

CVPA Indigenous and Enslaved Peoples Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are currently on the land of the Indigenous Siouan, Algonquian, and Haudenosaunee¹ communities who lived here for many generations. We pay our respects to their elders, both past and present, and honor their connections, past, present and future, to the Shenandoah valley.

We acknowledge and pay respect to the enslaved peoples,² bought and sold into forced labor. We honor all the descendants of the victims and survivors of the transatlantic slave trade.

We recognize that the painful histories of white supremacy persist in present-day racial realities and privileges at this university and in our communities. We invite all to commit to dismantling racism and oppression by creating change³ where we live and work.

¹ During the process of writing this acknowledgment, we entered into dialogue about referencing language groups versus specific Indigenous tribes in Virginia. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Shenandoah Valley was a crossroads of various groups of Indigenous people prior to European invasion. Language groups (i.e., Siouan, Algonquian, and Iroquoian) were identified based on archaeological evidence. This evidence suggests linkages to people who spoke these languages and also lived elsewhere on what is now called the continental United States. As “Iroquoian” was a name assigned by White settlers, we utilize the indigenous term “Haudenosaunee” here.

² The term “enslaved peoples” was chosen to recognize the enslavement of people from Africa as well as Indigenous people in Virginia.

³ This is not merely an acknowledgment; it is a reckoning with history and invitation to action. This is a call for solidarity for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to collectively work for change.