

**Native American & Indigenous Initiatives
Working Group**

Final Report & Recommendations

May 1, 2023

We Bring Our Minds Together As One

Ne ne entitewatáhsawen taietharàhkwe' niionkwarihwá:shona'. Ne kati wahi wetitewatatenonhwerá:ton. Tsi niiókhsats nón:wa wenhniserá:te ionkwakia'taró:ron ne iorihwá:ke ne aitewaka'eniónnion tsi niohtonhá:kie tsi na'titewátere ne onkwehshón:'a tánon' tsi ni:ioht tsi rokwatákwen ne ohontsià:ke. Ne ne á:ienre'k akwe:kon sken:nen tsi tewanonhtón:nionn ne tsi niionkwè:take kenhnón:we iahitewaia'taié:ri oni tsi ionkwata'karí:te iah thahò:ten tekionkwakia'tónkion nen'ne kanonhwa'kténhtshera'. Ne kati ehnón:we iorihwá:ke tsi entewátka'we ne kanonhweratónhtshera.

Ehtho niiohtónha'k ne onkwa'nikón:ra.

Today we have gathered, and it is so beautiful that we still see the cycles of life continuing for our benefit. We should be reminded today of where we come from, how we came to be, and what our predecessors have given us so that we may have a path in this life. We have a big responsibility. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things; to strengthen our relationships; to gather up all that is most precious in our experiences and hold them up in gratitude. We must each search within our individual minds for solutions to address the collective issues that confront us. This is how we continue forward in peace and lovingfulness. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Native American and Indigenous Initiatives Working Group, originally commissioned by former Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer Mercedes Ramírez Fernández under the auspices of the Institutional Office for Equity and Inclusion (IOEI).

As colleges and universities grapple with [histories of colonialism](#) and the moral, political, and intellectual obligations of these institutions in the present and future, the University of Rochester lags behind. In the spirit of *Meliora* and in alignment with the University's 2030 Strategic Plan *Boundless Possibility*, this report provides strategies toward a multiyear plan for the development and promotion of Native American and Indigenous academic, student, and cultural life at the University of Rochester.

Key recommendations for Phase 1 (year 1) include:

- Adoption of an effective land acknowledgement with accompanying commitment to substantive action
- Creation of a webpage that centralizes relevant information and resources
- Provision of an annual budget for programming and events pertaining to Indigenous peoples, communities, histories, and cultures, including formal commemoration of Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Cultural competency opportunities for faculty, staff, and students
- Steps to promote and grow the Haudenosaunee Nations Scholarship and the Native Peoples Scholarship
- Targeted efforts to recruit and support Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students
- Recruitment of Indigenous staff through intentional language in job postings and targeted dissemination of these postings
- Signaling a commitment to Native American and Indigenous Studies through a cluster hire of two tenure-track scholars
- Formation of a Council on Native American and Indigenous Initiatives to support implementation of a multiyear vision
- Assessment of existing resources and possible strategies and paths for initiatives related to Indigenous health and healing at the URMC

Key recommendations for Phase 2 (years 2 & 3) include:

- Establishment of an annual Indigenous Peoples' Day lecture
- Hiring of staff members with relevant expertise in the Office of Minority Student Affairs and the Institutional Office for Equity and Inclusion

- Increased faculty hiring, including the hiring of a tenure-track specialist in Haudenosaunee Studies
- Establishment of an undergraduate Native American and Indigenous Studies minor
- Designation of key physical spaces that symbolize the university's commitment to Indigenous inclusion
- Thorough assessment of progress, challenges, and priorities, along with strategic planning for the next phases of the work

Background

In the spring of 2022, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer Mercedes Ramírez Fernández commissioned a Native American and Indigenous Working Group. Dr. Sasha Eloi-Evans, Associate Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, invited Dr. Jessica Guzmán-Rea and Dr. Brianna Theobald to serve as co-chairs of this new working group.

The co-chairs recognized that any progress regarding Native American and Indigenous initiatives at the University of Rochester would require meaningful consultation with Haudenosaunee partners in the region. To that end, the co-chairs spent June and July meeting with Indigenous students, representatives of local institutions such as Ganondagan, and Haudenosaunee community leaders. The co-chairs set no agenda for these conversations; the purpose was to listen and learn.

From these conversations, and in consultation with the IOEI, the following working group charge emerged:

The Native American and Indigenous Initiatives Working Group aims to develop recommendations as to how the University of Rochester can meaningfully respect and acknowledge the Seneca homelands on which the institution sits, while building relationships and considering the institution's moral and political obligations in the present and future. This work shall be done through consultation with local Haudenosaunee leadership, members of the University community, and community partners. The goal is to evaluate the university's protocols towards respecting and acknowledging the peoples of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the university's efforts to build a dynamic relationship with the Haudenosaunee leadership, and ultimately to have a plan of action that could be incorporated into our University's 2030 Strategic Plan: *Boundless Possibility*. The Native American and Indigenous Initiatives Working Group will be responsible for producing a report with recommendations that elevate Indigenous issues, enhance our Rochester curriculum, and provide avenues for increased recruitment and retention of Native students, staff, and faculty.

In July, the co-chairs extended invitations to faculty and staff across campus, as well as two Haudenosaunee students, to join the working group. The group convened for the first time on August 17. Given the importance of Indigenous input and perspectives, and the minimal Indigenous representation on campus, the co-chairs formed an Indigenous advisory council to support the working group's efforts. Council members received a modest honorarium for their time and expertise, from funds that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation allowed co-chair Brianna Theobald to carry over from a Sawyer Seminar that officially ended in spring 2022. Dalton

LaBarge and Cheyenne Thomas, the two Haudenosaunee students in the working group, received a small stipend from the same funds. The working group and advisory council each met monthly, with the two co-chairs, the IOEI liaison, LaBarge, and Thomas attending both meetings. In the interim, the working group carried out its work primarily through three committees: Land Acknowledgement; Programming and Events; and Recruitment and Retention.

Working Group Activities

Accomplishments in 2022-2023 Academic Year:

The working group has prioritized community education, information gathering, and other efforts that can serve as a foundation for the proposed plan outlined below:

Community Education Events

- October 17, 2022: Removal of the Burrs Ceremony - virtual webinar - The protocol, a traditional welcome for people visiting Haudenosaunee Confederacy territories, was led by Rohsennase Dalton LaBarge, a working group member and first-generation, fourth-year medical student at the School of Medicine and Dentistry from the Tehanakarí:ne Bear Clan family of the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation.
 - 285 registrants/156 attendees
- January 12, 2023: Witness to Injustice - in-person event for diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership and staff - This program, put on by the Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation, is a unique three-hour interactive group teaching tool that aims to foster understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the United States. The exercise is an interactive effort to share Indigenous history that many Americans may not have been taught in school.
 - 18 participants
- February 18, 2023: Native American Winter Games bus trip to Ganondagan. Ganondagan's Native American Winter Games is a way to celebrate and discover the Seneca ways of winter through outdoor activities and access to the Seneca Art & Culture Center at Ganondagan, located in Victor, NY.
- Two buses took roughly 60 attendees (mostly undergraduate and graduate students) sponsored by working group member Stella Wang (Associate Professor; Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program) for her WRTG 105, a first-year writing course (*Being Homo Sapiens Sapiens*) and WRTG 263, an applied translation course (*Translation: Interpreting and Adapting*) and the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center.



The image on the left includes Dr. Jessica Guzman-Rea, assistant dean for diversity in AS&E and director of the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center and some student participants who attended the Native American Winter Games. The image on the right includes students enrolled in WRGT 105 and WRTG 263 intrigued by the dog sledding demonstration at the Native American Winter Games.

- March 31, 2023: Witness to Injustice - in-person event - for all students, sponsored by the River Campus Libraries
 - Garnered roughly 40 students!
- May 15, 2023: Witness to Injustice - in-person event - an upcoming professional development opportunity for faculty and staff hosted by the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center and a free lunch sponsored by the College Diversity Roundtable

Information Gathering

The working group conducted an internal assessment of existing resources and efforts underway at the University of Rochester pertaining to Native American and Indigenous programming, curriculum, research, and partnerships. Our methods for gathering this information included data requests from the Office of Institutional Research (Appendix A); a survey distributed through @rochester (Appendix B); targeted outreach to DEI representatives and key faculty and staff across campus; and outreach to current Native American students.

We are heartened by the interest expressed by administrators, faculty, staff, and students across campus and by the smattering of initiatives that we have identified, including, for example, Memorial Art Gallery exhibitions featuring Indigenous artists; musicologist Andrew Cashner's recent NEH-funded digital humanities project "Earth Songs of the Seneca Nation," undertaken in collaboration with Onöndowa'g:a' (Seneca) Faith Keeper Bill Crouse, Sr.; and URMC-affiliated projects regarding intergenerational trauma, suicide, and substance abuse in Indigenous communities. To date, these individual undertakings remain largely siloed; moving forward, we

hope to facilitate the centralization, coordination, and promotion of Indigenous programming across campus.

We also benchmarked other R1 universities in Haudenosaunee Territory. One clear takeaway is that UR lags behind these institutions by not offering a Native American Studies minor, as well as by the lack of support services specifically for Native American and Indigenous students. Among the university's national peer institutions, the record is more mixed, but the trendline is towards growing institutional commitments. See, for example, Emory University's [Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative](#).

Foundations for Further Growth

- The College Curriculum Committee approved a new social sciences cluster in Indigenous Studies, spearheaded by co-chair Brianna Theobald, which became active in spring 2023.
- Through the leadership of UR graduate student and working group member Cheyenne Thomas, steps have been taken toward the reinstatement of a Native American and Indigenous Student Association on campus, as well as the formation of a chapter of the American Indian Society for Engineering and Science (AISES).
- The Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations assisted the Department of History in creating a Native American & Indigenous Studies Fund to be used for undergraduate and graduate student research, with a preference for summer research in students' own Indigenous communities. This is a model that could be used by other departments and offices across campus.
- Through the leadership of co-chair Jessica Guzmán-Rea, the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center will sponsor the university's inaugural blanket ceremony to honor and celebrate graduating Indigenous students on May 9, 2023.

Recommendations

Our overarching recommendation is that the University of Rochester adopt a well-supported, multi-year plan for the development and promotion of Native American and Indigenous cultural, student, and academic life across campus. Such investments are vital to many elements of the university's emerging strategic plan, including actionable and accountable growth in diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and justice; institutional responsiveness to local and regional needs; and research excellence surrounding just and equitable societies.

Often, universities undertake initiatives regarding Indigenous programming, curricula, and research in response to immediate pressure stemming from a particular event or student or community unrest. Pressure to "do something" can lead to short-term, optics-oriented actions. In contrast, we advocate for a process of growth, sustained over the course of planned phases.

Earlier phases establish a foundation—“planting the seeds,” in the words of Onondaga Turtle Clan mother and advisory council member Freida Jacques—for later phases.

Given the exigencies of place and history, Haudenosaunee and Native American studies and communities should be a particular institutional focus during the first two phases presented in this report, although we recognize and value the importance of Indigenous Studies as a broader field of study and encourage its development at UR.¹

Phase One: Year 1

The goals of this phase are to demonstrate the university’s commitment to Native access and inclusion and Native American and Indigenous Studies through implementation of a series of relatively low-cost actions that can be undertaken almost immediately. The first phase is also an opportunity for individuals, offices, and departments throughout the university to consider their role in this vision.

Land Acknowledgement

We recommend that the University of Rochester adopt an official land acknowledgement. At present, various entities across campus, such as the [Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center](#), [Center for Community Engagement](#), [Eastman School of Music](#), [Laboratory for Laser Energetics](#), Office of Undergraduate Admissions, [University Health Service - Health Promotion Office](#), and the [Memorial Art Gallery](#) use land acknowledgements to varying degrees, and several of them have action items outlined in their statements. In recent years, institutions of higher education across Canada and the United States (Appendix C) have adopted land acknowledgements as a means of combating Indigenous erasure, signaling a commitment to relationship-building and reciprocity, and confronting an institution’s position in relation to histories of dispossession. Land acknowledgements can be useful educational tools, and they can foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging for Indigenous students and others. One Haudenosaunee undergraduate told us, for example, that a land acknowledgement would make them “proud to go to school here.”

And yet we offer this recommendation with a note of caution. Land acknowledgements should not be a substitute for meaningful action. Land acknowledgements that are strictly performative or perfunctory are inadequate and can even be harmful. We propose the adoption of the below land acknowledgement as a first step that should be coupled with other substantive, material commitments, such as staff and faculty hiring.

¹ Indeed, U.S. colonialism has exceeded the territorial borders of North America. UR also enrolls Pacific Islander students and Indigenous students from Mexico and Central America, among other locations. We further acknowledge and appreciate academic trends regarding global indigeneity as a robust field of study, as demonstrated, for example, by Syracuse University’s Mellon-supported Center for Global Indigenous Cultures and Environmental Justice.

As land acknowledgements should be more than a rote repetition of words, we offer a two-part template intended to encourage thoughtfulness regarding the realities the acknowledgement articulates.

We first recommend a simple statement that anyone on campus can utilize as a stand-alone land acknowledgement and offer one example of what this statement might look like:

The University of Rochester sits on the homelands of the Onöndowa'g:a' (Seneca) Nation, the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. As an institution, we recognize the injustices that disrupt their stewardship of this land to this day. We honor and respect these lands and the Onöndowa'g:a' people's ongoing claims and connections to them.

Given the importance of meaningful action, we encourage the university, as well as individual departments, organizations, or affiliated entities to draft a more specific second paragraph that explicitly considers what this acknowledgement means for their work, with examples of concrete actions and, when possible, links to those items. We offer one example of what this second paragraph could look like for the University of Rochester:

As an institution of higher education with a robust medical center, the University of Rochester acknowledges the importance of preserving the wisdom and knowledge of Indigenous peoples for present and future generations. We also recognize the ongoing impacts of colonization and systemic racism. Acknowledging this is a step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for our students, staff, faculty, patients, and visitors. By fostering stronger relationships with local Indigenous communities; providing opportunities for collaboration, education, cultural competency training; supporting Indigenous-led research projects and initiatives; and creating on-campus resources such as scholarships and financial support for Indigenous students, institutions can help rectify historical injustices. We recognize the importance of these actions and pledge to work towards implementing them as we strive to create a more equitable, inclusive, and just community.

Advisory council member Shara Francis-Herne has experience facilitating workshops in which groups draft land acknowledgements that have particular meaning and relevance for them. We recommend that the university encourage interested departments and offices to engage Ms. Francis-Herne for similar workshops and that the university provides funding to compensate her for her time and expertise.

We recommend that online versions be accompanied by a brief overview of relevant history to educate readers on the context for these acknowledgements, which individuals can draw upon when offering their acknowledgements. We provide an example of such an overview here:

The historical developments that disrupted Onöndowa'g:a' stewardship of these lands are rooted in U.S. settler colonialism. During the Revolutionary War, U.S. generals John Sullivan and James Clinton led a genocidal campaign of military violence, deliberate starvation, and forced displacement against Haudenosaunee people in western New York, including the Seneca. The University of Rochester sits on lands the Onöndowa'ga:' Nation ceded in 1788 through the blatantly unjust and still unredressed terms of the Phelps-Gorham Purchase. In 1794, the [Canandaigua Treaty](#) established terms for peace between the Haudenosaunee nations and the United States, while recognizing Haudenosaunee land rights and sovereignty. Although New York State lawmakers and business interests continued [to seize land](#) in violation of this treaty, Haudenosaunee people observe and commemorate annually the Canandaigua Treaty to this day. Today, Haudenosaunee individuals live in Rochester and throughout western New York, and the university is located in proximity to reservations, including Tonawanda and Cattaraugus.

Land acknowledgements should be posted online along with the following additional resources:

- A Seneca translation of the first paragraph
- A 5-minute video of UR medical school student Dalton LaBarge offering an Onkwehonwe statement in Kanienkeha with subtitles to give viewers an idea of how Haudenosaunee people relate to the land and one another and how they understand the responsibilities of acknowledgement
- Best practices for adapting and using the acknowledgement:
 - [How to use a land acknowledgement](#)
 - [Indigenous land acknowledgement guide](#)
 - Resources on correct pronunciation

Online Presence

Students, prospective or current, interested in Indigenous Studies or cultural events, and Native students in search of resources and community, are hard-pressed to find the information they are looking for. We recommend the creation of a webpage along the lines of “Native American and Indigenous Belonging at UR” that centralizes these resources. This website should at a minimum include: the land acknowledgement; practical information regarding the Haudenosaunee Nation and Native Peoples Scholarships; information regarding the recently approved Indigenous Studies cluster; and any upcoming events. The [University's LGBTQ page](#) is a useful model for such a site.

We encourage the university's various DEI offices to consider questions of indigeneity and how their work can further the objectives articulated in this report. One place to start is by examining Indigenous peoples' position within online diversity philosophies and mission statements. For example, AS&E's [Diversity Philosophy](#) currently makes no mention of Indigenous students or staff. Furthermore, assertions regarding the university's obligations to the Rochester community do not include obligations towards the Haudenosaunee Confederacy or attention to settler colonialism. To lay the groundwork for necessary growth, this work must be a priority, particularly given that current Native students report both invisibility *and* experiences with racism on campus.

Programming and Events

We recommend that the university demonstrate its commitment to this work by providing an annual budget for programming and events pertaining to Indigenous peoples, communities, issues, histories, and cultures. The working group co-chairs, as well as the group's IOEI liaison, would welcome the opportunity to be involved in conversations about where and how these funds could be most effectively governed and administered, but it's crucial that programming be supported across River Campus, Eastman, URMC, and the MAG.

Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day in a visible and financially supported way is an important start. In 2023, Indigenous Peoples' Day falls when classes are in session (not during fall break, as is often the case). In the spirit of relationship building, we recommend that the university take steps to support the events currently being planned by the City of Rochester's Indigenous Peoples' Day Committee through funds, space, and promotion.

Student Recruitment and Financial Support

We recommend more proactive advertisement of the Haudenosaunee Nations Scholarship and the Native Peoples Scholarship. With the exception of the working group member in Admissions, none of the faculty, staff, or students on the working group were aware of these scholarships. Nor were advisory council members aware of these two scholarships, and they do not believe them to be widely known in their communities. This is in contrast to Syracuse University's Haudenosaunee Promise, which is widely known in the region. An advisory council member from Akwesasne who attended Syracuse emphasized that her family viewed the university's material commitment to Haudenosaunee students as a sign of respect, and this made the institution an appealing choice for her.

We further recommend that Institutional Advancement identify donor/foundation support to endow these scholarships and to consider creation of an additional scholarship for Indigenous students seeking a career in medicine.

The Haudenosaunee Nations and Native Peoples scholarships should be a starting point for fostering the type of community and peer support that Indigenous students have reported is currently missing for them on campus. We recommend that the cohorting process associated with [Posse Foundation](#) scholarships be used as a model here.

We recommend that the admissions office resume efforts initiated in 2019 to collaborate with other colleges and universities in the region on outreach to Native students and schools in New York State.

The university should strive to strengthen its relationship with the [American Indian Science and Engineering Society \(AISES\)](#). Following a meeting with one of our co-chairs, the Office of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) expressed commitment to prioritize attendance at AISES National Conferences each fall for recruitment purposes. The university should give full support to the emerging AISES chapter on campus and develop an infrastructure to enable university scientists to identify and hire AISES undergraduate and graduate researchers; the latter recommendation derives from requests made by STEM faculty.

Academic research, as well as input from Native students at UR and the working group's advisory council, clearly indicates that many Native American students pursue higher education to benefit their communities. It is important that the university recognize and value these motivations and demonstrate its commitment to meeting identified needs of Haudenosaunee communities. The new Native American & Indigenous Studies Fund in the Department of History, which explicitly prioritizes Native student research in their communities, should be a model for other fields, departments, or entities across campus.

Hiring

Staff: The Indigenous advisory council and the students we spoke with were unanimous regarding the importance of Native American and Indigenous staff on campus and in key positions for student support. Institutional commitment and investment along these lines will increase our ability to retain Indigenous students once enrolled, which is at least as important as recruitment.

- a. The lack of Indigenous representation among UR staff is in part a self-perpetuating cycle, as job postings are often shared among existing networks. We recommend that offices and departments advertising positions be proactive in their efforts to reach Indigenous applicants. While appropriate venues will vary somewhat by position, our advisory council members suggested the Western Native Consortium Listserv and the Central Native Consortium Listserv.
- b. We strongly recommend that open DEI positions on River Campus and at URMC, such as the newly created position of Associate Director of Admission for Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion, be filled, and that a preference for experience working with Indigenous students be *explicitly* included in these job descriptions. This is a simple yet important way to signal that this is important to the university, and that we recognize that some Indigenous students may have specific needs.

Faculty: The development and expansion of Native American and Indigenous Studies and the increased relationship-building with Haudenosaunee and other Native American communities that this working group recommends depends on the hiring of additional faculty to help carry out the research (including community-engaged scholarship), teaching, and service necessary for these efforts to be a vibrant part of campus life.

a. We recommend a cluster hire of two scholars—one junior and one senior—in Indigenous Studies, and that these hires begin with those departments that have already prioritized expertise in North American Indigenous studies in their strategic hiring plans.

Following the model of recent cluster hires at other institutions, we recommend that the university signal its commitment to Native American and Indigenous Studies in these first postings and offer an approximate timeline of additional hires. The first two hires would take a leading role in organizing the recruitment of additional hires, and they will work alongside current faculty with research and teaching interests in Indigenous Studies (including Brianna Theobald, Tom Gibson, and Bob Foster, for example) to develop and advance a grounded vision of what Indigenous Studies can and should be at the University of Rochester.

b. At the same time, we encourage departments, particularly in STEM fields (in AS&E and at URMC), to consider pursuing target-of-opportunity hires to increase Indigenous representation among faculty. Strengthening the university's relationships with AISES (American Indian Science and Engineering Society) will facilitate this effort.

Council on Native American and Indigenous Initiatives

A critical component of Phase 1 is to put in place the infrastructure to support implementation of this multiyear vision. We recommend a standing committee that effectively merges the Native American and Indigenous Initiatives working group with the Indigenous advisory council. Our proposal is a committee that includes 4 non-URMC UR representatives (administrators, staff, and/or faculty); 4 URMC representatives; 4 Indigenous students or alumni; and 4 Haudenosaunee community members. This standing body would convene at least once a semester and requires a modest budget to appropriately compensate alumni and community members for their time and expertise. In addition to assisting with strategic development and

program review and offering guidance on culturally appropriate processes and priorities, the Council can deepen the university's relationship with Haudenosaunee communities and institutions and with Indigenous alumni.

Indigenous Health and Healing

Given the growing emphasis on health equity frameworks at URM and recent innovations including a course on Indigenous health disparities taught by advisory council member Dean Seneca, MPH, MCURP (Seneca), in the School of Medicine and Dentistry, we see tremendous potential for initiatives related to Indigenous health, research, epidemiology, and traditional methods of healing. Indeed, Indigenous health is an area where the match between university capacity and the needs of tribal communities is especially aligned.

As further research is needed along these lines, we propose that the URM representatives on the abovementioned Council take the lead in assessing existing resources and developing strategies and recommendations for the development of a robust Indigenous health component at the URM.

Phase 2: Years 2 and 3

Programming and Events

We recommend that URM launch an annual Indigenous Peoples' Day lecture, following the model of the Two Icons, Rainbow, and/or Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Address lectures.

Hiring

Staff: We recommend the hiring of two full-time Indigenous staff people (or individuals with extensive experience working with Native American and Indigenous students): one in the Office of Minority Student Affairs and one in the Institutional Office for Equity and Inclusion.

Faculty: We recommend four additional tenure-track hires in Native American and Indigenous Studies (two in the second year and two in the third year), with at least one of these being a specialist in Haudenosaunee Studies. We envision a multidisciplinary hiring process that responds to the university's emerging strategic plan.

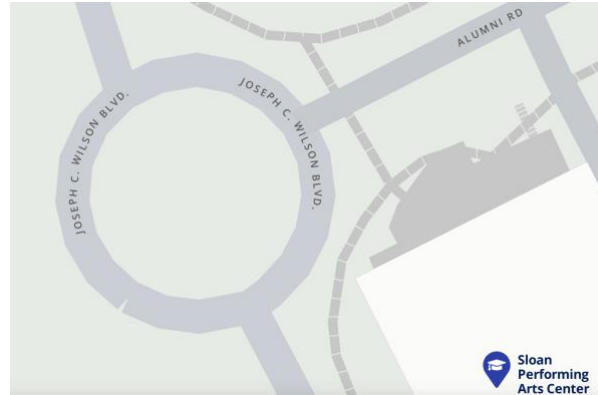
Native American and Indigenous Studies Minor

Within three years, AS&E should be equipped to offer an undergraduate Native American and Indigenous Studies minor, anchored by a required introductory theory and methods course.

Investments in Physical Spaces

Current Native students have explicitly requested a designated physical space where they can meet that has adequate ventilation for smudging and other cultural practices.

We urge the university to create a physical space in a prominent location that is dedicated to displaying a plaque with the approved land acknowledgement for visitors and community members to view and reflect. One Native community member suggested utilizing the land on the roundabout located on Joseph C. Wilson Boulevard and Alumni Road (next to the new Sloan Performing Arts Center). This physical location connects the City of Rochester and the University of Rochester with views of the Genesee River and local flora and fauna. It can also be easily seen and accessible by visitors and community members. Please see the image below for a visual of this potential site for an art installation by a local Indigenous artist.



The image above denotes a potential physical space for an art installation by a local indigenous artist that can also have a physical land acknowledgement plaque.

Looking Ahead

Review of Phase 1 and 2

So many well-meaning and important initiatives lose momentum following a burst of energy. To avoid that outcome here, we have proposed a relatively short timeline of three years, and we recommend that the Council described above, along with other stakeholders as appropriate, undertake a thorough review towards the end of the second phase in order to assess progress, challenges, and priorities, and to plan for the next phases of the work.

External Funding

By laying this groundwork, building on existing resources, and recruiting a talented team of staff, faculty, and students who can contribute to these efforts, the University of Rochester will be well prepared to seek and obtain external funding through entities such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which has provided significant support for Indigenous studies and programming efforts at peer and regional institutions in recent years. Representatives of our working group are committed to undertaking the grant writing necessary to make this happen, in coordination with a supportive administration. Ultimately, we believe that the University of Rochester is well positioned—perhaps uniquely so—to establish a Native Learning Center that is truly and meaningfully transdisciplinary.

Appendix A

“American Indian or Alaska Native” Institutional Research Dataset

In working with Dr. Samantha Spitler, Institutional Research Reporting and Analytics Coordinator in the Office of the Provost, we received a dataset of students enrolled in our undergraduate, graduate, and medical school programs from the years 2012-2022. The data we received were for students that identified as “American Indian or Alaska Native” and did not include any identifying information.

During this ten-year snapshot, there were 118 AI/AN undergraduate students enrolled with 37 degrees conferred, resulting in a 31% retention and graduation rate for undergraduate students. During this time, there were also 52 graduate students enrolled with 20 degrees conferred, resulting in a 38% retention and graduation rate for graduate students. These disappointing retention rates are especially concerning considering the anecdotal data we’ve received from current students; one graduate student, for example, is transferring to another university due to experiences of racism and lack of support on our campus.

A total of 60 undergraduate students (58 in AS&E and 2 in Eastman) were admitted to the University of Rochester but chose not to matriculate. There were a total 18 graduate students (1 in Eastman, 2 in Hajim, 5 in the School of Medicine and Dentistry, 6 in Simon, and 4 in Warner) who were also admitted, but chose not to matriculate.

Below is a brief recap of the information we received that includes an overview of their enrollment status and primary major/program. This information can be utilized for future student recruitment and retention initiatives.

Scholarships:

The University of Rochester awards merit-based scholarships to first-year and transfer students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and potential, regardless of financial circumstances. Currently, there are two scholarships that were awarded from 2021-2023. Four undergraduate students received the “Native Peoples Scholarship” and two undergraduate students received the “Haudenosaunee Nations Scholarship.” These scholarships are made available from the [Office of Undergraduate Admissions](#).

Haudenosaunee Nations Scholarship

The Haudenosaunee Nations Scholarship is awarded to academically excellent students coming to Rochester from one of the six nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, or Tuscarora. The University is proudly centered near the Western Door of the Seneca Nation. The

scholarship is a reward for their hard work in high school and an investment in their continued success here on campus.

Native Peoples Scholarship

Winners of the Native Peoples Scholarship are academically excellent students who are involved in studying, promoting or supporting Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (including Melanesian, Polynesian, Chamorro, and Samoan) cultural heritage, community, and study.

Enrollment:

From 2012 - 2022, there were a total of 175 students who identified as “American Indian or Alaska Native” enrolled at the University of Rochester:

- 118 Undergraduate Students (104 full-time status, 10 part-time status, and four with an unknown status)
- 52 Graduate Students (36 full-time status, 15 part-time status, and one unknown status)
- 5 Medical Students (all students had full-time status)
- 4 Institutional Withdrawals that impacted two undergraduate and two graduate students

Degrees Conferred:

From 2012-2022, there was a total of 57 students who identified as “American Indian or Alaska Native” and had degrees conferred at the University of Rochester:

- 37 Undergraduate Students
 - Bachelor of Arts
 - 1 - American Sign Language
 - 1 - Computer Science
 - 2 - English
 - 1 - English: British and American Literature
 - 1 - Film and Media Studies
 - 2 - Financial Economics
 - 2 - Human Behavior and Society
 - 1 - History
 - 1 - International Relations
 - 2 - Linguistics
 - 1 - Music
 - 1 - Political Science
 - 1 - Psychology
 - 2 - Religion
 - 1 - Spanish
 - 1 - Statistics
 - 1 - Studio Arts

- Bachelor of Science
 - 1 - Biological Sciences: Cell and Development
 - 1 - Biological Sciences: Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
 - 1 - Biological Sciences: Molecular Genetics
 - 2 - Chemical Engineering
 - 2 - Computer Science
 - 1 - Geological Sciences
 - 7 - Nursing

- 20 Graduate Students
 - Certificate Programs
 - 1 - Adolescence Education
 - 1 - Data Science
 - 1 - Inclusion Childhood Education
 - 1 - Urban Teaching and Leadership
 - Master of Business Administration
 - 2 - Business
 - Master of Music
 - 1 - Performance and Literature
 - Master of Science
 - 1 - Business Administration
 - 1 - Childhood Education
 - 1 - Data Science
 - 1 - Educational Administration (w/spec. in higher education)
 - 1 - Geological Sciences
 - 1 - Leadership in Health Care Systems
 - 1 - Microbiology - Medical
 - 1 - Optics
 - 1 - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Grades K-12
 - Doctor of Philosophy
 - 1 - Chemistry
 - 1 - Geosciences
 - 1 - Material Sciences
 - 1 - Microbiology and Immunology

Appendix B

Native American Internal Assessment Questionnaire Results

On March 17, 2023, we sent a brief questionnaire to our campus community via the @Rochester Newsletter to help the working group complete its internal assessment of available resources and relevant initiatives at the University pertaining to Indigenous studies, communities, or issues. We received nine responses to our questionnaire and have copied their responses below.

1. Douglas Phillips, Senior Vice President and Chief Investment Officer

This project is long overdue, and I'm so glad to see that it is being undertaken. I have a suggestion which is that the University begin all major Committee, board, meetings, faculty, senate, cabinet meetings, and all other meetings with a land acknowledgement to the Seneca. Many of our faculty do this in their classes and it is common in other areas or countries especially in Canada. Our River campus is built on an area that was settled by the Seneca. During Sullivan's campaign in the revolutionary war the Seneca were dislocated, killed or starved. It's quite a tragic part of our country's history and conveniently overlooked. We really need to do this. Would you please consider me as an advocate among the University's senior leadership for creating a land acknowledgment?

2. Rose Pasquarello Beauchamp, Program of Dance and Movement

The Program of Dance in general does a good job at working towards decolonizing dance forms and major requirements. As a result, a dance major can be achieved through studying dance of various cultural backgrounds. That being said, we do not yet have a course(s) focusing on Haudenosaunee or other indigenous forms. I imagine much of this is a monetary restriction. As a result, we are trying to do as much as we can outside of the classroom.

Much of my research has been in collaboration with an indigenous storyteller (Trish Corcoran) and we have been working to uncover land histories through art and movement. In addition, in the program we are: educating about histories whenever possible, host Native artists, have an indigenous voice on all of our panels, offer opportunities to take action regarding local injustices (example -- letter writing campaigns to prevent construction on native burial sites).

If we had funding, we would do more! My goal is to get a native American dance class into our schedule. In an ideal world, having a full-time faculty expert in this area for dance would be welcome. I see a real opportunity for that to thrive here.

Also, I am hoping that the group will look at the ways UofR acknowledges the land we are on. The signage on campus, the history online, etc. HWS has a GREAT article/post about the history of their campus lands (before colonization).

3. Karen Smith, Information Services Division

I start any meetings that I lead with a land acknowledgement statement and have encouraged our teams to connect with Ganondagan. We have an active DEI group in our department, who provide a monthly newsletter with information related to many different groups, and a space to discuss. I would like to be able to share more resources and information with our team in an appropriate manner.

4. Linda Callahan, Neuroscience and Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

I am not doing work directly, but as part of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion making sure that Native American and Indigenous populations are part of any conversation regarding Human Histology and Anatomy. I strongly believe it is important to make sure past mnemonics that were derogatory and just plain wrong are never used again for learning content.

I am very happy that finally we are talking about the fact that Native American Indians were the 'first people' of the land that is now named the United States. It is important we get the history right and we fix as much as possible the damage that was done - so we can all move forward.

My comment is that I am ecstatic that finally, after so many long years of trying to understand why the Native American experience was not considered our country's history - finally the information is being talked about. The legacy of what happened to the Native Americans should be a warning to all people, and it is alarming how relevant it is in light of the current Russian war's "attitude" - which is so ancient now. Plus, the Native American peoples learned and passed down education in a way that predates our current system. I am fairly certain that the typical way of oral history and hands on experience is what we are now calling 'experiential learning'. It does work better than only lectures - no question. I think the Native American people realized that thousands of years ago.

5. Nancy Ares, Warner School of Education

I teach a campus-wide seminar on anti-racist curriculum development. Land acknowledgments in course syllabi are part of our analysis, including how to go beyond performativity to integrating explicit goals, readings, and assignments that address Indigenous people's histories and presents. I'm so glad this effort is happening and hope that it is not just lip service.

6. Roger Freitas, Musicology, Eastman School of Music

I am doing very little, as my area of study is the music of Europe--especially Italy--in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In my undergrad survey of music 800-1750, I am considering including an early 18th-century French opera that exoticizes Native Americans, as a potential catalyst to wider discussions about the political and cultural situation. I do use a land acknowledgement statement, but I think somehow we need to do better than these rather empty gestures.

I would suggest the University needs to revisit its official land acknowledgement statement. Like most of these, it amounts to, "we're grateful to own this land that we stole." (Other such statements--though not the University's--claim to respect the "sovereignty" of the native peoples, but those strike me as entirely specious: no one is willing to turn over the deeds of their homes.) First, I think any such statement needs to openly acknowledge past wrongs. Expressions of gratitude are not a substitute and strike me as particularly tasteless: "Thank you for the holocaust your ancestors suffered so we could own your lands today"? And then the statement needs to refer to whatever active efforts toward reparation that the University is making, which could include (at least) education, community-building, and financial support. I am in favor of a Land Acknowledgement, but I would hope we could craft something that truly acknowledges the troubling history and looks forward to a better future.

7. Denise Yarbrough, Religion and Classics

In two of my courses, RELC 159 and RELC/PHLT 180 I spend one module on Native American and Indigenous issues relevant to the courses. In the Public Health class I have local indigenous guest speakers come to the classroom as part of that unit.

8. Dan Gorman, History Department

My dissertation, a history of nineteenth-century Spiritualism, briefly touches on the stereotyped "Indian spirit guides" that mediums channeled in séances and trances.

I have included Native American history topics in the three courses I taught as a PhD student. My New Age/new religious movements class discussed New Age appropriation (often by white Americans) of indigenous religious practices. My science and religion class read an excerpt from "Braiding Sweetgrass" when we discussed religion, environmentalism, and climate change. Finally, my digital history students learned about Mukurtu, a content management system designed for indigenous communities and that features different levels of content visibility. We also talked about Traditional Knowledge Labels, which are meant to be a companion to Creative Commons and copyright licenses.

I have notes and a few pages toward an essay on Lewis Henry Morgan's study of Native American religions, but I haven't worked on it seriously since late 2020/early 2021. Part of the problem is that I draw on Morgan's Seneca notebooks, held at the Rochester Rare Books department. In my conversations with Bob Foster (Anthropology) and Melissa Mead (University Archivist), a question arose of whether the content in Morgan's notebooks would be considered sensitive and private by contemporary Seneca. There are issues of repatriation regarding those notebooks that have yet to be addressed. Additionally, the pages were laminated in the 1960s, so they really need to be digitized before the glue destroys the underlying paper.

I wrote a report in 2019 for the Office of the President that addressed some ways that UR could pursue meaningful engagement with Native American students and governments. My dream would be for us to have a program comparable to RIT's Future Stewards initiative. But my 2019 report was hindered by the fact that I had limited input from Native individuals. I spoke to two UR alumni who are Native American, and I included materials from undergrads and librarians who commissioned Native art for Rush Rhees Library, but that was it. I didn't have the time, resources, or connections with indigenous governments to do a bigger report.

9. Nancy Chen, Biology Department

I have students read and discuss published papers on traditional ecological knowledge in my undergraduate and graduate courses. I've tried reaching out to local communities in the past to see if folks would be interested in collaborating but did not get a response. I am hoping to develop an interdisciplinary course on how systems of power and oppression affect the practice and content of scientific research in collaboration with Tanya Bakhmetyeva. This teaching interest was spurred by a recent special issue of *The American Naturalist* I helped edit that came out in July 2022 that included papers on how to do more just science in partnership with Indigenous populations. I serve on Diversity Committees and/or leadership councils for multiple scientific societies and am working to make biology more equitable and inclusive for all. I am always looking for ways to improve my research and teaching and the communities I'm a part of, and would be happy to get more involved!

Appendix C

List of Land Acknowledgement Statements from Peer Institutions

Lists	Colleges & Universities	Land Acknowledgment/Recognition
Consortium on Financing Higher Education Schools & Association of American Universities	Brown University	Statement, Background, Commitments, & FAQ
	California Institute of Technology (Caltech)	Statement, Resources, & References
	Columbia University	Several statements (Teachers College , School of the Arts , & School of Nursing)
	Cornell University	Statement, how to use, pronunciation guide, & resources -
	Dartmouth College	Statement (among many other resources) from the Native American Program
	Duke University	No Institutional statement, but this page features considerations and sample statements from Nicholas School for the Environment
	Emory University	Statement, Purpose, Background, and Resources
	Harvard University	Statements from the Native American Program , Earth & Planetary Studies , Theatre Dance & Media , School of Public Health ; Dept of History Art & Architecture
	Johns Hopkins University	No Institutional statement, but statement from Bloomberg School of Public Health
	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	Institutional statement, but working group commissioned in fall 2022 to work on strengthening its relationships with its Indigenous community
	Northwestern University	Statement from Native American and Indigenous Initiatives , history, resources, and strategic plan: " The Land We Stand On " Video from Center for Native American and Indigenous Research
	Princeton University	Statement, Guidelines, Best Practices, and Resources
	Rice University	None
	Stanford University	Statement, background, and campus partners
	University of Chicago	Statement, Background, Examples, and long list of resources
	University of Pennsylvania	The Association of Native Alumni wrote this one for the University, but it does not appear to have been officially adopted by the institution
	University of Rochester	No Institutional Statement, but there are seven examples: BIC , UG Admissions, Eastman , LLE , UHS , MAG & CCE
Vanderbilt University	No Institutional statement, but the following statement was passed by the Vanderbilt Student Government in Fall 2019	

	Washington University in St. Louis	No Institutional statement, but examples from Center for American Indian Studies & Brown School
	Yale University	Statement
Consortium on Financing Higher Education Schools	Amherst College	None
	Barnard College	No statement, but hosted a Land Acknowledgement Series in Fall 2021 to support & encourage development of land acknowledgements by staff, faculty, and students
	Bowdoin College	Statement just approved and posted in November 2022
	Bryn Mawr College	Statement & Actions
	Carleton College	Statement, Background, Library Guides (history and land acknowledgements), and other resources about Native communities
	Georgetown University	No institutional statement, but example from Indigenous Studies Working Group
	Haverford College	Statement, History of the College
	Macalester College	No institutional statement, examples from the College Archives , Admissions , and the Department of Multicultural Life
	Middlebury College	Statement, Shorter Statement, Pronunciations, FAQ, Initiatives, Contact
	Mount Holyoke College	Statement, Approval Process, Scope/Responsibilities, Policy, Procedures, etc.
	Oberlin College	No institutional statement, but examples from Dance Department , Crafting Change Symposium , Allen Memorial Art Museum
	Pomona College	No institutional statement, but examples from Benton Museum of Art
	Smith College	Statement - Department of Equity and Inclusion
	Swarthmore College	Statement
	Trinity College	Institutional statement pending, examples from Indigenous Studies Working Group
	Vassar College	Statement
	Wellesley College	Statement, approval statement by the Wellesley College Board of Trustees
Wesleyan University	None	
Williams College	Statement, Mission, Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	
Private AAU Schools	Boston University	No institutional statement, but examples from Teaching and Writing , Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation , Linguistics
	Brandeis University	No institutional statement, example from Intercultural Center
	Carnegie Mellon University	No institutional statement, but example from Career & Professional Development Center: Student Affairs

	Case Western Reserve University	Statement - Social Justice Institute
	New York University	No institutional statement, but examples from History Department and Program in Museum Studies
	Tufts University	No institutional statement, but examples from Admissions and Fletcher Graduate School of Global Affairs
	Tulane University	Statement, abbreviated version, pronunciation guide, explanation, usage, Native American/First Nations/Indigenous community feelings, information & resources
	University of Southern California	No institutional statement, but example from History Department
Public AAU Schools	Georgia Institute of Technology	No institutional statement, but example from Serve-Learn Sustain
	Indiana University	No institutional statement; First Nations Educational and Cultural Center provides sample statement and encourages offices to create their own
	Michigan State University	No institutional statement, but sample statements of various lengths provided from American Indian and Indigenous Studies Dept , Guide to land acknowledgements by Native American Institute
	The Ohio State University	Statement from Office of Diversity and Inclusion
	The Pennsylvania State University	Statement & Pronunciation guide from Educational Equity
	Purdue University	No institutional statement, but examples from Dept of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences , International Programs in Agriculture
	Rutgers University – New Brunswick	Statement
	Stony Brook University – SUNY	Land acknowledgement in the footer of every stonybrook.edu webpage!
	Texas A&M University	No institutional statement, but examples from Dept of Sociology and Dept of English
	University at Buffalo – SUNY	Statement
	The University of Arizona	Statement
	University of California, Davis	Statement
	University of California, Berkeley	No institutional statement, but examples from Staff Ombuds Office , Graduate Division , University Health Services , and Division of Equity and Inclusion

University of California, Irvine	No institutional statement, but examples from UCI Libraries , School of Humanities , School of the Arts ; Campuswide Honors Collegium
University of California, Los Angeles	Message to UCLA Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, and Administrative Officers encouraging land acknowledgements including 3 use example templates
University of California, San Diego	No institutional statement, but examples from Intertribal Resource Center , School of Medicine , and Student Life
University of California, Santa Barbara	No institutional statement, but examples from student government , Gevirtz School, Graduate Division , and Family Student Housing
University of California, Santa Cruz	Statement
University of Colorado, Boulder	Statement
University of Florida	No institutional statement, but example from libraries
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Statement
The University of Iowa	Statement
The University of Kansas	No institutional statement, but examples from Center for the Humanities , Center for Educational Opportunity Programs , and the Lied Center
University of Maryland at College Park	Statement
University of Michigan	No institutional statement, but examples from Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research , Ecology & Evolutionary Bio Dept , and Museum of Anthropological Archeology
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	No institutional statement, but examples from admissions , Institute for Advanced Study , and School of Public Health
University of Missouri, Columbia	No institutional statement, but example from libraries
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Statement
University of Oregon	No institutional statement, examples from senate , libraries , and arts and sciences
University of Pittsburgh	No institutional statement, but examples from Dept of Theatre Arts , School of Law , and Dept of Sustainability
The University of Texas at Austin	Statement

	The University of Utah	Statement
	University of Virginia	No institutional statement, but examples from School of Education & Human Development and Office for Equal Opportunity & Civil Rights
	University of Washington	Statement
	The University of Wisconsin – Madison	No institutional statement, but examples from Office of Compliance, Prevention Research Center , and German, Nordic, and Slavic Dept
Canadian AAU Schools	McGill University	Statement
	University of Toronto	Statement
Other Colleges and Universities	Rochester Institution of Technology	Statement
	Syracuse University	Statement