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**Dakota Language Documentary to Premiere at Morris**

*Summary: Morris will host a premiere screening of <em>Dakota Iapi Teunhindapi : We Cherish the Dakota Language</em> on Wednesday, May 1.*

(April 25, 2013)-Dakota Wicohan, a nonprofit organization co-founded by Teresa Luckow Peterson '91, recently completed work on a documentary film titled *Dakota Iapi Teunhindapi : We Cherish the Dakota Language*. In recognition of Peterson's ties to the institution, the University of Minnesota, Morris will host a premiere screening of the film on Wednesday, May 1, at 6 p.m. in Humanities Fine Arts 6. This preview will offer audiences a glimpse into the completed project.

Dakota Wicohan seeks to renew and sustain the Dakota language. The nonprofit's efforts connect people, families, and communities through life ways deeply rooted in relationships. Drawing on the strengths, skills, and networks each brought to its mission, the Dakota Wicohan co-founders have addressed the loss of indigenous languages by re-envisioning a future sustained by Dakota culture—language, values, traditions, arts, and kinship.

The purpose of the film project is to promote understanding, respect, and awareness of the Dakota language as well as to bring about healing within Dakota communities and between Dakota and non-Dakota peoples. To preserve the words and wisdom of Dakota community elders, the nonprofit began gathering oral histories from elders in 2008. Through video recordings, these elders shared their life experiences, Dakota language use, and community traditions.

In June 2012, Dakota Wicohan and its consultants began distilling the oral histories into an educational documentary on the Dakota language. In accordance with their participatory values, community members and staff provided feedback to help shape the final cut of the film. Having received the blessings of elders in March 2013, Dakota Wicohan is now ready to share the documentary with the larger community.

Both Heather Peters, assistant professor of psychology, and Tracy Peterson, associate director of Multi-Ethnic Student Programs, have worked closely with the Dakota Wicohan program in the Lower Sioux Community of Morton. According to Peterson, this relationship has been rewarding.

“Through collaboration, we are building relationships and establishing rapport as well as strengthening and nurturing the cultural values of both Morris and the Dakota community, which is ingrained in identity, kinship, language and well-being.”

Teresa Luckow Peterson is a member of the University's American Indian Advisory Committee (AIAC) and former director of Dakota Wicohan. She received a degree in sociology and liberal arts for the human services from Morris and a master of education from Southwest State University. She is completing a doctorate in education at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Peterson is also a Bush Fellow.

Teresa Luckow Peterson '91

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