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Indigenous Women, Mother Tongues, and Nation Building in New England: A Tribal Policy Leadership Series

Amy Den Ouden

University of Massachusetts Boston, amy.denouden@umb.edu

Chris Bobel

University of Massachusetts Boston, chris.bobel@umb.edu

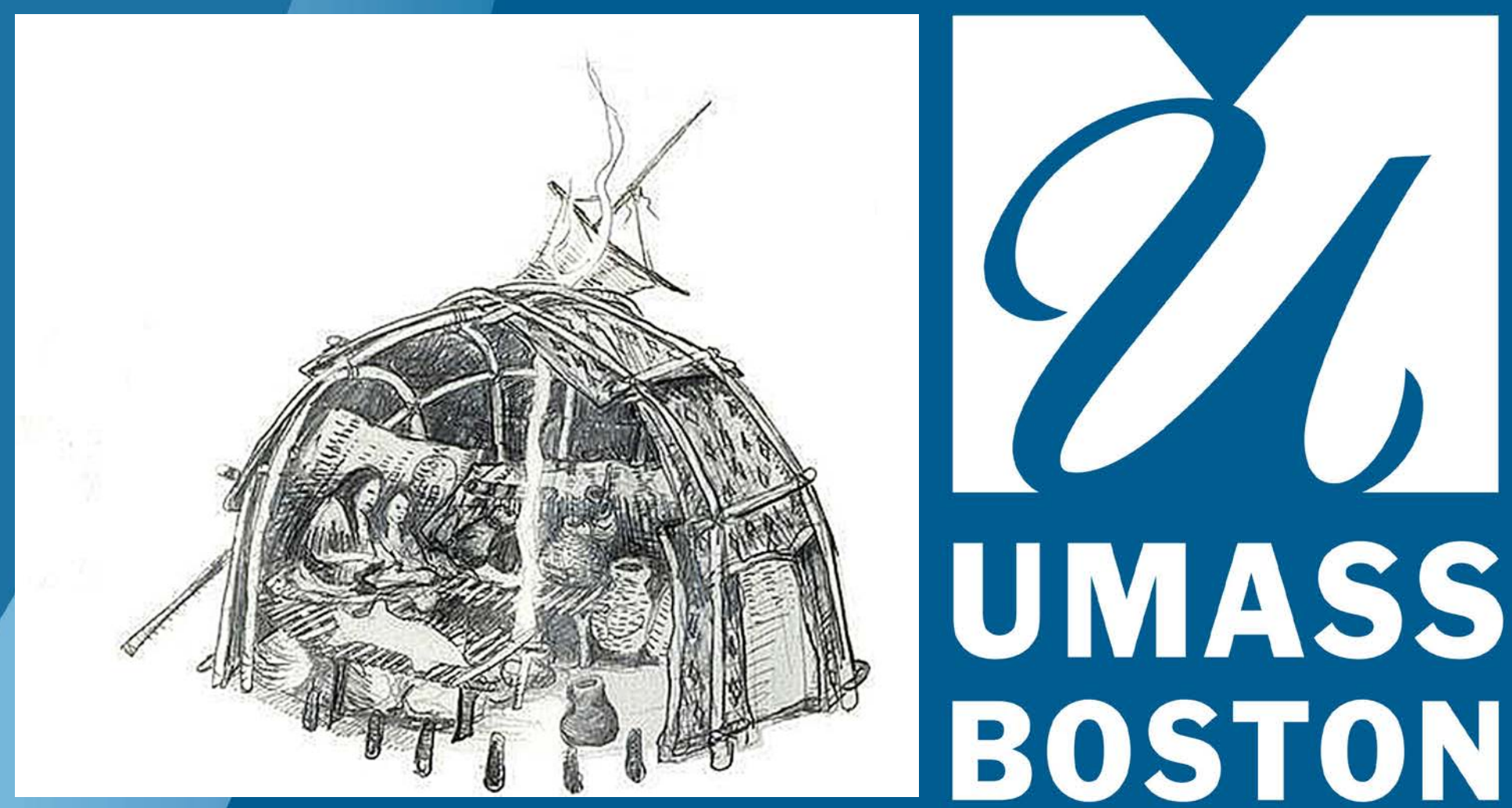
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Indigenous Women, Mother Tongues, and Nation Building in New England: A Tribal Policy Leadership Series

Amy Den Ouden and Chris Bobel, Department of Women's and Gender Studies

Summary/Abstract

In collaboration with the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project (WLRP), Indigenous women educators and leaders, the Dept. of Women's and Gender Studies is redesigning WOST/WGS 270, Native American Women in North America, to incorporate a lecture series on nation building and a semester-long community engagement project fostering student leadership in a research and policy formation project focused on legislating and funding a Native American language education law in Massachusetts.

Goals and Objectives

- 1) Enrich students' understanding of Tribal multilingualism, cultures, and nations
- 2) Promote civic leadership and policy advocacy for educational equity and mother tongue language rights among student and Tribal communities
- 3) Support intergenerational Native American language revitalization and bilingual literacy development for Wôpanâak immersion charter school K-1 students
- 4) Provide forums for interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research and policy exchange



Results/Impacts

Expected Results and Impacts Fall 2014

- Concrete opportunities for active student involvement in community-based, Indigenous-led advocacy and policy research projects;
- Enhanced student awareness of regional Tribal Nations and ancient traditions of female leadership in community and ceremony;
- Student and Tribal community collaboration to design and advance a legislative outreach and policy agenda;
- Improved library and bilingual literacy resources for an endangered language (Wôpanâak) community's education programs and charter school students

Approaches and Methods

- Tribal Leader Policy Lectures w/ Q&A
- Civic Engagement Leadership Training
- Language Revitalization Best Practices
- Participatory (Legislative) Action Research
- Community-Based Workshops
- Community-Based Cultural Exchanges



Conclusion/Next Steps

While WOST/WGS 270 is being redesigned to incorporate myriad enriching learning experiences in a range of issues critical to Indigenous nation building and the practice of sovereign governance, endangered Native American languages lie at the heart of contemporary Tribal struggles to retain and perpetuate Tribal identities and sustain nationhood. Indigenous language preservation policies and revitalization activities will therefore serve as the key thematic strand woven throughout student instruction and community engagement activities.

References and Resources

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Ourmothertongues.org

Partnership Information

Department of Women's and Gender Studies
Amy Den Ouden, Associate Professor and Chris Bobel, Chair

Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project
Jennifer Weston (Lakota), Charter Coordinator & Trustee
Nitana Hicks (Wampanoag), Curriculum Manager

Emily Jones, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing
Ruth Torres (Schaghticoke), Public Policy Specialist

Contact: Amy.Denouden@umb.edu and JWeston@wlrp.org