



Policy Territorial Acknowledgements	Replaces former policy: <input type="checkbox"/> Title: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
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Contact: Executive Director Strategy, Governance and Social Accountability	

Policy Statement

1. Territorial acknowledgements are delivered orally at the beginning of every Board, Committee, Panel or working group meeting, Annual General Meeting, presentation, and webinar.
2. An Indigenous participant from the Host Nation(s) must not be asked to deliver a territorial acknowledgement.
 - a. At meetings or events, the chair, host or designate calls the meeting or event to order, offers the territorial acknowledgement, and, where applicable, immediately turns it over to the First Nations Elder or Knowledge Keeper who will offer welcoming remarks.
 - b. No other business is conducted between the acknowledgement and the welcoming.
3. A territorial acknowledgement is displayed in writing on the College website, on Board, committee and working group meeting agendas, and in any formal reports.
4. A territorial acknowledgement is displayed in writing in any College office space reception and working areas.
5. The College communicates to registrants the significance of accurate and meaningful territorial acknowledgements, as well as the importance of their display in health profession service and education spaces.
6. College staff include an accurate and meaningful territorial acknowledgement in their email signature.
7. College staff ensure the accurate and meaningful acknowledgement of the rightful titleholders of the lands and territories by:
 - a. ensuring they use resources and guidance to confirm the rightful and ancestral guardians of the territory being acknowledged;
 - b. acknowledging whether the territory is traditional, ancestral and unceded land, or treaty territory;
 - c. acknowledging the College’s respect and gratitude paid to the traditional and ancestral guardians of the lands and territory, and the privilege the College has in conducting an event, meeting, or work in this territory;



- d. keeping in mind that territorial acknowledgements and their language are complex and fluid, evolving over time with the changing needs of society and the First Peoples;
 - e. ensuring that if on Métis territory outside of the province of B.C., they confirm protocol with the Métis community directly and when that is not possible, simply refer to the territory and not to “traditional territory”;
 - f. being mindful that several Indigenous communities may inhabit the same territory, in which case they should all be named;
 - g. understanding that the wording of the territorial acknowledgement will change depending on whether there exists an historical or modern treaty agreement, or not (unceded territory) between the Nation, British Columbia, and Canada;
 - h. ensuring that when they are uncertain about wording for a territorial acknowledgement, they contact the First Nation(s) offices directly and build a relationship in order to have a respectful discussion and engage in knowledge sharing.
8. College staff will, as their own learning and unlearning journey progresses, make the time to prepare and deliver in-depth territorial acknowledgements which follow these principles.
- a. Territorial acknowledgements should not be repetitive, they are living and breathing entities whose focus can shift each time they are delivered.
 - b. Significant time should be spent to research the territory and its relationship with its rightful guardians, as well as the correct pronunciation of any Indigenous names/words.
 - c. Territorial acknowledgements are not just about the people; they are about the lands and waters and what the territory looked like prior to colonization – the vegetation, wildlife, seasons, moons, seas/oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains, fjords, islands, forests, and teachings and laws of the lands and territories.
 - d. Territorial acknowledgements should express how language connects to the lands, territory and what the First Peoples of this territory call themselves.
 - e. When acknowledging an historic and/or modern treaty, the audience should be informed about the parameters: who signed it, what was agreed to or what did those signatories believe they were agreeing to, and whether the treaty is being honoured today.

1. Policy Rationale and Purpose

Territorial acknowledgement is about the recognition and honouring of the original land owners and their connection to their territories that has existed for thousands of years. Territorial acknowledgements uphold a distinctions-based approach.

Prior to the European settlement in and colonization of the lands and waters now commonly known as Canada, the First Peoples were thriving in large populations and living autonomously under their own governance, which included the first methods of healthcare, education, and justice, observed on these lands for thousands of years or since time immemorial. First Nations methods of disease prevention and healing as well as strong relationships with the lands have sustained and supported good health and wellness for First Nations peoples always. A relationship with the lands and waters is



viewed as reciprocal. The First Peoples take care of the lands and waters, and the lands and waters provide life-sustaining gifts to the First Peoples. Gifts from the lands and waters include foods, drinking water, medicines, spaces of beauty, leisure, and community, and materials for clothing, hunting, fishing and shelter. Settler-colonization including forced relocation, dispossession of lands and resources, the residential "school"/facility system and other human and Indigenous rights violations, have interrupted but not permanently altered the health and wellness journey of Indigenous peoples grounded in land-based wellness.

Land is what sustains us physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. We use the land for hunting, fishing, and gathering. The land is where we come from and is our identity. It is more than just the earth. It includes the ocean, air, food, medicines, and all of nature. We have a responsibility to care for the land and to share knowledge of the land with our people. Land and health are closely intertwined because land is the ultimate nurturer of people. It provides not only physical but emotional and spiritual sustenance, because it inspires and provides beauty; it nurtures our souls.

-First Nations Health Authority, 2012

In 2017, all British Columbia health profession regulators joined in signing the *Declaration of Commitment – Cultural Safety and Humility in the Regulation of Health Professionals Serving First Nations and Aboriginal People in British Columbia* with the First Nations Health Authority. The College including the Board, committees and staff are dedicated to act in their capacity as agents of change to enhance anti-racism, reconciliation, and decolonization including strengthening the understanding of the importance of the lands and waters to Indigenous peoples and their wellbeing. Indigenous-specific prejudice, stereotyping and racism originated in settler colonialism, as a means to degrade and dehumanize Indigenous peoples publicly, making it easier to deprive Indigenous peoples of their human rights, and their lands and title rights.

An important method in which the College can enhance anti-racism while paying respect to the vital relationships of the Indigenous peoples and their lands and waters, is for the leader of any meeting, event, or presentation to conduct what is called a territorial acknowledgement. When the College delivers territorial acknowledgements, they are not superficial and performative; they are meaningfully delivered as part of a larger framework of decolonization and reconciliation work and commitments.

Territorial acknowledgements are an initial step towards reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenous anti-racism, cultural safety and humility. They reveal truths and show recognition and respect, which are essential to strengthening and healing relationships and should become protocol in relation to the recognition of the First Nations laws of the lands where one finds oneself.

Territorial acknowledgements are about more than just the lands which are composed of earth, rocks and minerals, roots of plants and trees, and hold us up while cradling the



dust and remains of ancestors. Territorial acknowledgements about the territory which includes:

- the waters in forms of ponds, streams, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, inlets, oceans, and glaciers;
- the skies, stars, and moons;
- weather;
- animals, water life, bugs and insects, lifecycles and migration patterns;
- plants and medicines;
- stories passed down for thousands of years that are grounded in intergenerational knowledge of the lands, waters, and living in reciprocity;
- laws, legal perspectives, as well as legal and governance jurisdictions grounded in inherent lands rights and title, which are often grounded in knowledge of the lands and values that come from living well in reciprocity with the lands and waters.

The College recognizes the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) and is accountable to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) of what is now commonly called British Columbia. DRIPA (2019) mandates the recognition of Indigenous peoples' relationships to their lands and territories. Further, DRIPA outlines Article 25, which states that:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal areas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard. (DRIPA, 2019).

The College views territorial acknowledgements as only one way to recognize and respect the fundamental relationships of First Nations peoples to their lands and waters while enhancing the understanding of the priority for reconciliation and decolonization. They are a way to uphold, celebrate, honour, and pay respect to these special relationships to the lands and waters which have existed since time immemorial and continue to exist today. Territorial acknowledgements further bring awareness and truth. These elements of respect, honour, and truth contribute to enhanced relationships and reconciliation.

The purpose of this policy is to outline organizational expectations and to support all staff and all members of the Board and committees in acknowledging the First Peoples on whose ancestral territories the College works and visits.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all College staff, members of the Board and members of committees.



3. Legal Authority

This policy is linked to the following legislation and regulatory documents:

- B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)
- Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility, and Anti-Racism Practice Standard
- Health Services Organization Cultural Safety and Humility Accreditation Standard
- Board and Committee Code of Conduct

4. Key Partnerships

- Local Host Nations

5. Definitions

Anti-racism involves eliminating racism from our policies and institutions, understanding how the present exists upon colonial and racist foundations, and committing to educate oneself and take action to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality and justice. (In Plain Sight, 2020)

Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection and introspection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. It involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.

Cultural safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care.

Decolonization is the dismantling of the process by which one nation asserts and establishes its domination and control over another nation's land, people and culture. (B.C. Office of the Human Rights Commissioner)

Host Nation(s) refers to the First Nation(s) on whose land the Board meeting, committee or working group meeting, Annual General Meeting, presentation, or webinar is taking place.

- At the Hub in Vancouver, it refers to three First Nations- the hənqəminəm' speaking peoples – xʷməθ kʷəyəm (Musqueam), and sel̓ilwiltulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and the Sḵwxwú7mesh-ulh Sníchim speaking peoples - Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation).



- At the Victoria office, it refers to the ləkʷəŋən peoples (Esquimalt and Songees Nations) and SENĆOŦEN-speaking W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, including the BÓKÉCEN (Pauquachin), STÁ,UTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), and W̱SÍKEM (Tseycum) First Nations.

Indigenous refers to the first peoples who identify as First Nations, Inuk, or Métis.

Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015)

Settler colonialism is the persistent social and political formation in which settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there. (PHSA)

Staff means the employees, contractors, assessors, and inspectors of the College.

Treaties are constitutionally protected, government-to-government agreements that identify, define and implement a range of rights and obligations, creating long-term, mutually binding commitments, and entrench reconciliation between First Nations, Canada and British Columbia. Treaties negotiated through the B.C. treaty negotiations process are tripartite agreements between the governments of Canada, British Columbia, and a First Nation. Goals of treaties include reconciliation, the establishment of a new relationship based on mutual trust, respect, and understanding, and certainty of this relationship.

Treaties signed with First Nations in Canada between 1701 and 1923 are commonly referred to as historic treaties. In B.C., there are Douglas treaties, signed with First Nations on Vancouver Island, and Treaty 8 covering a portion of northeastern B.C. Treaties signed today are called modern treaties and cover where there are no historic treaties, and can also deal with matters not addressed in historic treaties. (B.C. Treaty Commission)

Unceded land means that the land was never legally ceded, or given up to the Crown, through a treaty or other agreement.

6. Process Check

The following documents have been consulted and applied to this policy.

- Board Policy Framework (in draft – use for reference)
- Safe Spaces Playbook
- In Plain Sight Report and Recommendations
- Other



7. Resources/References

“Native Land” interactive map. <https://native-land.ca/>:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/native-land-website-traditional-territories-1.4638401>

“Whose Land” website: <https://www.whose.land/en/> or mobile app:
<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/want-to-learn-whose-indigenous-land-you-re-on-there-s-an-app-for-that-1.4973367>

“First Peoples’ Map” website, includes Language (and pronunciations), Arts, and Cultural Heritage: <https://fpcc.ca/stories/first-peoples-map/>

A Guide to the Pronunciation of Indigenous Communities and Organizations in B.C. (2018). B.C. Government https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/a_guide_to_pronunciation_of_bc_first_nations_-_oct_29_2018.pdf

Métis Nation B.C. Chartered Communities: <https://www.mnbc.ca/citizens-culture/chartered-communities>

Territory Acknowledgements Information Booklet, First Nations Health Authority: <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Territory-Acknowledgements-Information-Booklet.pdf>

University of Saskatchewan module on developing your own territory acknowledgement: https://teaching.usask.ca/curriculum/indigenous_voices/land-acknowledgements/module.php

Transformative Territory Acknowledgement (webinar), Len Pierre Consulting: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1MDhIUxIbo&ab_channel=LenPierreConsulting

Transformative Territory Acknowledgement Guide, Len Pierre Consulting: https://www.lenpierreconsulting.com/_files/ugd/90c86d_b3aa5cd2564c4d77a72b7b397d96add0.pdf



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