

**Kim TallBear (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribal member), Associate Professor, Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta. Formerly Associate Professor of Anthropology and Native American & Indigenous Studies, University of Texas, Austin**

In 2012, I was recruited to the University of Texas as a Donald D. Harrington Fellow to the Department of Anthropology and to the Native American & Indigenous Studies program. I was recruited from the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. While I had a prestigious job in Berkeley with a low two course per year teaching load, and wonderful graduate students and colleagues, I was happy to relocate to Austin. The University of California system is in deep financial crisis. And central Texas is stunning country to my eyes. I am originally from South Dakota and I have a deep love of plains landscapes. I also work closely with UT biological anthropologist, Deborah Bolnick, a Native American ancient DNA expert who has an exceptionally ethical way of working with indigenous peoples, and students. We've been long-term collaborators, and her presence at UT Anthropology was a big draw for me. Finally, I grew quickly to love the Anthropology department at UT. My colleagues and students are great scholars and great people.

The University of Alberta had also been trying to recruit me when I was at Berkeley and during my Harrington Fellowship year at UT. But the U of A process was much slower than UT's and I happily accepted the UT job. Alberta finally offered me a job in 2014 for a fall 2015 start date. I have never been so torn. I cannot stress how much I love the landscape, skies, and musical culture in Austin. I was building community. But the University of Alberta has 1100 Indigenous students, an entire college of Native Studies (more than a department), and tens of Indigenous faculty spread across the university. It is in the city of Edmonton, which has a visible urban Indigenous population. Austin cannot compare on that front. I originally accepted the U of A offer in the fall of 2014, but then I decided in March 2015 not to resign from UT. Again, I really liked Austin and the move felt daunting. I decided to take another year to think about the decision. I felt relieved to be able to stay in the life I was building in Austin and to think more about where I would very likely spend the rest of my career.

But then the gun culture of Texas seemed to gain momentum in the spring of 2015 with all of the political controversy around open carry. I also learned more about concealed carry, and gun laws more generally in Texas. I saw the vicious pro-gun rhetoric heating up. That was the final decision point for me. In June 2015, I told my department chair that I was leaving and resigning in August 2015. It was a very quick decision. Academics rarely resign with this little notice. Our hiring and departure processes usually take close to a full academic year. I felt terrible leaving my valued colleagues in that position. I had two courses scheduled for fall. I continue to work from afar with my UT graduate students. I will not abandon them. But I could not stay in Texas. I just saw gun culture increasingly taking over. Also, since I teach Indigenous, feminist and queer theory—

topics that are difficult for students to process emotionally and politically—I didn't want the added factor of guns in my classroom. It feels too high risk.