

A resolution of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) supporting a university-wide land acknowledgement and reparations for the Native American Genocide

Author:

GPSG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

Co-Sponsor:

Duke chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)

Whereas, Duke University does not yet have a university-wide land acknowledgement.

Whereas, the land Duke University is on is the ancestral home of numerous Native American tribes.

Whereas, Rafael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide”, was a Holocaust refugee who taught at Duke from 1941-1942.ⁱ

Whereas, Rafael Lemkin started the book in which the word “genocide” first appeared in print during his time at Duke.ⁱ

Whereas, Trinity College’s previous location in Randolph County is the site of a former Indian Boarding School, the Trinity College Cherokee Industrial School.ⁱⁱ

Recognizing, the mass graves recently found at Indian Boarding Schools across North America, including the Kamloops Indian Residential School and Carlisle Industrial School.ⁱⁱⁱ

Recognizing, the new Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, seeking “a comprehensive review of the troubled legacy of federal boarding school policies”.^{iv}

Now, therefore be it resolved by the GPSG that the graduate and professional student body of Duke University:

States, the following is GPSG’s land acknowledgement:

GPSG acknowledges the land our homes, departments, schools, and the greater university occupies are the ancestral lands of the Shakori, Eno and Tuscarora people. GPSG also acknowledges the land the Duke Marine Lab occupies are the ancestral lands of the Coree and Neusiok tribes.

Today, North Carolina recognizes 8 tribes: Coharie, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Saponi, Haliwa Saponi, Waccamaw Siouan, Sappony, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee. We recognize those

peoples, in addition to many others, for whom North Carolina is their ancestral land, as well as the many Indigenous people who live and work in the state today.^v

Recognizes, the Native American Genocide.

Calls, for a university-wide land acknowledgement, including Duke University's recognition of the Native American Genocide.

Calls, for a Durham-wide land acknowledgement, including recognition of the Native American Genocide.

Calls, for a plaque in the Duke Chapel, West Union, and East Union, like that of the existing plaque in the Chapel recognizing Julian Abele, commemorating a university-wide land acknowledgement, and the contributions of Native Americans to Duke University.

Calls, for an open-air center of Native American culture in the Duke Forest, developed in partnership with local tribes, including experiential educational programming and exhibits showcasing the lives of Native Americans in pre-Columbian North America.

Calls, for Duke to participate in the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative.

Calls, for a comprehensive university review, and the full publication of, the story of the Trinity College Cherokee Industrial School.

Calls, for a comprehensive review of the Trinity College Cherokee Industrial School to include a review of any potential sites of mass graves at the former campus in Randolph County, and the use of ground-penetrating radar to identify such sites, if necessary.

Calls, for Duke to repatriate remains found in any mass graves from the Trinity College Cherokee Industrial School.

Subsequent to the above four clauses, **Calls**, for a Memorial on the site of the former Trinity College Cherokee Industrial School recognizing the Native Americans who attended the school and the cultural genocide which occurred there.

ⁱ <https://humanrights.fhi.duke.edu/who-we-are/history-of-human-rights-at-duke/raphael-lemkin/>

ⁱⁱ <https://guides.library.duke.edu/duke-native-americans/chokeee-industrial-school>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/28/world/canada/kamloops-mass-grave-residential-schools.html>;
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/23/us/carlisle-indian-industrial-school-remains-exhumed/index.html>

^{iv} <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-announces-federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative>

^v<https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/cma/about-us/land-acknowledgement>