

Conduct of Board Meetings Policy Amendments

BACKGROUND

In March 2017, the Board adopted a statement of mission, principles, and core values to serve as the foundation for its deliberations and actions. Among them is a statement of principle related to the value of inclusive excellence and diversity and the articulation of the core values of diversity, respect, and social responsibility. Over the past three years, the Board has been guided by these principles and values and has sought to continue to reflect on how it conducts itself and its business.

In April 2019, the question was posed to the Board of whether it would consider adopting the practice of making a land acknowledgment as part of its meeting practice. The question was posed by several students who, when providing comments on tuition, also advocated for this practice. As a follow up to these comments, the Board Secretary reached out to trustees to discuss the practice of land acknowledgements and to gather feedback on responding to this request.

Several trustees shared their support for adopting a land acknowledgement but felt that it would first be important to develop a deeper understanding of the historical, cultural, and political context of the Indigenous communities themselves. In response to this feedback, in October 2019, trustees and university leaders attended an event with tribal leaders and OSU faculty and staff titled "We Are All Treaty People." The program was developed in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Diversity and was intended to deepen the knowledge of the Board and university leadership regarding land acknowledgement statements and the history of both the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde on whose traditional homelands the Corvallis campus resides.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Much of where OSU now stands is upon lands ceded by treaties signed between Indigenous nations and the U.S. Government. A land acknowledgement refers to the practice of using a formal statement to recognize an Indigenous community's unique and enduring ties to the land on which a meeting or event is taking place. Acknowledging the communities that have an inseparable connection to the land on which an institution resides calls attention to a nation's colonial past and begins to renew relationships in order to move toward meaningful reconciliation. These statements represent respect for Indigenous voices and acknowledgement of the violence of U.S. history. The use of a land acknowledgement statement encourages individuals to think about what it means to occupy space on historically Indigenous lands.

Land acknowledgements are one small but tangible way the university can begin repairing the relationships with Native American communities. Over the past year, the university has begun to note the history of the Native Peoples on these lands at major formal programs, including commencement. The following language has been used by the university at Corvallis campus events:

Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon is located within the traditional homelands of the Mary's River, or Ampinefu, Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855, 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.grandrounde.org>) and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (<https://ctsi.nln.us>).

In 2019, the Associated Students of OSU (ASOSU) passed a bill amending the ASOSU statutes and adopting a similar statement to be used at ASOSU events.

Land acknowledgement is part of a broader university effort to grapple with the long and complex history of its land grant origins and reflect on the meaning of this mission in the twenty-first century. The practice is also part of a commitment to seek to advance greater and deeper relationships and understandings with Native nations throughout Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Building upon the learning and dialogue from the “We Are All Treaty People” event, staff developed proposed amendments to the conduct of board meeting policy. The amendments commit the Board to making a land acknowledgement statement at the start of regular board meetings, as shown in red text in Exhibit A of Attachment 1. Similar to the application of its conduct policy, the Board would also make the acknowledgement at the first committee meeting of the day.

The amendments describe the practice that will be adopted but do not specify the language that will be used for the land acknowledgment. This gives the Board flexibility to adjust the language based on the meeting location and the Native Peoples inhabiting those lands. This approach also gives the Board flexibility to adjust the language as needed to align with practices recommended by the Office of Institutional Diversity.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff propose that the Executive & Audit Committee recommend to the Board that it adopt the resolution amending the Conduct of Board Meetings policy as provided in Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION NO. 20-__



Oregon State University
Conduct of Board Meetings

BACKGROUND

Over the past year, the Board has deepened its understanding of the long and complex history of the university’s land grant origins and the importance of being mindful of the enduring relationship between land and peoples. Land acknowledgment is a tangible way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous Peoples’ history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth. Incorporating the practice of land acknowledgment in the Board’s regular meetings is consistent with the Board’s values to treat all people with respect and the university’s goal to integrate inclusive excellence practices in all aspects of the university.

RESOLUTION

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Trustees that the amendments to the Conduct of Board Meetings Policy, attached as Exhibit A, are approved.

This Resolution is effective upon approval by the Board of Trustees.

APPROVED by the Board of Trustees _____

Secretary of the Board

Date



Oregon State University Conduct of Board Meetings

Board Agenda

Staff will make every effort to deliver the proposed agenda, and all available, pertinent materials, for each regular Public Meeting of the Board to each trustee by regular mail, electronic mail, or otherwise, not less than seven days before any regularly scheduled meeting. Each item on the agenda must be approved by either the Chair or the President before being placed on the agenda. Except in unusual circumstances, staff must submit proposed agenda items, including consent agenda items, and pertinent materials to be included with the agenda, to the Secretary of the Board at least fourteen days prior to a Board meeting.

Order of Regular Meetings

The following shall be the order of business at each regular Public Meeting of the Board:

1. Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum
2. Opening Comments and Reports
3. Public Comments
4. Consent Agenda (including approval of minutes)
5. Reports of Standing Committees of the Board
6. Reports of Special Committees of the Board
7. Action Items
8. Discussion Items
9. Adjournment

Upon calling the meeting to order, the Chair will make a land acknowledgement statement, recognizing the history of the Indigenous peoples on the land upon which the meeting presides. The land acknowledgement will be based on language provided by the university's Office of Institutional Diversity.

The order of business of the Board may be changed or suspended at any Public Meeting by the Chair or by a majority of the voting trustees present. An item may be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda by request of any trustee.

Procedure for Appearing Before the Board

Individuals who wish to provide public comment must sign up with the Secretary of the Board in advance of the public comment section of a meeting, stating their name, email address, affiliation, and the topic to be discussed. A sign-up sheet will be available at each meeting. Unless otherwise indicated on the agenda or by the Chair, each public comment period will be for up to 30 minutes with a five-minute limit per speaker.

The Chair is authorized to control meetings of the Board, to enforce requirements of order and decorum, and to limit comments that are duplicative, disruptive, or irrelevant.

Procedure for Submitting Written Comments Related to Items on the Agenda

Individuals who wish to provide written comment related to a specific item on the agenda may do so by 1) sending that information electronically to trustees@oregonstate.edu; 2) delivering the materials to the Board Office; or 3) mailing the material to the Board Office.

Written material must be received at least two business days in advance of the meeting at which the agenda topic is scheduled. Material should be no more than three pages in length. Please note that documents provided to the Board may be subject to disclosure under Public Records Law. The Chair and Board Secretary will determine whether and, if so, when, submitted material is appropriate for dissemination to trustees and posting on the Board's website based on relevant Board actions. Written comments submitted to the Board not directed to a specific agenda item will be handled as general correspondence. The Board Chair will direct the distribution and response to these comments.

Document History

- Adopted by the Board of Trustees March 13, 2014
- Amended April 21, 2017
- Amended _____