

# Message from the Director

September 2018

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 delighted to share that Native American Studies is offering two **new** academic programs: [a Native American Community Services associate degree](#) (in cooperation with the NMU Social Work department) and a [Native American Community Services minor](#). These programs have student incentives thanks to a grant from the Office of Victims of Crime. Applications for student incentives will be on the NAS website very soon.

Over the past year, we have been offering [NAS 101 Anishinaabe Language, Culture, and Community I](#) online through the ZOOM video platform. We also started to offer [NAS 315 History of Indian Boarding School Education](#) online. One can now successfully complete [a minor in Native American Studies online](#) (it is a very prescribed set of NAS courses).

Naturally, we still love to see our students in the classroom as well as outside in the natural world. For the first time we are offering [NAS 240 Sacred Ground: Native Peoples, Mother Earth, and Popular Culture](#) as well as a brand new course, [NAS 440 Awesiinh: Wild Animal Relations](#) (feedback has been very positive).

Last academic year, I asked the Native American Studies faculty team to be thinking about how we can be building bridges to those not able to access the knowledge and resources that we have within our grasp within the academy. This year I asked the faculty to think about how the content of our courses and the work that we do can bring about healing to our tribal communities. On my own, I have been thinking about how the two questions can operate together: How do we *or* can we bring about healing while building bridges to tribal citizens/tribal communities in need? *Can education and healing go hand in hand?* I think they can. But I would caution others (and remind myself) that any bridge building is a **cooperative effort** *with* tribal communities. I do not assume that tribal nations are seeking my help simply because I am employed at an institution of higher learning -- in fact, I may even be considered suspect.

I am currently teaching [NAS 404 Research and Engagement in NAS](#) and in this class we discuss the processes of decolonizing. How do we work to shed the residue of cognitive imperialism from our minds? How do we bring about significant change not only for ourselves, but for those following in our footsteps for the next seven generations, and certainly for the Earth and all of her beings. These concepts may seem mammoth, even abstract, but they are central to the discussions in Native American Studies. What were the ancestors thinking about during the treaty period of the mid 1800s? We know there are provisions for hunting, fishing, education, and so on. What should we be strategically thinking about and embodying in action as we are mindful of our grandchildren's grandchildren?

I found this quote recently from Paulette Regan, "Decolonization is not "integration" or the token inclusion of Indigenous ceremony. Rather, it involves a paradigm shift from a culture of denial to the making of space for Indigenous political philosophies and knowledge systems as they

resurge, thereby shifting cultural perceptions and power relations in real ways" (189). When we come together to sing at an event or when we open an event with a land acknowledgement, these are small but necessary symbolic acts. However, the question is *how do these acts bring about significant change? Do they bring about change at all?* It is important to continue these acts of cultural inclusion and acknowledgement for many reasons. However, this year, I will be thinking about how these acts have the potential to not only educate, but also bring about healing. Additionally, I will be thinking upon what further actions should we be taking to influence change beyond the walls of Native American Studies.

**We could use your help!** Have you thought about contributing financially to the NMU Center for Native American Studies? What about volunteering your time? The majority of our Center's events are grant-funded; we work hard to make as many events as possible *free of charge* for the general public, but especially for our NMU students (I was a student once and I was broke!). Please consider contributing to our programs with your checkbook or your time! We would be extremely grateful! Contact me at [cnas@nmu.edu](mailto:cnas@nmu.edu) about how you might contribute. Miigwech | Thank you!

You are also invited to visit us at the Center for Native American Studies! We are 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-Thursday ET. If you are not able to see us in person, visit our [Facebook page](#). Have an amazing fall semester and be respectful to one another!

April E. Lindala, NMU Alum '97, '03, '06  
Director of the NMU Center for Native American Studies  
Associate Professor of English

Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

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The NMU Center for Native American Studies offers...

- **the only** [baccalaureate degree](#) in Native American Studies in the state of Michigan,
- a **new** [Native American Community Services associate degree](#),
- an associate degree in [general university studies](#) with a concentration in NAS,
- a twenty-four credit interdisciplinary [NAS minor](#),
- a **new** [Native American Community Services minor](#),
- a [TEDNA](#)-endorsed [undergraduate certification](#) in American Indian education,
- a [TEDNA](#)-endorsed concentration of online courses towards a [Master of Arts degree](#) in Educational Administration: American Indian Education Administration and Supervision,
- several courses that fulfill [liberal studies](#) | [general education](#), and the world cultures graduation requirements,
- a [resource room](#) filled with books, articles, films and more, and
- an [outdoor fire site](#) for NAS classroom visits, and

- the Native American Student Association, the Native American Language and Culture Club, and the Beading Club.

The Center also strives to keep you informed about items relevant to Native American Studies including [language lessons](#). Be sure to also visit the Center on [Facebook](#) and [Flickr](#). Listen to Public Radio 90 [WNMU-FM] Fridays for [Anishinaabe Radio News](#), a weekly program with insights to Native American Studies and news from Indian Country.