

Presidential Remarks

International Peace Day Concert

September 19, 2021

Thank you, Mark.

Among the many reasons for adopting the Land Acknowledgement Statement is the need for Oakland University to demonstrate a public show of respect to Native peoples who have been historically marginalized from American institutions, politics and academic curricula.

Oakland's formal and public acknowledgement is an explicit gesture intended to cultivate a mutually beneficial dialogue, which is an essential feature in building an inclusive campus community.

Widely supported throughout the university, the statement reflects the values at the heart of OU's mission and continual engagement to shape a more knowledgeable, diverse and fair society.

The Land Acknowledgement Statement is the result of a collaboration among a group of faculty, students and administrators.

I'd like to extend special appreciation to:

- **Andrea Knutson** (Assoc. Professor, English)
- **Ashleigh Dubie** (Cherokee, English/STEP, student)
- **Megan Peiser** (Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Professor English Dept.)
- **Mozhgon Rajae (Mose-ghan Ra-gee)** (Asst. Professor, Health Sciences)
- **Kevin Corcoran** (Former Dean, College of Arts and Sciences)
- **Cynthia Miree-Coppin** (Faculty Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee)
- **Joi Cunningham** (Provost's office)
- **The OU Senate committee chaired by Jonathan Wasserman**
- **Provost Britt Rios-Ellis**
- **VP Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer Glenn McIntosh**
- And, **Frank Provenzano** from the President's Office The Land Acknowledgement Statement reads as follows:

Oakland University resides on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabe, known as the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. The land was ceded in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit and makes up southeast Michigan.

In recognizing the history and respecting the sovereignty of Michigan's Indian Nations, Oakland University honors the heritage of Indigenous communities and their significant role in shaping the course of this region.

Further, we recognize the wrongs done to those forcibly removed from their Homelands and commit to fostering an environment of inclusion that is responsive to the needs of First Peoples through our words, policies, and actions.

The preservation and perpetuation of customs and traditions of Indigenous nations are essential to our shared cultural heritage. A deep understanding of Native peoples' past and present informs the teaching, research, and community engagement of the university in its ongoing effort to elevate the dignity of all people and serve as shared stewards of the land.

The statement was approved by the OU Senate on February 18, 2021 and presented to the OU Board of Trustees at their April 8 meeting.

Again, thank you to the faculty for driving this initiative, pushing for greater recognition and equity for Native people, engaging in our broader community, and for playing a leadership role in making Oakland a University of Choice.