



Student Government Resolution 119.024

**A Resolution for the Adoption of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement of Adair County
Sponsored by Shania Montúfar, Diversity Committee Chair; Lizzie Cremer, Diversity
Committee Vice Chair; Sam Tillman, Kavya Singh, and Elana Sanders-Braxton, Diversity
Committee Members**

WHEREAS,

- The Student Government is the official governing body of the Student Association and exists to represent the present and long-term best interests of the Student Association in the formulation of the University policy and in the fulfillment of the University mission; and
- Truman State University is located in Adair County, Missouri; and
- The land that is now Adair County, Missouri was previously inhabited by Indigenous peoples, specifically the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples¹; and
- Other Indigenous groups, including the Sac and Fox and Osage nations, also inhabited the area²; and
- The land was also previously inhabited by the Mississippian peoples, whose legacy includes petroglyphs found at what is now Thousand Hills State Park³; and
- The land that is now Adair County was ceded in one of a series of treaties, signed in 1824 by the Ioway⁴; and
- By 1838, almost all Indigenous peoples had been removed from Missouri, many due to the threat of violence⁵; and
- These land cessions followed a national trend of coercion and dispossession which removed Indigenous peoples from their lands⁶; and

¹ <http://hidden.coplacdigital.org/truman/the-tribes/>

² <http://www.genealogytrails.com/mo/adair/adairhistory01.html#earlysettlements>

³ <http://hidden.coplacdigital.org/truman/pre-contact/ancient-peoples-in-missouri/>

⁴ <http://hidden.coplacdigital.org/truman/post-contact/the-treaties/>

⁵ <https://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/theses/2013/McMahonBilly.pdf>

⁶ Ibid.

- Upon evaluation of the history and impact of colonial settlement, higher education institutions around the world have moved to formally recognize “the traditional custodial relationship between native people and the land⁷,” and
- This recognition, often called “land acknowledgement,” is a statement written in official publications, and spoken at events and activities sanctioned by institutions and their subsidiary organizations⁸; and
- Land acknowledgement serves to raise awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life⁹; and
- Land acknowledgement is a simple and powerful way to show respect, helps correct the stories and practices that erase Indigenous history and culture, and is a step toward inviting and honoring truthful representation of Indigenous peoples¹⁰; and
- Land acknowledgement not only recognizes the history and legacy of colonialism, but also embraces the responsibility to consider that history¹¹ and the privileges that settlers’ descendants enjoy today because of colonialism¹²; and
- Numerous institutions in the region formally acknowledge their presence on Indigenous land, including the University of Illinois system,¹³ Northwestern University,¹⁴ Michigan State University,¹⁵ and Indiana University¹⁶; and
- Several members of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) incorporate land acknowledgements into introductions for public events or written publications, including Evergreen State College,¹⁷ University of Alberta Augustana,¹⁸ Fort Lewis College,¹⁹ and University of Illinois Springfield;²⁰ and
- No other public Missouri University has published an official land acknowledgement statement; and
- Truman State University would be the first public Missouri University to formally adopt land acknowledgement; and

⁷https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas_Keefe7/publication/330505687_Land_Acknowledgement_A_Trend_in_Higher_Education_and_Nonprofit_Organizations/links/5c43f622a6fdccd6b5ba5d91/Land-Acknowledgement-A-Trend-in-Higher-Education-and-Nonprofit-Organizations.pdf

⁸ <https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ <https://usdac.us/nativeland>

¹¹ <https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ <https://www.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=1324&pageId=1049735>

¹⁴ <https://www.northwestern.edu/native-american-and-indigenous-peoples/about/Land%20Acknowledgement.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.canr.msu.edu/nai/about/land-acknowledgements>

¹⁶ <https://firstnations.indiana.edu/land-acknowledgement/index.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.evergreen.edu/news/post/response-student-issues>

¹⁸ <https://www.ualberta.ca/augustana/services/indigenous/engagement/statement>

¹⁹ <https://www.fortlewis.edu/about-flc/leadership/presidents-office/land-acknowledgment>

²⁰ https://www.uillinois.edu/about/land_acknowledgement

- The Student Government has drafted this resolution in consultation with relevant Truman faculty²¹; and
- Land acknowledgement is consistent with Truman State University’s vision of ensuring that students have an “empathetic understanding of human experiences at home and around the world”²²;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT:

- Acknowledges that the meetings, events, and activities of the Student Government take place on the ancestral land of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples; and
- Shall publish a statement of land acknowledgement (see Appendix II) on its website on the following pages:
 - Campus Information²³
 - Official Documents²⁴; and
- Encourages the reading of a statement of land acknowledgement (see Appendix I) before public events and conferences of the Student Government; and
- Recommends that Truman State University adopt official statements of land acknowledgment (see Appendix II) to be published on the University website on one of the following suggested pages:
 - Truman History²⁵
 - About Truman²⁶
 - Facts About Truman²⁷
 - Center for Diversity & Inclusion Resources;²⁸ and
- Recommends that these statements be disseminated by the Student Government to all University departments and student organizations for their optional use; and
- Recommends that Truman State University, including students, faculty, and administration, research the experiences and lives of past and current members of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples in Adair County and Northeast Missouri; and
- Requests that the Truman State University campus community, especially event-focused organizations, create programming which highlights Indigenous histories and experiences; and
- Encourages members of the Truman State University community to adopt an official land acknowledgement statement to be used in written materials and prior to programming.

²¹ Dr. Meg Edwards, Dr. Marc Becker, and Dr. Anton Daughters.

²² <https://www.truman.edu/about/mission-vision/vision-statement/>

²³ <https://senate.truman.edu/campus-information/>

²⁴ <https://senate.truman.edu/OfficialDocuments/>

²⁵ <https://www.truman.edu/about/history/>

²⁶ <https://www.truman.edu/about/>

²⁷ <https://www.truman.edu/about/facts-about-truman/>

²⁸ <https://diversity.truman.edu/resources-2/>

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT:

Additional copies of this resolution be disseminated to Dr. Sue Thomas, President; Truman State University Board of Governors; Dr. Janet Gooch, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs; Janna Stoskopf, Vice President of Student Affairs; Brad Turnbull, Interim Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion; Laura Bates, Director of Student Union and Campus Activities; Faculty Senate; The Undergraduate Council; Student Activities Board; Truman Media Network; all University Deans; all University department chairs; all student organizations; and the University Archives.

Passed 14-2-0, April 19, 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deanna Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association.

Appendix I

Sample Land Acknowledgement Statements for the Truman State University Community

Written Statement (for publication):

- “[Truman State University/name of organization] acknowledges that the events and activities of [the University/name of organization] take place on the ancestral land of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples, which was ceded in the Treaty of 1824. We recognize the diverse culture and lives of Indigenous communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In this acknowledgement, we honor and affirm Indigenous culture, history, and experiences.”

Spoken Statement (for public events/activities):

- “[Truman State University/name of organization] acknowledges that this event takes place on the ancestral land of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples.”

Recommended land acknowledgement email signature for the Truman community:

- “Truman State University occupies the ancestral land of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples, which was ceded in the Treaty of 1824.”

Appendix II

Sample Land Acknowledgement Website Upload for Truman State University & The Student Government

Statement I

“Truman State University/The Student Government acknowledges that the events and activities of Truman State University/The Student Government take place on the ancestral land of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples, which was ceded in the Treaty of 1824. We recognize the diverse culture and lives of Indigenous communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In this acknowledgement, we honor and affirm Indigenous culture, history, and experiences.”

Statement II

“Truman State University occupies the ancestral land of the Ioway, Missouriia, and Otoe peoples, which was ceded in the Treaty of 1824.”

- Land acknowledgement is consistent with Truman State University’s vision of ensuring that students have an “empathetic understanding of human experiences at home and

around the world.” We encourage the reading of this statement prior to campus events and in relevant publications.

- **What is land acknowledgement?**

- Land acknowledgement is a statement used to recognize Indigenous histories and presence in their traditional homelands.

- **Why do we use land acknowledgement statements?**

- “Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. But this beginning can be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native sovereignty and cultural rights, a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation.”...
“Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people’s history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth.” (U.S. Department of Arts and Culture).²⁹

- **When and how should you use a land acknowledgement statement?**

- Truman State University community members are encouraged to use a land acknowledgement statement in written publications and event introductions.
- Faculty may choose to incorporate a land acknowledgement statement into their class syllabus.

²⁹ <https://usdac.us/nativeland/>