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This project grows out of my longstanding relationships with Native American educators in the state of Oregon as well as a conviction that Willamette University can play a very important role in this mandated transition away from Indian mascots. This conviction is shared with OIEA members, who have asked for our institution's support in this work. The project, as outlined above, is in the first stage of what will be a four year project. While I have been aware of the Indian mascot issue for decades, I have not conducted research in this area. So, for me it is a new area of inquiry. The project relates directly to my long-standing concerns with the public understanding of Native American history and contemporary life, representations of and by Native people, and racial reconciliation.

In addition to LARC, we are hoping to receive external support for the research in 2013 and beyond. However, no funding is yet secured, and we are hoping that LARC support will provide us with the leverage to access other grant sources. The OIEA has applied to the Meyer Memorial Trust for a grant that would provide some funding for this project and we should know of the status of that grant by March 2013. It would assist with the direct costs (transportation, gifts) for the field research, but would not cover student stipends or living expenses. The Mascot Project is related to a larger Oregon Tribal Histories and Sovereignty Curriculum Design Project supported by the Gates Foundation. One possible outcome of a successful LARC 2013 project could be support from Gates or other foundations to extend the project into multiple years.

The structure of this project is deeply collaborative. Instead of each faculty and student member doing entirely separate projects, we will all work on the Community Listening Project together and contribute complementary components. My intention is to work with Professor Richards and the four students in spring 2013 to begin the background research and to organize the summer research agenda. Richards and I will encourage students to incorporate background research into their spring 2013 coursework when possible (for Villa and Gutierrez, AES Theory and Methods, for example). In spring 2013, we will identify each student's focus contribution (see below). In the first two weeks of the summer project, we will begin with training in ethnographic methods (e.g., participant observation, interviewing, and focus groups) and rhetorical analysis. Simultaneously, students (with our help) will schedule and organize the community visits. Then in the third week, we will conduct the first visit. We will pause a week for debriefing and analysis, before continuing with the other two communities in weeks five and six. The next two weeks will be devoted to analysis and report writing and the final week will be focused upon the preliminary development of activity-based workshops for school administrators and communities (to be delivered in fall 2013, in Salem). We will structure the project so that each student will have a stand-alone product as well as be a co-author on the collective report.

Ultimately, we hope that this Indian Mascot Community Listening Project can be a model for the state and beyond, with immediate application in nearby Washington state, which is also considering a mascot ban. The collaboration between undergraduates and faculty at Willamette with the OIEA and school districts will also nurture a Native American Community-public schools-University interaction that Willamette can build upon for the future.