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Land Acknowledgement

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A Land Acknowledgement

Note: Prepared for and read to an international audience at the Women, Peace, and Security Conference held virtually by Binghamton University's Human Rights Institute on April 23, 2020.

Hello. Hope that you're all doing well. My name is Joela and I am a freshman at Binghamton University. Before I begin, I would like to give some background about how I became involved with this endeavor. I'm in an academic program called the Source Project, with Dr. Imbruce. The course sequence is meant to provide freshmen with the opportunity to conduct research. My class section of the Source Project is focused on people and place, so I decided to research local Haudenosaunee nations and understand their relationship with the [local Binghamton, NY] area. I've examined land rights actions, museum exhibits, economic contributions and developments, and more, all within the scope of placemaking and understanding how these local nations and U.S. communities have interacted within a space and place, and how these interactions work to create and define that space and place and its peoples. Dr. Imbruce put me in contact with Dr. Moore and Dr. Rasmussen, who have graciously given me this special opportunity. I would like to mention Barry Brenton, and thank him for his guidance both with my research and this acknowledgement.

First, I would like to thank you for having me here today, and for allowing me the honor to commence the conference with this acknowledgement:

We recognize the indigenous peoples whose land Binghamton University was built on, and on which we gather for this conference. This land has been sustainably stewarded throughout generations by Haudenosaunee and Algonkian speaking peoples. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations and this land.

This acknowledgement is to remind ourselves that we are on stolen land; land that indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from. It is not meant to just serve as a reminder of the injustices of the past, but consider the injustices that still occur today. We must recognize that colonization is still ongoing. Within active dialogue around land acknowledgement, we can hope to advocate for an indigenous recognition of space and place. Today, the Haudenosaunee, or people of the longhouse, are a strong and resilient confederation of six sovereign nations: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. The Haudenosaunee are not a people of the past. They live in communities with thriving cultures and traditions; they are not forgotten or frozen in time. By acknowledging their ties to this land, we honor their sovereignty and culture. While Binghamton University, like many universities, does not have an official land acknowledgement—yet—we can hope that with recognitions, such as this one here today, we can create a more inclusive and mindful relationship with both the past and present.