

July 11, 2023

ITEM 207-1002-R0723

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies on Rosalyn LaPier – University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Rosalyn LaPier from the faculty of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for her 12 years of dedicated and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon her by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Professor LaPier retired with 22 years of experience in higher education. She earned her Ph.D. in history from the University of Montana and taught at the University of Montana for 12 years; 10 years with the Environmental Studies Program (EVST) and 2 years with Native American Studies. Prior to coming to UM Dr. LaPier taught for 10 years at NAES (Native American Education Services) College, a private Native American run college. Dr. LaPier is the first enrolled Blackfeet tribal member to earn tenure and become a full professor at the University of Montana.

Professor LaPier's scholarship, service, and teaching exemplified UM's mission to "generate world-class research and creative scholarship.... to build and sustain diverse communities."

Professor LaPier's scholarship while at UM was outstanding and brought significant recognition to the University. She published two award-winning books, peer-reviewed journal articles and dozens of publicly engaged articles. Dr. LaPier's second book *Invisible Reality* focused on the religious and environmental history of the Blackfeet tribe of Montana. It won two major national book awards and has been widely used in classrooms in the state and across the U.S. and Canada. Dr. LaPier was selected for prestigious academic fellowships while at UM, including at the Harvard Divinity School and with the American Council of Learned Societies. Dr. LaPier gave numerous keynote addresses, including at Harvard University, Princeton University, Brown University, tribal colleges, universities across the U.S. and Canada, and national research centers.

Professor LaPier was regularly interviewed as an expert in Indigenous Knowledge and environmental issues in the media at the local, regional, and national level. In her final year before retiring, Dr. LaPier was interviewed for the Ken Burns film "The American Bison," which will premiere on PBS in October 2023.

Professor LaPier's service while at UM was outstanding. On the national level she served two terms on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), a federal advisory committee to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and they honored her with a service award. She co-founded the National Coalition of Native American Language Schools and Programs (NCNALSP), while at UM, and helped write federal legislation that supports the revitalization of Native American languages. At UM she served on the Faculty Senate, the University Faculty Association (UFA) board, and numerous campus committees. She was regularly asked to speak to

Native American and non-Native American community groups, college and university classes, at UM, around the state of Montana, and across the United States.

Professor LaPier was a successful and well-regarded teacher. While at UM she developed five (5) new courses, one (1) internship and one (1) certificate. She developed a new focus area within the Environmental Studies program: "Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Sustainability." She advised graduate and undergraduate students, and assisted them to receive prestigious fellowships, including from the National Science Foundation. Both her graduate and undergraduate courses were popular and well-subscribed. Dr. LaPier's exceptional teaching made her nationally prominent. She was invited to participate in the Linton-Poodry Leadership Institute (hosted by the American Association for the Advancement in Science & Society Advancing Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) in Washington, DC. She served as the invited keynote at the University of Wisconsin's conference on teaching and learning for their faculty from across the state with more than 1,000 attending.

Professor LaPier's scholarship, service and teaching rose to the level of national and international recognition while at UM, which UM honored her for with the George M. Dennison Faculty Award for Distinguished Accomplishment and featured her in the Montanan Magazine.

The Environmental Studies Program is pleased to nominate Professor Rosalyn LaPier for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

None