



University of  
Lethbridge

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **University formalizing territorial statements acknowledging its place on traditional territory**

The University of Lethbridge is furthering its commitment to honouring the traditional territories of Aboriginal peoples for both its Lethbridge and Calgary campuses by officially adopting territorial acknowledgment statements.

The statements, in both long and short form, will become a part of the University's official Indigenous Protocol Handbook and will be used at the onset of major ceremonies and events such as convocation, installations and conferences, as well as governance meetings and even classes at the beginning of term.



The University has been using statements of recognition for some time, but without a specific protocol that guided when they should be used and specifically what should be said. As well, the newly-created statements have been approved by local Blackfoot elders and the Blackfoot Confederacy.

“Formalizing this acknowledgment comes in part from our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations but it also comes from a desire within the University community to honour the local Aboriginal communities in a respectful manner,” says the U of L’s Associate Vice-President (Students) Kathleen Massey. “Many colleagues and students have been using statements of their own already and while they were well-meaning and thoughtful, they are somewhat inconsistent and have not been approved by the local communities.”

It is anticipated that individuals at the University will open each meeting and gathering with an acknowledgment of the traditional territory. Individuals, at their discretion, may use either the long or short statements for opening remarks. An example of the short statement is as follows:

*Oki, and welcome to the University of Lethbridge. Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Aboriginal peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.*

The territorial statements were approved by the University's Board of Governors at its most recent meeting.

"I would like to thank the community, including the members of the University's Iniskim Education Committee, the Elders, and the Blackfoot Confederacy for helping us to develop these territory acknowledgements. It's a very positive step forward to formalize these statements and to recognize the generations of Aboriginal peoples, past, present and future, whose connection to the land is profound," adds Massey. "In addition to honouring our local Aboriginal communities, it grounds us and helps create the path forward for further reconciliation."

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/university-formalizing-territorial-statements-acknowledging-its-place-traditional-territory>

-- 30 --

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