November 1, 2023

Dear Friends,

Today marks the beginning of the national observance of Native American Heritage Month, a time in which we are all called to remember and honor the incalculable contributions of Native peoples in our country and the world.

Just a year ago this month, our campus hosted a visit and lecture by Curtis Zunigha, enrolled member of the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Oklahoma and co-director and co-founder of the Lenape Center in New York. Like all in attendance that evening, I cannot forget the heart wrenching stories and powerful message of his talk, entitled "Forced Removal of the Lenape People: History and Homecoming." I recently started reading his book and continue to draw great fruit from it.

We have so much to learn and understand about our Native American sisters and brothers. I encourage you to find ways this month and throughout the year to recognize the first inhabitants of this land we call home. We must celebrate the legacy of Native Americans as we also reflect on the bitter lessons of the violence and oppression that have endured.

In a concrete way, I remind everyone hosting events and gatherings on campus to please begin their programs by reading the University's Land Acknowledgment Statement:

> The University of Scranton acknowledges the original inhabitants and nations of this land: the Lenape, the Munsee, the Shawnee and the Susquehannocks. May we be ever mindful of their legacy and contributions and commit ourselves to stewarding this land with care and compassion as we navigate our communities towards faith and justice.

In using this statement, we should take to heart the reflection and action incumbent upon all of us – to deepen our learning and, as Curtis entreated us last fall, to consider the ways in which the legacies of racism and injustice remain with us today.

Yours faithfully,

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