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Re: Invitation to applicants for tenure-track position in Native American Studies and the Environment

Dear Colleagues and Potential Applicants,

We write to invite your assistance in reaching potential candidates for a new, tenure-track position in Native American Studies and the Environment, to be jointly appointed in Environmental Science, Policy and Management (ESPM) and in Ethnic Studies. This position is one of six Native American Studies cluster hires over the next three years at UC Berkeley. Five of these new faculty members will be jointly appointed in Native American Studies in the Ethnic Studies Department and other schools or programs, including History, Law, Social Welfare, and the performing and visual arts. The explicit aim of the cluster is to be “more than the sum of its parts” by creating a community of faculty across campus with overlapping scholarly and teaching foci, as well as a shared commitment to tribes and Native communities. These new faculty will have an important role in transforming the ways in which community- accountable research with Indigenous communities happens.

In order to attract candidates that could be part of this reshaping of Berkeley and the university’s approach to Indigenous Peoples and issues, we respectfully request your support. We are particularly keen to see applicants with a deep understanding of--and demonstrable role in--respectfully engaging with Indigenous communities. Evidence of this kind of community- accountable research paradigm is one of the explicit criteria used in evaluating applicants. We recognize that the future of environmental studies lies in research that includes methodologically rich engagements with the priorities of community partners. To that end, we seek scholars who can model for their students and colleagues how research can be carried out in ways that are respectful of community mandates while also producing scholarship that reflects these co-crafted commitments.

Native American Studies was founded at Berkeley in the wake of the Third World Liberation Strike in 1969, a loose confederation of students and faculty. It presently has three tenured faculty members but will expand significantly with the cluster hires. Environmental Science, Policy, and Management has a long history of faculty members and students (both undergraduate and graduate) working in collaboration with tribes in California including, for example, the [Karuk-UC Berkeley Collaborative](#). The cluster hires will enhance the place of scholarship and teaching on Native Americans on campus and will work productively in tandem with other initiatives. In 2017, a Tribal Forum was held at the Berkeley campus, a two day event, hosting more than 40 California tribes, in an effort to explore what partnerships with Berkeley might look like as the institution faces its past and looks for a better future for Native Peoples. Since then, an active network of staff, faculty, students, and community partners supporting principles of accountability and engagement has been growing. Institutional commitment to nurture that capacity can be seen in a growth and increased visibility of Native American staff and students.

A new, UC system-wide Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act committee has been formed to change the approach to repatriation in a respectful manner on all UC campuses, including Berkeley (two Native faculty members from Native American Studies at Berkeley serve on that committee, as do two Native staff members). The NAGPRA Committee has specifically adopted the principal of being *proactive* in its repatriation work. Beyond the longstanding commitment to Native communities, scholarship, and teaching, we would like to point out that the wider campus here at UC Berkeley is changing in terms of awareness of Native people and Native issues, as evidenced by the rich and diverse number of partnerships, panels, talks, and other events focusing on Native issues. This fall, Tommy Orange was the selected author for our “On The Same Page” series and his book, *There There* was gifted to every new student. This is but one inspiration for ongoing discussions, panels and events that touch all members of our campus community and consider deeply what our relationship to Indigenous Peoples should aspire to be.

Interdisciplinary collaborations across campus, including methodologies, practices, and community engagements reinforce this transformation, and have homes in programs like Native American Studies, Native American Student Development, American Cultures, the American Indian Graduate Program, the Designated Emphasis in Indigenous Language Revitalization, and the Joseph Meyers Center for Research on Native American Issues. Members of those programs have generously given their attention to this search as well as this letter and are open to dialogue with potential applicants who might want to contact them.

We in Environmental Science, Policy and Management and in Native American Studies are deeply committed to, and involved in, this campus-wide synergism. We hope you will recommend this job to potential eligible applicants or let us know about candidates we might directly contact. We look forward to reading applications from the broadest possible range of applicants. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Keith Gilless, Associate Professor
Jennifer Sowerwine, Cooperative Extension Specialist
Environmental Science, Policy and Management Dept.
Co-chairs on behalf of the Search Committee

Online application available here: <https://aprecruit.berkeley.edu/JPF02470>