

TO: SUNY University Faculty Senate  
FROM: SUNY UFS Executive Committee and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Working Group, Binghamton University  
RE: Resolution: Amend policy regarding “Display of the Flag” to include the flags of sovereign indigenous nations in New York State  
DATE: January 17, 2026  
LOCATION: Virtual (Zoom)  
NUMBER: 202-01-01  
VOTE: For: 44 / Against: 4

## RATIONALE

**WHEREAS** the State University of New York (SUNY) is situated on the ancestral lands of several sovereign indigenous nations, including the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Shinnecock Nation, the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe, the Stockbridge-Munsee Nation, and the Unkechaug Nation, whose sovereignty and historical presence long predate the establishment of SUNY; and

**WHEREAS** the current SUNY Policy 5600, “Display of the Flag,” establishes that the State University of New York shall display the flag of the United States of America (U.S. flag) and shall permit only the following flags to be displayed on University facilities and flagstuffs in conjunction with the U.S. flag: the New York State flag, the United Nations flag, the Red Cross flag, the National League of Families POW/MIA flag, and a unique campus flag or banner (Summary; II. Other Flags); and

**WHEREAS** NYS Executive Law: Article 19 (§§400 - 409), “Display and Use of the Flag of the United States of America in Parks and on Public Buildings,” one of the authorities cited to make the current SUNY Policy 5600, “Display of the Flag,” does not preclude flying other flags beneath the U.S. flag (“No person shall display the flag of the United Nations or any other national or international flag equal, above, or in a position of superior prominence or honor to, or in place of, the flag of the United States” [§403.7]); and

**WHEREAS** the Two Row Wampum (Gaswéñdah) Treaty of 1613 between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch, which established the foundation for a relationship between colonial settlers and indigenous nations in the region now including New York State, centered on mutual respect, non-interference, and recognition of separate, distinct, and parallel governance, principles that remain fundamental to healthy relations with sovereign indigenous nations today; and

**WHEREAS** SUNY University Faculty Senate (SUNY UFS) recognizes the long and brutal history of settler colonialism, broken treaties, and land dispossession in New York State, including, but not limited to, the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign, Ogden Land Company, residential school system, and creation of the Erie Canal, St. Lawrence Seaway, Kinzua Dam, and Tuscarora Reservoir; and

**WHEREAS** the display of a sovereign indigenous nation’s flag is an essential act of respect that acknowledges the nation’s political sovereignty and moves beyond purely symbolic land acknowledgments to affirm its status as a governmental body; and

**WHEREAS** visibly honoring sovereign indigenous nations enhances educational and research environments by creating a tangible, daily reminder of Indigenous history and contemporary presence, thereby promoting critical dialogues and supporting the decolonization of campus space, programming, and curriculum; and

**WHEREAS** SUNY’s commitment to Delivering a Meaningful Student Experience as one of its Four Pillars of Success that “expands regional partnerships” requires tangible recognition of the original inhabitants and sovereign nations whose lands encompass SUNY campuses and New York State; and

**WHEREAS** SUNY’s commitment to promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as one of its four Pillars of Success includes a moral imperative to tangibly recognize the original inhabitants and sovereign nations whose lands encompass SUNY campuses and New York State; now

## RESOLUTION

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the SUNY University Faculty Senate (SUNY UFS) urges the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees to amend SUNY Policy 5600, “Display of the Flag,” to remove current restrictions that preclude the display of indigenous nations’ flags on University facilities and flagstaffs “adjacent to, or in conjunction with, the U.S. flag”; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that SUNY UFS recommends that the revised policy should grant individual campuses the autonomy to display the flags of federally and state-recognized indigenous nations whose traditional territories encompass the campus location, in a manner consistent with federal and New York State regulations; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that SUNY UFS recommends that the State University of New York develop guidance for campuses regarding consultation with indigenous leaders and the proper protocol, etiquette, and respectful placement of indigenous sovereign nation flags in conjunction with the U.S. and New York State flags; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that SUNY UFS urges all campus administrative and governance leaders to use our recommendation to enhance curriculum and research partnerships, and create a welcoming and supportive environment for indigenous leaders, students, faculty, staff, and community members, in preparation for further action in response to our proposal.