



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities application guidelines at

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-tribal-colleges-and-universities>

for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title:           The Louise Erdrich Reading Project  
Institution:            Turtle Mountain Community College  
Project Director:      Larry Henry  
Grant Program:        Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities

Abstract.....	2
Introduction .....	3
Intellectual Rationale.....	3
Intended Audience.....	4
Improvement in Quality of Humanities Teaching.....	4
Content and Design.....	5
Humanities Content.....	5
Project Activities.....	5
Project Personnel.....	7
Staff members.....	7
Consultants.....	9
Institutional Context.....	9
Relationship to Mission/History/Students.....	9
TMCC Humanities Program and Resources.....	10
Followup and Dissemination.....	10
Long-Term Impact.....	11
Evaluation.....	11
Project Work Plan.....	14
Preliminary Book List.....	16
L. Erdrich email.....	17
Z. Peltier resume and letter.....	18
L. Henry resume.....	21
M. Johnson resume and letter.....	22
C. Lamb resume and letter.....	24
K. DeMarr resume and letter.....	27
L. LaFountain resume and letter.....	30
B. Bercier resume and letter.....	33
K. Henry resume and letter.....	37
The Institution.....	39

## Project Summary

Turtle Mountain Community College is proposing a two year humanities initiative designed to create a bridge between humanities courses and the reservation community. Academic coursework is usually separated from the world in which TMCC students live. The relevance of the courses is expected to foster student engagement in learning and encourage students to choose more humanities courses.

For TMCC, and most other tribal colleges, a continuing concern is how to make education relevant to its students. Most textbooks for Humanities courses focus on the mainstream population. Larger minority populations are increasingly included, but Native Americans continue to be a footnote. Available Native American resources focus heavily on history up to and including the Federal treaty era. Either materials are very outdated or perpetuate stereotypes of the Native American locked in the frontier era. Few materials are available with a more current context relevant to the students.

TMCC will use the works of author Louise Erdrich to improve the quality of humanities instruction. Ms. Erdrich, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band, is an author who has won the National Book Critics Award, the National Book Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She has written thirteen novels, poetry volumes, short stories and children's books. Key to the selection of her works is the reservation locale and the books have characters to which students can relate. Utilizing these books will allow the Humanities Instructors to incorporate materials into their classes which will bridge the students and mainstream course content disconnect. The project includes three components.

In the Core Development component, the works of Louise Erdrich will be used to support integration into existing humanities courses, develop two new courses (Creative Writing and the Works of Louise Erdrich), and began the process of gathering supplemental materials about the Turtle Mountains. The latter will provide materials for the project impacted courses as well as lay the groundwork for integration into other courses. It will also provide a permanent resource of materials for student research.

In the Faculty Development component, instructors will be provided an opportunity to engage in guided academic discussions with their peers. It will strengthen critical inquiry skills through the development of first person and documented materials providing new scholarly research opportunities. Faculty will be provided assistance in integrating Turtle Mountain materials to enrich the Humanities program at TMCC.

In the wider impact component, this project will serve as a model of integration for other TMCC disciplines and will provide an opportunity for all instructors and students to participate in an author lecture to encourage academic debate within the institutional community

Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) is a tribally controlled post-secondary institution chartered by the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and accredited by the Commission on Higher Learning of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Established in 1972, the college has an average enrollment of 600 students with 95% being Native American. The college provides higher education services primarily targeted to the Turtle Mountain reservation in north central North Dakota. It awards certificates of completion, associate degrees and bachelor degrees in elementary education, in secondary science and early childhood education. It is primarily rural and almost exclusively serves students from the reservation and surrounding county. TMCC is a charter member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

TMCC is proposing a two year humanities initiative designed to create a bridge between humanities courses and the reservation community. Academic coursework is usually separated from the world in which TMCC students live. The relevance of the courses is expected to foster student engagement in learning and encourage students to choose more humanities courses.

### **Intellectual Rationale**

Central Issue - For TMCC, and most other tribal colleges, a continuing concern is how to make education relevant to its students. Most textbooks for Humanities courses focus on the mainstream population. Larger minority populations are increasingly included, but Native Americans continue to be a footnote. TMCC instructors actively seek information to supplement mainstream materials; however, they have found the period most extensively covered in resource materials is up to and including the Federal treaty era. Either materials are very outdated or perpetuate stereotypes of the Native American locked in the frontier era. Few materials are available with a more current context relevant to the students. With neither a Native American

nor reservation of today focus, it is difficult for students to relate to Humanities courses.

The ability of instructors to provide more relevant instruction is often hindered by the lack of materials specific to the Turtle Mountain people in the campus library. The library's Turtle Mountain holdings are largely related to the Tribal Code with a few sources from the treaty era. Most of the available material speaks to Native Americans generally with a smaller number speaking to Chippewa people. It should be noted that Chippewa people are generally referred to as being one of the Woodland tribes. Before the reservation system, the people of the Turtle Mountains had already moved onto the plains and began incorporating elements of Plains cultures. The culture became a combination of old woodlands teaching with the plains elements necessary for survival. As a consequence, what describes Chippewa may not fit here.

Intended Audience – The intended audience is the 600 member student body of TMCC. The TMCC student body is more than 95% Native American with more than 90% of all students being low income. Fifty three percent (53%) are over 24 years of age. Nearly half have dependent children. The intended audience will also include the community at large by the development of valid materials about the Turtle Mountain people and through opportunities to participate in the humanities dialogue.

Improvement in Quality of Humanities Teaching and Learning – The impact on Humanities teaching and learning is expected to occur on two levels. The most obvious is student learning. As previously stated, this project will provide more relevant humanities content for the TMCC student. At the same time, it will foster an academic atmosphere which encourages students to critically examine the reservation within the contexts of historic factors and current conditions. Students will be encouraged to go beyond the classroom to find local source materials.

This project will also impact the quality of humanities teaching by providing instructors

with a solid foundation for humanities classes. This will provide an expanding resource which can be incorporated into lectures and used to foster student critical inquiry projects and classroom discussion.

### **Content and Design**

Humanities Content - TMCC will use the works of author Louise Erdrich to improve the quality of humanities instruction. Ms. Erdrich, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band, is an author who has won the National Book Critics Award, the National Book Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She has written thirteen novels, poetry volumes, short stories and children's books. Key to the selection of her works is the reservation locale and the books have characters to which students can relate. Utilizing these books will allow the Humanities Instructors to incorporate materials into their classes which will bridge the students and mainstream course content disconnect.

Project Activities – This project has three components designed to maximize the impact. These are core development, faculty development and community impact.

In the *Core Development* component, TMCC proposes to use the Louise Erdrich books as a vehicle to support integration into existing courses, new course development and the compilation of supplemental materials. In the integration area, it would include the Freshman Composition, Introduction to Humanities, Speech, Children's Literature, Women and Literature, Fine Arts (an appreciation of using the familiar to write novels) and Abnormal Psychology. These courses would utilize selections from Louise Erdrich's novels as a basis for class discussions and assignments. New course development would include a Creative Writing course which would incorporate exploring the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction (where and how truth enter fiction and vice versa). Students in this class will focus on narrative writing using

community source material (ancestry, history, heritage and culture) to enhance their writing. A second new course would be a literature course titled Works of Louise Erdrich.

In the third area of core development, supplemental materials will be gathered by instructors and possibly students to develop a body of supplemental material about the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, past and present. These materials would be housed in the archives section of the library and would be available as reference materials to students, faculty and the community.

In the second component, TMCC proposes *Faculty Development* to assist instructors in developing the skills needed for the success of this project. TMCC sees this as encompassing three areas. First, professional development will be facilitated through a faculty book club which not only explores Louise Erdrich's works, but also gives instructors an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions about which elements should be added to the curriculum. As a small rural college with a total academic instructional staff of twenty three (23), TMCC is unable to afford significant opportunities for its instructors to participate in academic discussions with peers. In addition to an in-depth study, the instructors would also have the opportunity to participate in critical inquiry projects supporting humanities research and the development of a body of first person and documented materials providing significant new scholarly research opportunities.

Secondly, instructors will learn from their peers on how Humanities content added to other areas will enrich TMCC academics by helping students make the connection between education and themselves. As will be discussed later, the integration of the Turtle Mountain history and culture is part of the institutional mission. The development of a wider base of knowledge will strengthen the institution's efforts to integrate humanities content specific to the

Turtle Mountains across the curriculum.

This component will also support the development and implementation of faculty orientation materials to provide new faculty with an understanding of the community. This will avoid cultural missteps and aid in faculty retention.

The third component is the *Potential Wider Impact*. This will include the provision of humanities programs for the TMCC college audience formatted around an author lecture to encourage academic debate within the institutional community. In keeping with its role as a community college, this would be open to the community. Faculty participation in this activity will aid students in viewing faculty as role models for critical thinking.

### **Project Personnel**

Staff members - This project will utilize a project director and six instructional staff all of whom will be part time. Resumes may be found in the appendix. The *Project Director* will be responsible for overall coordination of project and maintaining the documentation of activities. The director will handle scheduling of project activities and be the liaison between the project and the consultants. As part of the duties, the director will schedule facilities and provide notification to all participants. TMCC sees the director as being the person responsible effective and timely completion of the project activities.

Larry Henry, the Academic Dean, will serve as the project director. His role is seen as critical to the project because of the impact on curriculum and teaching. He is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Tribe and holds a Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Science from University of North Dakota. As Academic Dean, he chairs the Academic Standards Committee which approves all curriculums at TMCC. This is the area in which his expertise will benefit the project.

*Instructors* – Six instructors will be involved in core project activities. They will form the guided book club group and be responsible for the integration of materials into existing humanities courses. They will provide leadership to the supplemental materials research and will support other non-humanities faculty in the integration of Turtle Mountain culture and heritage into other disciplines.

Margaret Johnson is an English Instructor. She has a Masters degree in English. She is the departmental chair for Arts and Humanities. She has been actively involved in other projects including a service learning grant which developed curriculum and student awareness about diabetes and a Big Read project for junior high students. She is expected to provide leadership in tandem with Mr. Henry and will be a key to informing other non-project instructors of project activities and progress through faculty meetings. Dr. Carmelita Lamb is the chair of the Teacher Education program which prepares elementary, early childhood and secondary science teachers. The involvement of teacher education is critical to the expansion of the wider impact of the grant as it will provide assistance to students in understanding and integrating cultural materials as they complete teacher preparation. Kristin DeMarr is the Arts and Humanities Instructor. She will have primary responsibility for the development of the new creative writing course. Ms. DeMarr has a Master of Arts in English with a Writing Emphasis. Les LaFountain is the Social Science Instructor. An enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, he has a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Sciences. He will provide leadership in developing the Faculty Orientation materials and will serve as a resource for other instructors. Brian Bercier is the Psychology instructor. An enrolled Tribal member, he has a Master of Arts degree and is currently pursuing his doctorate. His primary role will be the integration of materials into the Psychology classes as well as liaison with older tribal

members. Kathy Henry is the Early Childhood Education instructor. She is the wife and mother of enrolled members. She has a Masters degree in Educational Leadership and twenty-five years of teaching experience including eight at the postsecondary level. She will be involved in integration of materials into the teacher education courses.

Consultants – This project will utilize two consultants. Ms. Louise Erdrich will provide authorial support to the project. She is expected to discuss with instructors which books and/or specific passages would be most appropriate to the project. She would also provide presentations to selected humanities classes during a visit to campus. Because her home is more than 500 miles from the college, TMCC will work with her on the use of telecommunications (including Skype) which will facilitate more effective use of her time.

Zelma Peltier will lead the book club and serve as a resource in the integration of cultural materials. Ms. Peltier, who is a Tribal Council Member, has fourteen years of experience as a postsecondary indigenous language instructor. She has a Bachelor of Science from St. Benedict College in Indiana. Ms. Peltier is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and an elder. Her background and ties to the community will prove to be a valuable asset to both the book club and subsequent integration of materials.

### **Institutional Context**

Relationship to Mission/History/Students – This project impacts the TMCC Mission which says in part, “By creating an academic environment in which the cultural and social heritage of the TMBCI is brought to bear throughout the curriculum”. Institutional Goal #3 speaks to providing in and out of class opportunities to discover the nature of Indian society, its history, variation, current and future patterns, needs, and to serve as a contributing member toward its maintenance and betterment. This project is fully compatible with the Institutional Mission by enhancing the

academic environment through Native American specific material. Further, students will be challenged to question many of the critical social issues of the reservation and reflect on the changes that have occurred that directly influence the social fabric of the Turtle Mountains and its people.

TMCC Humanities Program and Resources - In addition to the humanities courses offered at most colleges, such as Introduction to Humanities, Fine Arts and Aesthetics, Music Appreciation, Introduction to Fiction, and Children's Literature, TMCC also offers humanities classes that are relevant to the culture and heritage of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. Some of these courses include Pow Wow Organization, Turtle Mountain Legends and Lore, American Indian Games, Chippewa Jingle Dress, Grass Dance Outfit, Traditional Hide tanning, Beadwork, Quilting, Drum Making, Native Arts and Crafts, Traditional Use of Plants, Chippewa Cree Language, Ojibwa Language, Language Immersion Camp, and Beginning Fiddle. While a few of the cultural classes are taught by full-time instructors, many are taught by adjunct instructors who often are not academics. The focus of most of the cultural classes is on the cultural heritage of the reservation, and students often do not see or appreciate the connection between the past and their lives today.

Institutional Support – TMCC has previously supported the integration of language and culture into the curriculum, but with the limitations on current material available, this has largely dealt with information up to the treaty era. The institution will provide support for the involvement of non-project instructors by facilitating in-service and supporting integration activities. The TMCC archives will provide designated space to house supplemental materials and will provide public access to those materials.

**Follow-up and Dissemination** - For documentation, the project will prepare: a) Display booths

to disseminate project information during conferences including brochures, pamphlets, and posters; b) electronic dissemination to include PowerPoint presentation of how the project was implemented; c) a link from the TMCC website to the project; d) displaying disseminated information on the project using social media such as Facebook. As part of the dissemination effort, the college will utilize the following forums to reach other tribal college: The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) annual conference; The North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges (NDATC) during monthly meetings; and the Tribal College Journal which is published quarterly.

Long Term Impact – The primary long term impact will be the development of curriculum materials which enhance the academic climate and foster connection between the lives of students and education. This connection is facilitated with the inclusion of materials to which students of TMCC can readily relate. It will increase student engagement in education and support increased retention. It will provide an opportunity currently unavailable for instructors to engage in scholarly discussions and to develop more appropriate curriculum.

Equally important, the long term impact will be to provide the college with a documented archive of tribal social and cultural material with a primary focus from the post-treaty era to the present. This material will provide an invaluable resource for current and future instructors, students and the community for scholarly research and education.

**Evaluation** - This project will utilize evaluation as a tool to monitor progress and generate data for continuous program improvement. An internal evaluation will monitor the progress in the implementation of the project. Its primary purposes are 1) to ensure activities are undertaken within timeframes 2) that the project is meeting the grant purpose and 3) that appropriate programmatic and fiscal documentation is maintained. The evaluation will be undertaken by

Kellie Hall, the TMCC Vice-President and Larretta Hall, the Sponsored Programs Officer.

The evaluation will utilize the Indigenous Evaluation Framework developed under sponsorship of the National Science Foundation. The Indigenous Evaluation Framework is based on the evaluator telling a story about the program and its components reframing the basic elements of evaluation using metaphors and terms more familiar to indigenous framing. There are four components to an Indigenous Evaluation:

1) creating the story using an inclusive process, describe the story the program tells, diagram or draw the major relationships in the story; describe how activities relate to desired outcomes, identify assumptions about relationships between activities and outcomes and develop the key elements to explore as the story unfolds using questions or evaluative statements.

2) Building a Scaffolding for the Evaluation by employing keen observation and interpretation of individual and communal experiences through the use of multiple approaches to explore the story; both qualitative and quantitative methods. Identify methods, sources and a schedule for gathering information. Construct a blueprint to guide the implementation of the evaluation.

3) Gather information by considering issues of cultural and community appropriateness for each method. Look for and use approaches that fit within an Indigenous value system such as authentic assessment and appreciative inquiry.

4) Interpret and share information using appropriate analysis techniques for qualitative and quantitative data. Organize evaluation findings to meet the needs of multiple audiences. Use the knowledge created through the evaluation to move forward and improve services.

This model was chosen as it applies to Native American projects and more importantly will produce evaluation documents which are easily understood by Native American educators and non-educators. This is important as the evaluation is intended to serve as part of the

documentation of the project and is likely to be distributed to other tribal groups who seek to duplicate this effort. By seeing how the project shapes community attitudes toward relevance of education, TMCC will be provided with a sound basis which can be applied to future curriculum integration efforts involving other instructors.

Project Work Plan

Activity	Time Frame	Responsibility	Outcome
Identify cadre of instructors who will participate	Pre-grant – Jan 2014	Project Director	Core group established
Develop initial list of books for book club discussion	Feb, 2014 – April, 2014	Director, Instructor, Book Club leader and author	Starting list of works identified and materials ordered
Provide training to faculty in book club format and expectations	April and May, 2014	Book Club Leader	Instructors have skills and expectations for book club
Convene Book Club	June, 2014 to Aug, 2014	Book Club Leader, Director and faculty	Discussion on applicability of books
Develop list of book sections to be integrated into existing classes based on book club discussion	Sept 2014	Faculty with Director, author and Book Club Leader	Passages for integration identified
Develop list of books to be used in the two new courses	Sept, 2014	Arts and Humanities and English Instructor with author	Basis for two new courses established
Review available supplemental materials	June, 2014 to Sept, 2014	Director with Book Club leader	Inventory of available materials
Identify areas where supplemental material is needed and prioritize	Sept to Oct, 2014	Director with instructors	Priority list completed
Material integrated in existing courses	Sept 2014 to Dec 2015	Instructors with Director	Courses revised
Plan for supplemental materials collection developed and what training needs to be done for collectors	Oct 2014	Director	Collection plan completed
Development of new courses with institutional approval	Oct, 2014 to May 2015	Arts and Humanities and English Instructor with Director and Academic Standards Committee	New courses ready to be offered
Provide material collection training as identified in supplemental materials plan	Jan 2015 to June 2016	Director and college resources as needed	Instructors have appropriate skills for supplemental materials collection
Collection of supplemental materials	May 2015 to Dec 2015	Director and instructors	Supplemental materials collection expanded

Activity	Time Frame	Responsibility	Outcome
Author presentations for classes	Nov 2014 to Dec 2015	Author, director, instructors	Expansion of course materials through author led discussions and input from students and faculty
Face to face author lectures and community presentation	Sept 2015	Author with director and instructors	Author led discussion with students
Assessment of impact	Dec 2015	Director with Vice President and Sponsored Programs Officer	Evaluation of project
Final Report	Dec 2015	Director	Project Closed

## Preliminary Book List

All books in the Preliminary Book List were authored by Louise Erdrich and will be used for the Guided Book Club.

### Adult

1. Love Medicine – Her debut novel. Fictional saga of two families over fifty years.
2. Tracks – Historical novel combining time of Indian land erosion with strong characters
3. The Plague of Doves – Formed by an unsolved farm family murder, this novel brings together the reservation and white communities through vengeance and distortions
4. The Antelope Wife – The New York Times – describes this book as “A fiercely imagined tale of love and loss, a story that manages to transform tragedy into comic redemption, sorrow into heroic survival.

### Children

1. The Birch Bark House – nineteenth century girl’s story told from the perspective of a Native American
2. Chickadee – the story of brothers who are separated and their journey to reunite

## The Institution

Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) was established by tribal charter in 1972 as a two year tribal college. It was created by Tribal members, who returned to the Reservation after attending mainstream colleges, envisioned locally provided higher education services less impersonal and "generic" than those available at mainstream colleges and universities. They envisioned a college able to reinforce traditional Chippewa culture.

In 1984, TMCC attained full accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. As one of the first six tribal colleges, it was a charter member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). TMCC has been an advocate of the tribal college movement and assisted other Tribes in developing local colleges. It is a 1994 Land Grant College. It has articulation agreements with the State, private and tribal colleges in North Dakota.

TMCC offers Baccalaureate degrees in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education and Secondary Science; an Associate of Arts; an Associate of Science; an Associate of Applied Science; and vocational certificates. TMCC offers about 168 courses per term providing an opportunity for students in any program of study to carry a full-time class load. The catalog lists 398 courses which are offered over a two year period during regular terms and summer sessions.

TMCC students are drawn almost exclusively from the reservation and surrounding Rolette County. The Reservation is located at the geographic center of North America with the northern border paralleling the U.S./Canadian border 10 miles north. It is a small hilly, wooded area surrounded by prairie. Unique among Plains area reservations, the Reservation is densely populated with nearly 16,000 people living on the 6 by 12 mile reservation.

Ninety percent of the students are Native American. It enrolls an average of 600 full time equivalents each year. In 2012, it conferred 146 Bachelors and Associate Degrees and 33 vocational certificates. TMCC has 34 full-time faculty of whom 24 are academic instructors.

TMCC began operations in a shared space in a single building in Belcourt. Over the next twenty-two years it grew to encompass a four-acre site with eight buildings. These buildings continue to house vocational rehabilitation, adult education/GED and some Career and Technical programs. In 1999 the initial phase of a new campus was completed on a 123 acre site north of Belcourt. The current facility's 105,000 square feet of space includes instructional lecture and lab rooms, science classrooms and labs. The facility also houses the administrative offices, a student union, a college/community library and archives, a learning resource center and an adult education center. The college also has a 105 acre campus named the Anishinabe Center. This house the USDA land grant programs and cultural programs.