

## Plaque unveiling: Anishnaabeg land acknowledgment Briefing note and speaking points

### Overview

#### **Where and when:**

- Plaque will be located at Barrie Campus, outside H Building
- Unveiling will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 2 from 11:30 a.m. to noon

#### **Attendees:**

- Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Chair on Truth and Reconciliation for Lakehead University
- GCSA representatives including President Avery Konda and Vice President, External and Equity, Hunter Markle
- Self-identified Indigenous students
- Anishaabe Education and Training Circle members
- Elders Advisory Circle members
- Possibly members of the Georgian Board of Governors
- Georgian staff and students

#### **Agenda:**

- 11:25 a.m. – Meet in front of the plaque, outside H Building
- 11:30 a.m. – Greg McGregor, Manager of Indigenous Services at Georgian College, introduces Elder Lorraine McRae, who will do a prayer and perform a drum song
- 11:35 a.m. – Greg McGregor introduces MaryLynn West-Moynes, President and CEO of Georgian College, who will speak about the plaque, Indigenization at Georgian, and Treaties Recognition Week
- 11:40 a.m. – Greg McGregor introduces Kevin Wassegijig, Georgian College Governor and Chair, Anishnaabe Education and Training Circle, who will speak about the significance of this event, and Georgian, for Indigenous communities
- 11:45 a.m. – Greg thanks everyone for coming, invites everyone to luncheon
- 11:47 a.m. – Photo opportunity
- 11:50 a.m. – Time allocated for media interviews, if applicable
- Noon – Informal luncheon inside the Barrie Indigenous Resource Centre

**Expectations for MaryLynn:**

- Speak about the significance of the plaque, Indigenization at Georgian, and the first ever Ontario Treaties Recognition Week
- Pose for a photo by the plaque with Greg McGregor, Kevin Wassegijig, an Elder, and Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux
- Take part in media interviews (if applicable)
- Attend luncheon at the Barrie Indigenous Resource Centre

**Contact:** Tareyn Johnson, Indigenization Coordinator, Indigenous Studies, ext. 1320

## Suggested speaking points

### GREG MCGREGOR

- Hello everyone. My name is Greg McGregor and I'm the Manager of Indigenous Services at Georgian College
- It is a pleasure to welcome you to the unveiling of this plaque, which has been hundreds of years in the making
- I would like to invite Lorraine McRae, an Elder from our community, to begin this event with a prayer and song

### *Lorraine prays and sings*

- Thank you, Lorraine, for setting the tone for today
- Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge some of the distinguished guests we have here today:
  - Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux [ESS-ki-moh], Chair on Truth and Reconciliation for Lakehead University
  - Members of Georgian's Board of Governors, including Kevin Wassegijig [Wah-seh-GHEE-jig] who is also Chair of the Anishnaabe Education and Training Circle

- Georgian College Students' Association President Avery Konda and Vice President Hunter Markle
  - Anishaabe Education and Training Circle members
  - Elders Advisory Circle members, including Lorraine McRae
- And now I'd like to invite MaryLynn West-Moynes, President and CEO of Georgian College, to talk about why this plaque is important

## MARYLYNN WEST-MOYNES

- Thank you all for being part of this important milestone event – marking the significance of this land where our college stands today.
- I'd like to begin by reading the important words written on this plaque:
  - *Georgian College acknowledges that all campuses are situated on the traditional land of the Anishnaabeg [Ah-nish-NAH-beg ]people*
  - *The Anishnaabeg include the Odawa [Oh-DAH-wah], Ojibwe [oh-JIB-way] and Pottawatomi [Poh-tah-WAH-toh-mee] nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy*
  - *Georgian College is dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people*

- The passage is short, but significant:
  - First, it recognizes the Anishnaabeg people are the traditional stewards of this land
  - Second, it signals there is more work to be done
  - Third, it states that Georgian is committed to moving forward and working closely with people of Indigenous ancestry
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission marked an important step toward a new and more hopeful chapter in Canadian history
- Georgian wants to be part of the nation-wide effort to restore trust between Indigenous peoples and public institutions
- We think that effort begins right here on our campuses – where we can work to ensure that all students feel welcome, safe, supported and included, whatever their heritage
- That’s part of the reason we made enhanced Indigenization a priority in our new strategic plan
- What we mean by Indigenization is the infusion of Indigenous ideas and values into all of Georgian’s activities and processes
- We’ve been offering Indigenous programs, events and services since 1992. Indigenization isn’t new

- What's new is that we want our entire college community – staff, students and faculty — to benefit from knowledge of Indigenous culture and traditions
- We've already developed some strategies to begin this process, starting with knowledge sharing
- We chose the date for today's events carefully. This is Ontario's first ever Treaties Recognition Week
- The province created Treaties Recognition Week last spring to promote constructive engagement between government branches and Indigenous communities
- One of the ways we're going to create opportunities for dialogue is through a series of workshops hosted by leaders from Indigenous communities
- To help mark Treaties Recognition Week, one of those workshops is taking place this afternoon
- It will be hosted by Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, who works closely with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to implement some of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the northern part of our province

- Dr. Wesley-Esquimaux will speak at the Georgian Theatre at 1 p.m., and everyone is welcome to attend
- And this is only the beginning
- Moving forward, Georgian will begin all major campus events with an acknowledgment that the college is built on Anishnaabeg land
- Over the next few years, we will enhance curriculum to reflect Indigenous culture and traditions
- And we will provide opportunities for all faculty and staff to learn about Indigenous values
- To be clear, this is the beginning of a long journey for all of us
- And I look forward to working with all of you to move forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people
- Thank you

GREG

- Now, I'd like to invite a leader in our community, Kevin Wassegijig, to share why today's event – and Georgian College – are important to our local Indigenous community

## *Kevin speaks*

### GREG

- Thank you Kevin. We appreciate your presence, your words and your leadership
- Now I'd like to invite everyone to head over to the Indigenous Resource Centre in M134 – across from where we're standing – to continue to celebrate this event and Treaties Recognition Week with some light refreshments
- If you can't join us in the Resource Centre, be sure to join us in the Georgian Theatre at 1 p.m. to hear from Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Equimaux, who will speak about how the Truth and Reconciliation Commission applies to postsecondary education
- Once again, thank you for being here today

*Photo opportunity*

*Opportunity for questions from the media*