



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE
RIVERSIDE DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING, RM 225

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May 19, 2026

Ahmet Palazoglu, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

RE: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup

Dear Ahmet,

I write to provide UC Riverside’s comments on the Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup. On May 11, 2026, the Riverside Academic Senate Executive Council discussed the subject draft report along with the comments submitted by local committees. Members discussed the importance of the University putting in place dedicated resources, as well, as a well-qualified steward.

I have attached thoughtful and critical comments from local committees for your reference and have included a very general summary of those comments below. I strongly encourage the review of the letters for full information:

The School of Medicine Faculty Executive Committee agrees with the draft report's objective to create a map overlaying the UC Riverside parcel with known tribal holdings.

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) focused on financial clarity, underscoring the importance of including language in tribal land use agreements that specifies which party is responsible for specific associated costs.

The Committee on Physical Resources Planning (PRP) appreciated the report as a necessary step toward standardizing interactions between the UC and sovereign indigenous nations. The PRP noted the importance of protocol and accountability in maintaining tools like interactive digital maps and adhering to checklists and standards of interactions, though they observed that the report lacks demonstrated long-term provision.

To ensure necessary compliance and effective long-term implementation, the PRP recommended developing a detailed plan. This plan should focus on creating systematic processes, determining best practices for engagements, addressing potential discrepancies across campuses, and identifying and allocating required resources. The committee also suggested considering either

establishing a dedicated office at the UC or delegating officers across the system to maintain these documents and oversee these critical processes.

The College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences faculty executive committee (CNAS)

viewed the report as a good initial step in providing general guidelines on the campus's responsibilities for co-stewardship with Tribal partners over research lands. However, the committee called for more UCR-specific guidance on the policies, procedures, and steps researchers need to navigate these processes. While recognizing the existence of a Tribal engagement officer and a reserves manager, the CNAS committee requested greater facilitation at the campus level and broader dissemination of information to researchers. They also commented that they would like to see UCR establish deeper and more meaningful relationships with Tribal partners moving forward.

The College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences faculty executive committee (CHASS)

generally welcomed the proposals to establish better relationships with California Native peoples but identified a major shortcoming: the report does not seem to engage with specific and contextual Native nations. CHASS argued this engagement must be addressed immediately rather than being deferred to a future liaison stage, urging the workgroup to provide guidance by listing or naming the many different tribes and nations that would be impacted by the new relations.

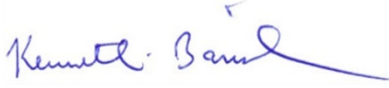
CHASS also requested clarification on several details, including whether the proposed parcel maps are intended to be informative or if they are meant to substitute or dialogue with specific tribal definitions of ancestral lands. The committee encouraged clarification on how the campus tribal liaison will be appointed, to whom they will report, and how the position will be funded, stating that the proposal currently suggests appointment by campus administration without further detail. Finally, CHASS advised the preparers to acknowledge existing campus units already engaging in this work, such as UCR's Native Student Programs and the California Center for Native Nations, to ensure the report goes beyond general system-wide recommendations.

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) saw the report as a long-overdue effort to address the UC system's harmful relationship with California Indian peoples, tribes, and lands, which it traces back to the "land grab" conditions created by the Morrill Act of 1862. While the CODEI acknowledged the report's attempt to standardize practices and provide concrete tools, it ultimately characterized the framework as "grossly hierarchical". The CODEI criticized the report for presenting as an internally developed, top-down operational framework rather than a set of tools co-developed with Tribal partners from the outset. To remedy this, the CODEI recommended that Tribal partners must be given clear and direct opportunities to review the core proposals in advance of other stakeholders. Beyond this minimum step, the CODEI suggested forming a new work group that explicitly involves Indigenous staff, faculty, and students to integrate tribal systems and strengthen the materials' credibility.

Independent of these recommendations, the CODEI detailed eight areas vital for further clarification to establish a collaborative framework: stating clearly when, how, and which Tribal partners will engage in providing feedback on the core frameworks; outlining a proactive and sustained outreach infrastructure that extends beyond project-specific interactions; balancing the framework's alignment with internal UC compliance with co-developed governance approaches; clarifying or completing process completeness criteria within flowcharts; articulating systemwide expectations for confidentiality and data governance; establishing clearer

expectations for baseline financial and logistical support to ensure equitable practices across campuses; and outlining mechanisms for monitoring adoption, consistency, and systemwide accountability. The CODEI also suggested engaging more deeply with Indigenous-centered best practices, such as those found in literature by authors with expertise.

Sincerely yours,




Kenneth Barish
Professor of Physics and Astronomy and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Monica Lin, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office



April 23, 2026

TO: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Rachel Wu, Chair 
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Report Review: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup

The CHASS Faculty Executive Committee discussed the draft report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup and has some feedback for the preparers. In general, the committee welcomes the work of this group and the proposals therein to establish better relationships with the California Native peoples on whose lands current UC infrastructure stands. However, our discussion led to certain shortcomings of the report that can be easily addressed moving forward. In general, while recognizing that the UC is a large organization with multiple campuses and spaces across the State, the report does not seem to engage with specific and contextual Native nations; this must be addressed at this stage in some way or another and not relegated to a next stage with a liaison. As it stands, the report does not list or name the many different tribes and nations that would be impacted by these new relations; at minimum we encourage this workgroup to provide that guidance for the University as a whole.

The Committee also requests clarification and specification on the parcel maps; as it is written now, it is unclear if these parcel maps are informative or if they are meant to substitute or dialogue with specific tribal definitions of ancestral lands.

The Committee also encourages clarification on how the campus tribal liaison will be appointed and to whom will they report? How will this position be funded? Currently, it seems this report proposes that campus administration appoint this liaison but does not detail more. This is another instance where more and concrete collaboration with specific nations is encouraged.

Finally, the Committee discussed how this report seems at this stage to be a series of general recommendations for the system but does not take into account existing and historically present units and departments already engaging with this work. Namely, at UCR we have the Native Student Programs and the California Center for Native Nations, both of which work with


different populations revolving around Native, Indigenous and Tribal realities. We encourage the preparers to look at each campus and what kind of work and relations they have been establishing already.



COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

April 27, 2026

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Esra Kurum, Chair 
Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Re: [Systemwide Review] (Report Review) Draft
Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup

This report represents a long-overdue effort to address the UC system’s harmful relationship to California Indian peoples, tribes, lands and ancestors/human remains since its inception. Though it makes some attempt to standardize previously fragmented practices across campuses, notes historical context, and provides concrete tools such as checklists, agreement elements, and process flowcharts as “living documents” while signaling openness to refinement, it ultimately represents a grossly hierarchical framework that exacerbates historically uneven relationships between the UC system and tribes whose lands we have occupied since the passing of the Morrill Act of 1862 when a “land grab” created the conditions under which the UCs were founded.

The report reads primarily as an internally developed top-down operational framework that is now being opened for feedback, rather than as a set of tools co-developed with Tribal partners from the outset. While theoretically understandable given the UC workgroup’s structure, it is indefensible considering the topic of the workgroup and the history surrounding the UC, Indigenous nations, and the issue of Tribal lands. The report notes that it is being circulated for input from advisory groups and stakeholders; however, it is clear there has been little to no involvement from existing avenues capable of providing Indigenous voices including Indigenous studies scholars; community leaders; tribal representatives; liaisons; or entities, including former and current Elders/Tribal Scholars-in-Residence, Native American Student Program staff and students, Chancellor’s Native American Advisory Councils (CNNAC), community members who have already weighed in on UC’s illegal and harmful collection, storage, and treatment of human/ancestral remains. Explicitly ensuring Tribal partners are provided with clear and direct opportunities to review and provide feedback on the core proposals in advance of other stakeholders is the minimum necessary to approach an appropriate framework for the management of shared resources. Beyond this, the committee recommends putting together a new work group that explicitly involves indigenous staff, faculty, and students at the ground level ensuring meaningful developments that integrate tribal systems, ways of being, and ways of doing to strengthen the credibility, relevance, and effectiveness of these materials.

Independent of these recommendations, the following are several areas where further clarification and development that are vital to starting the process of the work group over in ways that reflect collaboration, knowledge and resource sharing, and frank, open dialogue:

1. **Tribal partner involvement.** At this stage, the report needs to state with clarity on when, how, and which Tribal partners will be engaged in providing feedback on the core frameworks, including the process flowcharts, authority and its delegation, and agreement structures. While input through advisory bodies is valuable, it is important to ensure this workgroup does not infringe upon the work already being done by existing Indigenous entities in this realm. Clarifying the role of this workgroup and its outcomes within the larger landscape of tribal partners and organizations is necessary to strengthen the alignment of these tools with Tribal priorities and perspectives. To not do so at the outset of such a discussion that has real cultural, philosophical, environmental, and spiritual stakes is unethical and does not address harm reduction.
2. **Outreach.** reactive vs. sustained relationship infrastructure. While the outreach guidance emphasizes respectful, repeated, and flexible engagement, much of the framework appears tied to specific projects or agreements. The report could be strengthened by outlining a more proactive and sustained outreach infrastructure, including baseline communication practices, ongoing relationship maintenance, and institutional accountability that extends beyond project-specific interactions from the work group's inception through its completion.
3. **Balancing internal compliance with co-working structures.** The report incorporates required administrative and legal considerations from the UC (but not Tribal) perspective; however, the framework often presents as more aligned with internal compliance and approval processes within the UC systems than with co-developed governance approaches. Additional emphasis on how Tribal perspectives will inform these structures would help better align the operational design with the report's stated relational principles.
4. **Flowcharts and process completeness.** Some components of the process framework within the flowcharts remain under development (e.g., criteria yet to be determined). Clarifying or completing these elements prior to implementation is necessary to improve consistency and reduce ambiguity across campuses.
5. **Confidentiality and data governance.** While the report appropriately recognizes the sensitivity of Tribal information and relevant legal constraints, it could be strengthened by more clearly articulating systemwide expectations and safeguards for confidentiality, documentation practices, and data governance, particularly in light of public records requirements and the historical violation of California Indian data, confidentiality, and principles of consent by settler colonial entities such as the UC system.
6. **Funding and capacity.** The report encourages campuses to provide financial and logistical support for Tribal engagement where possible; however, the largely discretionary framing may lead to uneven implementation across campuses. A clearer list of expectations regarding baseline support would help promote more consistent and equitable practices, particularly as they pertain to the uneven ways funding is allocated across the system.
7. **Implementation and accountability.** The report would benefit from additional clarity regarding implementation and accountability. Specifically, it would be helpful to outline how adoption of these practices will be monitored, how consistency across campuses will

be ensured, and whether systemwide tracking or evaluation mechanisms will be established.

8. **Further reading:** We humbly and respectfully suggest that the work group members consider engaging more deeply with Indigenous-centered best practices for universities and academics, including Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi), *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*; Memorial University, Civic Lab for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR Lab); Michigan State University and the Native American Institute, *Reciprocal Research: A Guidebook to Centering Community in Partnership with Indigenous Nations*; the California Housing and Community Development's *Tribal Nations Engagement Handbook*; or any other text that outlines frameworks for good relations.



April 23, 2026

TO: Kenneth N. Barish, Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Harry Tom, Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

SUBJECT: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup

Prof. Barish,

The CNAS Faculty Executive Committee reviewed the draft report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup at the April 14th meeting and has comments to provide.

The committee feels that this report is a good first step in the direction of providing general guidelines to the campus outlining our responsibilities of co-stewardship with Tribal partners of the land that research is being conducted on, but there is a call for more guidance, specific to UCR, on the policies and procedures researchers need to be aware of and steps to navigate through these processes.

The committee recognizes that there is a Tribal engagement officer on campus, as well as a reserves manager that manages access and research happening at the UC Reserves, but would like to see more facilitation through this process at the campus level and dissemination of information on a broader scale to researchers.

There were also comments from the committee that they would like to see UCR establish deeper and more meaningful relationships between the university and Tribal partners moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Harry Tom'.

Harry Tom, Ph.D
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



Academic Senate

PHYSICAL RESOURCES PLANNING

April 28, 2026

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Brian Siana, Physical Resources Planning Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Siana", written over a light blue grid background.

Re: *[Systemwide Review] (Report Review) Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup*

The Physical Resources Planning Committee (PRP) has reviewed the *Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup*.

PRP appreciates this long-awaited step toward standardizing interactions between the UC and the sovereign indigenous nations on whose land the University now resides. As informed by past histories, this report seems reasonable, though contains aspects where long term provision has not been demonstrated. In the implementation of the tools and procedures of this report, the Committee notes the importance of protocol and accountability in the maintenance of aspects like the Interactive digital maps and adherence to the checklist and standards of interactions as required.

To achieve the necessary compliance for the commitments set out in this report, PRP recommends a detailed plan to create systematic processes, determine best practices for engagements, address potential discrepancies across campuses, and to identify and allocate required resources. Furthermore, the committee recommends consideration of a dedicated office at the UC or delegation of officers across the system to maintain these documents and oversee these processes.



PLANNING AND BUDGET

April 23, 2026

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

From: David Oglesby, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget



Re: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: *Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup*

At our meeting on March 31, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the *Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup*. CPB agrees with and underscores the significance of the language pertaining to the cost and financial responsibilities of tribal land use agreements: “Specify which party is responsible for specific costs associated with the agreement.”

04/23/2026

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
and Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

From: Kinnari Atit, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee

Subject: SOE FEC's Feedback on the Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup

The SOE Executive Committee reviewed the Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup. Comments/feedback were solicited at our executive committee meeting and via email.

The SOE FEC has no comments on this document.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kinnari" followed by a stylized flourish.

Kinnari Atit
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
Associate Professor
School of Education
University of California, Riverside
Email: kinnari.atit@ucr.edu

TO: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Kurt Schwabe, Chair 
Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: [\[Systemwide Review\] Report Review: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup](#)

Date: April 29, 2026

The Executive Committee of the School of Public Policy has reviewed the [\[Systemwide Review\] Report Review: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup](#). We are supportive of the workgroup's efforts and have no specific comments.



April 23, 2026

TO: Ken Barish, Chair
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Evangelos (Vagelis) Christidis, Chair
BCOE Executive Committee

RE: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup

The BCOE Executive Committee met on April 23rd, 2026. Regarding the Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup, the committee has no comment.





April 23, 2026

TO: Ken Barish, PhD, Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Adam Godzik, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

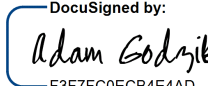
SUBJECT: **[Systemwide Review] Report Review: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup**

Dear Ken,

The SOM Faculty Executive Committee has reviewed the *[Systemwide Review] Report Review: Draft Report of the UC Tribal Lands Workgroup*.

The committee agrees with the draft report which aims to create a map overlaying UC Riverside parcel with known tribal holdings.

Yours sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
 Adam Godzik/24/2026 | 11:10 AM PDT
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Adam Godzik, Ph.D.
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine