

Native Land Acknowledgement Project Report:

**Auburn's Relationship with The Morrill Act,
Land Acknowledgement Statement and Analysis,
and Coupled Action Plan Proposals for the University.**

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SUST 5000: Senior Capstone in Sustainability

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Introduction & Purpose //

A land-grant university is a collegiate institution in the United States that was designated by a state to receive funding created by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The Morrill Acts set aside federal lands in order to erect colleges that would benefit agricultural and mechanical arts. Unfortunately, most of the federal domain lands were possessed by indigenous communities. Through expropriation and violence, the Morrill Acts converted native lands into college endowments. These colleges represent a dark history of “settler colonialism” (Nash, 2019) as they were founded upon the eradication of indigenous rights and cultural history. Auburn University is a land-grant university that was also established on indigenous Creek land. According to an investigative journalism website operated by High Country News, Auburn University benefited from the sale of 2,635 land parcels (239,646 acres) in the U.S. Upon the sale of the land, Auburn University was able to be founded with \$0 spent of its own funds. Though the university paid no money for its creation, the true price of Auburn University is great and tragic. Auburn’s land grant took land from 178 different tribal nations, dispossessing their people and uprooting their way of life without compensation or apology.

It is now up to Auburn University to provide a land acknowledgement statement to recognize, appreciate, and apologize for their debt to indigenous people. An acknowledgement statement is a formal statement that recognizes and honors indigenous people as original caretakers of the land that was taken from them during Native dispossession. There is a rising trend throughout higher education institutes to remember and acknowledge the communities that are responsible for their existence. It is necessary that Auburn University join the movement to convey its appreciation for the involuntary sacrifice that led to its foundation. Auburn is a large, leading university that must right its wrongs in order to promote social, environmental, and cultural sustainability. Beginning with a statement, Auburn University can strive to mend its relationships with native communities, enact programs that benefit descendants, reform effects of the Morrill Acts, and establish new norms valuing Native American history and culture.

This project and our multiple outputs will act as this starting point for the university, with well-researched historical documentation, analyses of land acknowledgement statements and recommendations for how to write them, and finally a list of action plan proposals that the university can couple a land acknowledgement statement with in order to prevent this from being viewed as performative.

Sustainability Rationale & Goals //

Our semester goals of laying a foundation to further the research of this topic and to develop useful and beneficial deliverables that Auburn University can use have come to fruition. We now look towards our long-term goals of increased awareness of indigenous land acknowledgement and sustainability-focused implementation, which can be seen through the share of our deliverables on campus platforms and increased conversations about this on both the highest levels of administration dialogue and on the level of student engagement.

This project has identified 5 major areas where sustainability will be increased through the implementation of our outputs and further research.

Honoring the Truth: The first step in addressing any problem should be to research what is the ultimate truth and what is the historical context of the issue at hand. This is necessary for a land acknowledgement project to ever provide any real value or meaning to the indigenous and non-indigenous communities they include. The history of The Morrill Act, land-grant schools, displacement & attacks on indigenous peoples, rewrites of history, and Auburn University is complex and mostly unacknowledged now. The dark truth is being brought to light via the research aspect of this project and this information that is needed to accompany land acknowledgement will be made widely available to all. Another aspect of honoring the truth is honoring the people who were disrupted and oppressed, i.e., the native communities. Documenting both their histories and their presence today is an important task when developing land acknowledgement statements. This fight for justice and truth falls within the 16th UN Sustainable Development Goal, 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.'

Building Partnerships & Connections: Sustainable development includes building partnerships. In fact, the 17th UN Sustainable Development Goals is all about building collaborative partnerships between diverse groups. Currently, there is a huge disconnect between Auburn University and indigenous communities, especially our American Indian students. This project aims to be a catalyst for developing true and invigorating partnerships for sustainable goals, collaborative research projects, and campus diversity. Partnering with tribal communities, when done with the benefit of Native Americans as the ultimate goal, has many benefits. As a part of the action plan section of this project, these partnerships will be recognized as a necessary component and plans for partnerships will be proposed in multiple aspects and with a few, equally beneficial and viable variations.

Equitable Education: Education remains one of the most important and pivotal aspects of sustainable development, social equity, and opportunity across the globe and is the fourth UN SDG. In a university that was created to perpetuate higher education and economic advancement, unequitable educational opportunities fall short of the university's expressed vision and goals. Auburn University has failed its Native American students by not providing attention to their needs, barriers, and goals. More action plans will be proposed in this project that relate to developing a better on-campus experience for native students, developing a native-oriented curriculum option, and offering hands-on, impactful internship opportunities

Social Inclusion: The United Nations considers equity and social inclusion to be one of its main shared principles and commitments, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ('Transforming our World,' 2015). Many of the 17 UN SDGs include social inclusion as a tool for completing objectives, even ones that do not outwardly represent social sustainability. Native American culture and social inclusion underpins all facets of this project. During the research, statement development, and action proposal facets of this project culture has been celebrated and honored. There are many curated and intentional action plans proposed that highlight increased indigenous social inclusion on campus.

Environmental Impacts: Grass-roots indigenous movements are being centered around land-rights, conservation of traditional practices, and equitable access to resources. The 13th and 15th UN SDGs, climate action and life on land, will see progress through this project's research and action plans. Considering Auburn's responsibility to give back to native communities, donating to and partnering with native organizations fighting for eco-related rights and regulations will make a huge impact on environmental sustainability. Also, developing collaborative research projects is an aspect of our action plan proposals. These co-grant research projects with native communities can have great environmental impacts, such as restoring ecosystems, enhancing native food sovereignty efforts, and gathering data about climate change using an indigenous framework and point of view.

Project Contacts //

Greg Schmidt: schmigr@auburn.edu; (334) 844-1736

- Head of Auburn University's Library Special Collections and Archives
- Expert in anthropology, environmental studies, sociology, special collections, and sustainability
- Advising on accessing the best research material

Dr. Gordon Ambrosino: gra0010@auburn.edu; 334-844-5008

- Associate professor, landscape archaeologist, and art historian at Auburn University
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Coordinator
- Advising on developing a land acknowledgement statement and working closely with native leaders and communities

Dr. Sarah Hamilton: srhamilton@auburn.edu; 334-844-4360

- Director of the Academic Sustainability Program at Auburn University
- Advising on preliminary research and furthering the resource list

Dr. Mark Freeland: mark.freeland@sdsu.edu

- American Indian Studies Program Coordinator at South Dakota State University
- Leadership position within the SDSU Wokini Initiative

- Advising on incorporating AI studies, Wokini Initiative development, and student development opportunities

Prof. Nicole Gaillard: gailnb@auburn.edu

- Professor in AU Hospitality Management Program & events expert & previous director of the Auburn Black Student Union
- Advising on developing fundraising & cultural awareness events on campus and how to promote inclusion and diversity for underrepresented students

Dr. Ellie Lee: shl0003@auburn.edu

- Deputy Director of the AU Korea Center - King Sejong Institute
- Assisting with questions related to having cultural centers on campus, the benefits to students, offering specialized courses and dedicated faculty, and intentional programs

Scholarship Office at Auburn University

- Assisting with questions related to scholarship opportunities for native students, scholarship marketing & outreach, and how develop new scholarships

JuWan Robinson: jdr0097@auburn.edu

- Chief of Staff, Special Assistant at the Auburn University Office of Inclusion and Diversity
- Answering questions related to Indigenous student demographics at Auburn, native representation within the OID, and how to get a statement approved and published on behalf of Auburn.

National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO): info@nathpo.org;
202-628-8476

Methods and Deliverables //

The project began with preliminary research about the topic, familiarizing ourselves with the history, and reading about the sustainability rationale regarding the development of land acknowledgement statements and actions. From there, we brainstormed what we wanted to see come to fruition by the project's end and created three major sections of the project to reach our goals. Each group member took a section that played best to our strengths and interests, and we compiled an annotated bibliography and a list of deliverables that each group member would be responsible for producing based on our individual focuses.

Section 1: History - Elizabeth Dudle (see Appendix A)

To begin a project with such a buried subject-matter and rich historical background, we found it crucial to appoint a group member to work on a historical profile for Auburn University's Land Acknowledgement. Having a background in Law and Justice and learning that Auburn's acknowledgement stems from the passing of the Morrill Act, I knew this was right up my alley.

Preliminary Research

To start, studying to truly understand the deep and complex history behind the purpose of the land grant acknowledgement statement was necessary. Why would our school need to issue an acknowledgement? What type of Auburn history are we not taught about? Our group needed to have answers to these questions before we even began to think about drafting a statement.

Research was conducted through contact leads, the Auburn University library database and Archives Department, and our key resource, *High Country News's* landgrabu.org. These resources proved to be hearty reservoirs of the necessary information regarding Auburn University's land-grant and indigenous dispossession. I began by researching the history of land grant universities and The Morrill Act; its relationship to Auburn University, indigenous peoples, and land acknowledgement statements. I analyzed over 20 articles, academic journals, and historical reports to compile a report that details Auburn University's founding following the Morrill Act.

Last step was compiling the relevant historical data about Auburn University and the Morrill Act to feature in the background and introduction of our project report and submitting the historical findings for my groupmates to propel their research from. It has been extremely important knowledge for us to possess when communicating with our contacts, especially those of indigenous communities. Having a deep understanding of the reason for the acknowledgement, backed with historical testimonies, numerical evidence, and well-documented reports has enabled us to prove to why Auburn University's past necessitates an acknowledgement statement.

Finalizing the Deliverables

1. Indigenous Tribes Affected Infographic

Through a search of Auburn University on landgrabu.org, I gathered general information about the 178 affected tribal nations, how much was taken from the biggest contributors to Auburn's land grant, and how much money was raised from their involuntary sacrifice. I determined the compilation of losses to indigenous communities through the sale of their lands.

I then chose to feature the top 10 indigenous tribes that had the most land taken from them for the benefit of Auburn University. These tribal nations are those whose sale of land contributed the most profit for Auburn University's land grant. I chose to do this to showcase the magnitude of the losses to the indigenous tribes in contrast to the immense gains Auburn received in exchange. With so many tribes affected by the funding of Auburn University, it would be difficult to highlight *all* of them in a graphic, but this deliverable allows for a general idea of how each tribe was impacted in terms of land loss and university profit.

2. "A Look at a Parcel" Visual

To showcase an example of how indigenous land was so wrongly taken by the Morrill Act, I made a visual deliverable that focuses on one parcel of land. Using the interactive map search on landgrabu.org, I picked a land parcel at random that was sold for Auburn University's land grant. I created a deliverable showing the land as it existed before modernization contrasted with the graphic depiction of the parcel. I detailed the size and location of the parcel, as well as the method and brief history of the indigenous dispossession from the parcel. I also included general facts about overall forced indigenous movement from all parcels sold for the benefit of Auburn University. This deliverable portrays the reality of the Morrill Act and shows that the land was not voluntarily surrendered for state colleges, but was really the product of government power and illegal trickery.

3. The Morrill Act and Auburn University Historical Timeline

Before the timeline, I laid out the history surrounding the project beginning with indigenous settlement to the Morrill Act, spanning through land grants sold for Auburn, and finishing with what Auburn has evolved into today. I created a general timeline detailing how and when the enactment of the Morrill Acts led to Auburn University's creation. I featured descriptions of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, the foundation of Auburn University, and general important historical milestones of our land-grant university since the impact of the Morrill Acts.

Section 2: Land Acknowledgement Statement - Anna Lyle (see Appendix B)

This section focused on providing examples of land acknowledgement statements from other colleges and universities and was created to highlight and analyze the quality of the contents and composition of other statements. The hope is that these deliverables can be used as tools in the future for creating a successful land acknowledgement statement. A working Auburn University land acknowledgement statement is also provided.

Statement Deliverable 1: A document highlighting land acknowledgement statements, comparing “good” and “bad” ones, and explaining why based on research and contact expertise.

In order to produce this document, 25+ case studies were analyzed to gather information on what makes a successful statement. Research was done on various articles written by Native Americans explaining what a successful statement includes/omits. The deliverable document was then formatted to be engaging and easy to read.

This document will act as a resource for future projects at Auburn and at other schools who want to look at the differences between good and bad statements. This document will also feature recommendations about how to write the best and most respectful statement, especially for Auburn.

Statement Deliverable 2: A draft land acknowledgement statement relating to this semester’s focus on the Morrill Act & the land sold in the Western U.S. in order to generate funds for Auburn.

Research was conducted on other land acknowledgement statements, including their contents and how they are formatted. Other colleges and universities were contacted to ask what their processes were for writing their statements. Reaching out to Native American authors who have written articles about writing successful land acknowledgements was another step in this process. Professionals at Auburn University were also contacted for assistance in writing the statement and to find out what the process would be to have it published for the public. All research and advice was then applied to the deliverable. The draft statement will be ready to be added to and adapted when the next semester does a project about local land and local tribal communities. Suggestions for where the statement could be located (online on school website, office of inclusion and diversity webpage, on plaques and where the plaques would be, etc.) will be provided. The draft statement developed is:

"Auburn University recognizes the importance of acknowledging that 178 tribes including the Arapahoe, Cheyenne, and Sioux had their land stolen and sold in order to generate our university's endowment via the Morrill Act. We believe that true acknowledgement comes from action, and we strive to continue to foster blossoming relationships with tribal communities and establish connections to aid in reconciliation and further encourage diversity among the Auburn Family."

Section 3: Action Plans - Lily Herbert (see Appendix C)

This section focused on how Auburn University could actually take action to better represent the existing diversity statement and the potential land acknowledgement statement that this project hopes to inspire. Writing and publicizing a statement like this needs to be coupled with tangible and intentional action or else it risks being viewed as performative and ultimately disrespectful to the indigenous communities it addresses.

Preliminary Research

In creating the action proposal document for the university, the first thing to do was preliminary research about what native communities and students need, especially in terms of higher education. Research was focused on finding articles and reports done by Native Americans, experts, and professional researchers. Sifting through the findings allowed for the three main groups of action that would best reflect Auburn University's abilities. Once grouped, case studies were examined to create the individual action plans with dialogue about why certain things worked, how other universities could replicate the actions, and how Auburn could take on these projects.

1. The Native American Student Experience

In the first group, the Native American student experience, actions were proposed that related to ways in which native students succeed in a higher education institution. Barriers and persistence factors have been thoroughly documented by researchers (Guillory and Wolverton, 2008). Barriers include financial burdens and a lack of academic preparation. To address these, scholarship development, waiving out-of-state tuition, and offering bridge courses before the freshman year are all proposed. Persistence factors include giving back to the tribal community and on-campus social support. To address these, offering intentional academic and development tracks, adding spaces and groups on campus for indigenous students, and hands-on internship programs are all proposed.

2. On-Campus Awareness and Cultural Engagement

The second grouping, on-campus awareness and cultural engagement, focuses on the broader Auburn community and getting the entire student body, faculty, and surrounding locals to become more educated and supportive of indigenous communities and land acknowledgement. Displaying signage around campus, hosting fundraising and awareness events, considering a diversity requirement in the general curriculum, and hosting more indigenous faculty on campus are all included within this group. It is important for all students to be aware of the progress that the university would be making by adopting these action plans and developing a land acknowledgement statement, so ensuring that all of this does not get swept under the rug and is instead made public should be a priority.

3. Collaborative Research and Outreach Projects

The last group, collaborative research and outreach, involves all that Auburn can do beyond within the “walls” of our locale. Whether this is working with tribal organizations and indigenous-led movements or partnering with members of tribes and tribal colleges on co-grant research projects, the primary concern is moving forward with the interests of tribes and Native Americans being the priority. Increasing the sustainability of indigenous communities and building relationships with them is something that Auburn, a large university, can help with. We can seek out equitable and beneficial partnerships with native groups. We can be a supportive institution to tribal communities while simultaneously benefiting from the share of resources, information, and beliefs. Considering our history with the Morrill Act and all that was taken from indigenous people during that process, Auburn and other western institutions have a lot of reflection to do and a lot that we can and should learn from native groups and collaborative partnerships.

Finalizing the Deliverables

After compiling all the research and creating the groups of proposals, all of the information was put into two deliverables. The first is a long, detailed report featuring all the action plan findings, explanations, potential applications, evidence, and references. This is a 21-page document, so it was broken up into multiple sections, was given a table of contents, and has an executive summary at the beginning to entice interested readers. This report is intended to be used by AU administration as an actual proposal document, or at least a draft of what one would look like, for future action plan projects at the university. It is also intended to be used by future researchers as a starting point and as inspiration for later action plan proposals.

The second deliverable is an infographic that explains the three groups of proposals and their associated action plans. This graphic is easier-to-read, helps viewers to visualize the groupings, is shareable on more platforms, and can be seen as inspiration for future Auburn-produced media and graphics about land acknowledgement. This deliverable was a necessary component, as the action plan report document is not necessarily intended for use by the average professor or student, whereas this infographic is.

This project did not include the actual implementation of these actions, however, seeing their eventual implementation or having this proposal document become included in higher-level dialogue about making similar changes is the major goal of this deliverable.

Section 4: Website - All (see Appendix D)

To allow for the sharing of our research and deliverables, a website was created which features all that we have done. We used wix.com to create this website and it is our hope that a link will be shared on the AU Office of Sustainability website for easy access to all who are interested in learning more about this project for years to come.

The website has 5 major pages, three for each of the group members' individual work (history, statement, and action), as well as a 'future research' page and a 'deliverables' page where the annotated bibliography, the project proposal, and this project report are readable via a PDF viewer add-on. Website viewers will be able to access all our documents, reports, and research in a visually appealing and easy to navigate platform which we hope will make the experience enjoyable for all.

Evaluation //

The establishment of a land-grant acknowledgement statement at Auburn University will hopefully have significant effects that reach beyond our local college community. We believe this project will inspire more research into Native American history and its deep connection to Auburn University. The possibilities of social change that flow from an acknowledgement are boundless. We are optimistic that the establishment of an acknowledgement will lead to more progressive schools of thought and knowledge. This project has the capacity to unite people and transform the relationships between damaged communities and responsible parties. The acknowledgement statement has ties in cultural, societal, and environmental sustainability and can serve as a leading example for how land-grant institutions can address and educate others about a hidden, dark past. The project may continue to be worked on for years to come, as others create university-wide outreach and reparations, work to bridge the local indigenous communities with the university's environmental education, and draft an acknowledgment that includes the local dispossession of land that is now home to Auburn University. We sincerely hope for and encourage multi-departmental collaboration on efforts beyond just a written statement.

Evaluation of our project will be in terms of how useful it is for future groups to use as starting points for continued development and research. The project will be considered successful if more administrators and faculty also start getting on board with the necessity of land acknowledgement at Auburn. If more people start talking about it and pushing for it based on this project and our outputs, we will have done our jobs. Part of this project's assessment will also be looking at the comprehensiveness of our individual deliverables and how impactful they are when compiled together.

Considerations and Further Research //

The backbone of this project and all projects relating to indigenous land acknowledgement is the use of outside sources and using the voices and insights of Native Americans. The three group members of this project are white females with no heritage connections to indigenous communities and no previous background working with them. Relying on our sources and our contacts was a vital aspect of this project. With that consideration, further research and development of this project is necessary. Though we were able to connect with a few great sources of Native American voices, this project faced both time and resource constraints that created a barrier in terms of waiting for certain contacts to respond or not having access to people that would have given us great information. In the future continuation of this project, finding more contacts and connections to Native Americans is of the utmost importance.

In the middle of this project's development, we came across a contact, Dr. Gordon Ambrosino, who stressed the importance of starting land acknowledgement at the local level first. Unfortunately, it was too late for us to switch over from our existing framework of the Morrill Act. This project is currently centered around the indigenous lands out west that were stolen and sold by the government in order to generate the land-grant funds for Auburn University. But the land that Auburn University sits on now is still relatively unacknowledged throughout this project. The next step in furthering this project and our research is to focus on the local land history and the relationships we have with the Alabama-based tribes. There are currently 9 state-recognized tribes in Alabama; The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama, Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, Southeastern Mvskoke Nation, Cher-O-Creek Intra Tribal Indians, MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, Piqua Shawnee Tribe, and the United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation ("Tribes Recognized," n.d.). These are the tribes that need to be the focus of the future development.

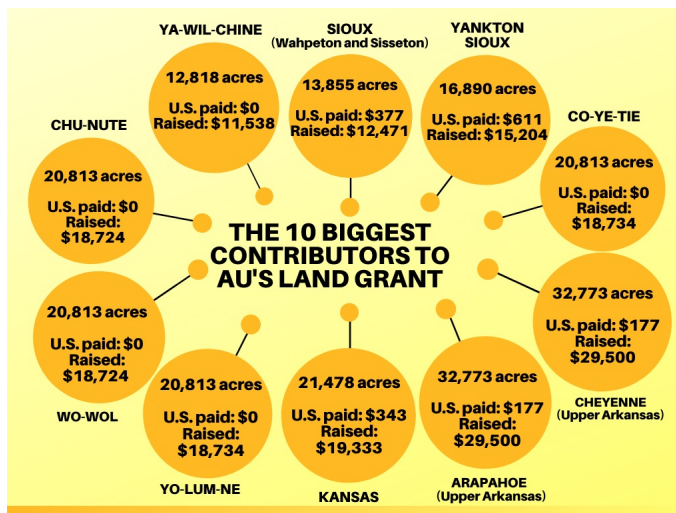
To address the need for further development of this project, we have created one last deliverable (see Appendix E) which is available on our website. This document is intended to be used by future Auburn SUST 5000 group members who will be doing research on indigenous land acknowledgement on the local level and also by any other students who are interested in doing research in this area. The document contains existing contact information and relevant information about the contacts that we feel could aid in the future research. It also contains relevant articles we have found, maps, and research/case studies that might be useful. Finally, all current group members have provided tips on what we did and what we learned that future student researchers might find helpful in their endeavors.

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Appendix A - History Deliverables

1) Indigenous Tribes Affected Graphic



2) "A Look at a Parcel" Visual (based off LandGrabU.com):



INDIGENOUS DISPOSSESSION: A LOOK AT A PARCEL

To show the reality of the Morrill Act's Indigenous land acquisition, we focus on an individual parcel of land that was granted to Alabama for its land grant college.

A parcel in Monterey County, California (CA21016050030E0SN250ANEAL) was acquired by the United States after seizure by an unratified treaty.

The land was stolen from seven tribal nations on May 30th, 1851.

In 1867, this particular parcel was signed to Alabama for Auburn University's fundraising.

In 1872, the university accepted the parcel and in 1890, the land was patented.

\$3,071.45 was raised for Alabama's land-grant from this illegal treaty and sale of land.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY PROFITED FROM 2,635 INDIGENOUS LAND PARCELS (239,646 ACRES)

3) The Morrill Act and Auburn University Historical Timeline:

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF
THE
MORRILL
ACT AND
AUBURN
UNIVERSITY**

OCT. 1, 1859
The small university opened its doors to students as a private liberal arts, Methodist-affiliated university.

JUL. 2, 1862
President Lincoln signed the first Morrill Act into law. It granted 30,000 acres of appropriated Indigenous land to each state in order to create higher education institutions.

1872
Because of financial hardship, the church gave the state control of the college. It then became the first land-grant university in the South and was renamed the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama.

AUG. 30, 1890
The second Morrill Act was passed in Congress. This act permitted African Americans to attend land-grant institutions.

1899
To acknowledge the growing diversity in the curriculum and school culture, the college was renamed the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API).

JAN. 4, 1964
Auburn University was officially desegregated and began integration.

JUL. 2, 2022
The school will mark 160 years of existence under the Morrill Act.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY IS A PRODUCT OF THE MORRILL ACT AND DISPOSSESSION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. HERE'S A BRIEF LOOK AT THE EXISTENCE OF THE LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY.

FEB. 1, 1856
The university, formerly named the East Alabama Male College, was chartered.

1861-1866
The college closed due to the Civil War.

1862-1872
239,646 acres of Indigenous land was stolen or purchased for next to nothing, and was sold for the benefit of Auburn University. 178 tribal nations had land taken for Auburn's fundraising.

1872
The university received a \$215,712 endowment principal that was raised from the 100% share of the Morrill Act land-grant.

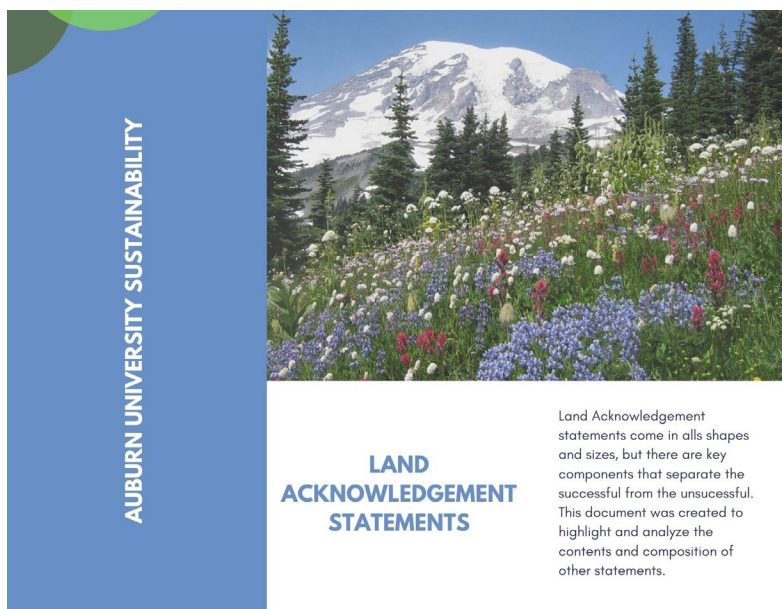
1892
Women and football arrived on the campus of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama.

1960
The university is renamed Auburn University in an effort to encompass the location, growth, and mission.

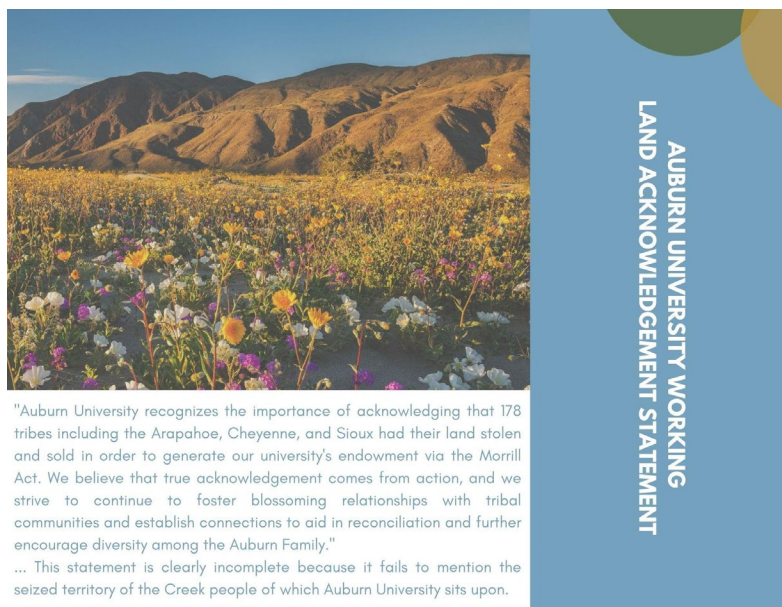
2021
The school reached an enrollment of 30,737 students with a mere 107 Native Americans enrolled.

Appendix B - Statement Deliverables

1) Intro Graphic



2) Auburn University Working Land Acknowledgement Statement



3) Successful Statement Graphic 1

SUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

University of Maryland, Baltimore -
 "We humbly acknowledge the historical and continuing connection between Indigenous peoples and their native lands. While we gather today in person and/or virtually interconnected across Turtle Island, the Indigenous term for the North American continent, we specifically acknowledge the presence of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the host institution for this conversation, on the ancestral land of Algonquian-speaking peoples who shared this area through their relations and whose descendants are thriving and resisting settler occupation. We honor these descendants, who include the Cedarville Band of the Piscataway Conoy, the Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe.

We acknowledge the historical, deliberate, and ongoing attempts by settlers and their systems of oppression to appropriate Indigenous cultures, ignore or break treaties with sovereign Native Nations, and perpetrate and obfuscate racist and violent acts of political, social, economic, and ecological white supremacy. We further acknowledge the fundamental role that these colonialist acts play in the historical and contemporary disenfranchisement, surveillance, and harm of Black Americans.

Recognizing these intertwining injustices, this land acknowledgment serves as an opening for all of us to contemplate the continuing struggles to resist colonial indoctrination through various Indigenous and Black movements for identity, freedom, and self-determination. May this digital space serve as one moment among many for ending anti-Black racism, modern colonialism, and white supremacy and for creating equitable relations that honor and heal communities and the land."

Highlights the tribes names and their lands, which is a good characteristic of a land acknowledgement statement according to the Honor Native Land Guide by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore Land Acknowledgement statement checks all the boxes for what a statement should look like. Not only does it name the affected tribes and their land, it also mentions the appropriation of Indigenous cultures and other racist acts of white supremacy. This is helpful because it highlights current injustices that are linked to the struggles of the native tribes in colonial times.

Mentions that this statement is supposed to bring awareness to the topic and inspire conversation, but is just the beginning of true acknowledgement and is an invitation to deeper analysis and action.

Makes explicit mention of the occupied, unceded nature of the territory in which a gathering is taking place.

Goes on to mention Black Americans in addition to the displaced Native Americans.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_CAYH4WU1QXTXo3MjZHRCD0ajj/view?resourcekey=0-RaHgCM0dQnPkkrW_BfGg

4) Unsuccessful Statement Graphic 1

UNSUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

Yale University -
 "Yale University acknowledges that indigenous peoples and nations, including Mohegan,1 Mashantucket Pequot,2 Eastern Pequot,3 Schaghticoke,4 Golden Hill Paugussett,5 Niantic,6 and the Quinnipiac7 and other Algonquian8 speaking peoples, have stewarded through generations the lands and waterways of what is now the state of Connecticut. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations and this land."

The Yale University statement is rather short and does little other than name the indigenous tribes of the state. They do mention that this statement is intended for use at the beginning of an event to acknowledge the relationships of indigenous peoples to the land on which the event is taking place or used in an event program. While this is noble, it can come off as insincere and like something the university is doing to check off a box rather than truly acknowledge the people. Most people at these events are probably unaware of the displacement of the tribes, and more context would be beneficial even if it is just a short statement to be used at events.

Speaking more about the historical connection would be beneficial and would give more of a background.

Needs more context to successfully acknowledge the tribes. Could also explicitly name the lands alongside the tribes

Presentation of the statement on the university website is important. Coupling the statement with some kind of background information and even adding photos or videos would help the statement be seen less as just another piece of protocol.

Risks being viewed as performative in nature if not paired with action.

5) Successful Statement Graphic 2

SUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

Northwestern University - "Northwestern is a community of learners situated within a network of historical and contemporary relationships with Native American tribes, communities, parents, students, and alumni. It is also in close proximity to an urban Native American community in Chicago and near several tribes in the Midwest. The Northwestern campus sits on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa as well as the Menominee, Miami and Ho-Chunk nations. It was also a site of trade, travel, gathering and healing for more than a dozen other Native tribes and is still home to over 100,000 tribal members in the state of Illinois. It is within Northwestern's responsibility as an academic institution to disseminate knowledge about Native peoples and the institution's history with them. Consistent with the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, Northwestern works towards building relationships with Native American communities through academic pursuits, partnerships, historical recognitions, community service and enrollment efforts."

The Northwestern University statement includes artwork drawn by a member of one of the native tribes and includes descriptions of plants native to the indigenous areas affected by the university. Sourcing an artist from one of the local tribes affected is the most respectful thing to do and an artist statement and description is included. Also included is a Territorial Acknowledgment with tips on how to appropriately recognize the history at everyday ceremonies, lectures, or any public events. This is helpful because it allows and encourages the topic to be addressed continuously outside of just the acknowledgement statement and any initial reparations.

Included native tribal members in the creation of the statement and artwork posted on the website.

Claims responsibility for the education of others on the history of the Native people and their background with the land.

Highlights the tribes names and their lands, which is a good characteristic of a land acknowledgement statement according to the Honor Native Land Guide by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture.

Mentions the university's continuous efforts to foster relationships with Native American communities and raise awareness to any ongoing oppression.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_CAYH4WUfQXTXo3MjZHRD00ajg/view?resourcekey=0-Ra1gC00dC0uP0k1Ww_BcEg

6) Unsuccessful Statement Graphic 2

UNSUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

University of Connecticut - "We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the territory of the Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke (ska-teh-COKE), Golden Hill Paugussett (paw-GUS-it) and Nipmuc Peoples, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We thank them for their strength and resilience in protecting this land, and aspire to uphold our responsibilities according to their example."

The Yale University statement is an example of a rushed and poorly executed acknowledgement statement. Although it includes pronunciation, it is too short and feels disingenuous, as it only lists out the affected tribes. The presentation on the website and format is too simple. It appears to be merely written on a Word document and placed on the webpage. It feels insincere and unprofessional, and almost like they were forced to write it. The wording could also be edited to sound more sincere. This is an example of what not to do in a situation where you want to respectfully acknowledge history and culture, as it comes off as performative.

Speaking more about the historical connection would be beneficial and would give more of a background.

Needs more context to successfully acknowledge the tribes and fails to explicitly name the lands alongside the tribes.

Presentation of the statement on the university website is important. Coupling the statement with some kind of background information and even adding photos or videos would help the statement be seen less as just another piece of protocol.

Wording could be enhanced to sound more sincere. For example, replacing "thank" with "express eternal gratitude", etc.

Risks being viewed as performative in nature if not paired with action.

7) Successful Statement Graphic 3

SUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

University of Pittsburgh -
 "We recognize that the University of Pittsburgh occupies the ancestral land of the Adena culture, Hopewell culture, and Monongahela peoples, who were later joined by refugees of other tribes (including the Delaware, Shawnee, and Haudenosaunee), driven here from their homelands by colonizers. We honor these traditional Native inhabitants of this place and uplift their historic, unique, and enduring relationship with this land, which is their ancestral territory. We pay our respects to their Elders and their past, present, and future people, community, and culture. While we cannot change the past, we commit to continued gratitude for the gifts of nature, along with ongoing respect, care, and stewardship of the land, each other, and future."

The University of Pittsburgh Land Acknowledgement Statement specifically names the affected tribes and expresses gratitude for the aquired land upon which the university resides. This statement not only acknowledges the past but recognizes the present and future of the tribes. It also makes a promise to take care of and nurture the land for future generations, which can provide a level of comfort. This is a good example of a shorter statement that is still respectful and successful overall.

Highlights the tribes names and their lands, which is a good characteristic of a land acknowledgement statement according to the Honor Native Land Guide by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture

Gives a brief recount of the history of the struggles that took place between the Native people on the land and the colonizers.

Acknowledges the Elders of the affected tribes and promises to protect the land.

Appears to express true gratitude for the land and the benefits received from it.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_CAy4WUfQXTx3M2HRC00ag/view?resourcekey=0-RaHgCMd9fQnPo4kRW_BCGz

8) Unsuccessful Statement Graphic 3

UNSUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

Framingham State University -
 "We would like to acknowledge that the land we live, work, learn, and commune on is the original homelands of the Nipmuc tribal nations. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory, and we honor and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather."

The Framingham State University statement is rather short and does not give a pronunciation of the name of the given tribe. It only names one tribe but then mentions the "many diverse Indigenous peoples" who may still be connected to the land. This implies there may be other tribes, and if so they should be named. If not, this is an example of a sentence that could be reworded to help with confusion. The statement fails to express any gratitude for the land and comes off as a little cold. Provides little background on the history of the land, and only mentions the horrible removal of the Native people.

Fails to provide pronunciation of the tribe and needs more context to successfully acknowledge them. Also, possibly leaves out other affected tribes.

Speaking more about the history of the land would be beneficial and would give more of a background besides the graphic description provided.

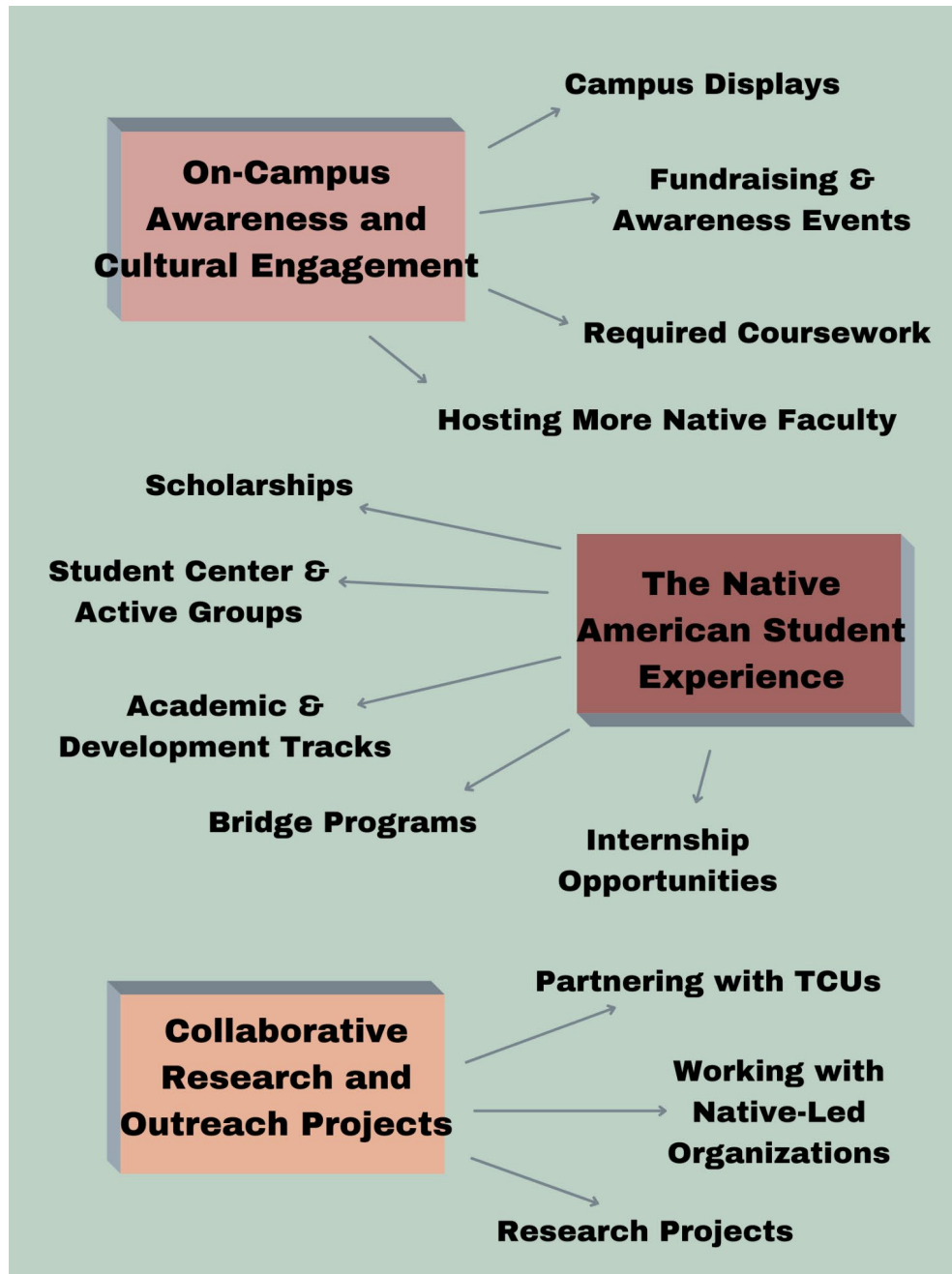
Presentation of the statement on the university website is important. Coupling the statement with some kind of background information and even adding photos or videos would help the statement be seen less as just another piece of protocol.

Fails to express any kind of gratitude for the land and the wording could be enhanced to sound more sincere.

Risks being viewed as performative in nature if not paired with action.

Appendix C - Action Deliverables

1) Action Plan Infographic:



2) Detailed Action Plan Report:

1

Lily Herbert, Land Acknowledgement Group
SUST 5000: Senior Capstone in Sustainability
December 2nd, 2021

Coupling a Land Acknowledgement Statement with Tangible Actions: Proposals for Auburn University

Executive Summary

This document acts as a list of action plan proposals that Auburn University could implement to further the impact of a land acknowledgement statement. Plans are broken up into three major groups of proposals: 1. The Native American student experience, 2. on-campus awareness and cultural engagement, and 3. collaborative research and outreach projects. Each individual action plan is then split into two portions: the reasoning and the action. The 'reasoning' section uses research to address why a certain action should and could be done by the university. These sections feature a mixture of case studies, previous research findings, sustainability rationales, and connections/relevancy to Auburn University. In the following 'actions' section, readers will see how the action itself could be accomplished by using university data, expert insight, and more case studies from other universities who have adopted similar plans.

1. The Native American Student Experience

This section includes action plans that should better indigenous students' experiences while enrolled/during the enrollment process at Auburn University. **Scholarships** for indigenous students should be developed and further marketed to Native American high schoolers and/or transfer students to help relieve the extreme financial burdens of attending a four-year university. Scholarships will also help students to complete their degrees, helping to fight the systemic issue of high drop-out rates among native college students. Creating a **native student center**, a dedicated space on campus for Native American students, will help to increase their feelings of inclusion and support on campus. Functional and intentional **academic tracks** remain a huge persistence factor among Native American students, and these tracks as well as the furthered opportunities they provide should increase Native American enrollment and academic success. Native American faculty and development councils are encouraged to be involved. **Internship opportunities**, for enrolled and non-enrolled Native American college students, should be developed. The research-focused internships should coincide with the fields that Auburn is best known for and should address some problem that faces native communities and/or reservations today. Finally, **bridge programs** should be developed for both incoming first year native students as well as those students transferring from a tribal college or

community college. Bridge programs help to educate and prepare students for the transition into Auburn University, increasing their eventual success at this institution.

2. On-Campus Awareness and Cultural Engagement

This group features action proposals that will help the entire Auburn community to be more culturally aware and engaged with native culture, increasing diversity and inclusion on this campus. Featuring **displays on campus**, including art pieces, signage, and tribal flags in the student center, is a great way to start integrating more indigenous awareness at Auburn and will engage students, even if just visually. Increased **fundraising and awareness events** on campus will also be beneficial within this category, as students can become more engaged on both the planning-side and attending-side of events. The fundraising events would be a great way to fund native scholarships and other action plans in this proposal. **Required diversity coursework**, though potentially controversial, is an action plan that many other American universities are now undertaking. Native American representation within this end of academia should be made equal to other groups and students at Auburn should be able to learn about native history and communities on a collegiate level. Finally, Auburn should **host more native faculty**. Now, Native American representation on a faculty-level is extremely underrepresented. It has been shown that native students benefit greatly from seeing native professors, administrators, and counselors represented well at their universities. Hosting more native faculty would be beneficial to those native students as well as non-native students, as diversity on the faculty-level is something all universities should strive for.

3. Collaborative Research and Outreach

This section includes action plans that Auburn can carry-out that enhance our relationships with native communities and can help to rebuild stolen opportunities for Native American across the nation. **Partnering with tribal colleges and universities** is the first plan, one that a few universities have done and are doing successfully. Partnerships can take many shapes: developing transfer agreements for students, sharing resources between the schools, and hosting research projects between faculty and students. **Working with native-led organizations** and movements is also proposed, as Auburn has a clear service-oriented mantra, but does not partner with any indigenous-led organizations or non-profits right now. Finally, starting more **collaborative research projects** with tribal nations and communities is of the benefit of all when done right. Auburn needs to develop genuine, long-lasting relationships with these communities and researchers need to become educated in the inner workings of tribal partnerships. The term "collaborative" should always be on the forefront throughout the entire process, and even continuing past the project's 'end date.' Research projects should be beneficial for the tribes they include, and the findings should be easily translatable into real-time solutions or starting points for tribal leaders to use.

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Introduction

When a university or institution publishes an indigenous land acknowledgement statement, this should not be considered a final output. As said by Summer Wilkie, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and the University of Arkansas' student coordinator for indigenous people, "something tangible is required to begin the reconciliation process." This notion is not only powerful, but it is considered the new status-quo for what were once empty and performative university land acknowledgement statements. Just as land is not a stagnant, inanimate object, land acknowledgement statements should not be either. Connections and opportunities were stolen from indigenous tribes when the land was stolen and sold by the Morrill Land-Grant Acts. It is the responsibility of land-grant universities to help restore these connections, provide these once-lost opportunities, and foster new relationships with indigenous students and tribes if true reconciliation is the institution's goal.

Auburn University's diversity statement reads as follows; "[We] recognize the importance of promoting an inclusive and diverse environment that supports the growth and success of all. We believe that the contributions of diverse cultures, ideas and life experiences combine to create an enriched and engaged campus community for the Auburn family." On the same webpage, just a quick scroll down highlights a very important hypocrisy to this diversity statement. Under the "Auburn's Historical Progress" section, the first highlight reads "under the Morrill Act in 1872, Auburn became the first land-grant college in the South." No mention is made of the indigenous lands that were stolen and sold to facilitate Auburn's beginnings. No acknowledgement is made of the traumas indigenous peoples endured because of this act. And no promises are made to ensure proper indigenous representation on behalf of this history.

Auburn University needs to not only acknowledge the reality of our dark history and relationship with indigenous communities via the Morrill Act, but the institution needs to start taking action to better the experiences of indigenous students, tribes, and the community through tangible plans. As a part of this land acknowledgement project, we have developed these proposals for the university and have grouped them into three broader categories: 1) The Native American student experience, 2) On-campus awareness and cultural engagement, and 3) Collaborative research and outreach projects. Within each of these categories are more focused action plans that the university can adopt and facilitate.

The Native American Student Experience

Focusing on the experiences that Auburn University students have during their enrollment at this school has been made a priority by administration and subsequent plans of action. However, Native American students here are grossly underrepresented and because of their small sample size, indigenous students often fall into a broad "minority" category. Statistics are showing that it is time that Native American students in higher education start receiving their own set of considerations, with 82% of indigenous students dropping out before completing their degrees (Chavers, 2012). The following action plans reflect things that Auburn University can do that would benefit Native American students and their experience here at school.

1) Scholarships

Reasoning:

The financial burden of attending a higher education institution is one of the biggest hindrances to Native American students. As reported in multiple research studies, both the low enrollment rates and the high drop-out rates of indigenous students can be partially attributed to economic hardship and the lack of financial aid available (Wells, 1997).

According to the Auburn University scholarship office, "Auburn University does not have scholarships available specifically for students of Native American descent." There are diversity-related and needs based scholarships available to students, but none that are specifically for indigenous students and only indigenous students which should be identified as a problem and can be addressed under this project's vision. Other universities do have scholarships like these; Colorado State University offers the Native American Legacy Award, University of Idaho offers the Tribal Homelands Scholarship, and the University of South Dakota facilitates over 30 scholarships for native students for various amounts and eligibilities.

Actions:

Auburn's Office of Development stewards gifts from donors and is in charge of the scholarship agreement process. To develop a new scholarship, all that needs to be done is to find the funds and work with this office to create its eligibility and application process. Funding something as important as this should be easy for the university. Through the Morrill Act, Auburn University saw over \$4.6 million (adjusted for inflation) in the endowment principal raised from the grant. Auburn University financially supports the things, people, and projects that it values. If Auburn is going to continue presenting ideologies and statements affirming its values of diversity and the student experience, financial support must also be given towards indigenous scholarships and other forms of indigenous student financial support.

If Auburn administration so chooses to not seek out or develop a new scholarship for native students, another option would be to waive the out-of-state tuition charges for these students. As it relates back to the Morrill Act and America's history of forceful removal of indigenous groups from their lands, looking at current U.S. state borders to receive more in tuition from Native Americans who do not live in Alabama is wrong and harmful. A new law

passed in Colorado granting all Native Americans in-state tuition is already receiving huge praises and is "[making strides] towards ensuring equity and enhancing diversity" (McMillin, 2021). Proposing the waiver of out-of-state tuition for Native students at AU would follow in these footsteps and would reflect the diversity statements that Auburn University has produced.

2) Student Center & Active Groups

Reasoning:

For underrepresented minority groups, something as simple as a dedicated space or active group on campus can have a huge impact on the student's experience. New research by the University of Washington and the University of Exeter tested the value that students place on dedicated facilities and discovered that 'ethnic spaces' greatly increase a minority student's feelings of inclusion, engagement, and support on college campuses (Eckart, 2020). One of the lead researchers for that study, Terri Kirby says, "The importance of these spaces is partly about the signal they send. They are more than just gathering places — they show students from underrepresented ethnic groups that they are welcome at the university."

At Auburn University, where Native Americans are grossly underrepresented in the student body with only 0.272% identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native in 2019 ("Enrollment," 2019), creating these spaces should be of the utmost importance. According to Dr. Ellie Lee, deputy director of the AU Korea Center - King Sejong Institute, having that space and their subsequent offerings receive tons of positive feedback from students and from community members who engage with the center. Having a dedicated space on campus helps tie Korean students back to their culture and helps non-Korean students learn about it. We believe that a similar space on campus for indigenous students would be extremely beneficial to those students' experiences and for the wider community.

Actions:

Auburn University does not necessarily need to dedicate an entire building or wing of a building to a new Native American student center, like at South Dakota State University or at the University of Idaho, but a dedicated space for these students should be created on campus. It is important that the space is close to the center, as many times spaces like this are found on the outskirts of campuses, where space was more readily available but far away and quickly rushed. The AU Korea Center is in Foy, and the AU Multicultural Center is in the student center. These spaces are great and would be a good example for where a Native American center could be; other options could be in Mell or Haley center.

As for active groups on campus, it appears that there is an Auburn American Indigenous Association, but the web link takes you to a 404-error message. We have also not been able to identify any leaders or club members through our email sources. If this is an active group on campus, that is amazing, though it does not appear to be very active or well-funded. Having a more accessible (especially online for prospective students) and more prominent group on campus would be another action that Auburn could pursue in order to better represent out

diversity statement and commitment to coupling this land acknowledgement statement project with tangible action.

3) Intentional Academic & Development Tracks

Reasoning:

As quoted in an interview with Dr. Mark Freeland, the director of American Indian Studies at South Dakota State University, "academics is an integral component of student success" (Freeland, 2021). He spoke about the importance of offering intentional academic tracks for Native American students and using the framework of indigenous culture as a core component. This academic area at SDSU falls within the university's Wokini Initiative offering dedicated programs, support, and other resources for the tribal nations of South Dakota who wish to gain opportunities and education both on campus and off via collaborative outreach programs with various tribal organizations (Dunn, 2017). At SDSU, the Wokini Scholars students have graduation and retention rates that are on par with non-indigenous students. The initiative acts as an amazing case study of what Auburn could do for our Native American students, especially on the academic side of things.

Actions:

For Auburn, introducing this new field of academia for students would start with finding an advisory council of tribal members, as well as using other indigenous studies experts as resources. Options for coursework include native languages, reservation economics and government, tribal sustainability, health courses, and agriculture. It is recommended by Dr. Freeland that students on this academic major either double-major in another area that fits their goals or have a minor, meaning a dedicated advisory staff at Auburn would be necessary to aid students in this area. Also, an ongoing dialogue between the global and local aspects of indigenous culture should be a priority in this track, so the role of department head, tribal liaison, and academic researcher should also be filled.

4) Internship Opportunities

Reasoning:

As a further addition to academia, offering internship opportunities tailored to native students has shown to be incredibly beneficial. In 2010, the University of Utah saw an opportunity to help increase Native American student participation in the biomedical sciences in response to the health crises facing indigenous populations. The school partnered with research, cultural, and professional mentors to develop a summer internship program for AI/AN (American Indian/Alaska Native) college students across the U.S. The culturally aware framework coupled with the mentorship aspect of the program attracted 128 students within the first decade of its conception and saw a 0% college dropout rate amongst its participants (Holsti, 2020). The program is noted to be so successful because of its focus on the experience for the

students, considering their unique barriers and needs as well as incorporating community engagement principles of the tribes.

Actions:

Auburn is a university famous for our agriculture, business, and engineering programs. Auburn is also unique in the fact that our creed exemplifies the values of hard work, education, the human touch & school spirit that flows through our campus. The University of Utah hosted a program for biomedical sciences, so it seems more than appropriate for Auburn to host a similar summer research internship for Native American students throughout the U.S. reflecting our expertise in academic areas. Based on the previous case study's amazing results, tailoring a similar program to fit in with what Auburn does best would be a great way to give back and offer opportunities to all Native American college students, not just the ones who attend our university during the regular academic year.

To develop something like this, the school would first need to form relationships with potential student mentors and curate a leadership committee reflecting the research-side and the indigenous culture-side of the program. Then, research focuses should be found relating to some issue facing indigenous communities (like health issues for the Utah program) in which our expertise in ag., engineering, or business could be beneficial. Examples of issues that could be addressed include the barriers Native American entrepreneurs face in the world of business (Fetsch, 2015), clean water and sanitation infrastructure issues on reservations (Tebor, 2021), or working to restore resiliency in tribal food systems and within agricultural networks (Anderson, 2021).

5) Preparatory Bridge Programs

Reasoning:

Two of the most frequently identified factors hindering Native American student achievement in higher education institutions are inadequate preparation and poor adjustment to the college environment (Wells, 1997). Attempts of addressing the poor preparation and adjustment have been made in the form of "bridge" programs and many colleges offer these. Northern Arizona University is a great case study of this, hosting the "Indige-Bridge to Success Program" for incoming indigenous students. The goal "is a successful college transition process, and Indige-Bridge provides an overview of the university community from an Indigenous perspective. Participants connect with key staff, faculty, and support services while meeting other students and building skills for success" ("Indige-Bridge," n.d.). Most bridge programs include study tips, sessions with mentors and advisors, addressing new institutional culture and greater academic expectations. Some bridge programs are for incoming freshman, while others are for students in 2-year tribal colleges or junior colleges who are transferring to 4-year universities.

Actions:

Auburn University already has bridge programs on campus and online. The AU STEM summer bridge helps students to become more prepared for curriculum and expectations. AUM has a bridge program to help students who did not meet admissions requirements. There is also a program in the school of kinesiology where students are recruited and aided in the transition to graduate programs. Auburn has the capacity and know-how to offer these programs. Now, we need one curated for indigenous students to help them reach higher levels of success in college. Two programs should be developed, for incoming freshman and for transfer students. These programs need to be online-accessible, so students do not have to pass up the opportunity because of transportation or logistics issues. The programs need to be developed with the help of Native American experts and a potential advisory council to ensure the course content is within a more intentional indigenous framework and addresses the more specific problems and barriers that our Native American students might face.

On-Campus Awareness & Cultural Engagement

It has been a long agreed-upon conclusion that increased diversity and access to cross-cultural engagement opportunities have multiple benefits on college campuses and for students. Auburn's own diversity statement reflects this agenda of increasing diversity and preparing students for higher levels of success via the contributions of diverse cultures, beliefs, and experiences to create a more enriched environment for all. Diversity on Auburn's campus has been lacking in the form of Native American culture. In developing a land acknowledgement statement, it will also be important to begin promoting increased awareness and cultural engagement of the people being acknowledged – indigenous communities. The following action plans will help to begin this process on a wider scale which includes the student body, faculty, and the surrounding local Auburn community.

1) Displays On Campus**Reasoning:**

More institutions are taking a look at how Native American culture is not only being represented in the student demographics and academia, but also how it is being physically displayed on campus. Whether this is through art, flags, or murals, respectable and non-offensive displays of indigenous pride and subsequent collaborative school pride have shown to be significant predictors of Native American enrollment as well as persistence throughout their years in college (Mottl, 2018).

In the AU student center, flags representing the countries from which international student's hail from are hung from the ceiling and are viewable by all. But, according to an operator at the Foy Information Desk at Auburn, none of the flags hung in the student center are

representative of indigenous communities. Also, it is unknown if there are any permanent art/cultural displays on campus that represent Native American history, culture, or current presence, except for a few portraits of Creek Indian leaders that reside inside the Scott-Yarbrough House aka 'Pebble Hill'.

Actions:

It is important that Auburn should begin considering just how impactful a good display could be, not only for our Native American students and faculty, but for the broader student body and its diversity goals. As stated in a publication by the Yale University Art Gallery dedicated to Indigenous North American art, "Institutions committed to accurately and respectfully displaying indigenous art have made it standard practice to include indigenous scholars, artists, and community members in all steps of the curatorial process. In addition to forming advisory councils, this may be achieved by consulting with indigenous scholars and/or hiring Indigenous curators" (McLeary, 2019). This would apply to most forms of displays that Auburn might consider developing, and it highlights how the first step and primary steps should include native voices and leadership.

As for the flags in the student center, adding flags to represent the local Alabama tribes and any/all tribes that native students are associated with is important. Working directly with tribal leaders to find out which flags they'd prefer to be hung or which flag they are currently using should be done instead of a quick Google Image search. Also, just as there are rules and requirements for the proper hanging and handling of the American flag, there are many tribal flags that also have associated regulations. These need to be addressed beforehand with tribal leaders and representatives and documentation of these requirements and other relative information should be collected and developed into an instruction guide or handbook available to all university personnel who might handle one of these flags.

2) More Fundraising and Awareness Events

Reasoning:

During the month of November, Native American Heritage Month, the Auburn Office of Inclusion and Diversity hosts a few events and programming related to the celebration and education of indigenous culture. This year, in 2021, the newsletter reads, "The center is offering two engagements to celebrate Native American Heritage Month" ("Auburn Recognizes," 2021). The two events are a craft class and an online session hosting Sasanhsaeh Jennings as the NAHM keynote speaker. Though both of these programs are great and do provide an exciting way to engage with indigenous culture at the university, is it enough considering our relationship with the Morrill Act?

Actions:

Hosting more awareness events on campus, and not just during the month of November, is an action plan that should be considered by Auburn University, especially considering this project's goals of developing a land acknowledgement statement. In an interview with Professor

Nicole Gaillard, expert in event planning within the AU Hospitality faculty and previous advisor for AU's Black Student Union, she gave some tips on how to host events like this. Her first piece of advice was to host events in a public-enough space that engagement could peak. She recommended Foy lawn as a great space for showing off activities and demonstrations that will draw people in off the concourse. Next, she advised to host larger events with other groups to boost engagement. This leaves the potential to include Native American displays and activities within larger Auburn OID events. Last, she made sure to include advice about how publicizing social-related events could be "gasoline for negativity," so ensuring that leaders and those involved are prepared to defend their positions and continually promote inclusivity is key (Gaillard, 2021). Using these tips, Auburn faculty and student leaders have a great opportunity to host more awareness events on campus highlighting and celebrating native cultures and our native students.

For fundraising events that could potentially fund indigenous scholarships and research projects, Eventbrite offers up some helpful recommendations. Defining your cause and setting fundraising goals are the first steps. If this were to be a scholarship fundraising event, setting a reasonable goal of 1-3 scholarships at variable amounts would be a great start. Then, pinpointing a target audience. For raising money, this could be a larger event where students could donate small funds, maybe left-over Tiger Card funds or small bits of their own money. A smaller and more sophisticated event would also be great for a target audience of older, professional members of the wider Auburn community. For this type of event, hosting a sit-down dinner curated by a Native American chef with Native American speakers would fit within the theme and would perpetuate the cause (Higgins, 2021). The Auburn University Hospitality Management program has an entire pool of students working towards their event management degrees. Working in tandem with this program, faculty, and students would be beneficial for potentially planning a large fundraiser event, as most of the students end up planning and holding their own events on campus.

3) Required Coursework for All Students

Reasoning:

Many universities have begun implementing a "diversity requirement" within their general education plans for students. Some universities, like UCLA, offer various courses that students can choose from in order to meet this requirement. Other universities, like St. Edward's University, offer a single required course that examines multiple areas within diversity-thought in America and how society and individuals are impacted. Both of these types of diversity requirements have faced pushes forwards and pulls back from various groups, but their ultimate goals of preparing students to look at contemporary issues and engage in dialogue is being met (DeRuy, 2016). If the university would choose to implement one of these styles of diversity core requirements, indigenous culture needs to be as equally embedded in the curriculum/course options as other groups.

Research has also shown that "The most successful efforts at managing and enhancing the benefits of diversity invite boundary crossing—between disciplines, student affairs and

academic affairs, the institution and local communities" (Smith and Schonfeld, 2000). This leaves room for discussions about, *how well are students prepared to be culturally competent within their career paths and larger society?* To take aspects of both the single required diversity course and choosing between multiple courses to fulfill the requirement, we also propose that the university considers the implementation a senior-level project for students that addresses diversity-related issues within their respective academic major(s) or minor(s).

Actions:

Implementing a new diversity requirement for all students seems daunting from an administrative perspective. Adding this into Auburn's existing GER's for existing students would be nearly impossible. However, making this a new requirement for incoming students would be much easier and would receive less backlash and would prevent conflict. To develop the course itself, administrators should develop a new taskforce of existing faculty members working in the areas of teaching diversity in academia. To ensure that it truly is a catch-all course for diverse topics, a few members of each respective background should be represented in the taskforce or should be used as a key reference and advisor. This includes native faculty, as indigenous diversity is the area in which few Auburn students ever experience in their academic tracks.

The idea of filling hundreds of years of history and existing societal intricacies of diversity into one 3-credit course over a semester is impossible. The course's developers and the related taskforce should know this and should be prepared for how difficult it will be. No one topic should be thrown in haphazardly and no one topic should take a precedence over the other. Balance of course content and the quality of the course content should be continually monitored and reworked as problems arise. This will not be the course that ends discrimination, as something like that probably will never exist. However, this will be the course that will introduce these topics to students on a collegiate level, potentially for the only time for some during their years here and should be deemed extremely important. It is recommended that administrators take at least a few years of working and reworking course content until it is up to par for student engagement.

For a required diversity-related senior project, the same principle above applies; it should not be required for existing students, but for incoming ones. Administrators should use a taskforce to create broad, general requirements for the projects applicable to all, but should allow department heads and independent faculty members to develop their own, more related requirements depending on the students' majors.

4) Hosting More Indigenous Faculty

Reasoning:

It is important that students can interact with diversity within the faculty-level while at school. Auburn University does a good job of hiring diverse professors and administrators with different backgrounds and experiences to share with students. However, there are not many professors or faculty on-campus who are of Native American heritage. According to Auburn's Office of Institutional Research, the Fall 2020 semester only had 7 faculty members who self-

identified as Native American. To compare, there were 154 Asian, 65 African American, 62 Hispanic, and 1,042 White faculty members ("Employees," 2020). The 0.005% native faculty percentage should be a huge wake-up call that in order to better represent our diversity statement and potential land acknowledgement statement, Auburn needs to start employing way more Native Americans, especially on the faculty level.

Actions:

An easy way that Auburn can begin doing this is looking to host Native Americans as adjunct professors. Adjunct professors are on the non-tenure track and are working on a course-by-course basis, so they have more flexible schedules. A goal for the university should be to host at least 15 Native American adjunct professors per semester. Allowing a course to be taught by Native American professors virtually from their home-states would also be doable to get more involvement from candidates who might not be able to relocate on a short-term basis. Auburn should also consider hiring more native faculty members who can work as indigenous student advisors or on advisory boards for some of the action plans in the first set of proposals, mentioned earlier.

Collaborative Research & Outreach Projects

It is extremely important that when we discuss outreach and research programs that the term collaborative stays in the forefront. Native communities and institutions have been fighting for sovereignty for as long as Europeans have been present on this land. Broad knowledge considers sovereignty in terms of governmental affairs and the right to self-rule. But we must now look beyond just jurisdiction and acknowledge some of the more modern concepts including food sovereignty, media indulgence, research projects, social change, and education.

Many tribal communities are weary of working with outsiders, as honoring their sovereignty and showing them respect has not been a recurring theme. For Auburn University, if any type of outreach or work with tribal groups is to be considered a plan, it not only has to be wholeheartedly collaborative at all points in the process, but it must also be done with the tribes' best interests as the first objective. In order to do this, the following action plans have been developed and case studies have been examined to determine the best ways to go about this style of action as a westernized higher education institution.

1) Partnering With Tribal Colleges

Reasoning:

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) act as a key development in the active support of tribal sovereignty, especially in terms of education, socialization, and supporting native youth. "The course offerings, programs, and research endeavors at tribal colleges, in turn, improve the

expertise of tribal governments through the graduates they produce. TCU students become active, organic elements of what the tribal college offers, helping rewrite and revitalize tribal identity and development" (Cheryl Crazy Bull, 2015). TCUs are, in full, designed to be separate entities from Eurocentric American universities. They are designed by and for native communities, and that must be respected and honored. In years past, more TCU students have been transferring to four-year institutions to obtain bachelor's degrees in their desired fields. TCUs and the four-year institutions have seen this pattern and are now recognizing the importance of making this transfer process as easy and as effective as possible as well as seeing the possibilities of more direct partnerships.

Fostering these types of partnerships has shown to be successful. Some of the partnerships have been reaching goals by creating articulation agreements between the schools. "An articulation agreement guarantees that certain TCU credits and courses will transfer to the four-year institution, aiding students in their transition" (Bryan, 2018). Another partnership was created between Leech Lake Tribal College (LLTC) and Bemidji State University (BSU). "The collaborative project is titled Students Matter and focuses on increasing enrollment and improving retention at LLTC and BSU by using distance-learning technology to allow students to complete four-year degrees at the Leech Lake campus site." Individual four-year institutions have partnered with TCUs by creating dual-enrollment opportunities for students. A final case study looks at the partnership between Northern Arizona University and Navajo Technical University, in which they have established a formal memorandum of understanding. "The MOU will seek to enhance academic programming and student success at NAU and NTU, as well as explore faculty collaborations and exchanges for the purpose of research and scholarly activities" (Vendever, 2017). This memorandum also highlights the importance of resource sharing between the schools that will provide unique and important benefits to the students and faculty involved. This partnership is described by Dr. Hammill, VP of NAU's Office of Native American Initiatives, as being "equitable, innovative, and enduring."

Actions:

The above partnerships are all options that Auburn University could and should seek out with TCUs. Though considerations and careful planning should be done beforehand. Historically, TCUs reached out to larger universities for these types of partnerships, only to be either rejected, called "unnecessary," or exploited (Bryan, 2017). Though things are changing, Auburn must take caution to address this history and make certain that potential partnerships are in benefit of the Native American students and the TCUs before all else.

Dr. Tim Nichols at South Dakota State University has been working with tribal colleges for years and has developed a checklist for four-year universities and TCUs to follow when attempting to form a partnership. Starting with learning about the history of potential collaborators and recognizing the differences, "You need to have enough humility of spirit to put yourself in a position to be a learner rather than an expert." Next is using caution and examining the motivations of both parties involved. Self-reflection is key here for Auburn. *Are we doing this because we want to look good?* Next is to visit each-others' campuses and make personal relationships and connections. "A lot of work early on is in developing the strong relationships. If

the relationships are in place, the collaboration will follow." Establishing your common grounds and also speaking up when discomfort becomes prevalent are the next steps. Sharing perspectives, airing grievances and being honest are important aspects of all relationships, especially between TCUs and four-year universities. The last steps are being patient, realistic, and open to possibilities and changes (Nichols, 2001).

2) Working With Indigenous-Led Organizations & Movements

Reasoning:

When discussing the importance of supporting indigenous-led organizations, a key thing to note is that native people have "always had to organize to protect our land, our children, our people, and our sovereignty" (Roanhorse, n.d.). This concept implies that there is no end in sight for indigenous communities' fights to protect themselves and the things they value, which is different from the more westernized linear approach to what a movement should entail. By supporting organizations that share in this philosophy, Auburn would be able to show that it also respects and honors these truths of continual change, reconciliations, and actions.

Olivia Roanhorse continues, answering the question, *why should your institution care about supporting us?* "These small but mighty movements (being significantly under-resourced) have been quite successful," and "these movements impact us all and they address the root causes of our collective problems - your water, your air, your health, the future we leave our children, to name just a few issues Native-led movements are tackling." According to a research report by Native Voices Rising, even with native-led organizations being extremely underfunded, with 0.3% of foundation funding going towards activities benefiting Native Americans (and a significant portion of these going to non-native controlled organizations), organizations that are truly native-led are making extremely impactful changes to local communities and on a nation-wide scale (Delgado, 2013).

Auburn University is an institution that clearly supports volunteer work and philanthropic support, with "the human touch" being a value stated in the university's creed and "service" being a pillar of the AU experience. Auburn Gives Back is an initiative that aims to promote service opportunities for students and AuburnServes is extremely popular amongst the student body. There is an entire Office of Public Service offering outreach information, a magazine that highlights the university's engagement across state and country borders, and a directory for philanthropic partnerships and the movements it supports. There are countless links for various organizations that the university supports via philanthropic efforts, yet none of them are native-led or even directly address issues that face native communities.

Actions:

Auburn has a ton of options and opportunities to begin supporting indigenous-led movements. Roanhorse lists a few of the ways that "non-natives and those in positions of power support, uplift, and ultimately invest in movements across Indian Country." The first is through doing one's own research. Learning about what causes you'd like to support and what organizations are working on those missions. There are dozens of resources out there offering this type of information; the Native Voices Rising Report and the USDAC's Honor Native Land

Guide are two great ones. Next is through funding and investing. Raising these funds can be done on campus, as discussed in a previous section.

Auburn also has a unique niche in the world of service because of our students. Many students use the AU service groups and networks to spend time helping platforms they like. Many students spend summer/winter breaks, weekends, and nights off doing service work, so giving native-led organizations a platform using these groups would be beneficial. Certain departments could find a native-led organization that aligns with their academic focuses and faculty could help their students learn and engage with these groups. Also, the University of North Alabama has a webpage entitled 'Native American Cultural Resources' where they keep their land acknowledgement statement next to a plethora of Native American organizations and nonprofits that they support. Auburn could do something similar and create a page dedicated to these indigenous movements and links for students to follow to learn more.

3) Collaborative Research Projects with Tribes

Reasoning:

Community-based participatory research is well recognized and for it to be as successful as possible, high levels of collaboration is needed in order to address community needs and to then turn findings into translatable and tangible outcomes. But when universities try to create these research partnerships with tribal nations, many barriers like cultural differences, ethical violations, organizational constraints, and unrealistic expectations prevent these partnerships from being effective (Harding, 2012). Tons of research is needed on reservations and within tribal communities to help find solutions to short-term and longer-term, systemic problems facing them. However, many Native Americans find it hard or even impossible to work with academic and researchers who are not equipped with the right mindsets or expectations on research projects.

Many universities and associated researchers are learning about these problems and are doing something about it. At the University of North Dakota, doctoral researcher Julii Green has been working on building strong relationships with tribal leaders in order for them to recognize that she is not just a "helicopter researcher who drops in, collects information and leaves, without maintaining a relationship and sharing research findings for the tribe's benefit" (Munsey, 2011). She states that her research project will essentially be owned by the tribe, ensuring that once her dissertation is finished, all information will be shared back with the tribe via their active relationship and that all follow-up work with the data must be permitted by the tribal council beforehand. This type of work is an "example of a new paradigm for conducting research in ethnically diverse communities — one that emphasizes collaboration over exploitation" (Munsey, 2011).

San Diego State University is another example of how long-term, equitable, and fully collaborative research partnerships are both doable by universities and beneficial to both the researcher and tribal communities. As stated on their webpage, "SDSU has a long tradition of programs, initiatives and collaborations with tribes and these tribal partnerships continue to

provide a foundation for the relationship between SDSU and tribal communities to develop and flourish" ("Tribal Programs," n.d.). Following this is a list of ongoing projects led by tribal partners and SDSU faculty and students with topics such as 'Business and Hospitality,' 'Conservation and Natural Resources, and 'Tribal Identity.' These research projects would not be possible if it were not for the dedication that the university has made towards building and maintaining these relationships they have with tribal leaders and communities across the state.

Actions:

For Auburn to take part in this kind of research with tribal nations, a lot of relationship building must be done beforehand. Researchers must go in and build collaborative partnerships and need to prove themselves to groups that have concerns or restraints. Auburn must also address ethical issues, stressing the need for collaboration in the face of a history of exploitation. Approvals need to be granted and the research must be able to eventually benefit the communities in some impactful way. Dr. Jacque Gray explains that when she meets with tribal leaders, she "explains the goal of the research, how its results might benefit the tribe, the fact that the tribe actually owns the data, the process for publishing studies drawn from the data and how the community's confidentiality will be protected, all of which is written out in a resolution presented to the council, which they can edit to fit their needs" (Munsey, 2011). This type of clear documentation has also been done by researchers at UC Berkeley when working with local tribes on a research project about redeveloping native food systems. They co-developed a document that both acknowledged their problematic past and that would act as a guide for research and practice throughout their current endeavors. This document became a test for authentic partnership between the university research team and tribes allowing for freer and trusting engagements between the two groups (Sowerwine, 2019).

The UC Berkeley team laid out a list of things that they learned while doing research work with tribal communities that Auburn can use as an extra set of guidelines and recommendations. Some of these insights included the insurance of equitable grant allocation to tribal partners, the encouragement of native professional development throughout the project, designating an inclusive and equitable leadership team, becoming educated about tribal norms, history, and cultural differences to build trust and respect, implementing transparent communication lines, and including non-research tribal community members as often and whenever possible to encourage high levels of community involvement (Sowerwine, 2019). Also, as a final recommendation by researchers working with indigenous groups, universities and academic researchers should become extremely familiar with native sovereignty, ethics, informed consent, and intellectual property rights and should develop agreements reflecting these concepts (Harding, 2012). If Auburn will consider these examples and recommendations by researchers doing this kind of work with tribal communities, there is a very real opportunity for growth in this area.

Conclusion

In addition to a land acknowledgement statement and new publishing about Auburn's history with The Morrill Act, the university needs to develop tangible action plans that correlate with the reconciliation efforts. The action plans presented in this proposal do not exhaust the list of possibilities and opportunities that Auburn has, nor should it be viewed as just a student-written paper for a school project. These plans should be seriously considered and this document, along with future research efforts, should begin to assimilate into the dialogue of university administrators and faculty.

Other universities have proven that these actions are not only achievable on paper, but are genuinely beneficial to their students, campuses, diversity statements, independent reconciliation efforts, and, most importantly, to the native communities they address. Auburn's land-grant history leaves us in a position to do more, not only for our reputation as a diverse, higher education institution, but as a collection of people with consciousness about the realities of this world and what institutions should do in order to be better members of this nation.

Our creed, as mentioned numerous times throughout this proposal, lends more responsibility to Auburn administration. *I believe in work, hard work.* The reconciliation process will be hard work, but it is something we must begin. *I believe in education,* an education that is not in the best interests of our native students and the greater native communities right now, but that can change. *I believe in honesty and truthfulness,* which is why our dark history needs to be brought to light and addressed via tangible actions. *I believe in the human touch,* allowing Auburn to make a true difference for our fellow man through these plans. Lastly, *I believe in a sound mind, a sound body, and a spirit that is not afraid.* Looking into our history, accepting the truth, and looking forward to what we can do better might be scary, as admitting our faults is a scary thing for humans. But we have a spirit that is not afraid of these challenges and the work that we must begin to do.

I believe in Auburn and love it, and I believe we will do what is right and will make the changes necessary for the betterment of all, especially our native students, faculty, and surrounding communities.

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Appendix D - Website

Website Link: <https://lgh0015.wixsite.com/sust5000>

1) Website - Homepage with Sustainability Rationale

Home | History | Statement | Action | Future Research | Deliverables | AU Academic Sustainability Program

Auburn University Land Acknowledgement Project

SUST 5000: Senior Capstone in Sustainability

This project's ultimate purpose is to lay the groundwork in order to encourage more upper-level administration dialogue about how necessary land acknowledgement is at Auburn University. Our project focuses on Auburn's history with the Morrill Act and how our land-grant title is rooted in stolen lands and the displacement of Native Americans; a fact largely unacknowledged by the university. Outputs related to this history, land acknowledgement statements, and potential action plans have been developed for this project and can be accessed throughout this site. We also hope that this project inspires further research in this area on the local level and a statement acknowledging the land that the university sits upon accessed throughout this site. We also hope that this project inspires further research in this area on the local level and a statement acknowledging the land that the university sits upon is developed in the near future, potentially by future SUST 5000 students.

History | Statement | Action | Future | Deliverables

Sustainability Rationale

This project has identified 5 major areas where sustainability will be increased through the implementation of our outputs and further research.

Honoring the Truth: The first step in addressing any problem should be to research what is the ultimate truth and what is the historical context of the issue at hand. This is necessary for a land acknowledgement project to ever provide any real value or meaning to the indigenous and non-indigenous communities they include. The history of The Morrill Act, land-grant schools, displacement & attacks on indigenous peoples, rewrites of history, and Auburn University is complex & mostly unacknowledged now. The dark truth is being brought to light via the research aspect of this project and this information that is needed to accompany land acknowledgement will be made widely available to all. Another aspect of honoring the truth is honoring the people who were disrupted and oppressed, i.e., the native communities. Documenting both their histories and their presence today is an important task when developing land acknowledgement statements. This fight for justice and truth falls within the sixteenth UN Sustainable Development Goal, 'Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.'



Much of the preliminary information about the Morrill Act was found thanks to **Land-Grab-U**, a website and database created as a part of the *High Country News* investigation of "How the United States funded land-grant universities with expropriated Indigenous land."

The site features all land-grant universities that benefited from this act, with a webpage specifically detailing Auburn University: <https://www.landgrabu.org/universities/auburn-university>



**INDIGENOUS
DISPOSSESSION: A**

On Land-Grab-U, nearly every parcel of land that was stolen and sold in order to generate land grant funds was found and documented on a great, interactive map.

One map links every parcel that went towards Auburn University's endowment. To show this in more detail, **this infographic was developed to highlight just one of the hundreds of native land parcels that Auburn benefited from.**



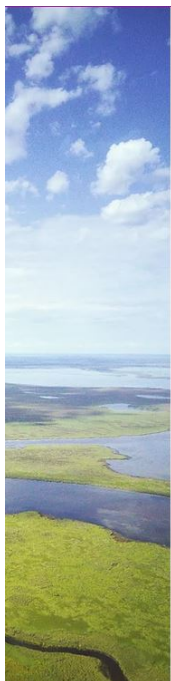

3) Website - Statement Page

Home
History
Statement
Action
Future Research
Deliverables
AU Academic Sustainability Program

Statement


Anna Lyle

It is now up to Auburn University to provide a land acknowledgement statement to recognize, appreciate, and apologize for their debt to indigenous people. **An acknowledgement statement is a formal statement that recognizes and honors indigenous people as original caretakers of the land that was taken from them during Native dispossession.** There is a rising trend throughout higher education institutes to remember and acknowledge the communities that are responsible for their existence. It is necessary that Auburn University join the movement to convey its appreciation for the involuntary sacrifice that led to its foundation. Auburn is a large, leading university that must right its wrongs in order to promote social, environmental, and cultural sustainability. Beginning with a statement, Auburn University can strive to mend its relationships with native communities, enact programs that benefit descendants, reform effects of the Morrill Acts, and establish curriculum that values Native American history and culture






AUBURN UN
LAND ACKNO

This is an unfinished, open-ended, 'working' land acknowledgement statement addressing Auburn's history with the Morrill Act.



Below are some graphics that analyze other university land acknowledgement statements, where success of the statement is discussed using researched data and insights. These are intended to be used by future statement writers or by anyone interested in the topic.

SUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

University of Maryland, Baltimore
The history, acknowledgment, and historical and contemporary relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their native lands, while we gather today to honor another critically important day in our history, the Morrill Act, we also acknowledge the historical and contemporary relationship between the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the land institutions for the Morrill Act, and the historical land of Indigenous Peoples. We honor the memory of the Native Americans, who include the Annapolis Band of the Piscataway Nation, the Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Piscataway Tribe.

We acknowledge the historical, indigenous, and contemporary relationship between the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and the Native American Peoples, who include the Annapolis Band of the Piscataway Nation, the Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Piscataway Tribe.

Recognizing these meaningful traditions, this land acknowledgement serves as a starting point for a continuous, ongoing, and evolving relationship between the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and the Native American Peoples. We honor the memory of the Native Americans, who include the Annapolis Band of the Piscataway Nation, the Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Piscataway Tribe.

<https://www.gsu.edu/news/2018/01/20/acknowledging-the-land-of-the-native-people.aspx>

UNSUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

Yale University
Yale University acknowledges that Indigenous peoples and nations, including the Shoshone, Machuquelet, Pequot, and the Quinapan? and other Algonquian-speaking peoples, have stewarded through generations the lands and watersheds of what is now the state of Connecticut. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations and this land.

The Yale University statement is rather short and does little other than name the indigenous tribes of the state. They do mention that this statement is intended for use at the beginning of an event to acknowledge the relationships of Indigenous Peoples to the land on which the event is being done or used in an event program. While this is noble, it is not enough of an effort and like something the university is doing to check off a box rather than truly acknowledging the people that people on these events are probably unaware of the displacement of the tribes, and more context would be beneficial as well as a short statement to be used at events.

Needs more context to successfully acknowledge the tribes. Could also explicitly name the lands alongside the tribes.

Presentation of the statement on the university website is important. Coupling the statement with some kind of background information and even adding photos or videos would help the statement be seen less as just another piece of pretense.

Risk being viewed as performative in nature if not paired with action.

SUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

Northwestern University
Northwestern is a community of learners situated within a network of historical and contemporary relationships with Native American tribes, communities, parents, students, and alumni. It also is a place of learning and discovery, and we are proud to be an active member of the community in Chicago and now several tribes in the Midwest. The Native American tribes are the traditional caretakers of the land of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Menominee. We are committed to the well-being and healing of more than 100 million Native American people and their lands.

The Northwestern University statement includes a link about a member of one of the native tribes and includes descriptions of gifts made to the university. Despite our earlier focus on the local tribes affected in the most meaningful way to do so in an oral statement and description is included. Also included is a link to the website.

Claims responsibility for the education of others on the history of the Native people and their background with the land.

Highlights the tribes names and their

UNSUCCESSFUL STATEMENT

University of Connecticut
We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the territory of the Shoshone, Machuquelet, Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke (aka Iah-OOKE), Goshute-Oh Pequot (aka OOH-EE) and Nipmuc Peoples, who have stewarded this land throughout generations. We thank them

This Yale University statement is an example of a rushed and poorly researched acknowledgement statement. Although it includes pronunciation, it is too short and feels disingenuous, as it only lists out the different tribes. The presentation on the website and format is too simple. If it appears to be merely written as a third document and placed on the

Needs more context to successfully acknowledge the tribes and fails to explicitly name the lands alongside the tribes.

4) Website - Action Page

Home
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Action Proposals

Lily Herbert

When a university or institution publishes an indigenous land acknowledgement statement, this should not be considered a final output. As said by Summer Wilkie, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and the University of Arkansas' student coordinator for indigenous people, **"something tangible is required to begin the reconciliation process."** This notion is not only powerful, but it is considered the new status-quo for what were once empty and performative university land acknowledgement statements. Just as land is not a stagnant, inanimate object, land acknowledgement statements should not be either. Connections and opportunities were stolen from indigenous tribes when the land was stolen and sold by the Morrill Land-Grant Acts. **It is the responsibility of land-grant universities to help restore these connections, provide these once-lost opportunities, and foster new relationships with**

reconciliation is the institution's goal.

Auburn University needs to not only acknowledge the reality of our dark history and relationship with indigenous communities via the Morrill Act, but the institution needs to start taking action to better the experiences of indigenous students, tribes, and the community through tangible plans.

As a part of this land acknowledgement project, we have developed these proposals for the university and have grouped them into three broader categories, and within each of these categories are more focused action plans that the university can adopt and facilitate.

Collaborative Research & Outreach Projects

It is extremely important that when we discuss outreach and research programs that the term collaborative stays in the forefront. Many tribal communities are weary of working with outsiders, as honoring their sovereignty and showing them respect has not been a recurring theme. For Auburn University, if any type of outreach or work with tribal groups is to be considered a plan, it not only has to be wholeheartedly collaborative at all points in the process, but it must also be done with the tribes' best interests as the first objective. In order to do this, the following action plans have been developed and case studies have been examined to determine the best ways to go about this style of action as a westernized higher education institution.

- Partnering with Tribal Colleges & Universities
- Working with Native-led Organizations & Movements
- Research Projects with Tribes



Read the full, detailed proposal below:

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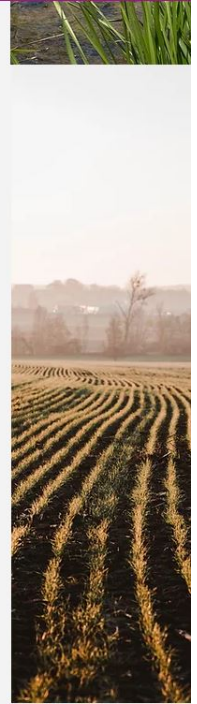
**Coupling a Land Acknowledgement Statement with Tangible Actions:
Proposals for Auburn University**

Executive Summary

This document acts as a list of action plan proposals that Auburn University could implement to further the impact of a land acknowledgement statement. Plans are broken up into three major groups of proposals: 1. The Native American student experience, 2. on-campus awareness and cultural engagement, and 3. collaborative research and outreach projects. Each individual action plan is then split into two portions: the reasoning and the action. The 'reasoning' section uses research to address why a certain action should and could be done by the university. These sections feature a mixture of case studies, previous research findings, sustainability rationales, and connections/relevancy to Auburn University. In the following 'actions' section, readers will see how the action itself could be accomplished by using university data, expert insight, and more case studies from other universities who have adopted similar plans.

1. The Native American Student Experience

This section includes action plans that should better indigenous students' experiences while enrolled/during the enrollment process at Auburn University. Scholarships for indigenous students should be developed and further marketed to Native American high schoolers and/or transfer students to help relieve the extreme financial burdens of attending a four-year university. Scholarships will also help students to complete their degrees, helping to fight the systemic issue of high drop-out rates among native college students. Creating a native student center, a dedicated space on campus for Native American students, will help to increase their feelings of inclusion and support on campus. Functional and intentional academic tracks remain a huge persistence factor among Native American students, and these tracks as well as the furthered opportunities they provide should increase Native American enrollment and academic success. Native American faculty and development councils are encouraged to be



5) Website - Future Research Page



Home | History | Statement | Action | **Future Research** | Deliverables | AU Academic Sustainability Program

Future Research

In the middle of our project's development, we came across a contact, Dr. Gordon Ambrosino, who stressed the importance of starting land acknowledgement at the local level first. Unfortunately, it was too late for us to switch over from our existing framework of the Morrill Act. Our land acknowledgement project centered around the indigenous lands out west that were stolen and sold by the government in order to generate the land-grant funds for Auburn University. But the land that Auburn University sits on now is still relatively unacknowledged throughout the project. **The next step in furthering this work and our research is to focus on the local land history and the relationships we have with the Alabama-based tribes.** We have created this document to act as an aid for future research groups when getting started.

It is our hope that future group members will be able to get more done in their first few weeks of the semester if they have this preliminary information from the get-go.

This document features:

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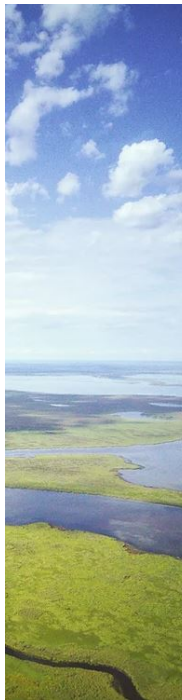
Collected Materials & Resources for Further Research Projects

Research Materials & Equipment

<https://aiac.alabama.gov/tribes.aspx>: There are currently 9 state-recognized tribes in Alabama. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama, Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, Mvskoke Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, Southeastern



6) Website - Class-Related Deliverables Page



Home | History | Statement | Action | Future Research | **Deliverables** | AU Academic Sustainability Program

1. Annotated Bibliography

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Land Acknowledgement Project – Annotated Bibliography Lily Herbert, Elizabeth Dudle, Anna Lyle

Project Purpose Summary:

This project will research, address, and act on the history of the Morrill Act, how it generated funds to provide University land-grants, and the responsibilities that Auburn University has today revolving around that history. We plan to research the Morrill Act and which native tribes were most harmed during the sale of land to benefit Auburn. We will be developing deliverables that address these communities, their histories, and who they are today. We plan to work closely with indigenous leaders, historians, and activists to gain insight and general advice about how we can put together a respectful acknowledgement statement along with some actual action plans to prevent this project from simply being performative in nature. These action plans might range from developing scholarships, hosting awareness weeks, or organizing fundraisers for grass-roots indigenous groups across the U.S. We will also be researching what other land grant universities are doing to acknowledge their histories and we hope to learn more about the dos and don'ts from those groups who have already taken action.

By the end of this project's completion, we hope to have a tangible plan for Auburn University to use as just a starting point for further action and acknowledgement, as we know that true acknowledgement will not be a one-time-deal. We also plan on compiling our findings, our statement, and our action proposals into an easy-to-read online platform which will help to spread awareness and will hopefully increase activism on campus. We believe that this will be a great introduction into this area of recognition at Auburn and hope this project is able to kickstart concrete change, further academic study and projects, and collective acknowledgement.

This preliminary research and literature review outlines the 3 sections of this project:

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SUST 5000: Sustainability Senior Capstone
Lily Herbert, Elizabeth Dudle, Anna Lyle


2. Project Proposal

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Project Proposal - September 23, 2021

Introduction & Background //

A land-grant university is a collegiate institution in the United States that was designated by a state to receive funding created by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The Morrill Acts set aside federal lands in order to erect colleges that would benefit agricultural and mechanical arts. Unfortunately, most of the federal domain lands were possessed by indigenous communities. Through expropriation and violence, the Morrill Acts converted native lands into college endowments. These colleges represent a dark history of "settler colonialism" (Nash, 2019) as they were founded upon the eradication of indigenous rights and cultural history. Auburn University is a land-grant university that was also established on indigenous Creek land. According to an investigative journalism website operated by High Country News, Auburn University benefitted from the sale of 2,635 land parcels (239,646 acres) in the U.S. Upon the sale of the land, Auburn University was able to be founded with \$0 spent of its own funds. Though the university paid no money for its creation, the true price of Auburn University is great and tragic. Auburn's land grant took land from 178 different tribal nations, dispossessing their people and uprooting their way of life without compensation or apology.

It is now up to Auburn University to provide a land acknowledgement statement to recognize, appreciate, and apologize for their debt to indigenous people. An acknowledgement statement is a formal statement that recognizes and honors indigenous people as original caretakers of the land that was taken from them during Native dispossession. There is a rising trend throughout higher education institutes to remember and acknowledge the communities



Appendix E – Future Research Document

Lily Herbert, Land Acknowledgement Group
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Collected Materials & Resources for Further Research Projects

Research Materials & Equipment

<https://aiac.alabama.gov/tribes.aspx> :There are currently 9 state-recognized tribes in Alabama; The Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama, Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, Southeastern Mvskoke Nation, Cher-O-Creek Intra Tribal Indians, MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, Piqua Shawnee Tribe, and the United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation. **These are the tribes that need to be the focus of the future development.**

Tribes Recognized by the State of Alabama



Poarch Band of Creek Indians
 Stephanie A. Bryan, Tribal Chair
 3811 Jack Springs Road
 Atmore, AL 36502
 (251) 268-9126
www.poarchcreekindians.org
www.alabama.gov/tribes.aspx



Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama
 Stanley Trimm, Chief
 410 Main Street West
 Clentone, AL 35925
 (256) 492-8678
 E-Mail: stanleyandhelen@bellsouth.net
www.echotacherokeetribe.homestead.com



Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama
 Stan Ling, Chief
 112 Parker Drive
 Murfreesboro, AL 35811
 (256) 426-4344
 E-Mail: stan.ling1@gmail.com
www.cherokeetribeofnortheastalabama.com



Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama
 James Wright, Chief
 64 Private Road 1312
 Etta, AL 36523
 (334) 897-2959
 Fax: (334) 897-2950
 E-Mail: chiefjames@centurytel.net
www.ma-chis-tribe.net



Southeastern Mvskoke Nation
 Bonnie F. Williams, Chief
 208 Dale Circle
 Midland City, AL 36350
 (254) 982-3722



Cher-O-Creek Intra Tribal Indians
 Violet Hamilton, Chief
 1315 Norfield Circle
 Dothan, AL 36303
 (314) 596-4866
 E-Mail: vlr_hamilton@yahoo.com



MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians
 LeBaron Byrd, Chief
 1080 Red Fox Road
 Mount Vernon, AL 36560
 (251) 829-5500
 E-Mail: lebaronbyrd@aol.com
www.mowa-choctaw.com



Piqua Shawnee Tribe
 Gary Hunt, Chief
 4001 Evans Lane
 Oxford, AL 36203
 (256) 239-1523 or (256) 835-2110
 E-Mail: morganandkaren@bellsouth.net
www.piquashawnee.com



United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation
 Judy Dixon, Chief
 1531 Blount Ave. P.O. Box 754
 Guntersville, AL 35976
 (256) 982-2333
 E-Mail: to.ucanonline@bellsouth.net
www.air-corp.org

<https://ajac.alabama.gov/Tribal-Map.aspx> : This is a **map of the tribe locations** in Alabama provided by the above source.



<https://www.landgrabu.org/> LandGrabU is where we got our start with our project. Here you can find **information about the Morrill Act and Auburn's relationship** in terms of the land that was sold and the tribes that were affected. Though our entire project revolved around this, and future work should be focused on local land, this source might be helpful.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_CAyH4WUfQXTXo3MjZHRC00ajg/view?resourcekey=0-RaHgCM0dfQnPokkfW_BCgg This is the **Honor Native Land Guide**, written by the US Department of Arts and Culture. This should be a huge help to future research, especially when writing a statement and getting preliminary tips on how to conduct land acknowledgement projects.

<https://www.alaskawild.org/blog/the-importance-of-land-acknowledgments/> This is a blog post within the Alaska Wilderness League. **The author has included a land acknowledgement statement at the beginning of the article**, addressing the indigenous land she was on while writing this piece – very interesting. This article answers *what is a land acknowledgement, why they are important, and how can our future benefit from learning about these?*

<https://www.intersectionalitywithineducation.com/> This is a link to a website created by the author of the above article. Included in this site is a link to **lesson plans for schoolteachers** relating to land acknowledgement and indigenous rights. This could be a great insight for potential action plans and the author could be a great potential contact.

https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/lib_land/1/ This is a video from a **“Land Acknowledgement workshop”** held in early 2021 by Utah State University. Guest speakers include Darren Parry: Former Chairman of Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, Marilyn Cuch: Lecturer in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at the Uintah Basin Campus, Hunkpapa Lakota from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota, and Dr. Colleen O’Neill: Associate Professor of History. This would be a great source of information but also a case study featuring a university.

<https://www.hcn.org/articles/indigenous-affairs-land-grab-universities-land-grant-universities-should-acknowledge-their-debt-to-indigenous-people>

and

<https://www.hcn.org/issues/53.5/indigenous-affairs-perspective-so-you-want-to-acknowledge-the-land> These are both great articles published by High Country News (the same group that investigated land grant universities and developed LandGrabU). **Great insights about the pros, cons, and everything in-between surrounding land acknowledgement.**

<https://native-land.ca/> This is a great **map of indigenous land** featuring this disclaimer: “This map does not represent or intend to represent official or legal boundaries of any Indigenous nations. To learn about definitive boundaries, contact the nations in question. Also, this map is not perfect -- it is a work in progress with tons of contributions from the community. Please send us fixes if you find errors.”

<https://studentaffairsnow.com/moving-beyond-land-acknowledgements2/> This is a podcast entitled **“Moving Beyond Land Acknowledgements”** hosted by Susana Munoz, whose scholarly interest “center on the experience of minoritized populations in higher education.” The podcast is around 54 minutes and an episode transcript is also available to get the information in a written version instead.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-12/native-land-stewardship-needs-to-follow-acknowledgment> This article discusses **acknowledgement statements and a furthered ‘Land Back movement’** which simply seeks to return available land back to the Tribal communities from which it was taken.” This also leaves some room for further action plans or university-support of the land back movement. Research about this movement in Alabama would be great.

<https://www.una.edu/socialinclusion/inclusive-practices/native-resources.html> This is a link to **the University of North Alabama's 'Native American Resources' page**. Here holds the university's land acknowledgement statement, native-related resources in Alabama (the Alabama chapter of the Trail of Tears Association, the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission, etc.), Alabama-based events, Native American sites in Alabama, and other native organizations. This can act as not only **a research database** for this project, but also as **a potential case study** of how other universities in Alabama are representing the local native lands + developing local land acknowledgement statements.

<https://www.aplu.org/about-us/land-acknowledgment.html> Since Auburn University's official land acknowledgement statement is, "*Auburn is an APLU member and is aligned with its statement*" (according to LandGrabU.org), this link takes you to **APLU's 'Statement of Land Acknowledgement.'**

Existing Contacts

Greg Schmidt: schmigr@auburn.edu; (334) 844-1736

- He is the head of AU Library's Special Collections and Archives and was super helpful when we needed help accessing research material and using search engines.
- He will also help find historic documents and reports about Auburn's land and the local Native American history

Dr. Gordon Ambrosino: gra0010@auburn.edu; 334-844-5008

- Dr. Ambrosino works extremely closely with native communities and leaders. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Coordinator.
- Is very willing to continue dialogue with students in this class about land acknowledgement – he is the person who advised us that addressing the local level should have been the first step. In this project, making this aspect of continued research very important.

Dr. Mark Freeland: mark.freeland@sdsu.edu

- Dr. Freeland is the American Indian Studies Program coordinator at SDSU and works closely within SDSU's Wokini Initiative.
- He has tons of great insights about how universities can better the experiences of its indigenous students and how universities can develop working land acknowledgement statements + tangible actions.

JuWan Robinson: jdr0097@auburn.edu

- AU Office of Inclusion and Diversity Chief of Staff.
- Was extremely helpful when we had questions about student demographics and other Auburn-specific questions.

Potential Contacts

The National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. <https://www.nathpo.org/>

- We were told about this organization by Dr. Ambronsino and we were able to hear back from a representative when we sent a comment through the Contact Us link. This will be a very useful source and contact if you get in contact with someone earlier on in the semester to start a longer and more fruitful dialogue.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians. <https://pci-nsn.gov/wordpress/>, (251) 368-9136

- "The Poarch Creek Indians are an active partner in the state of Alabama, contributing to economic, educational, social and cultural projects benefiting both Tribal Members and residents of local communities and neighboring towns."
- Representatives and leaders from this tribe should be a first point of contact for continued research of land acknowledgement on a local level. Members have worked with Auburn University faculty and students in the past.

President/Leadership of Auburn's American Indigenous Organization

- We made attempts to find contact information for leaders of this group at Auburn but were unsuccessful. We recommend continuing this search and potential contact(s) as they would be extremely useful.

University Land Acknowledgement Statement Authors

- The authors of these statements should be able to provide insights about how long it took to be approved, why they wrote it in the way they did, and what have the impacts been at their respective higher-ed institutions post-publishing them.

Kimberly Shackelford. kks0019@auburn.edu, 662-801-0718

- Associate Professor at AU; Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work.
- We had a super quick email exchange where she mentioned that she's reached out about Auburn's work to meet the need of land acknowledgement sometime in Spring 2021 but did not get very far.
- She is a big supporter of this type of work, especially the initial project and the exploration of future projects and possibilities.

Tips From Fall 2021 Land Acknowledgement Group Members

- 1) Don't get discouraged if you do not hear back from certain people and organizations you've reached out to. Move on and do not waste time waiting on an email back.
- 2) Send emails to any and everybody that you might consider a potential project contact; it could lead to a great quote, reference, or relationship.
- 3) Outline a set of goals early to guide your project but be open for those goals to change as time goes on.
- 4) Rely on your research; this is a topic in which the opinions of non-natives should not be deemed relevant.
- 5) Highlight native voices throughout all steps of the way!! Be strategic in your use of quotes and sources and ensure that many of them are native voices and thoughts.
- 6) When you see information explaining that Native Americans and only Native Americans should be doing this type of research, do not get discouraged. Many people agree that what we are doing is a great first step and that our outputs will be beneficial to all.
- 7) Be creative when developing deliverables. This is new waters for a lot of people, but especially at Auburn, so creativity is key.
- 8) Utilize your group members, professors, and classmates for feedback throughout the project's development. This type of project will eventually be viewed and judged by the masses, so take all the advice and critiques you can.
- 9) Do thorough, appropriate research upfront, which will help the project flow more smoothly as the weeks go on.
- 10) Develop weekly goals and ensure your group members are accomplishing what they need to; help them if things get overwhelming and make sure collaboration stays at the forefront.

We are happy to be contacted if future group members need help or advice; below is our information. Good luck!

Lily Herbert – Action Plan Proposals & Website. lgh0015@auburn.edu, (334) 707-2905

Anna Lyle – Statement Development & Analysis. aal0033@auburn.edu, (205) 765-2604

Elizabeth Dudle – Morrill Act & Tribal Research. med0070@auburn.edu, (334) 590-5967