The Department of American Indian Studies offers a rich curriculum in both Dakota and Ojibwe languages, but to contribute fully to the urgent need for language revitalization, our curriculum must be linked to fostering language communities, on-campus and off-campus. This effort is critical given the dangerously low (and aging) numbers of Dakota and Ojibwe first language speakers. Languages survive and thrive when learners not only have basic resources but also have places where they may be immersed in the language. Your gifts will support a number of programs to advance this effort.

**Online language dictionaries**
One of the basic resources for language learning is an accessible dictionary. Several years ago, we worked with Professor John Nichols to create the online Ojibwe People’s Dictionary (ojibwe.lib.umn.edu). The OPD not only allows word searches but includes audio clips of elder first speakers to provide the nuance of dialect and pronunciation. Your gifts will enable critical updates to this unique resource, as well as long-term support. We would also like to eventually create a Dakota People’s Dictionary.

**Connecting classes with communities**
Our language curriculum is in demand not only by university students but also by Native communities in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota. We also learn from these communities, particularly elder first speakers. However, our location makes it difficult to fully connect our classes with these communities. Your gifts will help secure an off-campus space, especially one better embedded in community areas like Little Earth, to make language instruction more accessible and enable other kinds of community engagement.

**Language student immersion houses**
Our language programs use immersion methods of instruction, which have been demonstrated as the most effective. With so few speakers, immersive language experiences outside of the classroom are challenging. To build more opportunities, we are piloting Ojibwewigamig, an Ojibwe Immersion House. The pilot year will be run through the University Housing and Residential Life, with 4-5 students sharing an apartment. Language instructors will plan events and connect students with elders as part of the program. Your gifts will help secure more permanent off-campus housing for Ojibwewigamig, and to add a Dakota Immersion House.
American Indians are underrepresented at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, despite the large Native population in our area and across the state. We aim to create opportunities for Native scholars by actively recruiting undergraduate and graduate students, providing them adequate financial support, and investing in faculty members whose research and teaching inspire students and amplify the Native American experience.

**High school student recruitment**
A new summer program will bring American Indian high school students to our campus for a three-week immersive experience. Participants will live in dorms, experience campus life in an urban environment, and learn about resources available to Native students—all while building a cohort with whom they identify. With your support, we’ll strengthen students’ self-identity by offering Dakota and Ojibwe language classes, culturally relevant programming, and coaching with undergraduate mentors.

“It’s very important for us to serve Native communities in Minnesota,” says David Chang, AIS department chair. “This camp is a really important way of reaching out to Native youth and potential future students.”

**Undergraduate transfer student recruitment**
Many of the college’s Native students, especially those who are first-generation college students, begin their undergraduate studies elsewhere—another U of M campus, a community or technical college, or a tribal college. Your gifts will help ensure the success of prospective transfer students by providing more personalized support in preparing them for likely challenges they will encounter here.

**Graduate student fellowships**
Your gifts will help build a substantial endowed fellowship for American Indian graduate students, especially those studying indigeneity and related topics within the College of Liberal Arts. You’ll make it possible to recruit and retain gifted graduate students from across the country.

**Endowed professorships or chairs in American Indian Studies**
Gifts for endowed chairs and professorships will enable the department of American Indian Studies to hire and retain top faculty who will conduct field-shaping research and provide students with an outstanding educational experience. We are currently focused on recruitment in the areas of environmental studies, literature and film and/or Native arts, and Dakota language.

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