**Land Acknowledgements & 1862 Land-Grant Universities[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**What is a Land Acknowledgement?**

“*A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories*” (retrieved from [Native American and Indigenous Initiatives at Northwestern University](https://www.northwestern.edu/native-american-and-indigenous-peoples/about/Land%20Acknowledgement.html)).

Land acknowledgements are often:

* Verbally expressed (e.g. before a meeting, event, or gathering)
* Written to appear on institutional materials (e.g. websites, brochures, email signatures, etc.)

**Land Acknowledgments & 1862 Land-Grant Universities (LGUs)**

Some [1862 Land-Grant Universities (LGUs)](https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/LGU-Map-03-18-19.pdf) have adopted institutional Land Acknowledgement statements (*see page 2*).

**General components of 1862 LGU Land Acknowledgements**

Some Land Acknowledgements developed by 1862 LGUs can include references to:

* Native Nations as original stewards of the land
* Specific Native Nations and indigenous individuals and communities who currently reside within the state’s modern-day geo-political boundaries, or those who have historically resided on lands that are currently occupied by the LGU
* Acknowledgement of indigenous individuals and communities who were removed from their ancestral homelands through force, treaties, or other means of U.S. government-sanctioned displacement
* The LGU’s vision statement for shaping current and future relations between Native Nations, the institution as a whole, and persons acting on behalf of the LGU
* Additional information and resources (via weblinks)

**Institutional recognition of Land Acknowledgements**

While some Land Acknowledgements at 1862 LGUs are formally developed and adopted through faculty and academic shared governance processes, how statements are developed, adopted, and used seems to vary by institution. Not all 1862 LGUs have an institutional Land Acknowledgment statement. Additionally, while certain structures found within LGUs (e.g. institutes, research centers, departments, etc.) have developed Land Acknowledgements. Two examples of this include the [University of MN-Twin Cities Institute for Advanced Study](https://ias.umn.edu/land-acknowledgement) and [UW-Madison’s Prevention Research Center](https://prc.wisc.edu/land-acknowledgement/). However, it is unclear whether institute- or center-specific statements are connected to broader institutional efforts on the topic.

**Land Acknowledgements & UW-Madison**

While UW-Madison is an 1862 LGU that does not currently have an official Land Acknowledgement statement, some institutional efforts have addressed this topic. In the summer of 2019, a heritage marker was placed on the top of Bascom Hill to acknowledge the UW-Madison campus’ current occupation of ancestral Ho-Chunk lands. Additionally, Heather Daniels (per an email sent to UW-Madison academic staff on 12/4/19), the Academic Staff Executive Committee (ASEC) requested nominations for an Ad Hoc Committee to develop a First Nations Land Acknowledgment for the Academic Staff Assembly. A call for nominations were due on 12/17/20. The committee’s effort is anticipated to conclude this effort in May 2020.

**Examples of institutional statements at 1862 Land-Grant Universities**

* [Michigan State University](http://aisp.msu.edu/about/land/)

*“We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.”*

* [University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](https://chancellor.illinois.edu/land_acknowledgement.html)

*“As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a responsibility to acknowledge the historical context in which it exists. In order to remind ourselves and our community, we will begin this event with the following statement. We are currently on the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Peankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. It is necessary for us to acknowledge these Native Nations and for us to work with them as we move forward as an institution. Over the next 150 years, we will be a vibrant community inclusive of all our differences, with Native peoples at the core of our efforts.”*

* [Oregon State University](https://asosu.oregonstate.edu/land-rec)

*“Let it be acknowledged that 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).”*

* [Colorado State University](https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu/)

*“Colorado State University acknowledges, with respect, that the land we are on today is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations and peoples. This was also a site of trade, gathering, and healing for numerous other Native tribes. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as original stewards of this land and all the relatives within it. As these words of acknowledgment are spoken and heard, the ties Nations have to their traditional homelands are renewed and reaffirmed.*

*CSU is founded as a land-grant institution, and we accept that our mission must encompass access to education and inclusion. And, significantly, that our founding came at a dire cost to Native Nations and peoples whose land this University was built upon. This acknowledgment is the education and inclusion we must practice in recognizing our institutional history, responsibility, and commitment.*

1. This document was created for informational purposes only and is intended to be shared with members of UW-Madison’s Division of Extension’s Native American Task Force. It does not represent an exhaustive report nor is it based on an empirical evidence. The observations and information included here do not reflect the perspectives of anyone other than the author. Any questions related to this document’s content can be directed to the author, Dominic Ledesma, at dominic.ledesma@wisc.edu [↑](#footnote-ref-1)