



FAQ Land Acknowledgment Statement at SNC

On October 8, 2018, SNC unveiled the following land acknowledgment statement:

SNC Land Acknowledgment Statement

In the spirit of the Norbertine value of *stabilitas loci*, a deep commitment to the local community, we acknowledge this land as the ancestral home of the Menominee nation, which holds historical, cultural, and sacred significance to the community. We acknowledge the living history and contributions of the indigenous communities that inhabited this land prior to the establishment of St. Norbert College, as well as the sovereign Native American Nations who continue to contribute to the flourishing of our communities.

How do I pronounce...

- Stabilitas loci: sta-be-lee-tas lo-key
- Menominee: Me-náh-meh-nee

What is a Land Acknowledgment Statement?

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

Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group, Ontario, Canada

<http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>

Also known as an Indigenous Land Statement, Land Acknowledgment Statements began as part of a larger project in Australia, New Zealand and Canada to seek truth and reconciliation between first nations and descendants of settlers. Acknowledging the history of the land is a first step to begin the process of developing meaningful and critical dialogue on the subject of the history of First Nations in the U.S. Dialogue should, ideally, lead to greater efforts of creating new partnerships based on equality and mutual respect. Land acknowledgments serve as the first step for the truth-telling component of "Truth and Reconciliation" efforts. In the U.S., Native Americans are rendered invisible in historical accounts of the U.S. and daily news coverage. In this context, a land acknowledgment statement affirms the historical memory of communities who previously inhabited and were displaced from the land that we currently inhabit. It is an initial step in recognizing the continuing contributions of Native peoples in our midst, and developing a deeper awareness of our own relationship with the land. (source: United States Department of Culture and Arts)

Why does SNC need a Land Acknowledgement statement?

- The Land Acknowledgement Statement is increasingly being used in higher education and modeled by national organizations like NASPA, ACPA and many other colleges and universities.
- Suggestions from the [USDCA](#):
 - Offer recognition and respect.
 - Counter the “doctrine of discovery” with the true story of the people who were already here.
 - Create a broader public awareness of the history that has led to this moment.
 - Begin to repair relationships with Native communities and with the land.
 - Support larger truth-telling and reconciliation efforts.
 - Remind people that colonization is an ongoing process, with Native lands still occupied due to deceptive and broken treaties.
 - Take a cue from Indigenous protocol, opening up with a statement with reverence and respect for the land is a way of acknowledging a component of Native wisdom as well as expressing solidarity.
 - Inspire ongoing action and relationship.

How might this statement be used?

We encourage members of the SNC community to begin public events and gatherings with acknowledgment of the traditional Menominee inhabitants of the land. The statement may be included in class syllabi.

Terms and Definitions

When addressing issues in connection to indigenous peoples, ideally, one should use the specific name of the community an individual is enrolled in, such as Menominee, Oneida, Potawatomi, etc. If one is speaking about communities in general, acceptable terms for reference include *First Nations Peoples*, *Native American* and *Indigenous Peoples*. The U.S. government uses the term *American Indian* in all its documents and references. This term is considered the least preferred in most of the U.S., although First Nations based in western U.S. states might retain the use of the term.

What are respectful ways of implementing the SNC Land Acknowledgment Statement?

Simply, take a moment to set up the statement as a way of recognizing the history of the land in which we stand. Do not rush through the statement.

What are possible prefaces to consider when I include the statement at my event? These are just suggestions; feel free to write up a preface appropriate for your event.

- Here at St. Norbert we recognize and are grateful for the links we share with the De Pere and Green Bay communities in both time and physical space. We would like to begin by acknowledging our relationships to the land. We wish to acknowledge the indigenous community members that have contributed and continue to contribute to the wellbeing of this land and its peoples. Thus...”
- “We would like to begin by taking a moment to recognize the historical roots of the land where St. Norbert College currently resides.”
- “We begin by taking a moment to acknowledge the land we stand on.”
- “As a Catholic institution committed to justice and solidarity within our communities, we take a moment to acknowledge the historical memory of the land and its peoples as well as our responsibility to work towards reconciliation.”

How do you know whose land St. Norbert College is on?

- Resources used to determine First Nations historical lands:
 - [Wisconsin Native Land Map](#)
 - [Native-land Map](#)
 - Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin [history](#)
 - Potawatomi Culture/[History](#)
- We also consulted experts from Menominee Historic Preservation Department, Oneida Cultural Heritage Department and The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center.

Why does the SNC Land Acknowledgment Statement only mention Menominee Nation?

- It is the common practice of First Nations to only recognize the caretakers of the land prior to removal of the communities by the federal government.
- By focusing on the appropriate First Nation of one's own territory, it acknowledges their historical link to the land. If more tribal nations are included, it leads to a second form of historical erasure because such a statement fails to acknowledge the independence and diversity of First Nations.
- It is our hope to develop a statement of commitment for SNC where subsequent interactions with and contributions by current First Nations members are acknowledged by including the Indigenous communities we collaborate with.

How does the Catholic Church support First Nations?

- First, we recognize that historically, members of the Roman Catholic Church have supported and encouraged the colonial abuse, slavery, and disenfranchisement of Native Peoples (Alexander VI, [Inter Caetera](#); Pope St. John Paul II, *Meeting with the Native Peoples of the Americas*, [Address of His Holiness](#), 2 (September 14, 1987); Pope Francis, *Participation at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements*, [Address of the Holy Father](#), 3.2 (July 9, 2015))
- There have also been members of the Roman Catholic Church who argued for the dignity and rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Catholic Church is committed to the Life and Dignity of the human person as well as the Rights and Responsibilities each person has by virtue of our shared humanity which are foundational principles of [Catholic Social Teaching](#).
- Over the years, Church leaders have been working toward reconciliation and partnership with indigenous people all over the world. The U.S. Catholic Bishops stated in 1992: "We ask the Catholic community to join us in seeking new understanding and awareness of their situation and in committing our Church to new advocacy and action with our Native American brothers and sisters on issues of social justice and pastoral life which touch their lives" ([1992: A Time for Remembering, Reconciling, and Recommitting ourselves as a People](#): *Statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on Native Americans*, Introduction).
- On January 2018, Pope Francis spoke powerfully on the importance of respectful engagement with indigenous peoples and the wisdom they cultivate through their traditions and ways of life:

Meeting with Indigenous People of Amazonia, Address of the Holy Father, *Coliseo Regional Madre de Dios (Puerto Maldonado) Friday, 19 January 2018*

"Those of us who do not live in these lands need your wisdom and knowledge to enable us to enter into, without destroying, the treasures that this region holds. And to hear an echo of the words that the Lord spoke to Moses: "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (*Ex 3:5*).

The recognition of these people – who can never be considered a minority, but rather authentic dialogue partners – as of all the native peoples, reminds us that we are not the absolute owners of creation. We need urgently to appreciate the essential contribution that they bring to society as a whole, and not reduce their cultures to an idealized image of a natural state, much less a kind of museum of a bygone way of life. Their cosmic vision and their wisdom, have much to teach those of us who are not part of their culture."

What are the next steps?

- Learn more about Menominee history and current developments relevant to First Nations (see below) and share with others
- Generate conversation on ways to integrate and implement the statement into SNC events and activities in greater dialogue with administration, faculty, staff, and students
- Identify ways in which SNC is in current dialogue with nearby First Nations members
- Seek ways in which SNC might develop deeper relationships with First Nations members in and around our communities
- SNC working group will continue the conversation and explore creating a commitment statement

Where can I learn more?

About Menominee Nation

- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin - [Culture](#)

About land acknowledgements:

- The US Department of Culture and Arts
 - [Guide](#) and call to honor native land
 - Additional [FAQs](#)
- [Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group](#), Ontario, Canada
- [ACPA 2019](#) conference land acknowledgement
- Indigenous Land Acknowledgement [Explained](#) (Vogue)