

Committee/Task Force Spring 2023 Report Native American Land Acknowledgement Working Group (NALAWG)

NOTE: This is the final report of the Working Group in its original iteration. The term of service ended in April 2023. Many members will continue their work with the newly formed committee under the direction of Dr. Carter-Hoyt.

Membership

Chair: Carole Nash

Members: Carlos Aleman, Tim Bloss, Ed Brantmeier, David Daniel, H Gelfand, Laura Henigman, Gilpatrick Hornsby, Brent Lewis, Scott Milliman, DaNae Peterson, Erin Phillippi, Brian Sullivan, Kwyn Townsend-Riley, Elizabeth Wislar, Catherine Zeman, Susan Zurbigg

Charge:

- *Calling together CFI, CVPA, Student Affairs, and any other unit on campus that has constructed a land acknowledgment statement to discuss why/how they did this work, how they use their statement, and what they hope it will achieve.*
- *Consulting with Native American communities on the creation of a JMU Land Acknowledgement Statement.*
- *Consulting with the Virginia Indigenous tribes/nations, as well as Indigenous scholars who have studied Native American diaspora, to better understand what these issues mean for contemporary Indigenous communities.*
- *Collaborating with Native American communities to explore curriculum, hiring, and programming at JMU.*
- *Examining interest in the creation of a Native American studies minor, which is a traditional starting point for curriculum development.*
- *Examining interest in creation of a Native American studies minor, once we commit to a broader initiative.*
- *Investigate with the Provost the possible creation of the position of Tribal Liaison to develop formal relationships with Native American communities and work with faculty/administration on curriculum and programming efforts at JMU.*

Summary of Spring 2023 Activity:

- Held monthly virtual meetings (January 24, February 21, March 21, April 18)
- Continued discussion of proposal from Kenah Consulting for 3-year Native American program development at JMU
- Met with Dr. Karen Diver (University of Minnesota; Fond du Lac) to discuss land acknowledgment statements, barriers and opportunities for Native American students and faculty in higher education; attended presentation, “Engaging with the Past to Embrace the Future: Supporting Indigenous Communities”
- Attended “Healing as World Building,” a presentation by Beth Roach (Nottoway) on indigenous land use/land conservation practices

- Met with Dr. Narketta Sparkman Key to discuss the elevation of the Working Group to the Office of the President, under the direction of Dr. Malika Carter-Hoyt
- Met with Dr. Sammy Matsaw (Idaho State University; Shoshone-Bannock) to discuss Native American pedagogies; attended presentation, “Cultivating Alliances: Indigenous Knowledge, Methodologies, and Research in Natural Resource Sciences”
- Brought to fruition the “Virginia Native Nations Higher Education Summit” on March 24. Representatives from 9 Tribes and 13 universities came together to open discussion with the goal of building partnerships that support Tribal needs. Five JMU representatives attended: Carter-Hoyt, Sparkman-Key, B. Lewis, C. Zeman, and C. Nash. As a listening session for the universities, the Tribal leaders expressed their concerns and hopes for such partnerships, outlining specific needs. The meeting had 70 attendees and was supported by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge. Follow-up meetings between partners take place every two weeks, and a more formalized structure is being organized.
- Met with CMSS staff to discuss programming for Native American Heritage Month (November 2023)
- Supported Dr. Carter-Hoyt’s vision for the Working Group going forward: *With contemporary information and recent history in hand, the purpose of this committee will most likely change slightly based on the gap between the current and desired outcome of community need. What will remain is a platform to express concerns, share experiences, and offer recommendations for improving the university's engagement with Indigenous issues. I would like to grow the scope of the committee to also be responsible for advising the university on matters related to relationships with Indigenous peoples and developing strategies to promote greater understanding and collaboration across the university and Virginia's sovereign nations.*

Future Work Planned:

- Assisting with meeting between Kenah Consulting and Dr. Malika Carter-Hoyt (upcoming, June)
- Identifying Indigenous scholars and focused events for campus during the 2023-2024 academic year
- Reconvening under a new name that takes the focus off land acknowledgment and broadens the work of the committee