**I. Background**:

In response to a resolution from SGA, in the fall of 2018, the Faculty Senate, chaired by Mitu Ashraf, convened an ad hoc committee made up of all of those who expressed an interest with the charge of exploring an AIS requirement. The ad hoc committee convened January 14, 2019. Early meetings nominated and elected a chair, and the exploration for a requirement began. The committee researched similar requirements at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) in North Carolina, and Native-serving institutions (designated as universities) across the United States. The committee’s findings are as follows:

* No Native-serving institution, of the 29 surveyed (based on the criteria above) has any specific Indigenous culture or community requirement. The committee saw this as an opportunity for UNCP to set an innovative example for experiential learning opportunities among Native-serving institutions.
* Of the HBCUs in North Carolina, North Carolina A&T State University requires a class in African American history. Shaw University has a general-education elective requirement in which two of the three choices are African American History (I & II). NC Central University has a community service graduation requirement (120 hours). Other North Carolina HBCUs surveyed did not appear to incorporate specific requirements.

The ad hoc committee submitted the following report to The General Faculty Meeting on May 3, 2019 to make faculty aware of our progress to that point:

**Committee members include:** Mary Ann Jacobs, Jane Haladay, Zachary Laminack, William Puentes, Conner Sandefur, Kim Sellers, Al Bryant, David Oxendine, Robert Canida, Scott Hicks, Christian Reeves, and Jamie Mize.

The committee met once a month beginning in February.

We have researched general education and graduation requirements for culture specific content in HBCU and Native-serving institutions. Our research led us to conclude than an AIS graduation requirement would be the easiest to implement (rather than a general education requirement). We also discovered that such a requirement would make us innovators in higher education, particularly among Native-serving institutions.

The committee will continue its work next academic year as we shift our focus to determining how to rollout an AIS graduation requirement with the resources we have. We will also consider how such a requirement will be implemented during our current period of planned growth. We plan to have a specific recommendation for faculty senate next academic year. Our intent is that this recommendation will include the details of what exactly the requirement will be, how UNCP can implement the requirement, and considerations for the future.

Jane Haladay represented the committee at this meeting to answer questions, and make note of concerns. Faculty raised no questions or concerns at this meeting.

This progress report was also submitted to the Faculty Senate for its September 4, 2019 meeting (distributed agenda and appendix, but no official meeting due to the hurricane); and included and discussed for the October 2 Faculty Senate Meeting, in which no discussion or questions were raised.

The committee continued its work in September 2019. A principal concern of the committee’s work in Fall of 2019 was making sure that the proposal offered options for students while not increasing faculty workloads or significantly altering degree paths.

In November 2019, the committee agreed upon the plan that we ultimately proposed to Faculty Senate.

While crafting the proposal, it became clear that the requirement needed a more inclusive scope, and so the decision was made to shift from “American Indian Studies” to “Indigenous Cultures and Communities.” This decision was made to maintain the charge to celebrate the University’s unique heritage while also including Indigenous peoples\* around the globe Additionally, an Indigenous requirement was warranted to respond to three important needs:

* The need to encompass the full scope of existing student programming opportunities some of which focus on Native communities beyond the United States and North America.
* The need to look ahead to future programming opportunities.
* The need to encourage departments from all colleges and schools to consider how existing or future courses and/or programming could contribute to the requirement.

\*Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures. Indigenous peoples have retained social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite their cultural differences, Indigenous peoples from around the world share common problems related to the protection of their rights as distinct peoples.

The committee completed the proposal in January 2020. The committee voted to approve the proposal and submit it to the Faculty Senate Chair in February 2020.