



College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

11 October 2020

President Neal Smatresk
University of North Texas

Dear Dr. Smatresk:

The Department of Anthropology strongly supports the Land Acknowledgement Project spearheaded by our fabulous Native American Student Association (NASA). This letter documents the department's conceptual support, and in practical terms, we pledge to donate at least \$100, pending budget clarifications. In a non-Covid year, we would have expected to donate a considerably larger amount.

As anthropologists, we are especially mindful of the violent and tragic history that made it possible for UNT to be built on land that had been territory of the Wichita, Caddo, Kickapoo, Tawakoni, Waco, and Keechi communities. All of these Native American groups were pushed out of North Texas during the 1800s in order to free the land for white settlers. The Republic of Texas, and later the United States, took aggressive measures to destroy and remove Native Americans from this area. This is what made the land available for use by the institutions that currently occupy it, such as UNT.

As anthropologists, we also recognize that in this time of social change, it is increasingly important for American institutions to acknowledge past injustices, and create a welcoming presence for the current generation of Native students and visitors.

The Department of Anthropology has collaborated extensively with NASA. Faculty member Adam Dunstan was NASA advisor for several years. And Christina Wasson, who as you know led UNT's celebration of the [International Year of Indigenous Languages](#) in 2019, worked closely with NASA on a number of the events. We therefore speak from a position of experience in stating that NASA is an extremely well-run and effective organization that will undoubtedly succeed in doing a wonderful job with this initiative.

UNT's support of the Land Acknowledgement Project will send an important message to current and potential students and their communities: it will support UNT's claim of being welcoming to diverse groups. Frankly, UNT is a bit behind in its efforts to support Native students compared to many other universities. For instance:

- UT Arlington is ranked in the "[Top 200 Colleges for Native Americans](#)"; its NASA is known throughout the Metroplex for organizing a high-visibility annual Powwow
- TCU has created a [monument](#) acknowledging all Native American peoples who have lived in the region, in close collaboration with the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes
- At the national level, universities such as the [Rochester Institute of Technology](#) have created programs specifically designed to support Native students

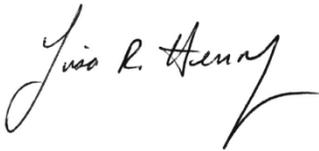
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The UNT Land Acknowledgement Project will be a powerful symbolic action that communicates support of Native students and understanding of the lived experiences of their communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa R. Henry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "L" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Lisa Henry, PhD
Professor and Chair
Department of Anthropology