University of Montana hires Blackfeet professor

The University of Montana has hired enrolled Blackfeet tribal member Rosalyn LaPier into a tenure track position as a professor in the Environmental Studies Program.

Rosalyn is the daughter of Angeline Wall of Browning and the late William LaPier Sr., and granddaughter of the late Annie (Mad Plume) Wall and Francis (Aims Back) Wall. Rosalyn is the first enrolled Blackfeet tribal member to be hired by the University of Montana for a tenure-track position.

"The faculty of the Environmental Studies program is delighted with the recent appointment of Rosalyn LaPier to the program" says her colleague, Professor Dan Spencer. "Rosalyn brings with her a wealth of skills, experiences and perspectives that are critical to Environmental Studies, particularly her training as an environmental historian, and her knowledge about the intersection of environmental and tribal issues and concerns."

Rosalyn brings 10 years' teaching experience to her new job, including two years as an instructor in the Native American Studies Department and eight years as an instructor at a tribally-controlled college in Chicago, Ill. Her teaching has focused on Native American religion, belief systems, ecological knowledge and U.S. public policy.

Rosalyn was also fortunate to spend many years with her grandmother learning about ethnobotany and Blackfeet ecological knowledge. She has merged this traditional knowledge with her academic training.

Rosalyn has worked within the nonprofit world, nationally and internationally, for 20 years, promoting and preserving Native American languages, history and traditional ecological knowledge. She has worked with the Piegan Institute and Cuts Wood School since 1999 on issues of language revitalization and capacity building. She will continue this work.
“This is a great opportunity,” stated Rosalyn. “I am excited to help UM recognize traditional ecological knowledge as a part of academic learning. I also hope to be part of the growing process at UM of helping American Indian undergraduate and graduate students to earn degrees such as the environmental studies degree that will be useful to their communities when they return home.”

“The Environmental Studies faculty are delighted to have Rosalyn LaPier join us,” says Len Broberg, the director of the Environmental Studies Program. “She will broaden the perspectives in the program and deepen our course offerings. We and the students are excited to learn from her!”