

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

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SANTA BARBARA SANTA CRUZ

American Indian Resource Program
Center for Educational Partnerships

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Dear Selection Committee,

It is with great pleasure and high regard that I recommend Jacque Nunez to represent Indian Country as the 2010 Educator of the Year. I have known Jacque for the past eleven years as a student, parent, community member, and as a professional in the field of education. I can personally attest to her outstanding abilities to teach at all levels and actively engage audience members of every age range. Jacque is a proud parent that has raised her children to carry on traditional ways through championship drum and dance groups. Jacque is also an entrepreneur that created her own business, Journeys to the Past, which supplements K-12 education with tribally focused history and contemporary American Indian teachings. I am confident in her ability to represent our great peoples as the NIEA 2010 Educator of the Year by carrying our banner of educational achievement and inspiration throughout the nation.

Jacque Nunez was selected through a national search by PBS to represent American Indian storytellers because of her outstanding ability to capture the attention of everyone that she comes into contact with. Jacque is also frequently featured in newspaper and magazine publications such as the Orange County Register, Los Angeles Times, Press-Enterprise, OC Metro, in addition to her own tribal publications. The ability to be featured in these prestigious publications is a testament to her unique qualities to inspire people because there are thousands of other articles that are rejected each day due to the population density in Southern California. Jacque Nunez is also the current California Indian Education Association, Educator of the Year. She has not only earned this distinction but has also expanded her efforts since that honor. Therefore, I feel it proper that Jacque be seriously considered for the national award.

The breadth of knowledge and reach of her impact is limitless. No matter what the timeframe or subject matter, Jacque is always able to weave in American Indian history, culture and significance to any lesson in a meaningful and respectful manner. I know that Jacque has been invited to deliver countless keynote addresses for conferences, symposiums, workshops, and assemblies. The reach of Jacque's impact on Native and non-Native students, parents, and administrators is vast and will pave a positive path for our youth.

We are so impressed with Jacque's abilities to educate others that after just a few presentations, our staff was moved to hire her more long-term to serve as our Cultural Specialist at the University of California, Irvine under our new University-Community Connections program, funded through the University of California, Office of the President. Jacque's efforts consistently exceed expectations and we are proud to have her represent our innovative mentorship program for Native youth throughout the state.

As Director of the American Indian Resource Program, I work with many types of educators and educational administrators on local, statewide, and national levels, yet Jacque is a rare gem that captures your attention and encourages individuals to achieve the highest echelons of success. Jacque is an excellent role model that should be recognized for her tireless efforts on behalf of our people.

In closing, Jacque Nunez has my full recommendation without any reservation to serve as the 2010 Educator of the Year. I strongly feel that Jacque is a tremendous asset to the entire American Indian community and I hope that NIEA will reach the same conclusion. Please feel free to contact me at (949) 824-6251 or nikishna@uci.edu, should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikishna Polequaptewa".

Nikishna Polequaptewa, M.S.
Director
American Indian Resource Program
University of California, Irvine