Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.  
University of Missouri | History Department  
615 Locust Street Building |Columbia, MO 65201  
Shannan.Mason@mail.missouri.edu | 618-616-9717

October 9, 2024

Lisa Tran, Chair  
Department of History | California State University, Fullerton  
800 N State College Blvd | Fullerton, CA 92831

Dear Dr. Tran and Search Committee Members,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic interest in the tenure-track Assistant Professor position in Native American Studies within the Department of History at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), starting in Fall 2025. I hold a Ph.D. in History from the University of Missouri (conferred June 2024), with additional certifications in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Museum Studies, which allow me to take an interdisciplinary approach to history, particularly the intersections of Native American history, environmental history, and transatlantic exchange during the colonial and early republican periods. Given my research on the commercialization of natural knowledge and its impact on Indigenous communities, I believe my academic background is uniquely aligned with the department’s commitment to social justice, diversity, and experiential learning.

My current book project, Reciprocities Market, examines the economic, social, and intellectual transformations in 18th-century North America, focusing on the botanical exchange networks of John Bartram and their intersections with Native American histories. Through this work, I explore how Indigenous knowledge systems influenced colonial and early American economies, with particular attention to themes like cultural sovereignty, land stewardship, and public memory. This research aligns with CSUF's commitment to expanding course offerings that explore Native American histories and the multiracial dimensions of American history. My analysis of the Bartram family's correspondences with Indigenous nations and colonial authorities delves into critical issues such as land use, sovereignty, and the commodification of natural resources—key topics for students exploring Native American history.

At CSUF, I would look forward to developing and teaching courses such as "The California Experience," "Native American History," and "Multiracial History of America," and engaging students in both undergraduate surveys and graduate seminars. My courses emphasize the importance of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies, employing tools like ArcGIS, NVivo, and Gephi to visualize the historical interactions between Native American communities and colonial settlers. These methods not only help students grasp complex historical dynamics but also encourage hands-on, project-centered learning experiences.

I bring extensive teaching experience from the University of Missouri and McKendree University, where I have taught courses ranging from surveys of early American history to capstone projects. My teaching philosophy prioritizes student-centered learning and interdisciplinary approaches, particularly as they relate to environmental and Native American histories. In my course, Nature’s Nation, students critically engage with primary sources related to Native American environmental stewardship, culminating in projects that reflect Indigenous land relations and cultural preservation. These types of experiential projects enable students to connect academic research with contemporary discussions about sovereignty, public memory, and land use.

My record of securing external funding from institutions such as the Huntington Library, the American Philosophical Society, and Florida Atlantic University underscores my ability to continue generating research support. I am confident that my skills in GIS, archival research, and community-based public history will allow me to build strong partnerships with local Native communities in Southern California, further contributing to CSUF’s goals of equity, inclusion, and collaboration. The university’s proximity to Indigenous lands and communities also makes it an ideal location to expand my research on Indigenous knowledge systems and botanical exchange.

In addition to my research and teaching, I am committed to public history and community engagement. My experience as an archivist and project leader for digital humanities projects has provided me with the skills to bring history to wider audiences. At CSUF, I hope to continue fostering student involvement in community-based research projects, collaborating with local Native organizations, and contributing to public understanding of Indigenous histories through exhibits, oral histories, and digital archives.

I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the Department of History at CSUF and look forward to discussing how my research and teaching experience in Native American Studies and environmental history can enrich the department’s goals. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,  
Shannan Catherine Mason, Ph.D.