

## FACULTY PROFILE BRIGETTA MILLER '89

### Associate Professor of Music

Brigetta Miller remembers being the only Native American student on campus in the late 1980s. These days, she's happy to help attract a more diverse range of students through Lawrence's growing ethnic studies program.

Miller, a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee (Mohican) tribe who grew up on a reservation in northern Wisconsin, is teaching two new courses on Native American identity, history and culture this year: *Strong Women, Strong Nations: Perspectives of Contemporary Native American Women* and *Decolonization, Activism and Hope: Changing the Way We See Native America*.

"These are courses I have dreamed about teaching for a long, long time," she says. "Given the fact that Wisconsin includes several federally recognized tribes, I think it is critical our curriculum brings visibility to a group that has historically been invisible at Lawrence."

#### **What's the biggest difference between Lawrence in 1985 and now?**

Our campus has a more diverse student population than it did when I was a student, and the Conservatory has grown quite significantly. One of the things I find most meaningful now is serving as a faculty advisor to LUNA, the Lawrence University Native American student organization, which did not exist before. Recently, our campus offered its first ever Native American powwow in the Memorial Chapel to raise awareness about Indigenous People's Day. I can't help but think our ancestors were smiling down on us that day.

#### **What is it like teaching at your alma mater?**

I have deep roots here. In many ways Lawrence has changed the trajectory of my life. I am grateful for the influential professors who believed in me during critical years in my development. I love being surrounded by brilliant colleagues and students in both the college and Conservatory who are highly motivated to succeed. My work here is largely driven by my desire to empower others. Perhaps at no other time in our nation's history has the need been so great for students to be liberally educated at a high level.

#### **What's been the highlight of your Lawrence career?**

Seeing positive growth in my students. I am thrilled my former students, no matter where they are located, from Singapore to Saudi Arabia to New York, stay in touch. I spend considerable time teaching future music educators, so it gives me great hope that Lawrence graduates leave a strong rippling effect on future generations around the world.

#### **What do you like to do away from work?**

I savor every waking moment with my 6-year-old son. As someone who was told by doctors I would likely never have children, he still feels like an absolute miracle to me.

