

Land Acknowledgment Series

HANA RIVERS & ANNABELLE TSENG, CENTER FOR ENGAGED PEDAGOGY



Land Acknowledgment Series 2021

OCT 27, NOV 3, & NOV 10 | 4-5PM

A three-part holistic learning experience open to instructors, staff, and students. We will read Indigenous scholarship and engage critically with the creation, use, and intentions of land acknowledgments.

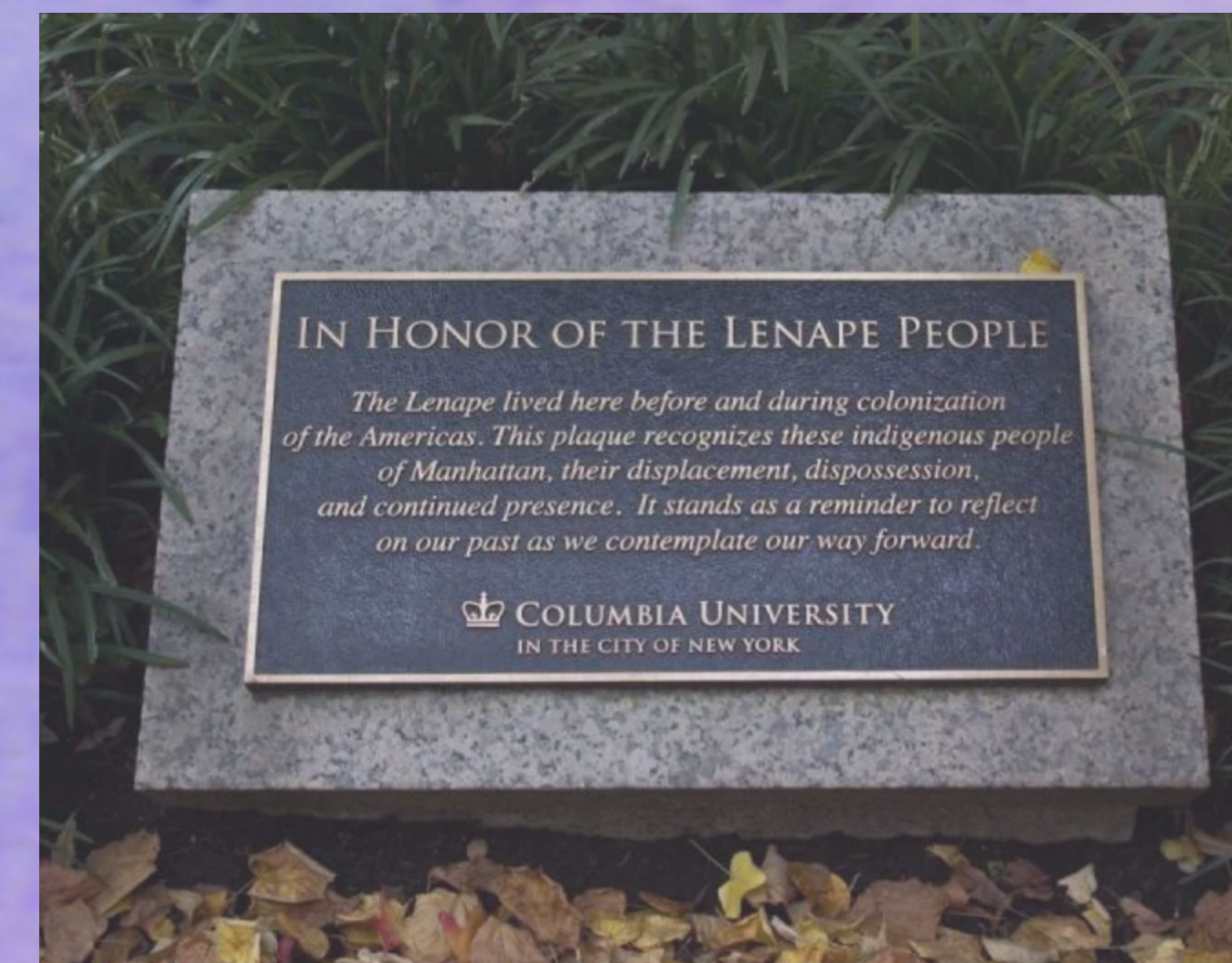
WHAT PURPOSE CAN LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS SERVE AT INSTITUTIONS LIKE BARNARD/COLUMBIA?

While many centers at Barnard, including ours, have taken up the practice of land acknowledgments during programming, community members also expressed interest in moving beyond statements of recognition toward anticolonial action.

In response, we created a Land Acknowledgment Series that took the form of a virtual, recurring learning community open to Barnard faculty, students, and staff Fall 2021. The series, which functioned as a learning community, aimed to cultivate collaborative engagement with the work of Indigenous scholars writing on the topic of land acknowledgments.

WHAT ARE LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS?

Land acknowledgments in the form of written or spoken statements are a growing practice at settler institutions like universities (Stewart-Ambo & Yang). Often read at the beginning of events, land acknowledgment statements underscore the presence of Indigenous people and their land rights as well as draw attention to the ongoing settlement of Indigenous land.



BARNARD COLLEGE

Barnard College, and the Center for Engaged Pedagogy (CEP) specifically, presently occupies Lenape land. This plaque on Columbia's campus, hard-fought by student activists in 2013-2016, is the only memorial on campus that recognizes the institution's occupation of Indigenous land.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN THOUGHTFUL, ACTION-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIP TO LAND?

PROCESS

- Reviewed scholarship on land acknowledgments written by Indigenous scholars and land acknowledgments resources from Indigenous organizations
- Consulted with members of the Barnard community and Native American Council at Columbia University
- Researched land acknowledgment practices and Land Back initiatives at similar institutions.
- Designed active learning activities and discussion questions drawing from holistic learning approaches centered on mindfulness and reflexivity

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to thank: The Columbia Native American Council; Elizabeth Hutchinson, Ariana González Stokas, Manu Karuka, and CEP staff members; the work of other institutions, specifically UCSD; and the work of Theresa Stewart-Ambo, K. Wayne Yang, Charles Sepulveda, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and others.

IMPACT

Collected from reflections & exit survey

- Participants appreciated having a space of reflection, vulnerability, and reflexivity in which to grapple with challenging questions
- Participants recognized both the generative potential and limitations of land acknowledgments in relation to their own work
- Participants forged a sense of community across departments and disciplines
- This series inspired additional CEP community learning spaces (e.g. a discussion group on abolitionist pedagogy)

WHAT'S NEXT



- The CEP intends to create more space for the Barnard community to continue to think about land acknowledgments beyond statements and how we can move toward actions in support of anticolonial movements.
- Through this project and its future offshoots, the CEP commits to integrating Indigenous knowledge into its approach to pedagogy, with a focus on self-reflexivity and an awareness of individual positionality.