

**Commission on Equal Opportunity & Diversity
Resolution 2022-23B**

Resolution to Approve the Land Acknowledgement and Labor Recognition Statements

Draft Notice Sent to University Council Cabinet	November 28, 2022
First Reading by Commission on Equal Opportunity & Diversity	November 15, 2022
Second Reading by Commission on Equal Opportunity & Diversity	January 17, 2023
Approval by Commission on Equal Opportunity & Diversity	February 21, 2023
Faculty Senate Comment	January 9, 2023
Staff Senate Comment	January 30, 2023
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	January 11, 2023
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Comment	
Undergraduate Student Senate Comment	
First Reading, University Council	March 13, 2023
Approved, University Council	April 3, 2023
Approved, President	April 3, 2023
Effective Date	Upon Approval

WHEREAS Virginia Tech, Virginia’s land grant institution founded in 1872, recognizes and honors the Monacan-Tutelo people, the traditional custodians of the land now occupied by Virginia Tech; and,

WHEREAS Morrill Act (1862) enabled the Commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western territories; and,

WHEREAS race integrity laws in Virginia discouraged American Indians from attaining public education until 1963; and,

WHEREAS tribes from across what is now known as the Americas are represented among the students, faculty, and staff at Virginia Tech; and,

WHEREAS Indigenous students and faculty at Virginia Tech study and work in nearly every college and represent at least 21 Indigenous communities, including the Anishinaabe, Blackfeet, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Chickahominy, Coharie, Delaware, Diné (Navajo), Eastern Band of Cherokee, Hawaiian, Lumbee, Monacan, Osage, Seneca, Mohawk, Peepeekisis Cree, Quechua/Aymara, Shinnecock/Unkechaug, Tohono O’odham, Nansemond; Choctaw, and Cheyenne River Sioux,

WHEREAS the American Indian Studies Program was established at Virginia Tech in 2000 and students from a vast majority of majors enroll in American Indian Studies courses every semester; and,

WHEREAS the Native at Virginia Tech student organization was formed in 2008 and has been an invaluable community for Native American and Indigenous students at Virginia Tech; and,

WHEREAS Virginia Tech's motto, Ut Prosim (that I may serve), is foundational to many Indigenous cultural identities and it is in the spirit of Ut Prosim that the Native at Virginia Tech student organization calls on Virginia Tech to serve and support the Native American and Indigenous community; and,

WHEREAS the Native American and Indigenous Community Alliance was founded in 2012, with a mission of activism, engagement, and support around Native American and Indigenous community issues; and,

WHEREAS the American Indian and Indigenous Community Center was dedicated in 2016 and serves as a place of relationship building among Native and Indigenous communities at Virginia Tech, the greater Virginia Tech community, and tribal and Indigenous communities across the United States and the world; and,

WHEREAS Virginia Tech has hosted tribal summits, including most recently in 2022, to strengthen reciprocal partnerships with the eleven tribal communities of Virginia which include the Cheroenhaka [Nottoway], the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Mattaponi, the Monacan, the Nansemond, the Nottoway, the Pamunkey, the Patawomeck, the Rappahannock, and the Upper Mattaponi; and,

WHEREAS Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family.

WHEREAS between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local white families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people.

WHEREAS enslaved Black people, including members of the Fraction Family, generated wealth that financed the predecessor institution to Virginia Tech, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on construction of its building.

WHEREAS, even after emancipation, African-Americans were not permitted to enroll at Virginia Tech when it was founded in 1872.

WHEREAS because of racial discrimination and segregation, it was not until 1953, that the first Black student, Irving Peddrew, was permitted to enroll at Virginia Tech;

WHEREAS it was not until 1961 that the first Black student, James whitehurst, was permitted to live in a residence hall;

WHEREAS it was not until 1989 that the Black Studies Program was created;

WHEREAS it was not until 1991 that the Black Cultural Center was founded;

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech's Principles of Community was written by African-Americans as part of the work of the DROP (Direct Resistance of Privilege) Alliance, formed in the spring of 2002; and

WHEREAS the first Principles of Community document was adopted by the Board of Visitors in 2005, stating, in part, that "We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others"; and,

WHEREAS University Council passed a resolution in 2017 authorizing a revision to Pathways General Education Curriculum to require a new core area of Critical Analysis of Equity and Identity in the United States to increase education and awareness; and,

WHEREAS informal land acknowledgements and labor recognitions have been developed and shared across campus for the past several years,

WHEREAS there is no formally approved land acknowledgement and labor recognition;

Therefore, be it resolved, that Virginia Tech's University Council officially adopts the following land acknowledgment statement.

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples' homeland and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Act (1862) enabled the Commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western states and territories.

We understand that honoring Native Peoples without explicit material commitments falls short of our institutional responsibilities. Through sustained, transparent, and meaningful engagement with the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples, and other Native Nations, we commit to changing the trajectory of Virginia Tech's history by increasing Indigenous students, staff, and faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying course offerings, supporting Native American student organizations and events; and recognizing the growing needs of all Virginia tribes and supporting their sovereignty.

And therefore, be it resolved, that University Council officially adopts the following labor recognition:

Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local white families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also enslaved hundreds of people. We acknowledge that enslaved Black people generated wealth that financed the predecessor institution to Virginia Tech, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on construction of its building. We further acknowledge that Black people in the local community played crucial roles in providing services and support to Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff from its founding. Not until 1953, however, was the first Black student permitted to enroll. Through InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, we commit to advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

And therefore, be it resolved, that Virginia Tech's University Council officially adopts the following abbreviated land acknowledgement and labor recognition statements

Land Acknowledgement

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples' homeland, and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Land-Grant College Act (1862) enabled the Commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in Western states and territories.

Labor Recognition

Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local white families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also enslaved hundreds of people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech's predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.



Faculty Senate
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
<https://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/>

January 9, 2023

Resolution CEOD 2022-23B

The Faculty Senate will waive our right to comment on CEOD 2022-23B: Resolution to Approve the Land Acknowledgement and Labor Recognition Statements.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert Weiss
Faculty Senate President

Professor of Natural Hazards
Center for Coastal Studies (Coastal@VT), Director
DRRMVT, Director
Department of Geosciences



**2022-2023
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ADHOC COMMITTEES

*Child Care
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

Staff Senate

<http://www.staffsenate.vt.edu/>

January 30, 2023

To: Vice President of Policy and Governance

The Staff Senate Committee on Policy and Issues has reviewed and approves CEOD Resolution 2022-23B. We have no further comment.

**Thank you,
Amber Robinson, Chair Staff Senate Policies and
Issues Committee**



Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate

<https://apfacultysenate.vt.edu>

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Undergraduate Studies

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Nicole Connors
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January 11, 2023

To: Vice President of Policy and Governance

From: A/P Faculty Senate Policies and Issues Committee

The A/P Faculty Senate Policies and Issues Committee has reviewed and approves/endorsees the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity Resolution 2022-23B to Approve the Land Acknowledgement and Labor Recognition.

We have no further comment.