



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

Strategic Recommendations of the Task Force on Native American¹ Inclusivity

Sustainable Development of a Native American Community Presence at the University of Denver

¹ The general term “Native American” will be used throughout this document as inclusive of other terms such as American Indian and Indigenous. This is not intended as an implicit endorsement of the term nor to dismiss or simplify the complex issues related to the meanings associated with such terminology. Whenever possible we will use tribally specific terms when referring to specific communities or Native nations.

With a few notable exceptions, Native American population and culture has been ignored by higher education. Native American student enrollment, employment of faculty and staff, as well as curriculum and an understanding of cultural practices, is under-represented or ignored within academia.

This has also been the case at the University of Denver, but is of particular significance due to the University's history. Less than two hundred years ago, what is now the DU campus sustained both the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations. The Sand Creek Massacre, among the most brutally violent acts in the long struggle between Native Americans and the immigrating settlers, involved the complicity of the Colorado Territorial government, the US Cavalry and some of the community leaders who were crucial to the founding of the Colorado Seminary – the precursor to the University of Denver.

In recent years, faculty at the University of Denver have taken significant steps to acknowledge this history and have begun the process of forging new relationships with Native American communities, including Arapaho and Cheyenne people, both on and off campus. The establishment of this Task Force is another step in what will be a long journey, as Chancellor Rebecca Chopp and Provost Gregg Kvistad explained in their letter to the University of Denver community announcing the creation of the Task Force on Native American Inclusivity:

To commemorate the Massacre, the University hosted lectures and poetry readings, helped to sponsor the Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run, and had a group of faculty members produce a report on John Evans. These events and the Massacre they recall exist in a broader context of atrocities this country has perpetrated against Native peoples and the struggle of Native peoples and cultures today.

The work of the University includes the mission of healing as well as creating and supporting a world in which such atrocities will never occur again. It is time for the University to discuss next steps, especially initiatives that will support our Native students, faculty and staff members, and alumni. The University needs to serve the public good in service to and in partnership with Native communities.

We have asked the University of Denver Task Force on Native American Inclusivity to recommend “next steps” for the University to adopt formally. We hope that the task force will address three questions:

1. How can we support Native students enrolled at the University of Denver?
2. What are the ways in which we might fulfill our mission to serve the public good relative to Native communities?
3. How might we expand our education efforts to encourage students to make ethical decisions, to respect those who are different from them, to remember the past, and to shape a future in which healing is experienced and where atrocities do not recur in this land or elsewhere?

To advise on these matters, the Chancellor and Provost appointed the following individuals, representing a broad segment of the DU community:

- **Billy J. Stratton**, Co-Chair, Assistant Professor, Department of English
- **David Greenberg**, Co-Chair, Vice Chancellor for Institutional Partnerships
- **Ramona Beltran**, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Social Work
- **Beth Karlsgodt**, Associate Professor, Department of History
- **Linda Kosten**, Associate Provost, Planning, Budget, and Analysis, Office of the Provost
- **Christina Kreps**, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology
- **Johanna Leyba**, Assistant Provost, Center for Multicultural Excellence
- **Pat Livingston**, Trustee
- **Nancy Wadsworth**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
- **Naomi Bishop**, Science and Engineering Reference Librarian²

TASK FORCE DELIBERATIONS

As the Task Force began its work in April of 2015, it immediately became clear that additional resources within the University would be necessary to produce relevant and impactful work. Accordingly, we sought the expertise of the following individuals and entities to help us understand matters related to student enrollment, financial aid and community outreach, as well as the cultural climate for faculty and staff of Native American origin.

Ad Hoc Working Group Members included:

- **Miriam Tapia Salinas**, Executive Director of Diversity Enrollment and Community Partnerships, Office of Admission
- **Nashwa Bolling**, Associate Director of Budget, Research and Analysis, Office of Admission
- **Tracey Adams Peters**, Director of Inclusive Excellence Student Success and Leadership Development, Center for Multicultural Excellence
- **Roberto Garcia**, Director of Graduate Enrollment, Graduate Studies
- **Kim McCabe**, Graduate Admissions Counselor, Graduate Studies
- **Lili Rodriguez**, Vice-Chancellor of Student Life and Inclusive Excellence
- **Alexandra Edwards Lustig and Fatima Rezaie**, Administrative Liaison, Office of Institutional Partnerships
- **Office of Institutional Research**

These individuals participated extensively in the Task Force conversations and research, and their opinions and expertise helped to inform the final recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force greatly appreciates and values their thoughtful contributions and the time dedicated to this important endeavor.

² The Task Force originally included Christina Kreps, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, who left DU to become Director of Museum Studies at the University of Oregon. Naomi Bishop was appointed to succeed her.

The Task Force also solicited the expertise and good counsel of additional individuals and organizations both inside and outside the University of Denver community. Among the guest speakers at Task Force meetings were:

- **University of Denver Native American students**
- **Ernest House**, Executive Director of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs
- **Dr. Jennifer Brown**, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Winnipeg, former Canada Research Chair of Aboriginal Peoples and Histories

In October of 2015, a delegation of Task Force members undertook a fact-finding trip to Dartmouth College to learn more about their Native American programs, which included a robust student recruiting and support services model, as well as a nationally recognized Native American Studies department.

Discussions were held with:

- **Kianna Burke**, Native American Program Coordinator
- **Jeremy Guardiola**, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Students
- **Dr. Colin Calloway**, Professor, Native American Studies
- **Dr. Melanie Benson Taylor**, Chair, Native American Studies
- **James Washington**, Director of Admissions: Outreach and Visitor Programs
- **Elizabeth Agosto**, Vice President of Student Affairs
- **Lynn C White Cloud**, Assistant Director of Guarini Institute for International Education

INITIAL TASK FORCE OUTCOMES

The Task Force, though it was not part of its initial mission, played a constructive role in facilitating University activities related to commemoration and cultural competency:

- **The Chancellor's Inauguration:** At the urging of Task Force members, the University made the decision to incorporate Native American events/ceremonies into the day-long celebration. Chancellor Chopp invited Professor George (Tink) Tinker from the Iliff School of Theology to preside over the opening and closing ceremonies of Inauguration Day.
- **Sand Creek Massacre commemoration:** Members of the Task Force took part in a number of activities related to the ongoing conversations with tribal representatives from the Arapaho and Cheyenne communities relating to Sand Creek and its long term consequences. In addition, at the urging of Task Force members, the University of Denver made significant financial contributions to support the efforts to create a Sand Creek Memorial at the Colorado State Capitol, while also providing sponsorship for the annual Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run.

OPEN QUESTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES

The Task Force, in addition to its focus on commemoration, curriculum and building a more vibrant and visible community, also raises two additional issues:

- First, while acknowledging that “Boone” is not the official mascot of the University, and that for over two decades members of the administration have made serious efforts to discourage the use of the mascot within the DU community, the Task Force is unanimous in its belief that more work needs to be done to eliminate the presence of Boone from the DU campus and official University events.
- Second, the Task Force believes that the recommendations contained in this report are but the initial steps in what will be a long term and continuous process to create a truly sustainable and welcoming climate for Native American students, faculty and staff. Accordingly, the Task Force proposes that a permanent Advisory Board, composed primarily of faculty, staff, and students of Native American and Indigenous origin, be created and report on a regular basis to the highest and most appropriate level of University administrative decision makers.

The recommendations in this report are intended to parallel and reinforce the goals of DU Impact 2025, and the connections are highlighted in text boxes.

These recommendations must be sustained over time to ensure successful implementation. There is a long journey ahead, but the Task Force believes the institution is progressing in the right direction and we are excited about the future.

University of Denver Task Force on Native American Inclusivity

Key Recommendations

Commemoration	Education and Curriculum	Recruitment and Retention
Establish MOU with Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Wyoming, Montana, and Oklahoma	Integrate Native American topics and themes into existing course work and develop new courses that address Native American culture, history, spirituality, literature, and experience	Increase recruitment, enrollment and persistence of Native American graduate and undergraduate students and provide additional merit funding
Create education modules on SCM and Colorado's history as it relates to DU	Encourage undergraduate and graduate students to take Native American focused classes for credit in their departments	Create a full-time Tribal Liaison and Program Officer position
Have a community conversation about John Evan's name and images as it relates to DU	Develop a Native American Studies BA Minor with the eventual goal of establishing a BA Major	Build a baseline historical database on recruitment, admission, acceptance, matriculation, persistence and graduation rates for Native American students at DU
Participate in the yearly Sand Creek commemoration activities including the annual Spiritual Healing Run as well as find permanent funding support for the annual Powwow	Increase hiring of full time, tenure/tenure-track Native faculty	Strengthen existing and establish new relationships and partnerships with local, regional and national Native and Native-serving organizations to better serve DU Native students
Create a Sand Creek Memorial Site on the DU campus and support efforts and fundraising for permanent memorial at the Colorado State Capitol remembering Sand Creek	Create new collaborative relationships and opportunities with other Colorado research institutions and organizations that focus on Native American Studies	Create a more welcoming and supportive campus-climate for Native American students by developing specific cultural competency training for all staff and faculty

COMMEMORATION:

The University of Denver supports “the development of mutually reciprocal opportunities for university-community collaboration to serve the public good and promote social change, with special attention to underserved communities” (DU IMPACT 2025, 13).

Over the last few years members of the University of Denver community have promoted involvement and actively participated in the commemoration of the Sand Creek Massacre in the following ways:

- The faculty-driven John Evans Committee Report and Recommendations
- Community participation and University financial support for the events surrounding the Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run/Walk
- Literature Symposium with prominent Native American writers addressing the legacy of Sand Creek and Native American cultural resiliency
- Art exhibits and lectures by Cheyenne and Arapaho Sand Creek Massacre descendants
- A screening of the RMPBS documentary on the Sand Creek Massacre with a panel of the film’s creators and community members

The understanding gained through this community-wide educational process helped lead to the creation of this task force and is part of the ongoing effort by the University to complete the Task Force’s charge to: “support Native students, ..., serve the public good relative to Native communities, ..., [and] expand our education efforts to encourage students to make ethical decisions, to respect those who are different from them, ***to remember the past, and to shape a future in which healing is experienced and where atrocities do not recur in this land or elsewhere.***”

These efforts and recommendations are designed to create systemic institutional change and acceptance as well as develop partnerships for healing, ongoing change efforts, celebration and to provide multiple avenues to honestly engage with the history of Sand Creek. There are recommendations for social, intellectual and material forms of commemoration to encourage enduring and reflective engagement with the history of Sand Creek and continued thoughtful evaluations of John Evans’s legacy.

CREATE SYSTEMIC CULTURAL CHANGE AND ACCEPTANCE

Strong, sustained and respectful remembrance and commemoration of the Sand Creek Massacre will help all faculty, staff and students develop an understanding of atrocities committed against Native American peoples, the context in which the Sand Creek Massacre and other similar events occurred, and the interwoven history of the University of Denver, the State

of Colorado, the United States and the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations. Cultivating this understanding, grounded in mutual respect and concern, is central to developing a more inclusive culture on campus and a more welcoming environment for our Native community members.

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS OF HEALING AND CELEBRATION

Commemoration efforts will assist in the healing process between the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations and the University of Denver and will lead to partnerships for cultural celebrations, shared rituals and future initiatives.

In this spirit, the Task Force recommends that the University of Denver be intentional about developing partnerships and collaborations with Native American communities, specifically with the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations. Essential to these goals is the necessity that all DU students be given opportunities to experience first-hand, informed, substantive cultural interactions to develop an appreciation for diversity and for our interrelated past. Knowledge of the University of Denver's history and open, honest interactions with Sand Creek Massacre descendants will help transform our community into a more welcoming, nurturing place for individuals from many varied cultures and backgrounds.

COMMEMORATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

To develop and nurture a community of cultural and historical respect and mutual understanding, the Task Force recommends the following steps be taken. The recommendations are grouped into four categories and are designed to move forward in concert with one another.

1. Create a Memo of Understanding

This agreement will be the foundational document for a clear, positive understanding between the Sand Creek Massacre descendants, along with their respective communities, and the work of commemoration at the University of Denver. This will build goodwill, promote healing and assure positive, material results, as well as provide an opportunity to better educate the community on the culture and self-governing processes of the Arapaho and Cheyenne nations.

Goal

To establish a **Memo of Understanding or Agreement** with the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma regarding representations (in memorials, educational materials, etc.) of the Sand Creek Massacre at DU, as well as regarding the broader institutional relationship DU aspires to cultivate with the Arapaho and Cheyenne communities.

Action Steps

- The MOU should include:
 - Inviting (with expenses paid) the formal Sand Creek Massacre descendant representatives to DU, as well as any other key constituents whose involvement may be essential
 - Working together to identify the areas in which DU will work with survivor descendants in consultation, collaboration, etc.
- Examples may include but not be limited to:
 - Any physical memorial placed on campus
 - Involvement in opening and closing DU ceremonies
 - Representations of Sand Creek Massacre
 - Student and faculty exchanges, etc.
- Designation of a University of Denver liaison to navigate ongoing communications and collaborations with the tribes once the MOA is written
- Explore the possibility of creating a Trustee position held by a Native American.

Measurable Outcome

- Memo of Understanding complete.

2. Educate the DU community about the Sand Creek Massacre and DU's connections, particularly the role of John Evans.

These measures will encourage deeper, community-wide understanding of the University's history and the ways in which it has shaped both opportunities and exclusions. These objectives will serve the University's dedication to the public good, while encouraging all community members to learn, reflect, and implement lasting change to create a more welcoming environment for all students, faculty and staff.

Goal

- All members of the community, faculty, staff and students, gain a substantially increased awareness of the history Sand Creek Massacre and DU's connections, particularly the role of our founder John Evans.

Action Steps

- Create an educational module for orientation of all incoming students, staff and faculty on Colorado history as it relates to DU and the Sand Creek Massacre. Provide a bibliography of sources that include but is not limited to:
 - History Colorado Documentary from Cheyenne and Arapaho perspectives
 - The Sand Creek Massacre National Park Service website resources
 - Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run video by Derek Brown
 - Articles and journal features written and edited by Billy J. Stratton on Sand Creek memorials and Silas Soule
 - The John Evans Study Committee Report and Recommendations
 - Report of the John Evans Study Committee, Northwestern University

- Recommendations from the Native American Outreach and Inclusion Task Force, Northwestern University
- The solicited reports on the Sand Creek Massacre of the United Methodist Church
- Development of teaching modules on historical trauma and healing
- A bibliography of scholarly secondary sources and online resources
- Create a campaign and/or training for current DU community members to be introduced to the orientation materials above, and provide resources for facilitating discussion, debate and reflection
- Incorporate this information into DU's institutional history and place prominently on the University of Denver website
- Create a committee to build a module on teaching strategies and appropriate materials about the Sand Creek Massacre, which would allow professors to integrate materials related to the Sand Creek Massacre into courses in a variety of subjects and disciplines
- Encourage educational opportunities, such as community discussions, provided by Evans' name and image. Example: A portrait of Evans accompanied by an explanation of his role in the founding of DU and as territorial governor during Sand Creek. Collaborations with the Evans family would be desirable in these efforts
- Organize and regularly offer tours of relevant sites in Denver and Eads: (offered two-three times per year, sponsored by DU)
 - Denver – Silas Soule Memorial, Civil War Memorial State Capitol, Wheel Sculpture at the Denver Art Museum
 - Eads – Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

Measurable Outcome

- Members of the DU community will gain a shared understanding of the history of the Sand Creek Massacre and DU's connections, particularly the role of our founder John Evans

3. Commemorate the Sand Creek Massacre Annually

Annual commemoration efforts will activate programming, people, learning, appreciation, and interaction with the history of Sand Creek. Given the ever-changing nature of our community -- the circulation of new students, faculty and staff each year -- efforts to commemorate the Sand Creek Massacre must be annual, on-going and become part of valued campus traditions. Through annual commemoration this once obscured past will become a shared history appreciated by all DU students and employees.

Goal

- Through annual commemoration this once obscured past will become, not only a shared history, but a cherished annual opportunity to create healing and community.

Action Steps

- Increase and normalize support for the annual Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run:
 - Create a budget for an annual and meaningful financial contribution to the Healing Run
 - Encourage the active involvement of DU students, faculty and staff by:
 - Creating a Portfolio site and/or Facebook page that DU community members can go to find info about the run, sign up to volunteer, etc.
 - Working with Student Life to recruit students (undergraduate and graduate), as well as the Living and Learning Communities, Graduate Student Association, etc.
 - Conduct staff and faculty outreach
 - Offer encouragement and incentives for involvement
- Establish a formal annual event, such as a lecture and/or panel discussion, related to the Sand Creek Massacre and ongoing efforts to recognize it
- Work with CME, NSA, IRISE and other relevant entities to build additional programming related to Native American Heritage Month. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Supporting an annual screening of the RMPBS Sand Creek Massacre Documentary
 - Providing funding to bring Native American writers, scholars and public figures to campus on a regular basis such as in the annual Indigenous Voices Lecture Series—with dedicated funding for at least one visit per year. Establish a keynote lecture series specifically dedicated to bringing prominent Native American writers and scholars
- Institutionalize Native involvement in University celebrations. Examples of institutional celebrations include but are not limited to: first year and new student orientation, awards ceremonies, Inauguration, Founders Day, Commencement, lacrosse³ and other sporting events.

Measurable Outcome

- Dramatically increase the participation of DU community members in the annual commemoration events and the Spiritual Healing Run. The Sand Creek Massacre descendants recognize and appreciate the partnership and support of the DU community in annual commemoration

4. Renew proposal for a Sand Creek Memorial on campus

Building a memorial site for the Sand Creek Massacre on a prominent/visible campus space will provide a sustainable, symbolic and sacred focal point for the efforts of the recent years and solidify the commitment the University of Denver has to acknowledging this aspect of our history. This effort would move us beyond “good intentions,” beyond annual

³ The Native heritage of lacrosse provides an opportunity to connect DU athletics to commemorative programs in meaningful ways, with potentially wide impact.

programming efforts, beyond learning modules and beyond the operating budget to create a lasting place to come together, participate in ceremony, learn, remember, reflect and foster healing. It will be also a catalyst for inviting design guidance and ongoing substantive and ceremonial interaction between Sand Creek Massacre descendants and their communities with the University of Denver community. As a supplement to this, and to highlight the political status of the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations, official flags should be placed at sites where the US and Colorado flags are displayed on campus, such as in the Driscoll Student Union.

Action Steps

- Launch fundraising to support the creation of this memorial
- Cooperate and consult with descendant representatives, seeking their input, advice and involvement on the placement and design
- Build memorial site
- Obtain and display official Cheyenne and Arapaho nation flags
- Create programming to occur with students, faculty, staff, community, and descendent representatives at this memorial site annually

Measurable Outcome

- Memorial site is built and programming regularly occurs at the site. Members of the SCM descendant community and DU community view the memorial site as an important place for community and healing

EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM:

“DU will be an intellectual, intentional and engaged academic community that cultivates critical thinking, knowledge and ethical leadership to prepare undergraduate, graduate and professional students to chart their own future and contribute to and serve the public good” (DU IMPACT 2025, 5).

The University of Denver enjoys a distinguished place among American universities, due in large part to the academic and scholarly excellence of its faculty and innovative practices that so many bring to our students. As an educational institution, DU is especially well-regarded within the region for its intentional dedication to the public good and to its core values of excellence, innovation, engagement, integrity and inclusiveness. Curricula that engages with Native American culture, history, literatures, spirituality, art and social realities forms a vital academic element that is central to the essence of our mission and goals. Aligning with the goals and vision of DU IMPACT 2025, new investments in the recruitment, hiring and retention of Native American scholars and Native American studies specialists, and building a curriculum foundation of Native American topics will contribute to a richer culture of learning at the University.

HISTORY

Over the last decade the University of Denver has made significant strides towards the creation and nurturing of a more inclusive campus that values the contributions of diverse students and points of view. One area where progress has moved more slowly, however, has been in attracting significant numbers of Native American students to the University of Denver — an issue that seems to be reflected in all units and schools, and in both the graduate and undergraduate populations. Despite the historic connections that Native American peoples such as the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute and others have to the land on which the city of Denver was established and the larger region, their engagement and presence within DU course offerings have been minimal.

While many factors and circumstances, some reaching far back in to DU’s institutional history in its relation to early settlement, government involvement and the connection to the Sand Creek Massacre, have contributed to this situation, the lack of course offerings is particularly prominent.

CONTEXT AND DEFINITIONS

Among the initial actions taken up by the Task Force was the completion of a university-wide inventory⁴ that sought to identify curriculum that engaged with Native American cultural content in substantial ways. The Office of the Provost provided critical assistance in ensuring the participation of a large number of respondents across all areas of the DU campus.

The feedback and data received from units, schools and departments helped identify a range of courses that intersected with Native American themes and concerns, some of which were unknown to our committee members. As a whole, the data collected revealed only a handful of courses on Native American topics and themes where such was presented as a primary focus. These included courses in a relatively small number of departments/schools including:

- ❖ Anthropology
- ❖ Art and Art History
- ❖ Communication (as a special topic)
- ❖ English
- ❖ Languages and Literatures
- ❖ Graduate School of Social Work
- ❖ Sturm College of Law

Native American Studies is an academic discipline consisting of courses in which the majority if not all of the assigned texts for a class are written by Native American authors, *and* that the information emanates from the perspectives of Native American people and communities. For example, Native American Studies courses typically focus on interdisciplinary topics such as tribal sovereignty, Indigenous knowledge, Native American languages and the cultural diversity of Native American societies. It is important to note that even among the DU courses that address Native American themes as a primary focus, most do not meet this criterion.⁵

CHALLENGES

Despite the identification of some significant academic enclaves and select (though isolated) opportunities for significant critical engagement with Native/Indigenous knowledge, as a whole the data that this Task Force collected reveals a profound lack of available curriculum. This, in part, is due to the lack at DU of a critical mass of Native American faculty members and other faculty with disciplinary specializations in Native American subjects, as well as the absence of programs in Native American studies. On the practical level, relating to the goals of our Task Force, these situations present some serious challenges to our most fundamental goals and aspirations.

In ways that are apparent and profoundly complex in their interconnectedness, the lack of regularly offered (across the three regular quarters, as well as Summer sessions) and more

⁴ Native American Studies Curricula Inventory Summary can be found in [Appendix A](#)

⁵ Examples of Native American Studies courses offered at other universities can be found in [Appendix B](#)

widely distributed courses within a greater number of units, schools and departments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, act to limit the opportunity of non-Native students to become more informed about Native American culture and respectful of its knowledge, traditions and cultural practices. A significantly enhanced selection of courses would convey that the University of Denver is truly a welcoming academic environment for current and prospective Native American students.

These challenges also have a direct bearing and inherent interrelationship to the other elements and goals advocated by the Task Force relating to commemoration, as well as the recruitment and retention of Native American students, staff and faculty. The proposed development and expansion of Native American Studies curriculum is offered to help form an indispensable foundation for the success of these broader institutional goals and endeavors.

GOALS

As a means of addressing these challenges directly, and being responsible in our inherent role as a leading institution for academic innovation and inclusivity, the Task Force encourages the greater inclusion of Native American topics and themes in existing courses and recommends the expansion of Native American curriculum at all academic levels. The Task Force is aware that the effort to address these deficits will require substantial investments and commitments of both time and financial support by the University of Denver, its faculty, administration and trustees. The Task Force maintains that only a long-term commitment to the development of a greater array of regularly scheduled Native American courses within the following areas can ensure the achievement of our goals:

- ❖ DU Common Curricula
- ❖ FSEM and ASEM courses
- ❖ Minors and Majors
- ❖ Graduate and Professional School Programs
- ❖ Internationalization

These proposed enhancements and additions to the DU curricula will not occur overnight, and will require the active support of the broader University faculty and administration to have the most beneficial effect and positive impact. To this end, the Task Force members are confident that DU is not only ready for such developments, but that the members of the DU community are eager to join us in these efforts and to move forward with a sense of intellectual boldness and shared responsibility to bring our transformative vision to fruition and make DU a desirable destination for Native American students and a highly respected and admired institution within Native American communities.

EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Expand educational opportunities for students to become more familiar with Native American culture, history, societies and stories.

This should be addressed through a comprehensive approach to curricular development that encourages adaptations and enhancements to current DU courses and through the development of new courses that address Native American culture, history and/or experience as the primary focus. Such courses should be offered on a regularly occurring basis (across the three regular quarters, as well as Summer Sessions) while being more widely distributed across a greater number of units, schools and departments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, while also finding greater representation in special faculty lectures and presentations such as at Founder's Day events, Discoveries Week and the DU Enrichment Program.

Action Steps

- Initial focus should be on integrating Native American topics and themes into current courses and infusing DU common curriculum with additional course offerings that specifically address Native cultural history, Indigenous forms of knowledge, Native American political structures and the nature and effects of colonialism, Native American history, spirituality, literature, art and gender, sexuality and/or identity
- Utilize the existing strengths and expertise of current University of Denver faculty and prompt/incentivize departments and event planners to become more active and inclusive of Native American experiences and perspectives in their courses
 - Example: the University of Denver could offer and encourage a teaching initiative that provides a stipend for faculty to redesign and enhance courses to address Native American topics
- Identify critical areas of deficit and need
- Offer opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to take Native American focused classes from varied departments for credit in their departments
 - Example: SOWK 4764 Historical Trauma and Healing
 - Example: ENGL 2715 Native American Literature
 - Example: ENGL 3733 Advanced Study of Native American Literature
 - Example: ENGL 4702 Native American Fiction and Poetics

Measurable Outcome

- An increase in the amount of courses that engage particular aspects of Native American culture, history and experience
- Expand the number of course offerings that address Native American topics and themes as a primary and specific focus
- Increase in the number of units across campus that offer such courses
- Include lectures on Native American themes or topics at signature campus events

2. Develop a Native American Studies BA minor with the goal of the eventual establishment as a BA major program

The Task Force recommends that the University of Denver significantly enhance and expand its curricular offerings in regards to courses in Native American Studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels as an intentional step towards the development of a distinct academic program/department.

This would demonstrate a serious commitment to building an environment of greater respect for Native American people and communities, while providing invaluable opportunities for all DU students to engage with a greater breadth of Indigenous knowledge, gain experience with diverse methodological approaches, cultivate greater appreciation for diverse perspectives and world views, while creating new opportunities for community engaged learning and service (CCESL) to create sites of engagement with Native American organizations and communities.

Action Steps

- Audit the NAS Curricula Inventory to ensure the course numbers and descriptions are accurate and complete
- Explore how NAS can be integrated into the undergraduate Common Curriculum by convening meetings with associate provosts, deans, departments and individual faculty members to identify existing courses and possibilities for new ones that might be added by drawing on existing faculty resources/knowledge/expertise
- Introduce a new Common-Curricular course component that specifically addresses the value of inclusivity and diversity within a Native American context, which could prepare the groundwork for the initial creation of a minor program in Native American Studies
 - Determine from the Registrar the number of faculty/sections needed for annual enrollment to make the requirement available for all undergraduate students.⁶
- Convene a faculty committee dedicated to creating a vibrant undergraduate minor and/or major within AHSS, but with participation from faculty in Natural Sciences and Mathematics.
 - Determine how many faculty would be needed – including affiliates
 - Determine the appropriate number and breadth of courses in terms of subject areas that would need to be offered. Explore the possibility of cross-listing
 - Consider how such a program could be most effectively developed and structured to make the greatest institutional impact given our size, students, location, etc.

⁶ Institutions such as Dartmouth and the University of Winnipeg require all students to complete at least one course in NAS as a condition of completing an undergraduate degree. In May, a requirement for mandatory education in the history and governance of Native nations was signed into law in the State of Washington, following previous efforts and recommendations in other states such as Minnesota, Wisconsin and Montana. Similar plans are also currently underway in Oregon.

- Determine whether a minor/major program should be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary
- Develop criteria for a robust post-course assessment tool (for students and instructors)
- Hire 1.0 full-time, tenure/tenure-track faculty member to direct the development of NAS curriculum leading to programmatic institution
 - This would also require the determination of an appropriate departmental home for the faculty member among the current University of Denver academic programs
- Convene a meeting with NAS affiliated faculty to envision and develop an introductory NAS course and what it would entail in terms of topics, course materials, etc.
 - Academic content could focus on subjects related to cultural, historical, geographic scope, colonialism and westward expansion, federal Indian law and policy, and barriers to understanding (persistence of stereotypes, identity, negative representations and mascots, political status and treaties, the reservation system and cultural invisibility), as well as environmental issues, advantages and opportunities
 - Determine what oversight and resource structures would be needed to ensure that educational content stays focused, consistent and current
- Consult with other Colorado research institutions to see if there are opportunities for shared academic resources and collaborations (CU-Boulder's Center for the American West, Native Studies Program UC-Denver, Ft Lewis College, Colorado College, etc.)
- Create dialogue with organizations within the region such as Diné College, the Institute of American Indian Arts (Santa Fe, NM) and Haskell Indian Nations University (Lawrence, Kansas) to build new collaborative relationships and Memoranda of Agreements

Measurable Outcome

- Creation of a selection of courses related to Native American topics within the DU common curricula, such as AI Society, as well as regularly scheduled FSEM and ASEM offerings; develop a BA minor program in Native American Studies with the long term goal of the establishment of a major program with departmental status at the University of Denver

NATIVE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION:

What might DU look like in 2025?

“Our diverse and inclusive community is known regionally and nationally as a best-practice environment for all who work and learn here and as a welcoming place that engages all who visit.” (DU IMPACT 2025, V).

The Task Force finds the present moment in DU’s history as an opportunity to achieve what many institutions of higher education have found elusive—creating a vibrant Native American student body.

According to the Census Bureau, Native Americans comprise two percent of the total U.S. population. DU is geographically positioned to serve as a destination institution of higher education for Native American students. Colorado is home to more than 100,000 Native American and Alaska Native residents (2014 American Community Survey). Larger populations reside in our neighboring states of Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming. The Task Force maintains that an aspirational goal of enrolling Native student population of two percent of the student population is a desirable and achievable objective.

To accomplish this ambitious goal, the enrollment management and student affairs divisions for both undergraduate and graduate students must serve a critical role in developing, implementing and leading initiatives in support of our target population. It will also require a shift in the overall campus climate to create a welcoming environment that supports success for all students.

The Task Force dedicated a session to getting feedback from current Native American DU students. Their individual testimonies poignantly revealed that their experiences are often typified by isolation, disengagement from campus and emotional pain resulting from overt and hidden experiences of racism. These testimonials highlight the tremendous amount of work the University of Denver community must undertake in order to truly improve the experience of our students.

Task Force members met with members of our community and that of the city of Denver, as well as colleagues at Dartmouth to identify the following key recommendations. We also consulted with Native American alumni who are involved in current recruitment and retention efforts at other institutions. From these visits and consultations, the Task Force learned the following lessons in terms of best practices for achieving DU’s recruitment and retention goals.

LESSONS FROM DARTMOUTH

The fact-finding visit to Dartmouth allowed the opportunity to observe the workings of a successful program, resulting in several key insights:

- The effective recruitment of Native American students is only the beginning of the transformational nature of support necessary at any university. The entry process must begin with culturally-relevant recruiters, intentional community outreach practices and tailored visit options for Native students.
- Equally essential are foundation and tribal partnerships to address affordability challenges for Native students.
- On-campus support mechanisms must be multi-faceted and intentional.

One of the keys to Dartmouth's success are the numerous levels of student support and community development that are in place. This includes such things as the availability of campus housing that promotes a vibrant community and celebrates the richness of Native American cultural diversity, as well as the intentional integration of curriculum and academic departments that reflect the lives, experiences and histories of Native American students. In addition, there are also structures that initially connect students to the Dartmouth experience via pre-admission activities such as the Fly-In Program (a student visit campaign), and continuing in other forms through graduation.

It is clear that in the mission to support Native American students on any college or university the appropriate resources and support staff is necessary to achieve success in multiple ways. At Dartmouth, Native American history is reflected in the artwork in the College's library and throughout the campus. Value is placed on the significant contributions of Native American peoples, including the honoring of past inhabitants of the land upon which Dartmouth College was established. Their story is told as a part of Dartmouth College's institutional history rather than being confined to a single month or discussion. For student success, DU must create an institutional commitment that permeates every facet of the University of Denver campus to welcome, celebrate, support and challenge students.

The Task Force members have narrowed its recommendations to those that we view as essential to impacting substantial institutional change that would result in measurable successes over the next three to five years and beyond. These recommendations can serve as a foundation for what the Task Force sees as long-term growth and change at DU, but should not be seen as exhaustive or complete.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Gather necessary data and information to guide our work

Early in its work the Task Force attempted to obtain accurate historic data about Native American enrollment at the University. This was a confounding experience, and led the group to conclude that the intelligent gathering and analysis of data will be critical in order for the University to improve its success rate in recruiting and graduating Native students.

This will require better instruments and analysis of our past recruitment efforts and our outcomes in terms of persistence and graduation rates for Native American students. It means the University needs to measure students' sense of belonging and overall satisfaction with the social and cultural experience while at DU.

Goal

- To establish foundations for identifying trends, challenges and creating targets for improvement – identifying our starting point. Complete a comprehensive survey that captures complex and global experiences of indigenous identities as well as membership/citizenship in federally recognized, state recognized or non-profit legal status tribes

Action Steps

- Work with Institutional Research and Analysis to gather relevant historical data sets on recruitment, admission, acceptance, matriculation, persistence and graduation rates based on specific variables. Data sets will also need to include students who self-identify as one or more ethnic identities
- Review how DU distinguishes students who self-identify as “Native” and as “Native and other ethnic groups” to ensure an accurate population count. This will require a means to ensure DU is not overstating what constitutes DU’s Native American student community. Include reports on the newly developed Diversity Dashboard to be reviewed on a quarterly basis by a cross-campus advisory board.
- Complete a comprehensive survey that captures indigenous identities as well as membership/citizenship in federally recognized, state recognized, or non-profit legal status tribes. This data will be collected by the various graduate admission and undergraduate admission offices as well as Human Relations for employees and the Office of Alumni Relations. Such data will be made available for relevant uses on the Diversity Dashboard currently being developed by the University
- Develop means to collect qualitative data on a bi-annual basis to give students more opportunities to share their sense of belonging and overall satisfaction with the DU experience
- Based on collected data, make ongoing recommendations across campus that impact recruitment and retention of students
- Create a realistic timeline for the implementation of these recommendations

Measurable Outcomes

- DU employees have granular data sets for both undergraduate and graduate Native American students within the reports provided on the Dashboard
- DU will have created and utilized instruments to collect and measure qualitative data on student experience

2. Build and strengthen partnerships and collaborative relationships

To create a nurturing environment for Native American students and to build an effective support and resource structure, the University of Denver will need to establish new external relationships while leveraging existing ones with local, regional and national institutions and organizations focused on Native American communities.

Such partnerships will also provide for more activities on the DU campus to demonstrate the current realities and contributions of Native American people in American society of the present and into the future.

Goal

Develop new and strengthen existing relationships between the University of Denver and Native-serving organizations to impact our ability to better serve Native American students.

Action Steps

- Work with undergraduate and graduate enrollment and campus life divisions to prioritize and establish partnerships that will meet the needs of current and future Native American DU students
- Host working group conferences:
 - Invite key stakeholders to campus for advice about building a successful Native American recruitment and retention strategy at DU. Examples:
 - Vicki Eagle, John Echohawk, Dartmouth and Northwestern contacts (Kianna Burke, Dartmouth students, etc.)
- Establish links to local and state, regional, and national organizations to leverage scholarship funds and raise the DU profile among Native American communities nationally. Organizations may include but are not limited to:
 - Native Nations whose higher education vision is compatible with what DU can offer
 - Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs
 - American Indian College Fund
 - National Coalition of Native American College Placement Services
 - Indian Country Higher Education
 - Native American Rights Fund
 - American Indian Higher Education Consortium
 - National Indian Education Association

- Establish links to local Native American focused community organizations to promote engagement with relevant cultural activities and resources. Community organizations may include but are not limited to:
 - Denver Indian Center
 - Denver March Powwow
 - Indigenous Film Festival
 - Indian Health Services
 - Native American student groups at other Colorado colleges and universities
- Develop and strengthen DU's Native Student Alliance, as well as relationships with DU's Indigenous Alumni Affinity group
 - Ensure student support and funding of NSA as an essential organization for the maintenance of an active and connected Native American student community at DU
 - Help welcome, support, mentor and celebrate student accomplishments and create a stronger community of support on campus
- Develop internship and practicum opportunities for DU students
 - Connect Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) and other service opportunities to all new partnerships.
 - Partner with businesses and organizations to provide paid internships relevant to current DU Native students
- Create a communication plan to raise awareness among Native American community leaders of our intentions and goals to encourage new partnerships

Measurable outcomes

- Significant increases in new partnerships between DU and Native American and Native-serving organizations
- Increase the number of Native focused conferences and meetings held at the University of Denver campus
- Increase scholarship funding available for Native American students through new fundraising efforts
- Increase off-campus support services for Native American students
- Increase placement of Native American students in practicum and internship opportunities, with special focus on Native-serving and Native organizations
- Increase the quality and quantity of relationships between DU and Native community leaders

3. Develop innovative enrollment policies and practices

Targeted efforts that intentionally focus on the needs and aspirations of Native students and their families are necessary to increase the pipeline and eventual enrollment numbers.

Goal

Increase the number of inquiries, applicants, admissions and enrollments of Native American students at the University of Denver.

Action Steps

- Provide a University-wide statement outlining the commitment to the increase of Native American student populations for both at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Create a Native American recruitment strategy and implementation team for both undergraduate and graduate enrollment efforts to ensure consistency and mutual outreach efforts
- Establish and strengthen links to local schools with Native-focused programming as a link for specific pipeline programming such as the Denver Public Schools Native American Education Program
- Provide additional merit funding to partnership groups specifically for Native students such as the Pathways award of up to \$7500 per year or the College Track partnership in which DU provides a specific amount and CT covers the remainder of the expense up to full-cost.
- Work closely with the Office of Enrollment to develop and/or strengthen the priority relationships/partnerships
- Create a University-wide plan to meet the financial needs of Native American student recruits.
- Hire 1.0 FTE for Undergraduate Enrollment to focus on the following:
 - Early family outreach (K-12) regionally
 - Guide the targeted partnership/relationship development outlined in #4.
 - Create a two-year, 8-week summer bridge program for rising Native American juniors and seniors
 - Create Fly-in Program targeting Native American students and their families with expenses paid involving campus tours and assistance in completion of necessary paperwork such as the FAFSA and other relevant documents.
 - Focused recruitment efforts that become part of the job duties of staff in the Office of Admissions in which relationships are established with local Native organizations and communities in their recruitment areas.
 - Utilize holistic admission process
 - On-campus transition programming coordinated with Campus Life efforts
 - Develop relationship with tribal colleges to serve as another recruitment pipeline
- Hire undergraduate and graduate students (GA positions) to be used for undergraduate and graduate student recruitment

Measurable Outcomes

- Significant increase in Native American student enrollment numbers at both undergraduate and graduate levels
- Significant increase in persistence and graduation rates of Native American students

4. Build and provide relevant on-campus resources and support systems

Building a community of Native American students on campus is only the first step. Once students are on campus, it is vital that the University of Denver provide a host of services and supports to ensure their academic, social, cultural and developmental success. Such

services must consist of both on and off-campus resources and be highly visible and accessible. Services must not be the sole responsibility of one unit, one person or one division—they must be both specific and embedded throughout the University. In DU’s efforts to “encourage academic engagement by supporting students holistically in their personal and professional development,” providing the resources for Native students to navigate DU successfully is of utmost importance (DU IMPACT 2025, 8).

Goal

- Create an effective Native-specific support services structure at DU
- Educate and train all support staff on campus to better serve Native American students and their families
- Embed Native American historical background into more student experiences while at DU

Action Steps

- Hire 1.0 FTE within Campus Life/CME to build on campus targeted services and coordinate all on campus support services across campus
- Hire one-full time Graduate Assistant dedicated exclusively to Native American undergraduate and graduate student organizations.
- Establish criteria to help staff understand who the target group is for these services

Measureable Outcomes

- Increased persistence and graduation rates
- Increased satisfaction with DU experience reported by Native American students

5. Institute significant campus-climate change to create a more welcoming student experience

With all that has been occurring across the United States on college campuses, it is clear that a nurturing campus environment is vital to the success of students of color. Native students are no exception. DU must provide training and education for skills building to improve personal interactions in the classroom, in the residence halls and throughout campus. Native American students who enter the DU community must be able to feel that their stories are valued and that their unique experiences relevant, not only when they participate in Native-specific programming. Often, if their personal experience is negative, they will leave, notwithstanding their financial situations.

Goal

The DU campus community will become more welcoming and supportive, and therefore, help ensure Native American student success and satisfaction.

Action Steps

- Create Native specific cultural competency training offered annually for all staff and faculty with online refreshers throughout the year
- Curriculum will include historical background for US Native experiences and perspectives as well as current Native realities and contributions giving context to staff and faculty interaction with Native students on campus
- Training will also provide staff and faculty with relevant and useful tools and resources on and off campus to help them best serve Native American students
- Create University traditions that reflect and mirror Native American traditions relevant to the original inhabitants of the land upon which DU now sits
- Ensure that physical representation of the original inhabitants of the land upon which DU sits is visible throughout campus including art, artifacts, historical recollections, etc.
- Provide central University resources to fully fund the annual Powwow in the amount of \$20,000

Measurable Outcome

- Increased sense of belonging as reported by DU Native American students
- Increased ability of employees to best serve Native American students

6. Build a community of Native American Students that contribute to a vibrant One DU community

Finally, the University of Denver will work toward building a critical mass of Native American students, both undergraduate and graduate, constituting a sustainable community to ensure an established network of students with whom to interact from the time they arrive on campus. Until the University of Denver is able to create such a critical mass of students, DU will continue to be a place where stories of isolation, feelings of alienation and a lack of connection to the campus are told. Regardless of whether or not students chose to identify with other Native American students, through our visits, anecdotally and from research, it is clear that students from Native American cultural backgrounds fare better in higher education with the presence of a supportive peer community. The Native American population is also a fast growing population in the Denver metro area that DU must be prepared to serve.

Goals

- Over the next three to five years commit to increasing scholarships the Native student population for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Ensure support of Native American students (and extension of unused funds to unfunded students) within DU's current structure of Native American community scholarships
- Create internal structures and supports so that the growing Native student population can gather, support one another and contribute with pride and confidence to the DU community.
- Create internal structures to track institutional progress toward these goals.

Action Steps

- Establish a campus advisory board to help monitor progress and guide any additional efforts to ensure accountability.
- Create a team of administrators responsible for oversight of progress made based on Task Force recommendations to include Graduate Studies, Enrollment Division, Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence.
- Revise policies related to the current Native American community scholarships to ensure extension of funding when awarded students leave the University so as to maintain the intended level of student service and support.
- Hold annual planning retreat between Enrollment and Campus Life staff to monitor progress toward goals

Measurable outcomes:

- Advisory Board established and functioning
- On-campus Oversight Committee established and functioning
- Development of new policies for Native American scholarships that are more responsive to the unique needs and situations of Native DU students
- Annual retreats held and producing impactful results

CONCLUSION

The University of Denver’s deep commitment to inclusive excellence is shown through DU’s institutional mission and reiterated in the DU IMPACT 2025 strategic plan. As our community moves forward towards achieving the promise of One DU, inclusive excellence is considered:

“Central to how we think about serving our aspirations and mission through our culture and structures. Over the last 10 years, these commitments have become more central to our identity and now they are profoundly important to our work for *shaping our future* (DU IMPACT 2025, 33, italics and bold added).”

Over its long history the University’s relationship to Native Americans has been filled with missteps and lost opportunities. The Task Force believes that in recent years serious efforts have been made to make things better. The Task Force understands that achieving a truly sustainable Native American community within DU will require a long-term campaign founded upon the building of trust and mutual respect. The recommendations contained in this report, if acted upon with sincerity and dedication, could truly move our community in the direction of One DU.

APPENDIX A: Native American Studies Curricula Inventory Summary

Undergraduate Courses that address Native American topics as a primary focus:		
Unit:	# of Courses:	
AHSS	14	
Anthropology	6	
English	4	
Languages and Literatures	3	
Communication Studies	1	
Undergraduate courses that address a particular aspect of Native American culture, history and/or experience:		
AHSS	43	
Anthropology	10	
Communication Studies	1	
Languages and Literatures	1	
Media, Film and Journalism Studies	1	
Music	1	
Psychology	2	
Geography and the Environment	8	
Sociology and Criminology	3	
History	15	
Gender and Women's Studies	1	
NSM	1	
Mathematics	1	
Graduate Courses that address Native American topics as a primary focus:		
AHSS	1	
Anthropology	1	
Sturm College of Law	2	
Graduate School of Social Work	3	
Graduate Courses that address a particular aspect of Native American culture, history and/or experience:		
Morgridge College of Education	13	
Counseling Psychology	6	
Curriculum and Instruction	1	
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies	1	
Higher Education	5	
Non-credit courses that address Native American topics as a primary focus:		
University College	3	
University College Enrichment Program	3	

APPENDIX B: Courses in American Indian Studies

University:	Example courses:	Level:	Cross-Listed:	Meets core requirement?	Degree Program:
University of Arizona ⁷	Intro to American Indian Studies	Undergrad			B.A in American Indian Studies
	Contemporary Indian America	Undergrad			
	Social Research with Indian Communities	Undergrad			
	Mixed Media Storytelling	Undergrad			
	American Indian Literature	Undergrad	English		
	Tribal Governments	Undergrad			
	American Indians and the Urban Experience	Undergrad			
	History and Philosophy of the Dine People	Undergrad			
	Native Peoples of the Southwest	Undergrad	Anthropology		
	Dynamics of Indian Society	Graduate			
	Tribal Colleges	Graduate			
	Exploring Critical Issues in Native American Curriculum Development	Graduate			
	Native Nation-Building I	Graduate	Law		
	Principles of Indigenous Economics	Graduate			
	Native American Natural Resources	Graduate	Law		
	Arizona State University ⁸	Multicultural Health Benefits	Graduate	Public Health	
American Indian Sovereignty and the Courts		Undergrad		Yes	
Readings and Writings in American Indian Studies		Undergrad			
Federal Indian Policy		Undergrad		Yes	
	American Indian Languages and Cultures	Undergrad		Yes	

⁷ <http://ais.arizona.edu/>

⁸ <https://americanindian.clas.asu.edu/>

	Crime in Indian Country*	Undergrad			
	Innovation for American Indian Sustainability*	Undergrad			
	Beginning Navajo I*	Undergrad			
University of Washington ⁹	Intro to American Indian Studies	Undergrad			American Indian Studies Minor
	Intro to American Indian Histories	Undergrad			
	Introduction to Contemporary Experience in Indian America	Undergrad			
	Introduction to Philosophical and Aesthetic Universes	Undergrad			
	First Nations Filmmaking in Canada	Undergrad	International Studies	Yes	
	Indians in Western Washington History	Undergrad	History	Yes	
Stanford University ¹⁰	Discourse of the Colonized: Native American and Indigenous Voices	Undergrad	Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity	Yes	B.A in Native American Studies
	American Indian Mythology, Legend and Lore	Undergrad	English	Yes	
	First-Year Lakota	Undergrad	Special Languages		

Notes:

*Special Topics Course

If cell is left blank, answer is unknown at this time

List of Native American Studies programs in the US: <http://www.niea.org/students/native-american-studies.aspx>

⁹ <https://ais.washington.edu/>

¹⁰ <http://nas.stanford.edu/courses.htm>