**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BASICS**

This document has been created for faculty to help them to incorporate Land Acknowledgements into their classes.

Land Acknowledgements are an example of one of the ways that faculty can help to redress the legacy of residential schools and their historical attempt to assimilate Indigenous children through Cultural Genocide. Recognizing and respecting Indigenous peoples, our territories and our contemporary binding relationships with each other are aligned with the recommendations outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s- Calls to Action.

Land Acknowledgements are individual and personal. This document is not meant to be a script but rather a guideline for some basic components to include with examples.

1. **Greetings**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Hello** | **How to pronounce** |
| Mohawk | she:kon | shay-COHN |
| Oneida | sheku | Say-GOO |
| Onondaga | segoli | Say-GO-lee |
| Cayuga | sge:no | SKEH-no |
| Seneca | Skeno | Sken-NO |
| Tuscarora | cwe | Chwen |
| Anishnawbee casual | Aaniin | Ah-KNEE |
| Anishnawbee formal | Boozhoo | Booo- JUE |

1. **Introduce/ situate yourself**

* Name, Nation, Relationship to the Land

**Indigenous Example**: My name is Johanne McCarthy, Onondaga Nation, Beaver Clan from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

**Non- Indigenous Example:** My name is \_\_\_\_, Canadian ally to the First Peoples of this continent and settler of the region now known as Hamilton, Ontario.

1. **Derivation of College Name**

* To reposition rather than appropriate the nation name “Mohawk”

**Example:** The name sake of this college, MOHAWK COLLEGE comes from the Mohawk Nation which is one of the nation’s making up the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. The Six Nations community is your neighbouring Native Reservation which happens to be the largest populated Native Reserve in all of North America referred to as Turtle Island.

1. **Statement of Purpose**

* To acknowledge relationship to the land/ treaty agreements

**Example:** I am here to proudly acknowledge and deeply appreciate that Mohawk College is STILL situated on Haudenosaunne and Anishnawbe territory as recognized and documented by “The Dish With One Spoon treaty”. This treaty, established prior to the 1600’s and is a legally binding agreement outlining the peaceful sharing and caring for resources by all allied nations in the region surrounding the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. It has been repeatedly reaffirmed throughout the 17th, 18th , and 19th century with the arrival of new comers to our land. This territory is also covered by the Upper Canada Treaties, established from 1781 to 1862 as a reaffirmation of our peaceful relationship with each other promoting a reciprocal exchange for a good life together.

We closely neighbour the territory covered by the Haldimand Treaty signed October 25, 1784 in recognition of Indigenous alliances with the British during the American War of Independence honouring their support for the loss of a large area of their land in Upper new York state to the newly formed America. It was 6 miles granted on either side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Since 1784 it has dwindled from 950,000 acres to 48,000 acres. That’s a huge change in only 234 years or 7 generations…

1. **Acknowledgment and Gratitude for present moment**

* To acknowledge the contemporary existence and survival of Indigenous people and ground our relationships in positivity.

**Example:** Today, this territory is STILL the home to many living and vibrant Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We would like to acknowledge this and unite us all in gratitude for the opportunity to be welcomed here in our common unity, our community!

**Some more information about Land Acknowledgements**

**What?**

* A formal statement recognizing the historical and contemporary, unique relationships that exists between Indigenous peoples, their territory and non-Indigenous settlers of this land.

**Why?**

* A way of honouring Indigenous people, inclusive of Indigenous perspectives.
  + Acknowledging connection to land is part of Indigenous protocol.
  + A way to understand context, your relationship to this land and the foundations of your current existence in our relationships to each other
* Transformative act that undoes the erasure or cover up of our existence in our own land.
  + As a means to create social change.
  + A way to bring about mindfulness of the current, ongoing process of colonialism.
* Promotes an awareness of Indigenous presence and rights and Treaties agreed upon by both Indigenous and non-indigenous settlers.
  + We are all treaty people responsible and accountable for our actions and allyship
  + 46 treaties cover the contemporary region of Ontario
  + These are legally binding agreements that set out rights, responsibilities and relationships between First Nations and Federal and Provincial governments
* A positive action towards reconciliation demonstrating a collective commitment to pay respect to Indigenous existence, contributions and context.
  + Recognition of presence both in the past and in the present.
* A means of cultivating a stronger relationship with each other.
  + A reflective act framing intention to be mindful of our place together, proceeding forward together with a grateful and good mind.
* Reminder of the need to cultivate healthy reciprocal relationships essential for reconciliation.

**How?**

* **Language is important… the words we choose can send implicit messages to our audience.**

**Please be mindful to not:**

* Position Indigenous people as non-existent
* Position territory as surrendered
* Position treaties as historical
* Position agreements as one-sided
* Position Indigenous people as Canadian

**Please try to use language that:**

* Acknowledges that Indigenous people are still here
* Acknowledges that territory was not surrendered
* Acknowledges that treaties are still binding and used to define contemporary relationships
* Acknowledges that we are all treaty people
* Acknowledge that we negotiated these agreements with the purpose of a peaceful coexistence built on the recognition of equity and mutual respect
* Acknowledges that we are sovereign Nations within the relatively newly formed Nation state of Canada and our agreements outline non-interference, protection of inherent rights, education and health benefits and the sharing of lands and resources.