

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: YOU'RE ON CALIFORNIA INDIAN LAND, NOW WHAT?

ACKNOWLEDGING RELATIONSHIPS TO SPACE & PLACE

TOOLKIT



ABOUT



The purpose of this toolkit is to encourage all academic staff, students, administrators to acknowledge the original nations on whose land we live, learn, and work. We approach our work through an indigenous epistemology, committed to the core values of the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center (CICSC) and American Indian Studies (AIS):

- Responsibility
- Reciprocity
- Respect
- Relationships

TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The creation of this toolkit was a collaborative process from the outset, as California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center and American Indian Studies does not see itself as the designated entity to determine land claims. We perceive ourselves as accountable to the sovereign tribal nations of our region. This land acknowledgement was developed in partnership with Palomar College American Indian Studies department with comprehensive tribal consultation and approval by Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association on June 28, 2019.



RESPONSIBILITY

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. Today, the meeting place of CSUSM and its surrounding areas is still home to the six federally recognized bands of the La Jolla, Pala, Pauma, Pechanga, Rincon, Soboba Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. It is also important to acknowledge that this land remains the shared space among the Kuupangaxwicheh/Cupeño and Kumeyaay and Ipai peoples.

WHAT IS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT?

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects the indigenous peoples as traditional stewards of this land, the enduring relationship that exists between indigenous peoples and their traditional lands. This is an act of conciliation that makes a statement recognizing the traditional land of the indigenous people who have called and still call the land home before and after the arrival of settlers.

WHY DO WE RECOGNIZE THE LAND?

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose homelands you reside on and a recognition of the original people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to realize the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the lands and to seek to appreciate your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in past tense or outside historical context. Colonialism is an ongoing process and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. The use of a land acknowledgement statement also encourages individuals to think about what it means to occupy space on indigenous lands.

RESPONSIBILITY

WHY DO WE RECOGNIZE THE LAND?

The acknowledgment of indigenous lands ultimately provides exposure and a learning opportunity for individuals who may have never heard the names of the tribes that have and continue to live and learn from the land they are standing on. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is indigenous/tribal protocol and the practice establishes a respectful routine and habit of supporting reconciliation.

Acknowledging the land is a transformative act that works to undo the intentional erasure of indigenous peoples is the first step in decolonizing land relations.

HOW DO WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE LAND?

"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory and homelands of the Luiseño/Payómkawichum people."

- Luiseño (Loo-sin-yo)
- Payómkawichum (Pie-yom-ko-wi-shum)





RESPONSIBILITY

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WHY

The way acknowledgment is delivered matters. It should not be a formulaic recitation. It is important to understand that the land was not given away to settlers. This is unceded land and this requires respect in the acknowledgement at the very least.

A land acknowledgment is not something you “just do” before an event. Rather it is a reflective process in which you build mindfulness and intention before walking into whatever gathering you are having.

HOW

- The person giving the acknowledgement should be the host of the event or meeting themselves. However, we encourage that the group collectively read aloud together the land acknowledgement, when possible.
- Include a formal thank you to the host nation whenever making a presentation or holding a meeting, *whether or not indigenous individuals are part of the meeting or gathering.*
- If you do not know the name of the Nation on whose land you are on, ask The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, Office of Tribal Liaison for help and pronunciation.
- Be respectful and practice saying the name out loud.



RESPONSIBILITY

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WHEN

- The opening of each campus video
- First day of class
- Before a special meeting or event
- Campus-wide events
- Graduation
- Academic Senate
- Sporting events
- ASI events

WHERE

- At all on campus activities and events, however, it is recommended when students, staff and faculty are at conferences or events representing CSUSM that they acknowledge whose land the campus sits on.
- When off campus, if you do not know the name of the Tribal Nation on whose land you are on, ask The California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center, Office of Tribal Liaison for help and pronunciation or you can reach out to your event host when away.
- Place it in your syllabus. **EXAMPLE:** We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. Today, the meeting place of CSUSM and its surrounding areas is still home to the six federally recognized bands of the La Jolla, Pala, Pauma, Pechanga, Rincon, Soboba Luiseño/Payómkawichum people. It is also important to acknowledge that this land remains the shared space among the Kuupangaxwicheh/ Cupeño and Kumeyaay and Ipai peoples or a shorter version with a link.
- Consider developing an assignment to have your students read and learn the tool kit. **EXAMPLE:** Develop a syllabus quiz at the beginning of the semester and create questions that have to be answered only after the toolkit is read.



RESPONSIBILITY

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WHERE

- *"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory and homelands of the people."* This would be the short version with the link to the larger explanation at www.csusm.edu/cicsc.
- Campus email signature: EXAMPLE: *A guest on traditional, unceded Luiseño/Payómkawichum land.*

EXAMPLE:

Joely (Luiseño/Payómkawichum)

Joely Proudfit, Ph.D. | Director, California Indian
Culture & Sovereignty Center

Department Chair and Professor, American Indian
Studies

Office: 760-750-3535 | Direct: 760-750-4619

Email: jproudfi@csusm.edu

Website: www.csusm.edu/cicsc

*"We acknowledge that we are on the traditional
territory and homelands of the
Luiseño/Payómkawichum people." For more
information please go to www.csusm.edu/cicsc.*

Joe Smith, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Department of Sociology

Office: 760-555-5555

Email: XXXXXXXXXX

*A guest on traditional, unceded
Luiseño/Payómkawichum land. For more information
please go to www.csusm.edu/cicsc.*



RESPONSIBILITY

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

WHERE

VIRTUAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT EXAMPLE:

Virtual Land Acknowledgment: (Faculty)

We acknowledge that this Virtual Classroom is taking place throughout the unceded territory of California home to nearly 200 tribal nations. As we begin this event, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of our various regions. A land acknowledgement is a critical step towards working with native communities to secure meaningful partnership and inclusion in the stewardship and protection of their cultural resources and homelands. Let's take a moment to honor these ancestral grounds that we are collectively gathered upon and support the resilience and strength that all Indigenous people have shown worldwide. I am currently teaching online from my home in xxxxx which is on the traditional unceded territory of the xxxxxxxxxxxx.

Virtual Land Acknowledgment: (Student)

We acknowledge that this Virtual Classroom is taking place throughout the unceded territory of California home to nearly 200 tribal nations. I acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of our various regions. A land acknowledgement is a critical step towards working with native communities to secure meaningful partnership and inclusion in the stewardship and protection of their cultural resources and homelands. I recognize and honor these ancestral grounds that I reside and learn upon and support the resilience and strength that all Indigenous people have shown worldwide. I am currently learning online from my home in xxxxx which is on the traditional unceded territory of the xxxxxxxxxxxx.

RECIPROCITY

MOVING BEYOND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Although it is important to acknowledge the land, this acknowledgement is only a first step. This is about relationships and supportive association. It is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with American Indian peoples and tribal nations.

Some of the terminology that one needs to be aware of when thinking about allyship with California Indian nations and peoples is found below.

ALLYSHIP

If you are not indigenous to Payómkawichum territory, you are a settler or a guest, and are accountable to the land and Payómkawichum people as beneficiaries of the violence that make it possible for you to be here. Allyship is a continuous process; it is also not a label one can give one's self, but one you earn from your actions and commitment to standing in solidarity by respecting American Indian nations.

Moving beyond land acknowledgments means asking difficult questions; how can you be in a balanced relationship with American Indian nations and citizens with the ecology around you? Please don't presume or assume. Poor *allyship* is speaking over Native people by taking credit and receiving recognition for arguments that the Native people have been making for their entire lives.

Allies must continually engage in self-reflection and should consistently work at being an ally (through learning, acting in a de-colonial manner, and sustaining relationships with American Indian nations and peoples, etc.)

NOTE: Being a good ally does not mean you have to be us to support us. In other words, intentionally identifying as a Native American without any connection is not appreciated or recommended.

RECIPROCITY

HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN BEGIN THE ONGOING AND CONTINUAL PROCESS OF ACTING IN SOLIDARITY WITH AMERICAN INDIANS:

LEARN

- About oppression and privilege.
- About the history of colonization.
- About California Indian peoples and cultures.
- About the land you live on.

There are many books, blogs, documentaries, tribal nation websites, plays, and songs that California Indian people have written and performed that are great places to start learning.

Native Land website (<http://native-land.ca/>) offers an online platform where users can interact with maps of Indigenous lands, treaties and languages.

However, there are many questions one still needs to address when using such maps; like shared spaces, time periods, it's incomplete and in development, and territories overlap. Therefore, it is always important to work with the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center to make sure.



RECIPROCITY

HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN BEGIN THE ONGOING AND CONTINUAL PROCESS OF ACTING IN SOLIDARITY WITH AMERICAN INDIANS:

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Building relationships is a very important aspect of standing in solidarity. A great place to start on campus is going to the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center located at SBSB 1118. We hold numerous outreach, cultural, and educational events throughout the year that are open to everyone. In addition, consider taking an American Indian Studies course. Follow the CICSC and AIS on Facebook, social media sites, and sign up for our newsletters.

ACT

Act by being accountable towards American Indian people and communities by supporting what they are saying is important, aligning oneself with the struggle, and speaking up when something problematic is said.

ASK

Don't presume or assume. Contact the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center at cicsc@csusm.edu or (760) 750-3535.



Below is excerpted from the Anti Oppression Network, revised to frame within the settler colonialism context (<https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>)

- allyship is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people
- allyship is not self-defined—our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with
 - it is important to be intentional in how we frame the work we do, *i.e. we are showing support for..., we are showing our commitment to ending [a system of oppression] by..., we are using our privilege to help by...*

Responsibilities:

We are not acting out of guilt, but rather out of responsibility

- we actively acknowledge our privilege and power and openly discuss them: we recognize that as recipients of privilege we will always be capable of perpetuating systems of oppression from which our privilege came. Privilege in this sense means the privilege of living on lands not of your own heritage of origin, acquired through processes of historical injustice.
- we listen more and speak less: we hold back on our ideas, opinions, and ideologies, and resist the urge to “save” the people we seek to work with; with adequate resources and support, they will figure out their own solutions that meet their needs.
- we do our work with integrity and direct communication: we take guidance and direction from the people we seek to work with (not the other way around), and we keep our word
- we do not expect to be educated by others: we continuously do our own research on the oppressions experienced by the people we seek to work with, including herstory/history, current news, and what realities created by systems of oppression look, feel, smell, taste and sound like.
- we build our capacity to receive criticism, to be honest and accountable with our mistakes, and recognize that being called out for making a mistake is a gift—that it is an honor of trust to receive a chance to be a better person, to learn, to grow, and to do things differently.
- we embrace the emotions that come out of the process of allyship, understanding that building allyships is messy work and it is inevitable that we will feel uncomfortable, challenged and hurt.
- our needs are secondary to the people we seek to work with: we are responsible for our self-care and recognize that part of the privilege of our identity is that we have a choice about whether or not to resist oppression; we do not expect the people we seek to work with to provide emotional support (and we’re grateful if they do). We do not expect awards or special recognition for confronting issues that people have to live with every day and redirect attention to the groups we are supporting, and the issues they face, when we do

Below is excerpted from the Anti Oppression Network, revised to frame within the settler colonialism context (<https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>)

Roles:

We act out of a genuine interest in challenging larger oppressive power structures

- we are here to support and make use of our privilege and power for the people we seek to work with
- we turn the spotlight we are given away from ourselves and towards the voices of those who are continuously marginalized, silenced, and ignored; we give credit where credit is due
- we use opportunities to engage people with whom we share identity and privilege in conversations about oppression experienced by those we seek to work with

It is important to talk about allyship in this way, as much confusion has come out of problematic ideas of "being an ally". These may be well-meaning, but they often recreate the same oppressions or perpetuate new ones.

Allyship is greatly valued and a huge step towards challenging oppression, however, we must understand possible feelings of resentment, bitterness, and even resistance towards us from the people we seek to work with. These feelings are not personal to us, but are reflective of peoples' experiences with allyship with others like us (past and present). Building trust takes time, so we must recognize that what we can offer may not always be immediately needed or accepted.

In the meantime, we have opportunities to practice allyship every day:

- How much space are we taking up in conversations? In rooms? In organizing?
- How do we actively improve access to our meetings? Our actions?
- How are our identities taking up space? Physically? Verbally?
- How much do we know about the people we seek to work with? What are our assumptions and from where did they originate?
- How aware are we of microaggressions specific to American Indian people?
- Who are we leaving behind?

In particular to colonization, take special effort to acknowledge the original peoples of the area/region/location in which you live, play, and do your work, and connect with your local Indigenous communities to involve them from the start, including elders, hereditary chiefs, and youth.

RESPECT

COLONIALISM DEFINED

Settler colonialism is both a root and result of racism and capitalism. California Indians have survived waves of genocide by multiple colonizing forces (Catholic Missions, Mexican period, gold rush, and government sanctioned militias) of land, resources, disease and indentured servitude. Those who stayed, and their descendants, are settlers because people whose heritage originates somewhere else cannot become indigenous.

Colonialism is a root cause of many other "isms" and injustices.

- Colonization is at the root of racism. Colonizers justified land theft and genocide by asserting that they were a religiously, culturally, and scientifically superior class of human beings.
- Colonization by white Europeans introduced a strict Christianity-backed patriarchy that created and enforces gender roles and binary with the use of violence, indentured servitude with the mission system and gold rush period, sexual violence.



Decolonization (excerpted from link below with slight revisions)

<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/decolonization-and-indigenization/>

Decolonization is the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. Decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. For us decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weeding out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being. For non-Indigenous people, decolonization is the process of examining your beliefs about indigenous peoples and culture by learning about yourself in relationship to the communities where you live and the people with whom you interact.

We work in systems that perpetuate colonial ideals and privilege Western ways of doing. For example, many institutional protocols use forms and procedures instead of first initiating relationships with students.

Decolonization is an ongoing process that requires all of us to be collectively involved and responsible. Decolonizing our institutions means we create spaces that are inclusive, respectful, and honor Indigenous Peoples.



RESPECT

HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Understanding historical trauma helps explain the current problems facing many California Indians today. American Indians are experiencing historical loss symptoms (e.g., depression, substance dependence, diabetes, dysfunctional parenting, and unemployment) as a result of the cross-generational transmission of trauma from historical losses (e.g., loss of population, family, community, language loss, land, boarding school and culture).

The teaching of U.S. history, in schools, museums, and the media, has left out the voices of the original nations and peoples. California native people have endured colonial efforts to erase their existence, cultures, religions, languages and connections to ancestral territories. Despite the influx of the mission system and a “war of extermination” during California statehood, native people have maintained their presence in and stewardship of their homelands. California is home to nearly two hundred tribes, both (109) federally recognized and (80+) federally unrecognized. Had the 18 original treaties with California Indian tribes been honored by the state and federal government, California Indian tribes would possess over 7.5 million acres of land. Today, California tribes collectively possess about 7% of their unratified treaty territory. Despite federal and state efforts to erode ownership, control, and visibility California Indian people remain actively engaged in cultural revitalization, resource protection and self-determination within every region of California. Systematic denial of indigenous knowledge, cultural authority, and historical experiences perpetuates the colonial structure of oppression.

RESPECT

INDIGENOUS DEFINED

The people who lived in a place prior to colonial contact are indigenous. American Indians who live in the territories of other Native people are there because of the violent disruptions to their own communities; they are still indigenous but are also accountable to the peoples of the homelands they reside in.

CALIFORNIA INDIANS DEFINED

California tribal nations are the original nations of California. This includes both federally and state recognized tribes. Please see information about tribal definitions

<http://www.narf.org/frequently-asked-questions/>



The following is excerpted from the article "Settler Fragility: Why Settler Privilege is So Hard to Talk About" by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

<https://www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2018/11/settler-fragility-why-settler-privilege-is-so-hard-to-talk-about.html>

Settler Fragility

"Settler fragility stems from settler privilege, which is similar to white privilege in that it is systemic, structural, and based on white supremacy, making it difficult to identify. Only in some ways, settler privilege is far more covert and cunning. The reason is because of the ubiquitous ways the US is normalized; that is, the US settler state is the "water we swim in." US citizens of all races and ethnic groups have been indoctrinated their entire lives with messages designed to foster a sense of national pride and belonging in the making of what has been called an "imagined community," which always occurs on Indigenous lands. Their citizenship and their very identity are taken for granted without critical consciousness about the US's contradictory foundational structures and narratives.

Settler privilege simultaneously implicates and is beyond racism, which is one reason why, paradoxically, even non-Native people of color can experience a type of privilege and fragility. Fragility stems from the need to distance oneself from complicity in settler colonialism, in what some scholars have called "settler moves to innocence." The good-bad binary is part of this distancing impulse, because like racism, nobody wants to be associated with genocide and injustice, especially in a country that touts its democracy and equality, and especially for people who have been oppressed by it in other ways. But compared to white privilege, this is what makes settler privilege so much more beguiling and difficult: it cuts to the core of American identity in all its iterations, subtly calling into question the legitimacy of the US and the sense of belonging on the land.

The following is excerpted from the article "Settler Fragility: Why Settler Privilege is So Hard to Talk About" by Dina Gilio-Whitaker

<https://www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2018/11/settler-fragility-why-settler-privilege-is-so-hard-to-talk-about.html>

Here are some of the ways settler fragility can be seen in all ranges of the political spectrum. On the liberal end we see:

1. "I love Indians and Indian culture. I believe I have Native ancestry somewhere in my family tree" (I have been oppressed, too, even though I'm white).
2. "Even though the Indians didn't deserve what we did to them, the damage is done and there is nothing we can do to right the wrongs that have been done to them" (We should all move on and forget the past, and Indians should get beyond their victimization).
3. "We are all one people now" (The settler state and all its attendant privileges must prevail).
4. "I am a person of color and am subject to racism, so I don't have settler privilege" (I have no reason to be accountable to settler colonialism since I am oppressed, too).
5. "Since I am poor and don't own any land, I don't have settler privilege."

In the middle we see:

1. "Neither I or my ancestors killed anyone to be here" (my people are not to blame).
2. "We can't apply the standards of today to the behavior of our (European) ancestors" (evasion of accountability).
3. "Most Native American people have white ancestry" (that means they are complicit in settler colonialism, too; if everyone is to blame, then no one is to blame).

On the right end of the spectrum:

1. "Indians were all killing each other anyway when Europeans got here" (they were uncivilized savages anyway).
2. "I'm a 'native' American because I was born here" (American Indian history is irrelevant, and the settler state prevails).

It's important to emphasize that like white privilege, settler privilege is systemic, so just denying that one doesn't possess it doesn't mean one isn't complicit in it. This is about deeply questioning all the assumptions we have been raised with in a society built on imperialism, private property (which includes slavery), and capitalism. Even for Native people who don't live in their ancestral homelands, the questions need to be asked: who are the original people of the place where I live, and what are my responsibilities to them?

RELATIONSHIPS

Finally, Land Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationship building, Community Participatory Based Research Practices (CPBR), and informed intentional action. Institutions, and the individuals that work and learn within their walls, have an obligation to native peoples to educate themselves in a thoughtful, responsible and respectful way. Most importantly, they have an obligation to be respectful and kind to our original nations by not perpetuating erasure, not presenting obstacles to our pedagogical sovereignty (e.g. American Indian studies curriculum, epistemology, and faculty and student representation on campus, etc.).

Remember: unless your ancestors came here in chains, you are here because you have unearned privilege from the history of genocide and land theft perpetuated by generations of aggressive settlement and ongoing systemic, structural genocide.

Together we can effect change beyond our institutional walls and the walls in our minds, but it requires a brutally honest assessment of the reality of U.S. society.

Our land acknowledgment offers our gratitude and privilege for those that came before us, the Luiseño/Payómkawichum people and who never left. We are more than a chicken ranch, so please stop referring to the history of CSUSM as beginning with the chicken ranch. Indigenous peoples have been here since time immemorial, as opposed to the comparatively short moment all others have been on the land.



RESOURCES

- www.csusm.edu/air
- www.csusm.edu/cicsc
- <http://native-land.ca/>
- <http://www.narf.org/frequently-asked-questions/>
- How make ó:
 - Mac: Hold down OPTION key and then press "e", then type the letter you want to accent, like ó
 - PC: Hold Alt and type 162

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