



LEARN. DO. LIVE.

June 2020

**CWU Land Acknowledgment Statement:**

Central Washington University honors the native people and land on which CWU is located in Kittitas County.

***Central Washington University acknowledges the people who have been on this land since time immemorial. The Ellensburg campus is on lands ceded by the Pshwanapum and other bands and tribes of the Yakama Nation in the Treaty of 1855. The Yakama people remain committed stewards of this land, cherishing it and protecting it, as instructed by elders through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands, and give thanks to the legacy of the original people, their lives, and their descendants.***

***We also mentioned maybe there could be a tailored closing as appropriate: Add some statement of commitment as a last sentence? Commitment to repatriate, to consult, to communicate, to ...***

**What is a Land Acknowledgement?**

A land acknowledgment formally recognizes and pays respect to the indigenous people who once lived where CWU stands today. It is intended to raise awareness of the enduring relationship between indigenous people and the land.

**How was the statement developed?**

CWU's Vice President of Inclusivity and Diversity provided a written statement, in collaboration with Yakama Nation Alums

**When should this statement be used?**

The campus community may present the land acknowledgment statement at any CWU event held on the Ellensburg campus and at CWU-Yakima and CWU-Wenatchee. The statement is not appropriate to use at other CWU locations that were not the traditional home of Yakama people.

**How to present the statement**

The event host may present the land acknowledgment statement during opening comments. Following the statement, hosts are encouraged to reflect on why the statement matters to them. The statement may also be included on printed agenda or materials if desired.

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### Land Acknowledgment Addendum

#### **Why we encourage utilizing a land acknowledgement:**

We have a responsibility to make visible and take ownership of power dynamics, privilege and oppression that have been perpetuated through systems of inequity, colonization and imperialism; we need to model this to our students and provide opportunities for amplifying practices that are educational, inclusive and promote healing systemic wrongs. Incorporating the CWU Land Acknowledgment into your gatherings allows CWU to honor Native and Indigenous members of our community and to provide those who are not Indigenous and Native peoples to learn.

#### **Presenting the statement intentionally and respectfully:**

In addition to the attached guide, below are key considerations for delivering the statement with some tools and examples to assist. Intentionality is the key and taking the time to learn the “why” and “how” will positively influence the delivery and impact of the statement.

#### **Prior to delivering the statement:**

1. Practice correct pronunciation. Pronunciation matters: demonstrating that you care to learn the pronunciation is a key component of honoring indigeneity.
2. Consider adding your own reflection *after* the provided statement that you verbally deliver. While the statement itself cannot be edited, we encourage you to offer an additional reflection that speaks to the context of your gathering, what it means to you, and/or why an acknowledgment is important. Examples are provided below; *these should not be used word for word* and can be adapted to appropriately reflect your gathering.
  - Event Specific
    - *The Kittitas Valley was a traditional gathering place for tribes and often included trading which can be considered a sharing of resources. It is our hope that during our time together at this event, we engage in a shared commitment to learning together and exchanging ideas.*
  - Individual Specific
    - *“When I was preparing for the event today, I was reminded that I didn’t learn about the indigenous peoples and land that I grew up on in Illinois. It wasn’t part of the conversation in my communities or school. It should be. Today, I’m sharing the reminder aloud that we have a responsibility to understand the impacts of settler-colonialism.”*
    - *“Reading this statement aloud is important. Native and Indigenous peoples continue to fight for their sovereignty, control over sacred sites, or autonomy to govern. This is our call not just to learn but I also hope it moves you to action.*

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*Feel free to connect with me after the event if you'd like to learn more about how you can support indigenous communities and amplify the voices of indigenous leaders."*

3. For some events, it may be appropriate to ask the audience to reflect upon the statement. You could pose a question to the audience or leave moment for quiet reflection. Examples include:
  - What actions of solidarity can you take to support Native and Indigenous communities?
    - Examples: Donating time or money to indigenous-led organizations, amplifying the voices of indigenous people leading, building relationships
  - What do you know about the Native and Indigenous peoples from where you grew up?
  - What do you hope to learn about Native and Indigenous people Washington state?

### Sharing the statement

4. Share the statement at the beginning of your gathering, as a component of the welcoming remarks.
  - Use of this statement at physical gatherings and for virtual meetings is encouraged with consideration of where you/the majority of participants are physically located. Remember, this statement is particular to CWU-Ellensburg, CWU-Wenatchee and CWU-Yakima and may not be appropriate if the participants are mostly calling in from other places (and thus have a different tribal history, relationship to the land, serve as the homelands for multiple tribal nations etc.).
  - At this time the intent of the statement is for use *aurally* and is not intended for websites, email signatures and other written forms of communication.
5. For ongoing or recurring meetings/events with the same group of participants, we recommend sharing the acknowledgment at the first gathering. If you use an acknowledgment at subsequent gatherings, this should be intentional to include new reflection points or re-emphasizing the "why." We want to avoid the "overuse" so that the statement does not become a performative motion, but rather a practice of intentional reflection, learning or engagement that honors the purpose.
6. Be prepared that participants may ask additional questions. It's helpful that you can articulate "why" the statement is important, and it is also okay not to know all the answers. Below are a few resources which may be helpful to have to recommend:
  - **Resources**
    - [Read the 1855 Treaty](#)
    - [CWU's Library Subject Guide on "The Yakama Indians"](#)
    - [Native Governance's Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgments](#)
    - [Land Reparations and Indigenous Solidarity Toolkit](#)
    - [Reflections on Yakama Nation history and language from Yakama members](#)
    - Local options: visit the Wanapum Heritage Center or Yakama Nation Cultural Center

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