

## **Committee/Task Force Fall 2022 Report**

### **Native American Land Acknowledgement Working Group (NALAWG)**

#### **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 Zurbrigg

#### **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 Fall 2022 Activity:**

- Held monthly hybrid meetings (September 5, October 3, November 7, and December 5).
- Updated charge and web page information; established email address.
- Met with Mike Davis, Office of the President, to discuss and identify potential Madison Vision Series speakers who are Indigenous. Developed list of suggested speakers.
- Wrote a statement for recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day (October 10) for the Office of the President that confirmed NALAWG's approach to our work in the context of the recognition.
- Met with Dr. Malika Carter-Hoyt and Dr. Narketta Sparkman Key to learn about the alignment of NALAWG with University DEI initiatives.
- Discussed TFRE recommendations and identified overlap with NALAWG charge; prioritized items.
- Formed planning group with Paula Robinson (SCHEV Associate Director of Equity and Engagement), and Melissa Faircloth and Sam Cook (Virginia Tech American Indian and Indigenous Community Center) to develop a gathering of representatives from the

Virginia Tribes/National and public universities to discuss the role of higher education in supporting Indigenous communities. This planning group met multiple times during the fall to propose the Virginia Native American Higher Education Consortium, a group that will provide points of contact between the tribes and universities and develop working relationships. The meeting is planned for February 2023 in Richmond and is funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge.

- Identified Kenah Consulting, a Virginia-based, Indigenous-owned consulting company to develop a process for building the collaborative, tribal-based relations necessary for establishing a sustainable program and outreach at JMU. They have outlined a three-year process that will culminate in the hiring of a Tribal Liaison.
- Gathered information on courses currently being taught at JMU that have a Native American/Indigenous focus to begin the discussion of a Native American/Indigenous Studies Minor.
- Met with officers of the Native American Student Union (NASU) to establish connections and offer support.
- In November, co-sponsored with NASU and CMSS, for Native American Heritage Month, the film “Run to be Visible,” which was attended by approximately 190 students and covered by Breeze TV. The event included a Q&A with the film’s producer and director.
- Gave extended interview to The Breeze on Native American Heritage Month and the work of NALAWG.
- Wrote a statement for the NALAWG web page re: a JMU Land Acknowledgment Statement
- Provided programming on Land Acknowledgment Statements to UNITED (JMU Corporate and Foundation Relations) and President’s Council on Health and Well-Being.

#### **Future Work Planned:**

- Spring 2023:
  - Continued work with Dr. Malika Carter-Hoyt and Dr. Narketta Sparkman-Key on aligning the working group’s efforts with larger DEI projects/programs at JMU and TRFE recommendations.
  - Supporting the February 2023 visit of Dr. Karen Diver (University of Minnesota) to campus.
  - Co-leading the February Virginia Native American Higher Education Consortium meeting.
  - Supporting a visit by Kenah Consulting to JMU to discuss a process that allows JMU to build trust and working relationships with the Virginia tribes.
  - Distributing land acknowledgment statement (see below) to the university, in the context of a document that explains NALAWG’s approach.
  - Planning for first summit on Native Americans in Virginia Higher Education.

The following statement is being proposed to the University for consideration:

### **Native American Land Acknowledgment Statement Process**

The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia has been home to Indigenous communities for millennia, creating a complex history that includes many tribes and nations. The acknowledgment of traditional land is a public act of respect for Indigenous peoples and a statement toward correcting the stories and practices that continue to erase their histories and cultures. Acknowledgment is also a starting point for action. JMU is committed to developing a powerful, meaningful, and equitable land acknowledgment that embodies the genuine respect and appreciation for the original stewards of the lands that are now home to our university. Our committee strives to create a statement with guidance from and in partnership with members of the Indigenous communities of Virginia and looks forward to sharing this statement in the coming year as part of larger initiatives of Tribal engagement.