

# DISTINGUISHED SEMINAR SERIES

Hosted by the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
at Northeastern University

## DEIJ! How we do it, and how can we take the call for justice seriously in work with communities



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**Thursday  
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12PM - 1PM EST

**Via Zoom  
(Viewing  
available in  
Churchill 101)**

*Please arrive early to  
prevent disruptions.*

**ABSTRACT:** There has been a loud call for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) across the U.S. and the world. Events of the summer of 2020, with the killing of George Floyd and others by police, brought into focus what people of color have seen for hundreds of years. However, the structural inequality and discrimination of the justice system are just the tip of the iceberg of many collaborating systems of oppression. Many planners, engineers, and policymakers do not understand the underbelly of logics and practices based on settler colonialism buttressed by patriarchy and racism that are foundational to their work. In this talk, I will try to map out some of this underbelly and suggest ways to push back. We must struggle against the overlapping fundamental social, environmental, political, and economic configurations dominant in our work as teachers, practitioners, and community members.

**BIO:** Elizabeth L. Sweet teaches in the Urban Planning and Community Development Program and the Department of Africana Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston, focusing on planning theory and qualitative research methodologies. Professor Sweet engages in collaborative community economic development, concentrating on the links between economies, violence, and identities. Using feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial frameworks, her work in U.S. Native, Black, Latino/a/x, and Latin American communities has led to long-term collaborations and inclusive projects that push the boundaries of planning theory and methods while at the same time providing practical planning interventions. In recent publications, she has proposed using body map storytelling and community mapping as innovative ways to co-create data and strategies with communities on a wide range of issues and urban problems. Theoretically, these methods create awareness that enables planners and communities to re-envision their relationships with environments and see their visceral, historical, and spiritual bonds. These new understandings promote new practices. Her most recent projects focus on 1) Afromexicans and Native erasure in Mexico and how Anti Black/Native narratives impact Mexicans/Chicanos in U.S. cities. And 2) Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in Mexico and how it may hold the keys for resilience and survivance in the face of a changing climate. Professor Sweet has also been very active in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within university settings by organizing events, student recruitment, and publishing research and teaching articles.



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