In her article, “Land as Pedagogy,” Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Simpson writes:

The land, aki, is both context and process. The process of coming to now is learner-led and profoundly spiritual in nature. Coming to know in the pursuit of whole body intelligence practiced in the context of freedom, and when realized collectively generates generations of loving, creative, innovative, self-determining, inter-dependent and self-regulating community minded individuals. It creates communities of individuals with the capacity to uphold and move forward out political traditions and systems of governance.

For the American Indian Studies Department, Native cultural teachings and practices anchor our educational purpose and curriculum. Native teachings “generate and regenerate” meaning -- in their telling and living they make relevant the ethical terms and conditions of our relationships and responsibilities to one another, to other-than-humans, and to the land. These “original instructions,” as they are often called, tell us that the land is the “context and process” of intergenerational learning.

So, it matters for us as faculty that the campuses of San Francisco State University — on the peninsula and in the north bay — are located within the occupied territories of the Ohlone peoples and the Coastal Miwok (who, along with the Southern Pomo, are organized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria).

It matters that this land holds a history of Native genocide and forced dispossession but also of Native continuance, renewal, and renaissance.

It matters that the land has a dense, complex history of Native movement and diaspora, now home to one of the largest urban Native populations in the United States and Canada.

The palimpsest of Native territoriality, migration, and diaspora that defines this region situates AIS faculty in relationship and responsibility to the community and to the complexities of intergenerational learning that define our educational mission and program.
Today, AIS continues our conversations with the community to ensure that the university not only acknowledges the multiple lawyers of Native San Francisco and Marin counties but does so in a way that is meaningful and responsible to the diversity of Native people’s cultural teachings and concerns in and of this place.

What does it mean for an institution of higher education to acknowledge the original peoples of the lands on which it resides? (Often as a direct result of Native genocide and land fraud.)

How does land acknowledgement matter to the institution’s strategic planning? (What kinds of questions about land use and access does the acknowledgement mean for Natives?)

San Francisco State University’s mission statement says explicitly that it sees education’s role as furthering social justice and equity. What does this mean for Native people? How does land acknowledgement further the university’s contribution to social justice and equity?

Today, we are honored to be thinking through these issues with individuals representing the diversity of Ohlone peoples.

Corrina Gould (Chochenyo Ohlone)
Kanyon Sayers-Roods (Coastanoan Ohlone/Chumash)
Gregg Castro (t'rowt'raahl Salinan/rumsien Ohlone)

They will offer some remarks about how and why land acknowledgement matters.

Then, we are honored to welcome Dr. La Nada War Jack, of the Shoshone Bannock Nation, to campus. Dr. War Jack will respond to our panel, to open our question and comment period.

We will then have a short break followed by Dr. War Jack’s keynote, The 50th from the Perspective of Alcatraz.

As you are no doubt aware, this week marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the College of Ethnic Studies and so of the American Indian Studies Department.

In January 1968, War Jack was the first Native student enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley. She graduated with honors in an Independent Major of Native American Law & Politics. In 1969, she and students throughout California united together to take over Alcatraz Island in peaceful protest against the federal government’s ill treatment of Native people and its repeated breaking of treaties with tribes. She was on the founding steering committee and executive board of the Native American Rights Fund. She has been an elected councilwoman for her tribe. Dr. War Jack is currently a Distinguished Professor at Boise State University. Her book, *Native Resistance: An Intergenerational Fight for Survival and Life*, is going to be published this November.