

September 2017

Boozhoo! Greetings Students and Friends:

On behalf of the NMU Center for Native American Studies team, miigwech (thank you) for visiting our website. I am moved to compose a more personal note for this website update. These are my views and not the views of Northern Michigan University, nor the views of anyone else at the NMU Center for Native American Studies.

First, let me say I am very proud to share that NMU President Fritz Erickson stated quite strongly in his recent university convocation that the horrific behavior – as we recently saw in Charlottesville -- is NOT acceptable on the NMU Campus.

Second, if there is one thing that I think we in Native American Studies (NAS) do very well – we constantly remind our students is to operate with m’naademdamowin (respect)! Respect in and out of the classroom. Respect for creation. Respect for all beings of the earth. Respect for the elderly. Respect for different ways of knowing. And respect for different ways of learning. Respect for one’s self and one’s body. Respect for finding balance.

Sadly, the news and social media are filled with a continuous barrage of hate and ridiculousness. If we are not careful we can easily be short-circuited by such messages and have our own inner balance interrupted in profound and harmful ways. I experienced this the day after Charlottesville. I thought long and hard about what I was doing to bridge divides. I questioned whether I was doing enough. I agonized over how to help to heal such hatred. Teaching the tenets of NAS is one way to do this but I still questioned my own contributions. My day was derailed by the news that someone was killed for standing up for what they believe in. My heart and my mind sunk. My takeaway is that it is important not to isolate (as I did). It is important to seek out like-minded people not just to talk with but also to strategize with... how can a small group impact big, positive change?

I believe that we, in NAS, have an obligation to help students and our communities reach a critical consciousness for the benefit of the earth, Indigenous peoples, all of our relations, and for those future generations yet to be born. We need intellectual warriors willing to sacrifice their time and energy to grip on to the tenets of the discipline of Native American Studies and create positive changes for tribal peoples! We need more people to respectfully engage the teachings found within the ancestral territory of the Anishinaabe for the next seven generations to come. These tenets of NAS and traditional teachings must be remembered, revocalized, and revitalized. As Mohawk artist Elizabeth Duxtater has said, we need to be of good mind and re-villagize! It is my hope that there are others out there who feel similarly. If you are someone who seeks to serve Indigenous communities, reach out to us and let us know how our academic programs might help you achieve your goals.

If you are in or around the Marquette area, feel free to visit our “village.” The Center for Native American Studies is located in [112 Whitman Hall](#) at the corner of Norway Street and Fair Avenue in Marquette, Michigan. We are *usually* open 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday-Friday ET. If you are not able to see us in person, visit our Facebook page.

Have an amazing academic year and be kind to one another.

Respectfully,

April E. Lindala, NMU Alum '97, '03, '06
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