

One Inclusive Thing: Supporting Indigenous People at GVSU

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To support Indigenous people, you need a strong understanding of the ancestral land where you stand. To research your current locale, investigate the resources provided below.

- [Michigan Tribal Governments](#)
- [University Libraries Native American Michigan Resources database](#)

Indigenous People in Michigan 101

- The Three Fires Confederacy is an ancient alliance of
 - (Ojibwe/ Ojibwa)/ Chippewa
 - The Ojibwe are known as the Keepers of the Tradition, the Odawa as the Keepers of the Trade, and the Potawatomi as the Keepers of the Fire
 - Ottawa (Odawa)
 - Potawatomi/ Pattawatomi (Bodéwadmi/ Bodowadomi)
 - <https://libguides.gvsu.edu/natamericans/michigan>
- Tribal nations in the Great Lakes region are also known as the Anishinaabe, Anishinaabeg, Anishnabek, Neshnibek, Nesnabek, Original or True People or Spontaneous Beings.
 - [Anishinaabemowin language resources](#)
- Michigan is home to twelve federally-acknowledged tribal nations
- Federally acknowledged tribes are not merely organizations of citizens who happen to be of Native American descent, they are sovereign governments that exercise direct jurisdiction over their members and territory and, under some circumstances, over other citizens as well.
- [Michigan Tribal Government website](#)

To reduce Harm and Violence to Indigenous People, Don't Ask:

- Do you get money from casinos?
 - Some tribes have invested and built businesses, including casinos. These tribes share the revenues, beyond tribal government expenditures to insure the welfare of tribal members.
 - [The Myth of Indian Casino Riches](#) by Dwanna L. Robertson, Indian Country Today
- Do you go to college for free?

- Michigan has had responsibilities for educating the state's American Indians since the Comstock Agreement of 1934. A 1976 Legislative act and its subsequent revisions provided for state institutions of higher education to grant free tuition to certain American Indians through the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver (ITW) program.
 - [Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver FAQ](#)–Michigan.gov
- How much Indian are you?
 - Blood quantum is a colonial tool, codified by law, defining race, complicated today by a variety of forces.
 - [So What exactly is 'Blood Quantum'](#)–The Code Switch Podcast
- Will you speak your language for me?
 - Don't ask, it's just rude.
- Will you explain what Indigenous people think about x, y, or z?
 - Don't ask one person to represent the views, beliefs, experiences of an entire group of people. Instead, try a little research.
- Did your parents go to a Native American Boarding School?
 - While the last boarding school in Michigan did not close until 1983, the oppressive and traumatic history experienced by many indigenous people makes this question particularly intrusive, insensitive, and inappropriate.
 - [Indian Boarding Schools](#) article by Eric Hemenway on Michiganology website.
 - [Mutually Exclusive: We the Seventh](#) video clip by M. Avila on WGVU (2016).

Working with Indigenous People and Supporting Academic Success

- Begin with the understanding that you are always on settled, Indigenous land.
- Create nurturing relationships that support and create opportunities for Indigenous students.
- Develop and maintain relationships with Indigenous people that are not extractive, enabling improved understanding of the history and culturally sensitive support.
- Understanding your own settler privilege and complicity.
 - For guidance, see [Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack of Settler Privilege](#) by Dina Gilio-Whitaker.

What Can I Do in my Classroom?

- Create a course curriculum that includes Indigenous representation and acknowledges the present existence of Indigenous people.
- Avoid tokenizing or offending Indigenous students, by adhering to the questions above and examining your curriculum for bias.
- Most curriculum is taught from a Euro-settler perspective. Develop curriculum that centers Indigenous experience and intellect. Carry out curriculum that serves outside of the settler experience.
- Study, read, and teach Indigenous authors in your discipline.

What Can My Offices and Departments Do or Change?

- Cluster hire Indigenous staff and faculty to support Indigenous students and diversity/culture at Grand Valley State University.
- Accountability when creating community events includes compensation, decision making and support.
- Allow space for the institutional hierarchy to be dismantled.

Want to Learn More?

- Absolon, K.E. (2011). [Kaandossiwin: How we come to know](#). Halifax: Fernwood Pub.
- Atalay, S. (2012). [Community-Based Archaeology: Research with, by, and for Indigenous and Local Communities](#). University of California Press. Retrieved February 25, 2021 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pn9dj>.
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- Doerfler, J., Sinclair, N.J., & Stark, H.K. (2013). [Centering Anishinaabeg studies: Understanding the world through stories](#). Michigan State University Press.
- Kimmerer, R.W. (2016). [Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teaching of plants](#). Unabridged. [United States]: Tantor Audio
- King, L., Gubele, R., & Anderson, J.R. (2014). [Survivance, sovereignty, and story: teaching American Indian rhetorics](#). Logan: Utah State University Press
- Simpson, L.B. (2017). [As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance](#). Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press.
- Wilson, S. (2008). [Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods](#). Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Publication