



Land Acknowledgement Guidance

Land acknowledgements are becoming more common both at Oregon State University and nationally. As your department, program, college, etc. considers adopting land acknowledgements, please use this guide as a starting point to reflect on current practices taking place within your unit or classroom. Many Indigenous people and Tribal nations nationwide recognize that land acknowledgements have become performative and have called for them to stop unless there is intentionality in doing them. This guide is intended to help think more critically about this practice as you do land acknowledgements.

What is a land acknowledgement?

Land acknowledgements are rooted in many Indigenous people's practices and cultural protocols in order to recognize other Indigenous peoples whose land one is a guest on.

Why are they done?

In recent years, many universities and other organizations have adopted land acknowledgements not only to recognize Indigenous connections with land bases, but to also acknowledge the histories and present-day lives of Indigenous people as well as the relationship between Indigenous communities and academic institutions. Unfortunately, many people in the United States imagine Indigenous people as "in the past" rather than living in the present, and often have no consciousness of Indigenous people, communities, and issues. Land acknowledgements can help shift understandings of Indigenous people and histories and, further, more clearly acknowledge the responsibilities of everyone to Indigenous futures.

What is OSU's Land Acknowledgement?

Oregon State University in Corvallis, OR is located within the traditional homelands of the Mary's River or Ampinefu Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855 (Kalapuya etc. Treaty), Kalapuya people were forcibly removed to reservations in Western Oregon. Today, living descendants of these people are a part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon (<https://www.grandronde.org>) and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (<https://ctsi.nsn.us>).

OSU's expanded "about us" statement: <https://oregonstate.edu/land-acknowledgement>

Why does OSU's Land Acknowledgment focus on Corvallis?

While OSU has multiple campuses and extension offices in all parts of Oregon, the main operations and decisions of the institution are based out of Corvallis. It is important to recognize this as part of guiding the work of OSU. Other campuses and extension offices are



encouraged to work with existing land acknowledgements that have been developed in partnership with the local Tribal nation(s) in their respective areas of the state if they would like to use one.

Where did OSU's Land Acknowledgement come from?

Indigenous faculty and staff at OSU began using a land acknowledgement based in their own cultural practices and within email signatures as part of grassroots actions. The statement that is currently in use stemmed from these efforts and were modified to use language, spellings, and information based on acceptable content by Tribal nations per their provided materials.

It is critical that people do not change the spelling and phrasing of the current written land acknowledgement out of respect for the local Tribal nations. Verbal land acknowledgments are more flexible at events and meetings. We encourage people to intentionally draft their own script to read aloud rather than to read the written statement verbatim.

Before you begin drafting your land acknowledgement script, consider:

How does having a land acknowledgement connect to your work?

What do you hope to accomplish by using a land acknowledgment? What commitments and connections are you making to Indigenous people and communities? What beliefs and values drive your commitments?

What have you done in the past to advance efforts that support Tribal nations and Indigenous students, faculty, and staff? How will you communicate and model action that is in alignment with the work land acknowledgements call for? Think of specific examples.

Oregon State University has issued following statement:

“Indigenous people are valued, contributing members of the Oregon State community and represent multiple sovereign tribes among students, faculty, staff and alumni. ... Oregon State University accepts its responsibility for understanding the continuing impact of that history on these communities. Oregon State is committed — in the spirit of self-reflection, learning, reconciliation and partnership — to ensure that this institution of higher learning will be of enduring benefit, not only to the state of Oregon, but also to the people on whose ancestral lands it is now located.”

<https://oregonstate.edu/land-acknowledgement>

How are you ensuring that Oregon State University will be of enduring benefit, not only to the state of Oregon, but also to the people on whose ancestral lands it is now located? What about Indigenous students, faculty, and staff more broadly that are a part of OSU?



If you need more time to answer these questions, it is ok to pause in doing a land acknowledgement. It will be more meaningful to reflect deeply than to just read the written version to fulfill a superficial expectation. Oregon State University's President's Commission on Indigenous Affairs is not asking units or people to stop giving land acknowledgements. Rather, the Commission is asking the OSU community to think more critically about why you do them and the commitments you are making to Indigenous people.

Continued Learning:

Resources to learn more can be found on OSU's land acknowledgement page:

<https://oregonstate.edu/land-acknowledgement/>

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians history:

<https://www.ctsi.nsn.us/introduction/>

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde history:

<https://www.grandronde.org/history-culture/history/>

Overview of Oregon's Tribal Nations:

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ABOUTDHS/TRIBES/Pages/Tribes.aspx>

** Please note that this is an initial draft that will be further developed over the 2022-2023 academic year.