

“Assimilation versus Integration”:

The Story of Native American Studies Program at Dartmouth College

By Farah Almadani

Abstract

In 1970, President John G. Kemeny, the thirteenth president of Dartmouth College, recommitted the College to its original charter: educating Native American youth. This paper focuses on the Native American Studies Program, an interdisciplinary special program formed in 1972 at Dartmouth College. While the focus of this scholarly work is focused on this program at Dartmouth, I will also discuss how its establishment relates to the Civil Rights and American Indian Movement of the mid-20th century. My work addresses whether the program’s original intentions were met, fifty years after its founding. The impetus for this research was its semi centennial anniversary, which was celebrated this Spring through events co-sponsored by the College’s Native American and Indigenous (NAIS) Studies Program and the Dickey Center for International Understanding.¹ I sought to uncover whether this re-commitment achieved its original purpose. Previous scholarly work relating to this topic notably include Professor Colin G. Calloway’s *The Indian History of an American Institution : Native Americans and Dartmouth*. As a Historical Accountability Research Fellow, my research was archival study at Dartmouth College’s Rauner Library. The research, by nature, exemplified secondary analysis². Native American Studies is an attempt, by the College, to achieve multicultural understanding between Natives and non-Natives; that is the primary goal. However, the lack of integration of

¹ “Presidency of John Kemeny,” JOHN G. KEMENY ‘22A. President, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science, Emeritus. https://www.dartmouth.edu/library/rauner/archives/oral_history/kemeny/index.html.

² National Library of Medicine (National Center for Biotechnology information, “Secondary Data Analysis: Ethical Issues and Challenges.”

Native American culture into the general curriculum illustrates that the goal is yet to be achieved. In this essay, I argue that the failure to integrate Native American culture in Dartmouth's general curriculum is because academics approach the subject with a Western, rather than Native, perspective.

INTRODUCTION

On March 1st, 1970, Dartmouth College President and former mathematician John G. Kemeny gave an inaugural address that highlighted the fairly recent diversification of the elite, Ivy League consortium. His words praised increased student diversity at Dartmouth, which to him, retained "such a superb record in the admission of all minorities." Although Kemeny publicly exemplified anti discriminatory beliefs, his words arrived at a time of racial discord in U.S. History: Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered two years prior. As Dr. Kaladra writes in his essay *God Made Me Indian*, "Black communities pushed back and continue to push back against the unreconstructed who have supported Jim Crow in some form or fashion" and "Chicana/o communities have pushed and continue to push back against exploitation of migrant farm workers."

According to Kemeny, this phenomenon was motivated by broader scholarship policies and the improvement of secondary school education. Yet, a larger challenge was the recruitment of students regardless of their educational and financial background. The consideration of an individual's privileges (or lack thereof) is best understood today as 'holistic admissions'. "And this is the great challenge," Kemeny said, "we must somehow find the means whereby every student no matter what social background he comes from, once he is a student Dartmouth, feels he is a full member of the entire community." While the College credits the inauguration as the official recommitment to educating Native American youth, Kemeny does not explicitly state in

the speech whether the College's diversification would specifically include Native Americans. The President, himself, does not recall when he publicly stated the re-commitment. "I don't remember if it was in my augural address or right after it [and] I never could find a trustee vote where they approved it," he said. "I hope some future historian disentangles that."

In his speech, *The Future of Higher Education*, President Kemeny further comments on the importance of diversity in reference to the plight of African-Americans and Native Americans. He tells his audience that "[the College] has made a commitment to Native Americans, because of the long, historic ties between Dartmouth College and Indian Americans." In 1972, President Kemeny would help create the Native American Studies Program, an academic discipline or "ethnic study" about Native American culture.

According to its original King George III charter, the College was intended "for the education & instruction of Youth of the Indian tribes in this Land in reading, writing & all parts of Learning which shall appear necessary and expedient for civilizing & christianizing Children of Pagans as well as in all liberal Arts and Sciences; and also of English Youth and any others." The College's Eleazar Wheelock would deviate from the promise; there were only 20 Native American graduates by 1970.³ However, in the 1950s, the faculty at Dartmouth and other institutions were committed to integrate non-Western cultures into its education, as a means to break down the "parochialism" of undergraduate education.⁴

The External Committee also recommends that a systematic survey be conducted for the library's "current holdings in the discipline of Native American studies." It is implied that the library may not have expertise in curating content on Native Americans, because the Committee

³ "Native American Studies Program Established", 250 Dartmouth.

⁴ March 30, 1972 - Report and Recommendations Ad hoc Committee on American Indian Studies

writes that “individual faculty members [in NAS] are knowledgeable about the strength and weaknesses of the library’s holdings in their areas of expertise.”

One method of undoing the College’s white, male perspective was through the recruiting of minorities, overseen by the Committee of Equal Opportunity, or CEO, was officially formed in Spring 1969.⁵ The Committee was created “to help implement the faculty and trustee decision to broaden Dartmouth’s commitment to the education of socially disadvantaged Americans”, according to a 1973 report.⁶ The Board of Trustees voted in favor of the Equal Opportunity Program, but its existence was a result of the McLane Report of 1968, submitted to the Board of Trustees.⁷ The report reveals that the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. “stirred the conscience of many white Americans.”⁸ The Board of Trustees realized that Dartmouth, as an institution, can play a small but important role in racial progress through enrolling students and hiring advisors of African-American descent, providing an Afro-American Cultural Center for facilitating Black cultural events, and developing curriculum relating to Black literature. The Committee was effectively responding to the following question: “What is Dartmouth doing now and what more can it do?”

President Kemeny was one of the faculty representatives on the CEO, and later served as chairman until assuming his duties as College President.⁹ Since the College did not endorse a quota system, the plan was to concentrate efforts on recruiting and supporting Black and Native American students, as well as underserved rural students from New England. It is important, as

⁵ https://www.dartmouth.edu/library/rauner/archives/oral_history/oh_interviews_pdf/KemenyInterview.pdf

⁶ Which box??? A Report to the Alumni Council on Equal Opportunity at Dartmouth College, dated June 14, 1973

⁷ https://www.dartmouth.edu/library/rauner/archives/oral_history/oh_interviews_pdf/KemenyInterview.pdf

⁸ McLane

⁹ Note: The Committee on Organization and Policy elected Kemeny to be chairperson; it was a not vote among other faculty members of CEO.

Kemeny articulates in his conversation with A. Alexander Fanelli, to note the difference between *affirmative action* and the *equal opportunity program*. Affirmative action was considered when hiring employees; equal opportunity always concerned student admissions. In retaining equal opportunity programming, the College defined five key aspects 1) admissions and financial aid 2) academic and administrative personnel 3) transition programs 4) academic programming 5) campus presence. “Indians’ concerns” was referred to in the latter category.

According to Kemeny, he advocated for increased Native Americans because of the charter, which made the group “a natural target” for the equal opportunity program. Two members from the student organization, Native Americans at Dartmouth, were assigned to serve on the committee.¹⁰ This does not mean, however, that Native American students remained at Dartmouth. The overall graduation rate for Native students decreased significantly over the course of Kemeny’s presidency. In 1971, two Native American students matriculated at the College and the graduation rate was 100%.¹¹ By 1981, the graduation rate had fallen to 60%. The overall graduation rate during Kemeny’s presidency was 67%. **The NAVC suggested a possible reason for Native Americans leaving the institution is selective racial prejudice that “has had a profound effect on Dartmouth’s Native American students.” Another reason is that some Native American students were occupied with taking courses intended for their graduate study.**

While the future Native American Studies Program would be intended for both Native and non-Native students alike, the recruitment of Natives motivated the necessity for the aforementioned academic program. In 2012, Howard Bad Hand ’73, Michael Hanitchak ’73,

¹⁰ Source???

¹¹ Twelve-Year Review Report of the Native American Visiting Committee on the Native American Program at Dartmouth College (1970-1982). Separate File

David Bonga '74 and Drew Ryce '74 – all Native American students during the Kemeny era – reunited to speak about how their life experiences were shaped by the College.¹² The panel was in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Native American Studies Program. Howard Bad Hand, a Sioux and a traditional singer of Sundance songs and published author, met with President Kemeny to encourage more integration of Native life on campus. Bad Hand was one of three Native American students in his class year. Prior to matriculating, he participated in A Better Chance Program, or ABC, an opportunity for low-income African-American, Latinx, and Native American students to immerse themselves into private school learning. The ABC program was organized by the William Jewett Tucker Foundation – which in turn was funded by the Committee on Equal Opportunity. The Foundation was a vehicle for funding programs relating to equal opportunity, including Native American Studies.

When first visiting Dartmouth, Bad Hand recalled being shown “Native things” at Dartmouth. The College’s cultural excitement of Native American culture motivated Bad Hand to return as an undergraduate. “I’m going to come back in four years and I am going to change it,” he said to himself. Bad Hand’s goal was to “indianize” Dartmouth.

Native American Studies as a Special Program

Between spring 1970 and spring 1972, various stakeholders at Dartmouth researched how the curriculum could include an Indian Studies program. On March 30th, 1972, the Ad hoc committee on American Indian Studies, or simply called the Indian Studies Committee, submitted a recommendation concerning NAS. Committee members included Chairman Stuart Tonemah – who would later become director of Native American Program (NAP) – History

¹² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eb_WsHir-o

Professor James Wright, Language Instructor John Rassias, and Duane Bird Bear '71.¹³ Bird supported the recruiting of Native students, and first encouraged Dartmouth and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to open the ABC program to Native Americans. Bird would later recruit, alongside Bad Hand, the Native American Studies Program's inaugural chairperson, Michael Dorris.

According to the ad hoc Committee's rationale, Native peoples have contributed to linguistics, arts, and technology, and therefore merit inclusion within the liberal arts core. Their examples of these inventions included mathematics and public accounting. Their culture existed in the New World for thousands of years, and as a result, European settlers have been impacted by the presence of indigenous peoples. "In brief, we have been affected by those whom we have conquered," the report reads. "We cannot continue to deal with the Americas simply as the product of cultural importation. Native Americans are a significant part of the rich heritage of the New World." In their view, the study of Native American culture has the same dedication and focus given to cultures in the Far East, India, and the Mediterranean. "There is no intellectual reason why the history of Native American peoples should not be considered an integral part of a liberal arts education," they said.

The Committee recommended that Dartmouth institute a program – not a department – called Native American Studies effective the 1972-1973 school year. Here, the Committee does not clarify why that decision was made, other than saying that they "[did] not find it desirable to offer a major in NAS. Programs often committed for funding, but the College was willing to use funding for the Ford Foundation Venture to launch the program. The design was modeled after

¹³ <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://history.dartmouth.edu/people/james-e-wright&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1658867213035822&usg=AOvVaw0A7wsT9lwPcR8-RsszftVU>

Black Studies, Environmental Studies, and Urban and Regional Studies. Given Black Studies' interdisciplinary nature and connection to equal opportunity, it is unsurprising the College might adapt a similar format for Native American Studies. While this decision reduces two distinct and multicultural ethnic identities to an adaptable template, Native American Studies, or NAS, would later incorporate unique elements such as "Introduction to Native American Languages."

Yet, in 1972, only four core courses were approved within the program: Introduction to Native American Studies (NAS 1), Native American Studies 2 (NAS 2), Independent Study and Research, and the Seminar in Native American Studies. The first two courses offered would be NAS 1 and the Independent Study course. The introductory course would concentrate on traditional Native American culture in the pre-Columbian era. This course – and the others – would be open to all students, non-Native and Native alike. Given its role as a program, students would receive a certificate in Native American Studies to supplement their existing major. Core courses are important because of "the lack of such curricula in [Native American Studies]." The three areas emphasized in NAS are anthropology, literature, and history. NAS is the only academic unit to teach courses with Native Americans from an "emic point of view", which means "from the view of the culture being studied."

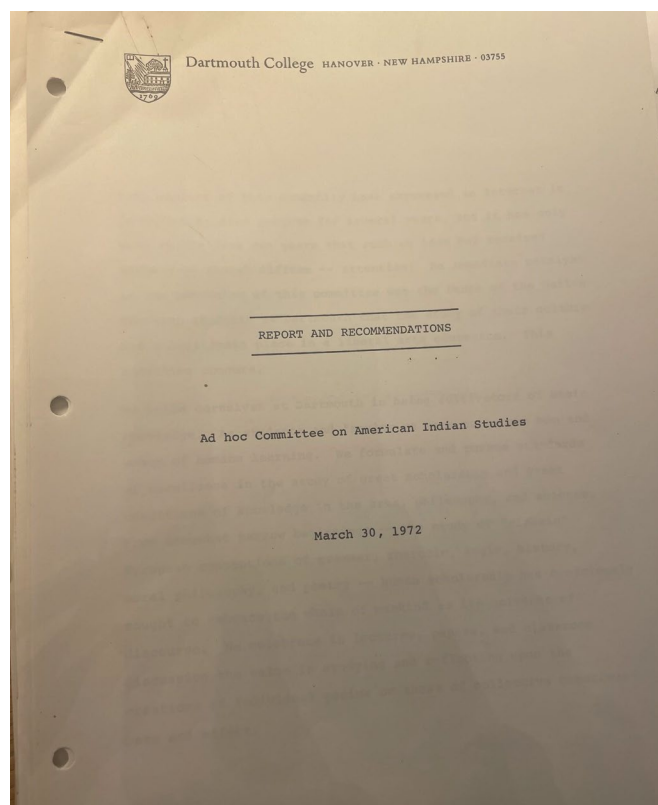


FIGURE I. The cover page for the Ad Hoc Committee on American Indian Studies' Report and Recommendations, published March 30th, 1972.

The Committee outlined an immediate and “high priority” need for Native American culture to be included in all departments in the Social Studies and Humanities. “A survey of current and proposed course offerings in the various departments indicates virtually no courses that deal substantively with the Native American experience,” said the report. Most Native American-related courses such as “The American Indian” and “Cultural Change in the Modern World” were in the Anthropology department. Meanwhile, the Education department offered a seminar in Native American education, and History offered both “The Development of Latin American Society” and “History of the American West.” Solutions to this dilemma was hiring staff willing to work with the program and a chairperson for NAS, additional FTEs¹⁴, and recruitment of faculty. The two latter solutions were required by the Committee. Cross-listing courses would also augment exposure of the content to the general student population.¹⁵

¹⁴ Full Time Equivalency

¹⁵ Cross-listing courses is when two departments co-sponsor a course. <https://www.dartmouth.edu/reg/guides/dcars/faq.html#g> The Committee also recommended that NAS be

In April, the Committee on Instruction approved the program in a motion, and set forth an additional demand. After five years of operation, the Committee on Instruction and an external committee would evaluate the “academic and budgetary status of the program.” The Faculty and Arts and Sciences – convened by President Kemeney himself confirmed the Committee’s demands the following month. Native American Studies officially began July 1st, 1972, with the first courses offered that fall. The Office of Information Services formally announced the program two days later in a press release. The Faculty’s decision was met with sentiments of hope, excitement, and wonder by Denis A. Dinan, editor of the Bulletin. He described the decision as “ingenious and unique”, and one that came with unprecedented support. According to Dinan, the decision also met with unprecedented success. “I think that it is fair to describe [the Faculty vote] as an unprecedented act of unanimity.” More importantly, the decision arrived during a time of significant academic changes at the College: the introduction of the modified major and the Choate complex and the faculty exchange with Wellesley College.

Native American Culture and Academic Integration

In Fall 1972, “Introduction to Native American Studies” was successful in reaching all four class years.¹⁶ Forty students enrolled and seventeen of them were Native American students. The newly Chairman of the program, Michael Dorris, later claimed that the NAS program “has come a long way since September, but it’s only a beginning.” Still, the burgeoning program encountered sabotage of its offerings. In a letter addressed to the Council of Special Programs, Professor M.O. Clements – also Chairman of the Committee on Instruction – suggested

cross-listed with the following departments: Anthropology, Art, Comparative Literature, Drama, Education, English, Government, History, Language Study, Music, Philosophy, Religion, and Sociology.

¹⁶ The course fulfilled the “culture area” course for anthropology and the social science (SOC) distributive.

ANTHRO 40, or “The American Indian” replace NAS 1.¹⁷ Clements argued the former would be enough for students to gain significant knowledge in Native American studies. He also suggested that another course, “The Contemporary Society” be placed under the History department.

Although Clements cited limited faculty resources as justification, his comments address Native American Studies’ legacy as misunderstood academic discipline. The impetus for Native American Studies as an academic field was to empower Native people, to address issues relating to Indian affairs, but also to acknowledge the vast accomplishments Native people have offered to the world.¹⁸ Champions of this mission include anthropologist Dr. Alfonso Ortiz and Dr. N. Scott Momaday, author of *House Made of Dawn*.¹⁹ According to Howard Bad Hand, Ortiz was also considered to chair Dartmouth’s Native American Studies. Michael Dorris was later given the position, and remained chairman until 1975.²⁰

On February 12, 1973, Dorris, himself an anthropologist, responded to Clements, arguing that Anthropology is archaeological and assumes a scientific perspective.²¹ The non-scientific focus of Native American Studies is indicative of its focus on cultural materialism. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn writes that “[Native American Studies] would emerge from within Native people's enclaves and geographies, languages and experiences.” Anthropology and History seek an isolatory view point, common in Western scholarship. Dartmouth’s “Introduction to Native American Studies” rejects this approach by drawing upon oral tradition and mythology. Beyond differences in scholarly approaches, Dorris argues that the time period for both courses is broad

¹⁷ Cook-Lynn, Elizabeth. “Who Stole Native American Studies?” *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1997, pp. 9–28. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1409161>. Accessed 27 Jul. 2022.

¹⁸ Cook-Lynn, Elizabeth. “Who Stole Native American Studies?” *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1997, pp. 9–28. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1409161>. Accessed 27 Jul. 2022.

¹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eb_WsHir-o

²⁰ **Source**

²¹

enough for them to co-exist. two courses “No one would presume to argue that all aspects of European society from 30,000 B.C. to the present should be restricted to the content of but one Dartmouth College course; is North America so different?” claims Dorris.

Native American Literature in Academia

TS: In its first eight years Native American Studies offered courses that highlighted the role of oral storytelling and literature in Native American culture. The program offered “Native American Oral Traditions” and “Native American Literature”, the latter taught by Professor Andrew Wiget and cross-listed with the English department.²² The External Committee recommended both academic areas, should they continue to work together, incorporate traditional oral literature and “a flexible course numbering system” in their teaching. The Committee encouraged the establishment of three-course block: “Introduction to Native American Literature”, “Native American Oral Traditional Literature”, and “Native American Literature.” They also recommended Dartmouth Library include Native American literature in their collections. Native American Studies Assistant Professor Andrew O. Wiget taught some of the courses, and would later publish “Native American literature” in 1985. Wiget used a \$225 grant provided from the Faculty Research Committee to fund the purchase of necessary materials such as chapbooks for this particular study. In his book, Wiget writes that “contemporary readers, forgetting the origins of Western epic” think that literature must be “written.”

Connection with the Upper Valley Community

Within its first two years, the program acknowledged the lack of academic opportunities to engage with Native American culture beyond the College. In the Winter of 1972, students taking Native American 2, or “The Native American in the Post-Contact Period” **sought to**

²² The External Review Committee Report on NAS for January 31, 1980. Also known as the 1980 Review Committee for the Native American Studies Program.

collaborate with local Hanover and Norwich primary and secondary schools.²³ The undergraduates conducted “mini-courses” for these younger students. This demonstrated a concentrated effort in expanding scholarship on Native Americans beyond the classrooms of NAS. The program was well-received, and those in charge of the program applied for a \$2,200 grant from the Spaulding-Potter Trust. The aims of the institute were the following: “acquainting these individuals [from Hanover and Norwich] with current bibliography concerning Native Americans for all levels of students.”

The Native American Language Requirement

Offering Dartmouth students a broad, but also in-depth understanding of Native American languages was another challenge for the College. In 1975, The Native American Visiting Committee – a group of alums, chosen by the President of the College, who evaluate all issues pertaining to the collectivity of the Native American Program — submitted a report to President Kemeny and the Board of Trustees on the first four years of the Native American Program.²⁴ The report highlighted the linguistic efforts (or lack thereof) in Native American Studies. According to the report, “NAS is based upon a limited number of core courses [...] dealing with the areas of Native American civilization, past and present, societies, cultures, current problems, and to a very limited degree, languages.”

By 1979, the department would seek out and later onboard linguistic professionals. Maude Sterling, fluent Cree speaker and language instructor, was approved to teach “introduction to Native American Language.” Sterling received her B.A. from Laval University, and completed graduate studies at Queen's University and McGill University. Before arriving at

²³ 5 January 1972. Dorris, Michael. Dartmouth College: Native American Studies 1972-73

²⁴ 29 May 1975. Report to the President and Trustees of Dartmouth College from The Native American Visiting Committee.

the College, she lived in Mistassini and learned the Cree language. According to her resume, she sought to write a book in Cree syllabics. By the 1979-1980 school year, the Lakota and Cree languages had been offered to students, with (the) Navajo and Mohawk languages being offered in the future. Language is imperative to preserving the historical narratives of Native American people. In 1980, the The External Review Committee, however, recommended students fulfill the language requirement with a Native American language, but made it clear this would be true for all students, not only Native American ones – a point originally made by chairman Dorris. According to the External Review Committee, Dorris “very wisely counsels students to consider their career goals in determining their choice of language study as well as their need to broaden their understanding of other cultures through the study of a foreign language.” The Review also concurred that Native American Studies should continue to offer the different methods needed to engage in Native American language such as “a course in language as culture, exchange programs with other universities possessing strong programs with other universities possessing strong programs in Native American Studies.”²⁵ The Committee also recommended, in 1980, to have a Native American language course offered every school year moving forward. In the years prior, the special program also recognized the need for languages, and began recruiting language instructors in 1973. The candidates for the position included Norman Blue from Minnesota, who taught the Sioux language at Vermillion University in South Dakota.

The Successes of Native American Studies

Native American Studies demonstrated initial success through steady undergraduate enrollment, as well as through its internship and Visiting Scholar programs. The Faculty of Arts and Science received \$37,500 and \$15,000 grants to the Visiting Scholar program and Internship

²⁵ 31 January 1980. The External Review Committee Report on Native American Studies. Professor LuVonne A. Ruoff.

program.²⁶ Mr. William Durant Jr. Executive Officer of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, claimed that “both programs have been highly successful in terms of quality and return, and [he] would hate to see them terminate.” In its first year, “Introduction to Native American Studies” attracted 38 students total, 18 of whom were Native American.²⁷ “Contemporary Society” had 39 students enrolled – making it the most populous Native American Studies course at the time. Fifteen of its students were Native Americans. The language course in the program was “Introductory Sioux”, which had 12 students enrolled with seven of them being Native American. The Visiting Scholars Program – which began in 1979 – was funded by Native American Studies, but also the Educational Foundation of America. The program’s brochure, located in the Native American Council record collection, reveals that the goal of the Visiting Scholars program is to promote Native American scholarship where there has historically been none.²⁸ Selected applicants serve one term, and are given the privileges of a visiting faculty member. They are expected to work alongside Native American Studies faculty and audit courses.

The Native American Studies also featured a notable internship program, which was commended by the 1980 Review Committee. “[The Internship program] strengthens the emic perspective about Native American cultures included in the NAS courses by providing the student with the experience of learning about Native American people through personal interaction,” the Committee reported. Students seeking Native American-related service internships through the special program were required to take at least two Native American

²⁶ Letter from Executive Officer of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Mr. William B. Durant, Jr.

²⁷ Enrollment - Native American Studies Courses. (box 1976)

²⁸ Undated. “Native American Studies Visiting Scholars Program Dartmouth College.” (Box 1976).

Studies courses.²⁹ External organizations such as the Minority Committee of Modern Language Association, the Native American Rights Fund, and the American Historical Indian Society were willing to develop these opportunities for NAS students.³⁰ In 1975, Joanna Aldrich '77, a Chicksaw, served as a research assistant at the Museum of the American Indian. According to the report to the Educational Foundation of America, Aldrich crafted a 45-page article on her tribe, after reordering the museum's collections. Another student, Susan Gillette, interned with the Alaska Native Language Center in Fairbanks, where she participated in curricular seminars in local communities and linguistic analysis. Inspired by her work, the report says that Gillette plans on attending graduate school for linguistics before returning to work in Alaska.

Solutions For the Native American Studies Program

The lack of Native American-related content in the program remains a pertinent problem for the discipline today. For the 2022-2023 school year, eight courses were cross listed with the Native American and Indigenous Studies, one of them being "Native American Literature".³¹ I argue that the Committee approved that the NAS receive review procedures allocated to Departments i.e. Departments of History, English, Environmental Studies, but also that an additional FTE is hired. NAS faculty and Advisory Committee be revised, such as an additional FTE, or "Full Time Equivalent" on faculty who must retain – at least initially – short-term appointments. The Committee recommended that short term appointments

²⁹Note: The 1980 Committee also recommended that college internship programs in Native American communities or organizations outside of NAS, also uphold the aforementioned prerequisites.

³⁰ PART II, Report to the Educational Foundation of American on Native American Programs at Dartmouth College: 1975.

³¹ According to the Department's website, Native American Studies became Native American and Indigenous Studies, or NAIS, in 2021. The measure was taken to include peoples from Central and South American, Oceania, among other regions.

The External Committee recommended that NAS remain a special program rather than a department because of the interdisciplinary nature of its curriculum. The Committee also supported the NAS faculty's recommendation that NAS offer a small faculty and small courses that would be supplemented by courses in related areas in other departments. This structure would also be supported by joint appointments to "encourage the interchange of ideas with departments and demonstrably increase the infusion of Native American content into courses offered outside NAS." At the time, the only required courses for students was NAS 1, which "focuses on traditional Native American cultures with emphasis on pre-Columbian period." The committee recommended adding additional courses that are required for students.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Native American Studies Program at Dartmouth served as a rejection of the Western approaches to academia. Dr. Valadra writes that scholar Russell Thornton defined Native American Studies, the academic discipline, as "originating from inside Indian cultures." This approach is furthermore supported by NAS Chairman Michael A. Dorris who favors an ethnohistorical perspective of evaluating Native history, rather than an anthropological one, even though Dorris was himself, an anthropology professor. Others argue that the discipline is inherently a weapon against a larger colonist narrative, which can be done through oral retellings or Native American artifacts. In their essay on the investigation of Native American materials, scholars Alyssa MT Pleasant, Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup, argue that these objects reverse our widely accepted assumptions of Native Americans in academia. They "ask [themselves] how centering spoken, image-based, material-object, and Indigenous-language texts might productively revise our respective disciplines' conceptions of literary and historical

evidence.”³² Their scholarly work suggests that using approaches rooted in Native American culture rejects the Western approaches we are acclimated to in academia. Unfortunately, our focus on Western approaches hinders our understanding of Native American peoples. As Dartmouth professor, A. LaVonne Ruoff Brown writes in *Introduction to American Indian Literatures*, “the history of American Indian literature reflects not only tribal cultures and the experience and imagination of its authors but Indian-white relations as well.”

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³² Pleasant, Alyssa MT, Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup. “Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn.” *Early American literature* 53.2 (2018): 407–444. Web.

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Report to the Alumni Council on Equal Opportunity at Dartmouth College, dated June 14, 1973

Extra:

In May, a press release from the Office of Information Services announced that NAS would begin on July 1st. A grant from Ford Foundation Venture – granted to the College two years prior thanks to President John G. Kemeny – would financially support the program.

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

DA-799: Dartmouth College, Associate Dean of Humanities records

Folder, Box: 7569 (1976-1988)

Assume this is the beginning of the department!

EXTRA:

About Michael Dorris:

Chairman Michael Dorris was an acclaimed writer, and Anthropology and Native American studies professor. He would later publish *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (1987) and *The Broken*

Cord (1989). The latter was later produced into a made-for-television movie. The film is about Dorris – played by Jimmy Smiths – who “unknowingly adopted a South Dakota Sioux Indian child with FAS in 1971, before the syndrome was widely documented in medical journals.” Dorris died in 1997, and was previously married to Louise Erdrich – an acclaimed writer and former student in the Native American Studies program.

EXTRA, UNVERIFIED:

In 1970, CEO made it college policy that the College should aim for 2-3% Native American matriculants for the Class of 1974 and beyond.³³

In 1969 – a year before Kemeny assumed office – 230 students within the Equal Opportunity Program were admitted to the College.³⁴

CEO would fund the Tucker Foundation, which according to the Alumni Council report, “played an important catalytic role in the mid-to-late Sixties as the College moved in a major way to exercise its responsibility for equal opportunity.”

. This is separate from cross-listing courses. The Committee also recommends cross-listing courses with NAS. The Committee also recommends that NAS be cross-listed with the following departments: Anthropology, Art, Comparative Literature, Drama, Education, English, Government, History, Language Study, Music, Philosophy, Religion, and Sociology.

³³ Source????

³⁴ 10 October 1969. Equal Opportunity: Report on Five Basic Areas.