

Northwestern State University of Louisiana

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Together, we acknowledge that the NSU campuses are located on the traditional and contemporary lands of Indigenous nations, including *the* Caddo, Tunica, Biloxi, Ofo, Chahta, Adaes, Apalachee, Apache, Chatot, Pascagoula, Chitimacha, Coushatta, Alabama, and other Indigenous nations, *as well as* Native refugees from other nations. Indigenous nations care for and are cared for by the land. The relationships between the original peoples and their lands remain of great historical, spiritual, cultural, and personal importance. We recognize the sovereignty of modern Indigenous nations, and through this land acknowledgment we affirm our commitment to supporting tribal self-determination through education. We give our gratitude to the elders, past and present, who have cared for these lands and join in their commitment to the lands' stewardship. We thank the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe, which hosts our Marksville campus on their tribal land.

What is a land acknowledgement

A Land Acknowledgment 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.

Why we recognize the land?

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgments do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.

When should we use land acknowledgements

For many Native nations, the land acknowledgment is a customary way to honor relationships among Native communities and homelands as well as the responsibilities of people to land and the other beings who share land. As American Indian scholars increasingly entered academia, they brought land acknowledgment traditions with them, recognizing those on whose homelands they were guests. Today, the land acknowledgment tradition has become more widespread.

Land acknowledgments may be used to introduce any public and private events or meeting. However, land acknowledgments should not become empty and merely routine words. They should be made with reflection on how a speaker and audience or a group may meaningfully contribute to relationships with Native nations or engage with Indigenous communities. For more information, visit the Native Governance Center's Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgments, <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>