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September 26, 2024 NAGPRA and Tribal Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Bryan Morey

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Western Kentucky University NAGPRA Committee Meeting

Date: September 26, 2024

Members Present (Meeting conducted via Zoom): Nikki Wilcox, David Pollack, Darlene Applegate, Brent Björkman, Lindsey Carter, Bryan Morey

Minutes recorded by Bryan Morey.

Minutes

NAGPRA Status as of September 26, 2024:

- Consultations accepted from the following Federally recognized Tribes and Nations:
 - Miami Tribe
 - Quapaw Nation
 - Delaware Nation
 - Shawnee Tribe – Official letter of approval received giving WKU permission to move collections out of Cherry Hall due to upcoming construction.
 - Cherokee Nation (responded September 8, 2024)
- The following Nations deferred consultation:
 - Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
 - Chickasaw Nation – no counties represented in WKU’s current Ancestral Remains Inventory, but there are counties represented in the collection in which they may be interested.
- WKU is awaiting responses for consultation from the following Tribes and Nations:
 - Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
 - Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
 - Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
 - Osage Nation
 - Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
 - Seneca-Cayuga Nation
 - Muscogee Nation
 - United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
- WKU is awaiting a response for a request for information from the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana.



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History Department NAGPRA Digitization Project

Dr. Katie McClurkin needs a project for her Public History class in the Spring 2025 semester (6-10 students for a guided internship). She reached out to Nikki, and they discussed a project digitizing and transcribing records related to NAGPRA-related holdings (not the artifacts themselves). The Tribes and Nations would need to approve this, but Nikki has reached out to them for approval. The committee also discussed mentioning this type of project to professors in other departments if they want to do similar projects in the future.

Sisterhood Grant

Nikki is working on a Sisterhood Grant to acquire PastPerfect as a database for storing the Anthropology collection.

NAGPRA Website

The Provost and the Dean of Potter College have stated they want the NAGPRA website hosted underneath the Anthropology program within the Department of Society, Culture, Crime, & Justice Studies. This website will provide an overview of NAGPRA work being done across WKU. Since the NAGPRA work is across departments at WKU, some members of the committee believed the website should be hosted under Academic Affairs, but as of right now, it will not be.

The website will include WKU's NAGPRA policies and procedures along with a way for Federally recognized Tribes and Nations to submit repatriation requests.

The committee emphasized the importance of making it clear on this webpage that the University is not clearing everything out of the Anthropology, Kentucky Museum, and Kentucky Archaeological Society's collections and sending it all off to the Tribes. Artifacts that fall under NAGPRA compliance make up a relatively small percentage of the overall collections. Nevertheless, WKU will obtain free, prior, and informed consent from lineal descendants and Federally recognized Tribes and give deference to Native American traditional knowledge for anything we do that relates to cultural items and human remains.

The committee also discussed thinking more broadly than NAGPRA about our Native American collections, including overall initiatives related to this work.

Regarding the proposed opening paragraph for the website, the committee discussed and agreed that the ethical reasoning for conducting this NAGPRA work should be



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separated out from the legal requirement. The committee also emphasized the importance of explicitly stating Federally recognized Tribes, as opposed to simply Tribes. Further recommendations were made by members of the committee in reviews outside the meeting, and Nikki will update the document to reflect those recommendations.

The committee discussed having a page that links to relevant statutes, along with links to the following websites:

- NAGPRA Community of Practice: <https://mediaspace.du.edu/channel/NAGPRA+Community+of+Practice/276861963>
- National Parks Service: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/index.htm>
- Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/13/2023-27040/native-american-graves-protection-and-repatriation-act-systematic-processes-for-disposition-or>

Upcoming Guest Speaker

The History Department confirmed that Philip Deloria (Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University) will be giving a guest lecture on March 26, 2025 at 5PM. His research and teaching focus on the social, cultural, and political histories of the relations among American Indian peoples and the United States, and his lecture will relate to the work we are doing on NAGPRA at WKU.

Developing Policies and Procedures

The NAGPRA policies and procedures document for WKU is currently in a rough draft phase. The university Board of Regents will eventually need to approve this document.

Committee Minutes

Bryan Morey brought up the idea of recording formal minutes for NAGPRA Committee meetings, and he agreed to act as Secretary for the Committee, which the Committee voted on and approved.

Bryan spoke with University Archivist Suellyn Lathrop about permanent storage of Committee minutes, and she said she would make a page on TopScholar to host any committee-related documents we want public. We can link to this page from the NAGPRA website we will create, and we will have access to upload documents directly to the TopScholar page.

Future Agenda

Land acknowledgement for WKU.