A RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TO FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS TO THE ELEVEN AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS WITHIN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council Membership consists of representatives of the eleven federally-recognized Indian Tribes located within the State of Minnesota, members of the legislature, commissioners from state agencies;

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council is a liaison between the state and local units of government in the delivery of services to the American Indians in the State of Minnesota;

WHEREAS, the University of Minnesota recently began conducting outreach toward the Minnesota American Indian tribes in an attempt to create a system-wide approach toward entering into a new era of relationship-building, partnership and respect for tribal nations as governments, which MIAC welcomes and encourages;

WHEREAS, under the United States Constitution, American Indian tribes are governments with a direct government-to-government relationship with the United States and being a citizen of an American Indian tribe is a political status, not a racial or ethnic status (Morton v. Mancari 1974);

WHEREAS, the University of Minnesota is a land grant University pursuant to the Morrill Act of 1862 which allowed tribal lands in Minnesota to be wrongfully taken to build the University of Minnesota and other Universities (see “Land Grab Universities,” Lee and Ahtone, High Country News, March 30, 2020);

WHEREAS, the University of Minnesota owes its very existence to the taking of 94,439 acres of tribal land from the eleven American Indian tribal governments of Minnesota;

WHEREAS, the University of Minnesota benefitted from the sale and lease of tribal land, and that income became part of the Permanent University Fund, worth $543,000,000 in 2016;

WHEREAS, like the United States and the State of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota owes special obligations and has responsibilities to the American Indian tribes of Minnesota which have for the most part gone unfulfilled, unrecognized, or ignored and policy-making at its campuses has continued to reflect paternalistic processes steeped in institutional racism;
WHEREAS, while the State of Minnesota and the United States of America have acknowledged formal obligations and responsibilities to American Indian tribal governments, the University of Minnesota has yet to do the same or develop a formal consultation policy treating tribal governments as partners;

WHEREAS, while current University leadership has demonstrated a desire to build positive relationships with the American Indian tribal governments of Minnesota, there exists a long history at the University of Minnesota of past leadership resisting calls to dismantle racist policies that still today allow the University to profit from lands taken from Indian tribes, and the University still lays claim today to tribal lands within the Fond du Lac Reservation which were wrongfully taken from the Band;

WHEREAS, the University of Minnesota has yet to conduct an honest accounting of its own historical actions that, have over the years: (1) perpetuated oppression of, racism toward and discrimination against American Indian people; (2) allowed the University to profit from theft of tribal lands and resources even today; (3) engaged in research for the U.S. Army through the University Medical School which involved tribal members between 1954 and the 1970's; (4) attempted to replicate the DNA of Manoomin without involvement of tribal governments, which in its natural state is sacred to Anishinaabe people; (5) provided inadequate academic, financial and student support services to successfully recruit, admit, retain and graduate American Indian students; and (6) disrespected the sovereignty and self-governance of American Indian tribal governments through failure to consult with tribes about actions impacting tribes.

WHEREAS, along with other public and private educational institutions in Minnesota, the University has been complicit in concealment by omission of Minnesota’s dark history of dealings with American Indian tribes, which has resulted in most Minnesotans being uneducated about our shared history and existence as governments;

WHEREAS, it is widely documented that inherent bias in hiring processes and institutional racism permeates higher education nationally, which at the University of Minnesota is reflected by under-representation of American Indian faculty at each of the University campuses and institutes, under-representation of American Indian leadership and administrators, and under-representation of American Indian student support staff;

WHEREAS, one of the most renowned tribal attorneys of the 20th Century, Marvin J. Sonosky, spent his life fighting for tribal rights and endowed a Chair at the University of Minnesota Law School, and the University of Minnesota Law School has never used the Sonosky Chair to research, write or teach about American Indian law or policy;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that MIAC welcomes a new era of relationship building and partnership with the University of Minnesota with the understanding that for this partnership to grow, engaging with Indian tribal governments must occur at the highest level of the University and given the same status and attention as conducting state or federal relations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Minnesota shall expand the funding and mission of the Tribal Sovereignty Institute (TSI), which will work with tribes on research;
developing materials; and teaching courses that have been prioritized by the tribal leaders and that will benefit the eleven American Indian tribes of Minnesota;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that building authentic new relationships based on trust requires committing to a truthful accounting of the University’s historical relationship with and impact on the American Indian tribal governments of Minnesota, including acknowledgment of historical injustices which the University perpetuated and benefitted from, acknowledging the injustices which the University continues to directly and indirectly benefit from today, committing to dismantling institutional racism which directly and indirectly benefits the University, industry and certain other communities at the expense of American Indian tribal governments and people, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MIAC calls upon the University of Minnesota to partner with Indian tribes to create an American Indian Policy Review Task Force (AIPRTF) that will be charged with conducting a truthful historic accounting of the University’s past and present policies which have directly and indirectly impacted American Indian tribal governments and American Indian people as described in this resolution, make recommendations of future policies to better serve Indian tribes and people, and that the Task Force shall be comprised of persons nominated by the American Indian tribal governments and persons nominated by the University of Minnesota;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University will provide staffing and any necessary funding of the Task Force’s work, which shall be led by the Senior Director of Tribal Nations Relations and AIRPTF shall complete its work within one year;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University President and representation from the Board of Regents shall engage in formal consultation with the elected leaders of the eleven American Indian tribal governments at least three times annually through hosting summits with the tribal leaders, as is the practice of the Governor of Minnesota as well as the White House;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Minnesota will partner with the eleven American Indian tribal governments to establish a system-wide tuition waiver for American Indian undergraduate and graduate students at each of its campuses rather than just the Morris campus, similar to the Waiver of Tuition for North American Indians policy in Michigan (Act 174 of 1976) and that that current admission criteria for sought-after student athletes should equally apply to American Indian students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that because American Indian students are descendants of the tribes from whom land was taken to fund the University and which the University still profits from today, and because of their unique political status as members and citizens of a tribal government, American Indian students are not “multicultural” students but are entitled to their own gathering places, access to tribal elders, access to tutorial assistance, and access to Native American academic and student support counseling such as American Indian Learning Resource Centers (AILRC);
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AllRC’s must be provided on all University of Minnesota campuses and be autonomous from multicultural centers in the same way as International students have their own gathering spaces as representatives of foreign nations with a unique status and issues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University will uphold its duty to educate Minnesotans about our shared tribal-state history through requiring that all undergraduates take coursework that builds knowledge and understanding of tribal governments, tribal sovereignty, and our shared history and that all graduate students studying in fields related to public policy, business or law in Minnesota shall be required to take a graduate or law school courses of the same nature;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Minnesota will immediately adopt hiring procedures and policies which identify and remedy search committee bias, conduct aggressive outreach and recruitment of American Indian PhD candidates, and institute other best diversity hiring practices specific to American Indian faculty toward the goal of doubling Native American faculty and professionals within five years;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that lands on the Fond du Lac Reservation which were taken from the Band and are currently used by the University of Minnesota Cloquet Forestry Center should be returned to the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chipewa Indians;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University of Minnesota should ensure that the Marvin J. Sonosky Chair of law and public policy should be used to fund American Indian law and policy scholarship and teaching to honor the work of Mr. Sonosky; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the University will establish a PhD in American Indian Studies and offer a Dakota language undergraduate degree in Dakota language, as the Twin Cities and Morris Campuses are on Dakota lands.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the University of Minnesota Regents, the President, the Provost, the Vice Presidents, Chancellors, Vice Chancellors and all the University Deans and all upper level executive officers of all campuses must be required to attend the Tribal State Relations Training established by State Executive Order 13-10 and continued by Executive Order 19-24 or similar training.

CERTIFICATION: We do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly presented and acted upon by a vote of 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent at Regular Meeting of the Minnesota Indian

[Signatures]
Robert L. Larsen, Chairman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

Shelley Buck, Vice Chairwoman
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council