



## Five College Consortium awarded \$2.5 million for Native and Indigenous Studies

Five Colleges, Incorporated has been awarded a \$2.5 million, four-year grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to help its member campuses transform how they approach Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS), with the goal of enhancing teaching, learning and scholarship in the field. The grant is one of the largest made by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the consortium to date, and is also one of the consortium's largest grant awards from any funder in its 50-year history.

"We are honored to receive this funding from the Mellon Foundation," said Sarah Pfatteicher, executive director of Five Colleges. "This award represents the Mellon Foundation's continued support for the consortium and the significant work our member campuses are doing to advance the humanities in service of society. Importantly, it also recognizes our efforts to build sustained, reciprocal relationships with Native American scholars and communities, and will support further efforts in this area.

The Five College campuses – Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts Amherst – are located in the *Kwinatekw* (Connecticut River) Valley, which has historically been a crossroads of Indigenous nations. Today it remains a central gathering place for NAIS scholars as well as for Native American and Indigenous leaders, artists, writers and activists. "With this remarkable grant we want to honor, humbly and respectfully, this history of being a space where people's pathways converge," said Pfatteicher.

Called *Gathering at the Crossroads: Building Native American and Indigenous Studies at the Five College Consortium*, the effort will allow the campuses to develop and establish a set of new academic pathways for students interested in Native American and Indigenous Studies – supported by new faculty, new courses and new course modules – as well as create new advising structures to guide students through these academic options. The grant includes funding to bring a variety of scholars and Indigenous experts to the campuses to collaborate in this work.

"We are thankful to Mellon and thrilled to expand NAIS's reach and programming," said Professor Laura Furlan, faculty member at the University of Massachusetts and chair of the long-standing Five College Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) Committee. "This truly is an exciting time to be a part of NAIS in the Valley."

Amherst College professors Lisa Brooks and Kiara Vigil, both longtime members of Five College NAIS, shared a joint statement. "For many years a hallmark of the Five College Native American and Indigenous Studies program has been an abiding commitment to collaboration and community building," they wrote. "We are excited about the opportunity this Mellon Grant offers us to further build and extend that collaboration and community, providing additional needed support to nurture these ongoing efforts, which will enable future intellectual and cultural work within the Five Colleges, throughout the *Kwinatekw* Valley, and across a wider Native network."

Work on this project begins this month.

Based in Amherst, Massachusetts, [Five Colleges, Incorporated](#), is a nonprofit educational consortium created in 1965 to advance the extensive educational and cultural objectives of its member institutions—[Amherst](#), [Hampshire](#), [Mount Holyoke](#) and [Smith](#) Colleges and the [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#).

### For more information, contact

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