

Syracuse University Haven Hall Indigenous LLC Smudging Policy

Revised August 1st, 2022

University Diversity Statement

At Syracuse University (SU), we believe in the dignity and worth of all people. This belief commits us to ensure a diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible campus environment for all. Each person here should be welcomed and appreciated. We value diverse identities. Cultural perspectives and worldviews matter to us. Difference should never mean devaluation, nor should it result in discrimination. We believe that diversity and inclusion enhance who we are as students, faculty, staff and alumni. A key dimension of SU's excellence is our adherence to the core values of diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility. Syracuse University's Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence (ICCAE) draws from its own history of distinctive strengths.

Since its founding as a coeducational institution in 1870, Syracuse University has embraced broad notions of diversity and inclusion—in its student body (nearly half are from diverse backgrounds), faculty research and role-models, curriculum and leadership. The University's first president, Jesse Truesdell Peck, announced at the University's opening ceremony: "there shall be no invidious discrimination here against woman," as "brains and heart shall have a fair chance." Syracuse University maintains with pride a historical commitment to U.S. military servicemembers as exemplars of national public service and is home to one of the largest student populations of military veterans in the Northeast, the nation's longest continuous Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program and the only national think tank in the area of veterans and military families, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), devoted to "serving those who have served." Syracuse University is a national leader both in students with disabilities and national and international research on disabilities.

Syracuse University's ICCAE program is an innovative academic resource for the educational value of diversity in our world today. We are enthusiastically committed to sharing and providing resources, courses and curricular content, programs, faculty expertise and mentorship on diversity and inclusion issues at the University and beyond. We see ourselves as part of a broader mosaic of academic diversity-serving programs at the University (beyond specific administrative offices, such as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Disability Services, LGBT Resource Center, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Institute for Veterans and Military Families, etc.). We intend to offer in-depth diversity and inclusion learning opportunities for students, so that students may build substantive knowledge in this area, including in ways that advance their disciplinary degree programs.

The University's commitment to inclusivity and diversity—in perspectives, demographics, experiences, background, languages, national service and abilities—provide a firm foundation to recruit and educate a dynamic public service-oriented student cohort with IC knowledge, technical expertise and special skills sets.

Policy

Syracuse University recognizes the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, and thus acknowledges that smudging and the non-smoking use of ceremonial tobacco and other medicines are a necessary part of the traditional way of life, well-being, and spiritual practice for many Indigenous people. The medicines described here are permitted on campus when following the procedure outlined below. In this policy the target group, Indigenous People, includes but is not limited to registered and non-registered U.S tribal communities, First Nations peoples, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians/ Pacific Islander, and members of underrepresented Indigenous populations Living within the Indigenous Living Learning Community in Haven Hall. Residence Director/supervisor and Assistant Director for Living Learning Communities will inform others as needed, emphasizing the cultural significance and ceremonial use of traditional medicines. Should issues or concerns arise, the Native Student Program will provide appropriate education and training pertaining to smudging practices, policies, and respectful ceremonial considerations.

As a part of this, Fire and Life Safety will monitor smudging practices/the smudging policy to ensure safety of the community. If Fire and Life safety feel that the smudging practice is not following policy or is causing a life safety issue, they will ask for the activity to stop until they can work with community members to find a different way that honors the practice and keeps the community safe to NYS policy and SU guidelines.

Rationale

We acknowledge, with respect, the Onondaga Nation, Firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee, on whose ancestral lands Syracuse University now stands. Syracuse University supports and acknowledges Indigenous heritage and history, especially the Onondaga Nation of the Central New York region. Syracuse University recognizes and appreciates that Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and community engagement in a variety of traditional ceremonies and practices such as smudging. These practices are time-honored Indigenous traditions, passed on from generation to generation. Syracuse University recognizes and welcomes these practices in the Native Student Program House and the Indigenous Living Learning Community.

Residential Hall Procedure

1. Residence Director takes the lead to establish all connections and discussions.
2. Residence Director will work with Native Student Program and Assistant Director to establish the three times during the semester this is approved to occur. (Fall Move-in, Fall Mid-terms and Spring Move-in)
3. Residence Director/LLC advisor will purchase smudging supplies from approved Vendor (will coordinate with Barnes Center) and they will be stored within the office of the Residence Director.

4. Residence Director will communicate to Fire and Life safety manager/assistant manager (CC LLC office liaison and supervisor) to schedule the times/dates we will need Fire and Life safety and facilities present
5. Fire and Life safety will take lead on notifying public safety and Facilities
6. Any funds needed to pay for the staffing of Fire and Life safety and Facilities will be paid from the LLC budget.
7. Resident Advisor, Residence Director, LLC faculty/staff member, Fire and life safety and Facilities must be present for this to occur
 - a. We appreciate the presence of other campus partners from the Barnes Center

Definitions/Medicines and Tools

Smudging - Smudging is a purification ceremony where any one or a combination of sacred medicines (some of which are listed below) are lit with a match or lighter. When lit, the burning medicines will produce smoke and a distinct scent is given off. The smoke is drawn over the individual(s) or area to release negative energy, create a positive mindset, and to ground or connect the individual to their teachings and culture. Smudging is always performed voluntarily and may be done in the context of ceremony or for teaching purposes. The smoke and scent produced during a smudge is minimal and often dissipates quickly.

Tobacco - Tobacco is used as an offering or a gift. It is used to pray as well as to give thanks to the plants and animals after taking their lives by hunting or picking them. Tobacco is often used in smudging or is placed in a fire, on the ground, or in water. Tobacco can be used on its own for other ceremonies. It is also smoked ceremonially, but that is less common in higher education settings. Traditional tobacco has two different forms in this region; from leaves, such as pipe and cigarette tobacco, and from the bark of red willow trees.

[Tobacco-Free Campus Policy - Policies – Syracuse University](#)

“Exceptions: Research involving tobacco is an exception to this policy but must be in compliance with other University policies governing research, health and safety. Smoking and tobacco use may be permitted for educational, clinical, artistic, religious or ceremonial purposes with prior approval of the appropriate dean, director, facility manager, Provost or his/her designee and, in the case of smoking, the appropriate University fire/safety officer.”



Natural Pipe Tobacco

Natural Pipe Tobacco



Tobacco is sometimes put into fabric bundles

Tobacco is sometimes put into fabric bundles to use for praying



Tobacco leaves as they are drying



Red Willow Plant



Dried Red Willow bark

Sage - Sage is used to cleanse negative energy from people and spaces. It is one of the stronger of the four main medicines that are used in smudging and gives off a very distinct odor when it is burned. Sage is often the main part of the act of smudging but is also used in many ceremonies other than smudging.



White Sage Plant



Dried White Sage Leaves



Desert Sage Plant



Dried Desert Sage Leaves

Sweetgrass - Sweetgrass is said to be the hair of mother earth and when it is burned it gives off a very sweet smell. Like sage, sweetgrass is also used for cleansing negative energy but because of its sweet smell it also has a calming effect like lavender when it is burned.



Sweet Grass before it is picked



Sweetgrass that is cut and braided

Cedar - Cedar is also used for cleansing and purification but it also has many other medicinal uses. Most commonly, if not used for smudging, cedar is often boiled into a tea or put into a bath to help with sickness and to cleanse the body as well. Cedar is also often hung above doorways for protection.



Northern White Cedar bough

Northern White Cedar tree

Abalone Shells - Abalone shells are a thick seashell that usually has a shimmering, iridescent inner surface. Abalone are found worldwide. These shells are sacred to many Indigenous peoples and are used as a vessel for burning traditional medicines.



Both abalone shells pictured are Paua Green abalone shells

Other Possible Smudging Medicines

Bear Root - This plant is also commonly known as osha and chuchupate. The tuber-like root is often either used to smudge or made into a tea to help with lung and stomach problems as well as colds, flu, and fevers. This medicine has a very strong odor, much like a spicy celery smell.



The dried root of the Osha plant



The Osha Plant

Piñon - The needles might be burnt in place of cedar. The smoke of piñon smells like a campfire or burning pine.



Pinon Pine nuts



Pinon Pine needles and cones

Palo Santo - Also burned like the other medicines, it is commonly used by Indigenous people from southern Mexico. When burning, it gives off a fresh almost minty, citrus aroma.



Dried Palo Santo Wood



Palo Santo Tree

Copal – A natural tree resin that is also burned for smudging, that has been used by Indigenous Mexican and Mayan peoples for generations to cleanse and purify. It has a sharp, citrus-like scent when burned. It is said to be the blood of the trees and is very sacred. Copal tree may refer to several tree species such as, *Protium copal*, *Hymenaea courbaril*, and *Hymenaea verrucosa*.



Dried copal tree resin



Protium copal tree



Copal tree resin before it is dried

Yerba Santa was extensively used as a traditional medicine by many California Indigenous tribes. It is said that the leaves were smoked or chewed to relieve asthma, coughs, colds, headaches, and stomach aches. Yerba Santa has a unique scent and is one of the few plants that smells “mediciney.”

