

**Committee on Land Acknowledgment  
The University of Texas at El Paso**

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT - RATIONALE**

The University of Texas at El Paso is a Research One University that also prides itself on community engagement and serving the tri-state region of Texas, New Mexico, and Chihuahua, Mexico. As an R-I community engaged institution, it is important that The University of Texas at El Paso demonstrate respect for the historic and contemporary presence of Indigenous Peoples in Texas and, particularly, in the greater Paso del Norte region. Thus, it is incumbent upon The University of Texas at El Paso to recognize that our campus resides on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples who were dispossessed of their homelands. Land Acknowledgements are an expression of gratitude and appreciation to the Indigenous Peoples, the traditional caretakers of the land, for the use of their lands on which we work, study, and learn. They also open the door for mutually beneficial partnerships and opportunities. In this spirit, we encourage all faculty, staff, students, and guests of The University of Texas at El Paso to open public events and gatherings with this Land Acknowledgement, and/or to include this statement in printed materials associated with our events:

**Land Acknowledgment**

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all of the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.

## Land Engagements and Commitments<sup>1</sup>

*In recognition of the ongoing and cumulative challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples in West Texas and globally, The University of Texas at El Paso can strive towards these mutually beneficial goals and objectives:*

To repatriate any ancestral remains or cultural patrimony held by the UTEP Centennial Museum and any units of the University to their Indigenous descendant communities and Native lands, per the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

To commit to the active recruitment and material support of Native American and Indigenous students, who currently constitute less than .1% of the UT El Paso student body.

To increase the long-term institutional commitment to build curriculum and programming focused on Native American and Indigenous Studies, and commit to hiring of more Native faculty, staff, and administrators.

To establish a protocol of research and study on Tribal or Native lands, and to foster an ethics and practice of engaged scholarship, across the Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and STEM-Health disciplines, with and for Indigenous peoples and communities, locally and internationally.

These and other measures can build human capacity, improve numerous socio-economic indicators, contribute to social mobility, and enhance overall health and well-being not only of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, but of all Native communities in our region.

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<sup>1</sup> It has become increasingly common – and important – to indicate how universities, municipalities, and organizations might commit themselves to engagement and improved relations, in the spirit of the Land Acknowledgement Statements. Future steps after these Statements include the points above, with partnerships possibly cemented through an MOA or MOU. These Statements are expressions of good will and positive intent, and open the door to myriad relationships that are mutually productive and beneficial, and perfectly align with the mission of a Research I, Minority Serving Institution, and engaged public university.