

A Plan for Penobscot Language Signage on the University of Maine Campus

REPORT FROM THE
PENOBSCOT LANGUAGE
SIGNAGE COMMITTEE
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Submitted by the Committee

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Penobscot home nation is in the minds
and hearts of the people.

When he talks them old time tales of hunting, mysteries,
wendigo, and little people,
I know I am home.

When wind blows lullabies through the piney tree tops,
I know I am home.

When she's making medicine for someone in need,
When every act is done in that spirit,
You forget there was ever such a thing as greed.

When sun warms your body through the heart of the land
And smiles play on our children's faces
You can see the work of Gluscabe's hand...

Carol Dana
When No One is Looking



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SUMMARY

The Penobscot Language Signage Committee met regularly during the Spring 2018 semester to formulate a plan for Penobscot language signage on the UMaine campus. The committee reviewed the experiences and actions of Indigenous language signage on other campuses in the U.S. and Canada, and compared those actions with the needs of the Penobscot community both on-campus and off. The result is a Plan that incorporates modifications to existing signage and installation of new signage for the entrance signs, building signs, road signs, and signs at other significant sites.

BACKGROUND

This project builds on conversations that have developed over the last few years in the Wabanaki Center and Wabanaki communities in the State of Maine regarding the relative invisibility of Indigenous people, history, and languages at the University of Maine. The specific need for Penobscot language signage on campus has been an ongoing concern of both Native American Programs and Penobscot and other Indigenous community members.

This project supports the **University's Diversity Action Plan** by communicating clearly and affirmatively the University's commitment to diversity, and supporting the retention of both employees and students of difference through a climate of inclusiveness. Bilingual English and Penobscot signage sends a message that the Indigenous community is valued, supported, and included as part of the university community, while also showing respect for the Penobscot traditional territory upon which the university is built.

Bilingual Indigenous and non-Indigenous language signage networks are an effective means of raising awareness and recognition for otherwise invisible Indigenous landscapes and places, as has been demonstrated by Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik signage at the University of New Brunswick, Anishinaabe street signs in downtown Toronto, and British Columbia highway signage in Squamish, Lil'wat, and Tsilhqot'in languages.

Where Indigeneity is invisible, signage is a moment of opportunity, a marker in time and space where unseen (and thus unvalued and un-included) places, people, languages, and historical narratives can be made visible, tangible, and meaningful to passersby. To build a sign is literally to build a landscape of inclusiveness, one where Indigenous language, culture, people, and traditional territories are recognized and valued.

As Natchee Blu Barnd writes in his 2017 book *Native Space*, for all of these reasons, the presence of Indigenous language signage on university campuses, urban streets, and in tribal communities has been steadily growing.

At the University of Maine, English and Penobscot language signage will connect the deep past to the present moment in place, sparking the viewer's imagination through traditional place names.

For example, a sign that tells a viewer they are standing at a place called *wasáhpskek*, "at the slippery ledges," brings the viewer into an awareness of place while evoking the ancient, traditional activities of the spot where they stand (a place where it will be slippery when pulling a canoe out of the water).

Bilingual English and Penobscot language signage will foster an awareness of the presence of multiple, living languages for campus places, as for example when a sign is used to label a

place such as *nətasotəmənena*, “we discuss it” for a seminar room, *áwətəssis*, “little path” for the bike path, and *kkihkan*, “garden” for Littlefield Garden.

Penobscot language signage will create new landmarks, meeting places, and sites of discussion for faculty and students, and will likely be incorporated into courses across the curriculum. It will reveal the Wabanaki landscapes and waterscapes that are a part of our daily lives on the university campus, prompting us to consider new questions about the places we live and work, and to see our surroundings from a different perspective.

PROCESS

The Committee convened its first meeting on January 31, 2018 at the Wabanaki Center, joined by Jim Settele, Claude Junkins, and Micah Pawling. Meeting attendees discussed both Penobscot community and UMaine priorities for the project, and shared their personal commitments to Indigenous language signage. Ranco noted that UMaine is on track to become leaders on Indigenous signage in the U.S., and Settele confirmed the commitment of the President's Office to support this initiative. Pearce presented a review of Indigenous signage solutions at other universities, including insights from her visit to the UNB Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre the previous week.

The Committee continued to convene seven more meetings between Feb 9 and May 4 at Penobscot Cultural & Historic Preservation.

During this time period, the Committee moved gradually from brainstorming signage ideas to refining priorities and actions. Each week, Dana and Paul worked extensively on the Penobscot translations for existing and new signage and circulated the translations for discussion and refinement. These translation discussions clarified and corrected Penobscot words and spellings while also providing a forum for Penobscot and English conceptual meanings to be compared and evaluated.

Francis advised the committee on Penobscot history and joined with Ranco to write historical content for the signage, supplemented by additional historical research from Pearce.

In March, UMaine students Shantel Neptune and Claudia Cummings joined the Committee to provide their insights and feedback. Also in March, Pearce met with Angela Michaud to review Facilities Management protocol and process for new campus signage.

In April, Ranco and Francis gave a preliminary Committee report to Penobscot Nation Tribal Council. The Committee then met to finalize priorities, and review and select appropriate locations for new signage for the first iteration of a Plan. Dana and Pearce then field-checked all proposed locations, and the Committee met to revise the Plan according to their findings.

The final Plan for Penobscot Language Signage was approved by the Committee during the week of May 7, 2018.

CATEGORIES OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE SIGNAGE

The following plan presents **five categories** of Penobscot language signage:

1) Corrections to existing signage in “Penobscot”

Signs that restore and correct Penobscot words, spellings, and meanings on existing campus signage

- ✦ to show respect for Penobscot language, values, and people
- ✦ to restore meaning and knowledge
- ✦ to raise geographical, historical, cultural, and political awareness
- ✦ to foster reconciliation



Example of a sign that restores the correct word Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh, meaning “mother of the wind,” for the name “Squamish,” which is meaningless.

2) New signage at significant sites on campus

Signs that place Penobscot words and meanings in places of authority

- ✦ to show respect for Penobscot Nation and people
- ✦ to raise awareness that campus is located on Penobscot homeland
- ✦ to foster inclusion
- ✦ to foster reconciliation
- ✦ to foster awareness and understanding of historic agreements and relationship between Penobscot Nation and UMaine



Example of a sign at a significant campus location: the Lakehead University (Ontario) entrance sign, in English and in Oji-Cree (ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ) syllabics.

3) New signage that reorients the campus community in Penobscot space and time

Signs that teach viewers to see their position with respect to Penobscot history and the Penobscot landscape around them

- ✦ to foster inclusion
- ✦ to raise geographical, historical, cultural, and political awareness
- ✦ to tell the story of Marsh Island
- ✦ to foster reconciliation by sharing about Penobscot language, values, and people
- ✦ to restore meaning and knowledge



Example of a sign that orients the public in Indigenous space and time: a billboard in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language), near Toronto, from the Ogimaa Mikana Project. The English translation is “wild rice is Anishinaabe law.”

4) New signage in the Wabanaki Center and Native American Program

Signs that empower Native American Programs to self-identify in the host language

- ✦ to foster inclusion
- ✦ to raise community awareness for the Center and the Program
- ✦ to foster awareness and understanding of historic agreements and relationship between Penobscot Nation and UMaine



Example of an Indigenous Program sign: the Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Thompson Rivers University (Kamloops, BC)

5) Conceptual translations for existing road signage in English

Signs that translate the meanings of English concepts on existing campus signage:

- ✦ to show respect for Penobscot Nation and people
- ✦ to share concepts from Penobscot traditional knowledge
- ✦ to foster inclusion
- ✦ to foster reconciliation



Example of a road sign that translates concepts into Indigenous language, UBC Okanagan (Kelowna, BC).

SIGNAGE PLAN

CATEGORY 1: CORRECTIONS TO EXISTING SIGNAGE IN "PENOBSCOT"

a. Existing building signage for residence halls

<u>English sign</u>	<u>Penobscot sign</u>
Kennebec Hall	kìnəpekək at the large body of water
Aroostook Hall	wəlahstəkək at the bright river
Penobscot Hall	pənawáhpскек where the rocks widen
Androscoggin Hall	aləssikəntekək at the river of rock shelters

Location



Standing signs in front of each building

b. Existing road signage

<u>English sign</u>	<u>Penobscot sign</u>
Sebago Rd.	sopekək at the ocean
Sebec Rd.	msapekək at the great expanse of water
Allagash Rd.	walakésk^wihtək^w bark stream
Schoodic Rd.	mskòtek at the plain, prairie
Moosehead Rd.	mòsatəp moose head
Androscoggin Rd.	aləssikəntekək at the river of rock shelters



All instances of each sign

CATEGORY 2: NEW SIGNAGE AT SIGNIFICANT SITES ON CAMPUS

a. Entrance signs

English sign

The University of Maine

Penobscot sign

on Penobscot homeland

kk^wey

pahk^winók^wəsəyek^w

hello, you all are pleasing to the eyes

Location



At Munson Rd. and near Branch Rd.

Welcome to the University of Maine

on Penobscot homeland

kk^wey

pahk^winók^wəsəyek^w

hello, you all are pleasing to the eyes



Standing sign at every entrance

b. Building signs

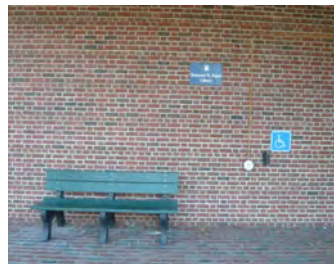
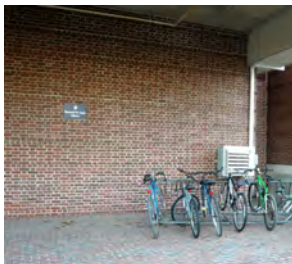
English sign

Fogler Library

Penobscot sign

awihkhikaní-wikəwəm

book house



Standing sign in front of building and two wall-mounted signs

English sign
Memorial Union



Penobscot sign
máwikamik^w
community, meeting house



Location



Standing sign and two wall-mounted signs

Alfond Arena



attalakəmehposóltimək
place where you skate



Standing sign, wall-mounted sign over entrance doors, and on directional sign

Collins Center

nsáwətawe
center of the wigwam
surrounding the fireplace



Wall-mounted sign on building

English sign
Hudson Museum

Penobscot sign
wəmiḥkolawemə
he reminded him

Location
Above entrance doors to the museum

NB Recreation Center

əttali-
milahəyəwələtimək
where you play a
variety of games



*Standing sign and wall-mounted sign
on building*

Doris Twitchell
Allen Village

oténehsis
little village



Wall-mounted sign to left of entrance

Memorial Gym

əttali-
milahəyəwələtimək
where you play a
variety of games



Standing sign and wall-mounted sign

English sign
Health Center

Penobscot sign
səkəlama'lsəwəkan məwte
get your health together

Location



Standing sign and wall-mounted sign on building

c. Places

English
mall

Penobscot
kči-əwətik
the big path

Location

Two standing signs, one on each end of the mall

track

əttali-
k^wak^wəmahləwələtimək
place where you run



On fence at entrance with no sign

Mahaney Diamond

ətali-apesk^wamhátimək
place where you play ball



Standing sign at gate entrance, and on directional sign

English
bike path

Penobscot
áwətəssis
little path

Location



On pole with other bike path signs

river trail

ssənočik
on the shore



Location: standing sign at Steam Plant trail head

rose garden

kəčəkɔlakikweminosi-
kkihkan
rose garden



Location: standing sign at garden, viewable from parking lot

English
Littlefield Garden

Penobscot
kkìhkān
garden

Location
*Fence-mounted sign at South
Entrance gate*

pinos at Steam Plant Lot kōwesihkok
place of the small pines



*Standing sign beneath pines, viewable from
College Ave (where Carol is standing)*

**CATEGORY 3: NEW SIGNAGE THAT
REORIENTS THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY
IN PENOBSCOT SPACE AND TIME**

a. Four directions

English
east

Penobscot
sakhíhlatok

Passamaquoddy/Maliseet
cipenuk

Mi'kmaq
wjipenuk



*Standing sign on Rangely Rd.
(where Carol is standing)*

English
south

Penobscot
sawánahkik

Passamaquoddy/Maliseet
sawonehsonuk

Mi'kmaq
pkite'snuk



*Standing sign on Grove St. Extension
(to left of rocks)*

English
west

Penobscot
nkíhlátok

Location

Passamaquoddy/Maliseet
skiyahsonuk

Mi'kmaq
tkisnuk



Standing sign at Steam Plant Lot near the put-in.

English
north

Penobscot
pàponkik

Passamaquoddy/Maliseet
lahtoqehsonuk

Mi'kmaq
oqeatnuk



Standing sign on the rise by the tennis courts (to right of path)

b. Teaching sign

Sign with a Penobscot teaching about birds and living in balance.



Standing sign on the island between the Union and Fogler Library

c. Marsh Island sign

Sign with a brief narrative acknowledging the controversial history of the occupation of Marsh Island, accompanied by a map of the island in Penobscot place names.

Location



Standing sign along path near center of mall (near where Carol is standing)

CATEGORY 4: NEW SIGNAGE IN THE WABANAKI CENTER AND NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM

a. Outside sign

English sign
Corbett Hall

Penobscot sign
[TBD]
Place of Wabanaki
People

Location



Two standing signs (one on mall side, and one on interior quad side that is viewable from Dunn Lot)

b. Inside hallway signage

<u>English sign</u>	<u>Penobscot sign</u>
Seminar Room	nətasotəmənena we discuss it
Student Lounge	notakehkíməsičik students
greeting on lintel	pítike come in
Native American Programs Office	nəmihkomə I advise him, counsel him
Mens Room	senəpak men
Womens Room	phenəmok women
Alt: Gender Neutral	məsitte awen everyone
stairs	aləta'wəkan stairs
fire extinguisher	nkahsawahəto put it out

Location



At each instance of the sign (for example, the Student Lounge sign)

CATEGORY 5: CONCEPTUAL TRANSLATIONS FOR EXISTING ROAD SIGNAGE IN ENGLISH

<u>English sign</u>	<u>Penobscot sign</u>
Long Rd.	k ^w ənawətik on the long road
Grove Rd.	mànahkok in the grove
Portage Rd.	wíwənikanek on the portage
Square Rd.	təmósk ^w ikənek on the square
Branch Rd.	pskáhtək ^w ənek on the branch
Flagstaff Rd.	mətewəkəní-əpasik on the flag staff
Hilltop Rd.	téhsatənok at the top of a hill

Location



At each instance of the sign (for example, the sign at Grove & Allagash)

APPENDIX

a. Implementation Timeline

b. Budget

