

Land Acknowledgement

What is land Acknowledgement?

A land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

Why recognize the land?

1. An expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on,
2. A way of honouring the Aboriginal people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.
3. An important reminder of the long standing history that has brought you to reside on the land
4. To seek to understand your place within that history.
5. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense. They are not only about historical context – they are an acknowledgement that colonialism is a current ongoing process and they help us become mindful of our present participation in the colonial process.
6. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.

Important things to know about offering a Land Acknowledgment

- The person giving the **acknowledgement should be the host of the event** or meeting themselves
- **Include a formal thank you to the host nation** whenever making a presentation or holding a meeting, **whether or not Aboriginal individuals are part of the meeting or gathering**
- If you do not know the name of the Nation on whose territory or treaty land the building sits, ask around; Friendship Centers, Aboriginal Student Centers, local Band Offices are always a good source of information
- Ask the Friendship Center or Aboriginal Student Center for help with the pronunciation.
- If that is not possible, call the band office of the Nation after hours and listen to the recording
- Practice saying the name of the host nation out loud
- **A land acknowledgment is not something you “just do” before an event. Rather it is a reflection process in which you build mindfulness and intention walking into whatever gathering you are having.** It should be rooted in whose land you are honoured to stand on.

Examples of Land Acknowledgments from other Organizations

CAUT Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725.

The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

United Church - Presbyteries in Maritimes Conference - To be spoken at the start of meetings.

As we gather to share the work that rightly comes before this court, let us pause to remember that in this region we live and work and worship on lands that are, by law, the unceded territories of the Wabanaki peoples—predominantly the lands of the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with its people.

Students Against Israeli Apartheid - Dalhousie

Acknowledge that we are having our event on unsurrendered Mikmaq territory and our status as settlers and visitors on this land ...

Foreign powers came to this land hundreds of years ago and claimed it as their own when there were millions of people already living on that land.

In Palestine the same process of colonization is taking place

For that reason, we pledge solidarity.

This process of colonization is as current here in Canada as it is in Palestine

Moving beyond Acknowledgment

Although it is important to **acknowledge the land, it is only a first step.**

We are all treaty signers, and *all* responsible and accountable for the violence that Indigenous people face in Canada.

Being an Ally is a continuous process; it is not a designation that one can earn and hold forevermore.

Allies must continually engage in self-reflection, and must **consistently work at being an ally** (through learning, acting in a de-colonial manner, and sustaining relationships with Indigenous Peoples, etc.)

Ways you can begin the ongoing and continual process of acting in solidarity with Indigenous folks in Canada:

- **Learn:**

Learn About oppression and privilege. About the history of colonization. About Aboriginal peoples and cultures. About the land you live on. There are many books, blogs, documentaries, Independent media sites, plays, and songs that Aboriginal people have written and performed that are great places to start learning.

- **Build relationships:**

Building relationships is essential to many Aboriginal people because relationship is a fundamental and central value of many Aboriginal cultures. A great place to start on campus is going to the Aboriginal Student Center, located at 187 Albert Street. Every Tuesday they host a soup lunch where anyone can attend, in addition to many events throughout the year.

- **Act:**

Be accountable towards Aboriginal people and communities

Support what Aboriginal people and communities are saying is important,

Align yourself with the struggle,

Speak up when something problematic is said

Dalhousie Student Union – Motion for Recognition of Mi'kma'ki Territory

WHEREAS The Dalhousie Student Union Building and Dalhousie University are located in the territory of Mi'kma'ki,

AND WHEREAS the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors are the traditional owners of the territory, AND WHEREAS Mi'kmaw territory is historically unceded as the Peace and Friendship treaties were relational treaties, not land treaties,

AND WHEREAS this is reflected by the reality that the Federal Government, the province, and Mi'kmaq First Nations in Nova Scotia are in the process of negotiating a Mi'kmaq Title and Treaty Implementation Process (which includes a self-governance provision),

AND WHEREAS these relational treaties were entered into by the British and Mi'kmaq in a Nation-to-Nation relationship that recognized Mi'kmaq sovereignty,

AND WHEREAS the Crown has a duty to consult arising from the fiduciary relationship between Indigenous people and the Crown,

AND WHEREAS the threshold for discharging the duty is high, and meaningful implementation of this duty is essential to reconciliation,

AND WHEREAS colonization, its violence, and its intergenerational trauma remain ongoing as reflected by the residential schools and the 60's scoop, the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system and living in poverty, and disproportionate number of indigenous children in state care,

AND WHEREAS there is a disproportionately lower number of Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary institutions,

AND WHEREAS the DSU has stated in the past (Council Meeting July 6 2012), that it, "wishes to engage and represent its First Nations members," as well as, "support, honor, and respect the Mi'kmaq community,"

AND WHEREAS the student body should be conscientious of the fact that they are engaged in an ongoing treaty process,

AND WHEREAS violence against Indigenous women is endemic as reflected by the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada,

AND WHEREAS British common law was both created out of, and maintains, colonization, systemic inequality, and violence against Indigenous people, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Dalhousie Student Union encourage all DSU Councillors, and the student body more broadly, to familiarize themselves with the traditional territory of Mi'kma'ki, the relational treaty process, and the history and ongoing legacy of colonization.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DSU acknowledge Mi'kma'ki as the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq at the beginning of every DSU event, and at the annual general meeting of the DSU.