

UW-Stevens Point chancellor creates commission to build on partnerships with tribal nations

A group of campus, tribal and community members will continue working together to acknowledge native burial grounds on the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point campus and expand the educational opportunities for native students, families and communities.



Chancellor Thomas Gibson has established the Chancellor's Commission on the Ancestors Buried Below Us to coordinate efforts, leverage university resources and ensure timely progress and momentum.

"I have invited the leaders of the Tribal Nations to provide input, feedback and counsel to our efforts to recognize and honor their ancestors, such as creating a permanent memorial and on other initiatives," said Gibson. "I believe this is a critical next step in our process to create sustainable and beneficial partnerships with our tribal partners."

Historic research shows that the campus encompasses what was at one point a Native American camp and burial ground of the Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Ojibwe and Potawatomi. A temporary memorial marker has been placed near the Communication Arts Center to acknowledge the Indigenous people buried there many years ago.

Members of the commission will advise the chancellor in the following areas:

- Partner with UW-Stevens Point administration to establish a Cultural Resource Management Plan with various tribal nations in the region;
- Provide recommendations for a permanent memorial or another formal recognition to native ancestors after consulting with and receiving support from the tribal leaders in the region;
- Provide recommendations for opportunities to integrate Indigenous tribes' history and culture into the curricular and co-curricular components of the institution;
- In partnership with University Advancement and the UWSP Foundation, engage in efforts to fund a permanent memorial and provide scholarships to support Indigenous students' access to a UW-Stevens Point education.

The group will be co-chaired by Al Thompson, vice chancellor for Student Affairs, and Skye Alloway of the Forest County Potawatomi Cultural Center, Library and Museum. The following individuals will provide recommendations to Chancellor Gibson by May 13, 2021:

University faculty and staff:

- Tobias Barske, assistant dean, College of Letters and Science
- Iris Carufel, coordinator, Native American Center
- Sam Dinga, director, Office of Diversity and College Access
- Sasānēhsaeh Jennings, coordinator, UW System Native American Student Success Center
- Tahirih Hanson, representative, Student Government Association

- Rob Manzke, chief of staff, Chancellor's Office
- Jenna Miskowic, outreach assistant, Museum of Natural Resources
- Nate Sayas, president, American Indians Reaching for Opportunities (AIRO) student organization
- Sarah Scripps, director, Museum of Natural History
- Al Thompson, vice chancellor, Division of Student Affairs
- Mike Zsido, operations coordinator, Facility Services

Tribal and community members:

- Skye Alloway, Forest County Potawatomi Cultural Center, Library and Museum
- Dave Grignon, Tribal Historic Preservation officer, Menominee Nation
- Karen Ann Hoffman, UWSP alumna, community partner and member of Oneida Nation
- Mike LaRonge, Tribal Historic Preservation officer, Forest County Potawatomi
- Bill Quackenbush, Tribal Historic Preservation officer, Ho-Chunk Nation
- Ray Reser, former director and current curator of anthropology, Museum of Natural History

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Caption: A temporary memorial marker for Native American burial grounds was installed on the UW-Stevens Point campus in December, with representatives of the university and tribal nations speaking. Chancellor Gibson has formed commission to continue the work to recognize the Ancestors Buried Below Us.