus-wide events such as Welcome Week, Club Recruitment Week and Unity Week.

Four 'Tobacco-free Fun Runs,' a two-mile run or walk around the campus, took place with more than

100 people participating.

STARSS has sponsored focus groups, campus community forums, conducted key informant interviews and observations and opened up club meetings.

Environmental tobacco policy change is not only about reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, but to assist current smokers in their efforts to quit. The Student Health Center has expanded our cessation efforts over the four years, including assessing the smoking status of each patient seen and improving cessation interventions.

Our advocacy efforts proved worthwhile when the Board of Trustees and Dr. Treadway approved Ohlone to become a completely smoke-free campus in March 2004. We celebrated with a press conference where more than 50 people and 11 media representatives attended.

Our goal was to demoralize smoking and indirectly influence current and potential tobacco users by creating a social climate where tobacco use becomes less desirable, acceptable and accessible. As a result, the campus smoking prevalence has decreased from 13 percent in 2001, to 10 percent in 2003, and 8 percent in 2004.

We are not out to attack smokers, but rather to protect the majority of nonsmokers, particularly individuals who are more vulnerable and susceptible to environmental tobacco smoke, such as those with respiratory and cardiac problems.

Credit for the success of this program must be given to Sally Bratton, director of the Student Health Center, who has worked tirelessly over the last four years by making tobacco use a priority on campus and among her patients. The student health center staff, especially myself believe we have the best boss in the world. We also appreciate Dr. Treadway's leadership in making a smoke-free campus one of the college district goals in his State of the College Address in fall 2004.

We thank the students who completed our public opinion survey in 2000 and our attitudes and policy awareness surveys each spring.

Collaboration has also been a key strategy in our work plan, particularly with departments such as the Campus Security and Athletics and Physical Education.

We thank the Ohlone *Monitor* for providing a forum to exchange dialogues, opinions, and rebuttals on this rather controversial, but very important public health and social justice issue. In the 2002 - '03 school year, a total of 39 articles, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor were published on the campus smoking issue.

We thank the staff of Buildings and Grounds for removing old receptacles, installing new ones, painting the "no smoking beyond this point" lines, and making the campus a cleaner, healthier and safer place. We thank faculty members such as Gregory Mellblom, Cynthia Katona, Howard DeWitt, and Yvette Nichols for their continuing support.

ASOC has funded a number of our programs, including our famous Ciggybutt costume character. We are grateful for the 100 People / 100 Days participants. We also thank the Alameda County Public Health Department's Tobacco Control Program staff for their leadership.

We are grateful for the students who make up STARSS.

As one of the leading campuses to address tobacco control in higher learning, many schools have contacted us for technical assistance, and we have presented segments of the program at state and national public health conferences.

Although the grant period will be ending, we hope tobacco control education will continue on this campus in order to maintain a smoke-free school and promote smoke-free lives.

**Sincerely,  
SANG LENG TRIEU  
and the STARSS Club**

# The question of being Indian

**EDITOR:**

In the March 31, 2005 edition of the *Monitor*, Mr. Mark McCord entered the foray regarding Prof. Ward Churchill of CU, Boulder. Mr. McCord's op-ed piece participates in valorizing a cynical use of ethnic authenticity used for eroding civil rights.

I'm sure that Mr. McCord did not intend this outcome. However, pervasive and constant repetition lulls us into dangerous participation. This is a nationwide anti-democratic rhetoric and is dominating the media and the tongues of a governing elite seeking to censor informed dialogue to consolidate controls over citizenry.

Firstly, and most seriously, the case against Prof. Churchill is a first amendment issue! Prof. Churchill has the Constitutional right to make and publish his statements, even if they incriminate monied and federal powers that are seeking ways to crush honest dissent.

The method used to discredit him is to distract people with irrelevant charges. For Prof. Churchill the issue recently raised is that-are you ready?-he's not really Indian. Those who participate in this character assassination deflect attention from the erosion of our constitutional rights in the name of patriotism.

Let's consider the fact that it is the U.S. government-the very same entity that has a recorded history of genocide against Native Americans-that gives itself the right to deem who is Indian or not through numbered enrollment in a "tribe" that it chooses to recognize.

Our academic community is itself called Ohlone College after the native people of the Bay Area. How many of us are aware that the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs does not recognize the Ohlone? What am I to think of the contemporary Ohlone residents here in the Bay Area? Are they "frauds?" - Mr. McCord's word, not mine. Authenticity is always evoked by someone or some group claiming the authority to determine who is and who is not.

Mr. McCord's argument inherently collapses under his own critique: "From what I hear, my great-great grandmother's mother was 1/4 Cherokee Indian." What part of

Mr. McCord exactly is Indian and how would he go about proving this other than family lore? While some (the U.S. gov't., some members of AIM) say Prof. Churchill isn't Indian, there are others today, like AIM founders Russell Means, Dennis Banks and other Native elders who unequivocally accept Prof. Churchill as Indian. It is symptomatic that Mr. McCord's logic ends up utilizing the same justification for his identity that he castigates Prof. Churchill of using.

More important than essentialized identities are the lived experiences of individuals. How many so-called Indians have participated in Indian culture? Lived on a reservation? Worked with elders and other tribal members on political agendas and struggles? Fought the FBI's COINTELPRO against AIM? For decades Prof. Churchill has been documenting the history of native peoples and their victimization at the hands of the U.S. government and military. What Prof. Churchill can claim is a proven record of political activism and publications for Native Ameri-

can rights that speaks volumes more than the empty rhetoric of identity.

It is not some flaccid notion of authenticity that gives Prof. Churchill the right to publish. It is the Constitutional right he has to free speech, followed by the merit of his scholarship. And this is true for everyone! The loss of free speech and academic freedoms are at stake!

This autistic discourse regarding Prof. Churchill is epidemic within our society: a willing erasure of constitutional rights due to a lack of critical comprehension and commitment to informed, democratic discourse.

Please, to everyone in Ohlone's community, let us use our innate intelligence enough to recognize what is being done to us and whose interests it serves. Following money is always a big clue. "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds," sings Mr. Marley, rolling in his grave.


**NOEL AMHERD  
Anthropology instructor**

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