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I write with enthusiasm and intrigue at the prospect of participating in the Indian Mascot Community Listening Project. This project seems like the ideal setting to combine my skills, experiences, identities, and interests with those of my LARC community members to help envision alternative community identity in Oregon public schools.

I am interested in pursuing a life path that encourages me to incorporate activism, feminism, anti-racism, decolonization, and popular education into my work. I am passionate about facilitation and education techniques that affirm and combine multiple and collective truths. I intentionally challenge myself every day to be a better listener, because I believe that every person has something to teach me. Experiences in classes this semester have taught me to not be afraid to ask tough questions—and have challenged me to really listen to the answers, instead of hearing only what I want to hear. I also have been challenged to explain my convictions with easy-to-understand words, instead of reciting theoretical jargon. I think my drive to intentionally continue honing these listening and speaking skills will be valuable to our LARC community.

I am humbled every time I spend time interacting with Chemawa Indian School students' beauty, humor, and resistance, and I look forward to entering both native and non-native communities in Oregon with humbled ears and heart. One part of this project that absolutely thrills me is our collaboration with the Oregon Indian Education Association, a powerful collective of passionate Native educators. I am also excited to build professional and personal relationships with Professors Dobkins and Koenig Richards. I see them as two powerful academics that are plugged into communities at WU and beyond. Although I have only met Prof. Koenig Richards recently, but I see both as potential mentors and friends.

I look forward to complicating my understanding of community. As I have learned in my Native American and Indigenous Film class this semester, even seemingly "simple" things like water (or a school mascot) are highly contested within and among groups who live in a geopolitical community together. Our LARC community's research will center the listening project in particular geopolitical communities within Oregon's borders, while also reaching beyond and challenging state borders by researching the best practices of other states.

I have grant-writing experience, and I enjoy doing research and editing. I also have experience in planning and facilitating workshops for Take-a-Break and Community 101. Although I would love to (and will) support my co-collaborators in all of our work, I would be most interested using the event planning skills I have acquired at Willamette to assume leadership in reaching out to and organizing interviews within particular communities. Logistics, scheduling, and hospitality are some of my other skills that I think would be applicable to this project. I also look forward to beginning prep-work on this project during the spring semester in Theory and Methods in American Ethnic Studies.