

JIIMAAN JOURNEY



Northwestern

**NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024**

MISSION

At Northwestern, we seek to create spaces where Native American and Indigenous people are heard, their identities and ways of being and knowing are honored, their intellectual work is valued, and they can be successful members of Northwestern as well as good tribal and community citizens.



Pictured here: Faculty, staff, and students with President Michael Schill during the reciprocity gift exchange.



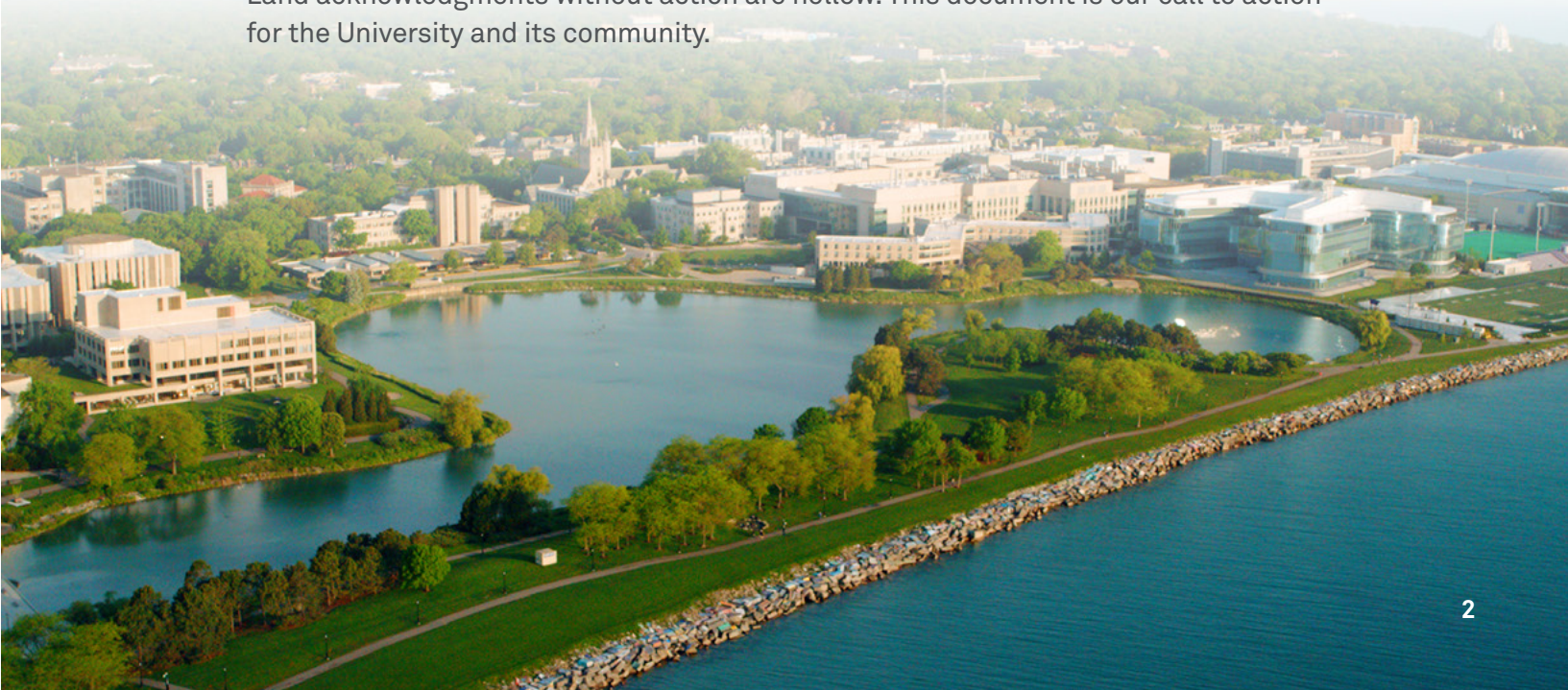
ACKNOWLEDGMENT LAND AND HISTORY

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.

Northwestern also sits within the legacy of settler colonialism through the relationship between the Cheyenne and Arapaho Peoples' and John Evans, in his role as the territorial governor of Colorado.

Chicago and this area have always been a place of gathering, knowledge sharing, and dreaming about futures. Illinois is experiencing a historical shift with the transfer of land returned to the Prairie Band of Potawatomi.

Land acknowledgments without action are hollow. This document is our call to action for the University and its community.





Beaded medallion made by Maritza Garcia (Mississippi Choctaw)

GROUNDING FRAMEWORK RECIPROCITY GIFT

In recognition of the inauguration of Northwestern's President, leaders within the Native American and Indigenous community at Northwestern and President Michael H. Schill engaged in a reciprocity gift exchange. The exchange represents reciprocity and kinship between the president and the Indigenous communities. In Anishinaabe culture, parties fulfill the social expectations of kinship and agree to maintain a reciprocal relationship of mutual assistance and responsibility.



At the gathering, Megan Bang '09 PhD, presented President Schill with a custom beaded medallion in purple and white with the Northwestern "N" which the president can use and enjoy, wearing to future occasions and events. As is tradition, it was offered to the president four times before he accepted—to ensure careful consideration.

In exchange, President Schill presented a birch bark basket filled with a copper mug representing water as the source of all life, wild rice representing sustenance, seeds representing our hopes for the future, and wampum shells representing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. The president offered this to Dr. Bang four times before she accepted on behalf of the Indigenous community at Northwestern, mirroring the action above. The act of gift exchange strengthens our community through modeling reciprocal relationships and doing right by Indigenous communities.

GUIDING PEDAGOGY JIIMAAN JOURNEY

“ALONE, THE MATERIALS ARE FRAGILE, TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONG.”

In October of 2021, the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR) hosted master canoe builder Wayne Valliere (LDF Ojibwe) as an artist-in-residence. During his three-week residency, Valliere and the Northwestern Native community took part in building a jiimaan, a birch-bark canoe, which is now proudly housed in the Segal Visitor Center. The jiimaan carries not only people but culture. Embedded in the structure are centuries of Indigenous engineering, philosophy, history, artistry, and wisdom. Therefore, when establishing a guiding framework for our Native American and Indigenous Strategic Plan, it was fitting to utilize the teachings from the jiimaan as we continue to navigate the waters of change and renew our commitments to Indigenous communities.

Ishkweyaang-jiimaan (Stern – Past)

Ishkweyaang-jiimaan is the Ojibwe term for the stern of the canoe and represents the past.

Since 2014, with the publication of the Report of the Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force (NAOITF), we have been busy building our capacity at Northwestern. Northwestern’s collective leadership has established the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Minor. The renovations of the Welsh-Ryan Arena sourced lumber for the basketball courts from the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin. Indigenous leaders are woven throughout the University and help guide key initiatives. We have seen an increase in students, faculty, and staff, numerous programs and events across campus, and strong allyship with units, departments, and individuals committed to this work. And, with the transition of many of the leaders that initiated the original efforts and a growing interest in implementing Indigenous initiatives, there is a need to update and renew our commitment to Indigenous communities.

Waaganigaanan (Ribs - Present)

Waaganigaanan is the Ojibwe term for the ribs of the canoe.

Canoe ribs provide structure for the vessel. Like the ribs of the jiimaan, the structure of Northwestern’s Indigenous Initiatives must be strong to carry the knowledge and wisdom of past, current, and future Indigenous members of the Wildcat community. As we examine our present state, there is much to be proud of. There are four Native American student groups (undergraduate, professional, graduate) throughout the University. Our Native American and Indigenous Student Alliance is hosting the 3rd Annual Traditional Spring Pow Wow. Four undergraduate classes have now had the opportunity to pursue a minor in Native American and Indigenous Studies. Northwestern’s land acknowledgment page gets 8,000 views per month and the practice is now an embedded part of Wildcat Welcome and Commencement ceremonies. We have seen a steady increase in Indigenous student enrollment, tenured our first Indigenous faculty, and appointed our first Indigenous Dean.

However, we have also witnessed harm over these past years. Two years ago, hate speech directed toward Native Americans was written on The Rock. Nationally, we see attacks on critical race theory and equity initiatives. Our data assessment revealed a gap in the perceived frequency of misinformation, problematic ideas, comments, or thoughts about Native or Indigenous Peoples between Native American and non-Native American participants at Northwestern. Most non-Natives believe that harmful incidents rarely or never happen to Native Americans on campus. It’s clear there is still work to be done.

Niigaan-jiimaan (Bow – Future)

Niigaan-jiimaan is the Ojibwe term for the bow of the canoe and represents the future.

We have begun to set our future in motion with the release of our Native American and Indigenous Strategic Plan. This plan is a collective call to action. All Wildcats are encouraged to reflect and to generate actions responsive to the strategic priorities laid out in this plan. Like the many hands required to build a jiimaan and propel her into the future, we call on everyone to generate actions responsive to the priorities laid out in this plan. No matter where you sit in the University, you can examine the ways your unit functions and create opportunities to align your work with these goals.



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE AND PROCESS

In Fall of 2022, Northwestern launched the Native American and Indigenous Strategic Planning process and appointed a Strategic Planning Committee of faculty, staff, and students across the University. The process invited many voices into the highly collaborative process.

Strategic planning question: In the next five years, what do we need to do at Northwestern to deepen and sustain our commitment to Indigenous self-determination?

Northwestern's Strategic Planning Committee consisted of:

- Jasmine Gurneau (Chair), (Oneida/Menominee) Director for Native American and Indigenous Affairs, Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion
- Megan Bang, PhD (Ojibwe/Italian descent), Professor, School of Education and Social Policy; Director, Center for Native American and Indigenous Research
- Alivia Britton (Odawa/Potawatomi), Undergraduate Student, SESP '24
- Kayla Giger (Ojibwe), Medical Student, Feinberg School of Medicine
- Athena GoingSnake (Cherokee), Undergraduate Student, WCAS'25
- Aaron Golding, (Seneca) Associate Director, Multicultural Students Affairs
- Niyo Moraza-Keeswood (Diné/ Chichimeca), Senior Assistant Director, Undergraduate Admission
- Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Māori), Indigenous Education Scholar
- Isabella Twocrow (Oglala Lakota/Ho-Chunk Nation), Undergraduate Student, SESP'23

Process Outline:



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Through our comprehensive collection of input, assessment, and facilitation of nominal group processes, the following five priority areas were established. These five goals serve as a guiding framework for implementing strategies and efforts that are informed by and with Indigenous community and the guiding principles of Northwestern. These goals serve as a comprehensive resource that can be applied in relevant ways for any school, unit, department, or individual across the University to develop their own implementation plans. With each goal and its description, we've also included select examples of resources or efforts that are currently underway at Northwestern.

The Native American & Indigenous Strategic Plan sets the framework for a range of action plans targeting five key areas:

RESOURCE INVESTMENT

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE & EDUCATION

TRIBAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



01

INVEST IN HUMAN, SPACE, AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC PLAN

Commitment to strengthening existing and building new fiscal resources ensures that Northwestern has the infrastructure to meet the goals outlined throughout the strategic plan. While fiscal resources will include investing in people, the work will also require funding to develop programs, events, and spaces. Achievement of this work will require financial investment in people via promotion and retention of existing staff and faculty and the recruitment of new staff and faculty across all sections of the University. Successful completion of this goal also requires access for Indigenous Peoples to land and spaces across campus so that they may practice culturally appropriate ways of being while at Northwestern.

Spotlight of existing examples of programs, projects, resources:

- Centering Indigenous Student Voices: Utilizing a New Demographic Approach to Understand the Experience of Native and Indigenous Students at Northwestern
- CNAIR Fellowships for students, faculty, and staff

02

ENHANCE NORTHWESTERN LEADERSHIP EFFICACY AND CAPACITY

Develop strategies and resources designed to help leadership across all sectors of the University to gain and develop leadership competencies that will prepare them for overseeing implementation of Indigenous initiatives. When leadership and skill development is cultivated across the university, it disperses the burden put on Indigenous staff, faculty, and students and will lead to sustaining change at the University. The development of data infrastructure and empirical trends will be important to inform leadership with data-driven, research-backed strategies, infrastructure, and decision-making. This goal also includes the recruitment, development, and recognition of Indigenous leaders towards more comprehensive presence, influence, authority, and decision-making at higher levels throughout the University. Indigenous leadership also can create pathways for mentorship and succession of future Indigenous leadership at Northwestern and generally.

Spotlight of existing examples of programs, projects, resources:

- The Land We Learn On: Refusing Invisibility & Erasure of Indigenous Communities Workshop
- Land Acknowledgment 4-part lesson series by the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion





03

CREATE NU-WIDE KNOWLEDGE AND PROGRAMS GROUNDED IN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES AND SELF-DETERMINATION

It is the responsibility of Northwestern as an academic institution to ensure that all members of the community, at all levels, have a grounded understanding of Indigenous knowledges. This goal supports the creation of multi-disciplinary, innovative, Indigenous-centered, collaborative work informed by and responsive to Native American and Indigenous nations, communities, and organizations. These intellectual spaces should open up multiple modes of engagement for faculty, students, staff, and community members. Achievement of this goal directly supports Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and cultivated a sense of belonging and intellectual excitement on campus. Achievement of this goal will require all units across the university, no matter where they sit, to consider the unique ways their individual offices can develop new or enrich existing programs and initiatives that support intellectual base of the University.

Spotlight of existing examples of programs, projects, resources:

- *Learning in Places*, Field-based Science Education

04

EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP WITH TRIBAL & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous Peoples exist globally and are culturally distinct communities. Specifically in the United States, our government has a specific trust responsibility with federally recognized tribes. Our partnerships should include urban, rural, and reservation-based lands with a priority of fostering of relationships with tribal nations and communities within Chicago, the Midwest and with the Cheyenne & Arapaho. Globally, 80% of the world's biodiversity exists within Indigenous lands, and thus Indigenous Peoples should be present and central to exploring, researching, and addressing global problems. This partnership goal includes collaboration, shared decision making, information and resource-sharing, research, policymaking, and employment or procurement partnerships. Achieving this goal honors tribal sovereignty, promotes innovation, awareness and education, community engagement, capacity-building, and the self-determination of Indigenous communities. This goal requires resources and accountability.

Spotlight of existing examples of programs, projects, resources:

- Tribal Historic Preservation Officers consultation
- Signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Chicago American Community Collaborative





05

INCREASE SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN & INDIGENOUS STUDENTS AT NORTHWESTERN, INCLUDING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, CURRENT STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Unit throughout the University will all play a role in developing strategies and resources to increase student recruitment, improve graduate and undergraduate retention, and promote post-graduate alumni engagement. Achievement of this goal will ensure that Northwestern is a welcoming and hospitable environment where Native American students can thrive. For Northwestern to meet the ever-changing needs of its Native population, it is critical for administrators at all levels to continually examine their systems for collecting data to ensure an accurate understanding of the current experience of Native American & Indigenous students and to develop informed strategies to meet the needs of this population.

Spotlight of existing examples of programs, projects, resources:

- Sr. Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission – Native American and Indigenous Outreach; Student Coordinator of Native American and Indigenous Outreach





VISIT [NORTHWESTERN.EDU/NATIVE](https://northwestern.edu/native) FOR:

- Additional resources
- Events and workshops related to plan
- Details around process of plan development
- List of all partners involved in process
- Spotlight on units and people
- Historical information on initiatives