

4.2 Decolonization

Preamble

The Society is committed to centering decolonization within its ongoing advocacy work. The Society is committed to recognizing Indigenous Peoples inherent rights and titles to land, as well as the right to self-determination and self-governance. The Society recognizes that colonial forms of governance are imposed and do not encompass Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. The Society acknowledges the ongoing harm to Indigenous Peoples by assimilation, genocide, and the systemic barriers rooted in globalization, capitalism, colonization, and Western governance.

The Society acknowledges the nuanced relationship that Indigenous Peoples have with the education system, political institutions, justice systems, social welfare systems, and other systematic structures that contribute to ongoing injustice and violence.

Furthermore, the Society acknowledges the complexities and challenges associated with “reconciliation,” “indigenization,” and “decolonization.” The Society acknowledges the need to be in solidarity with Indigenous social movements and;

- A. Recognizes that as an educational institution, the Society has a special responsibility to ensure that this work is meaningful, ongoing, and addresses the harms experienced by Indigenous Peoples
- B. Encourages and affirms that reconciliation must involve genuine action, and decolonization should be understood as an ongoing, transformative process rather than a one-time accomplishment.
- C. Acknowledges that Indigenous Peoples encounter barriers to full participation in education and employment opportunities due to racialization, cultural/linguistic domination, colonization, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, settler colonialism, and religion. The Society is committed to eliminating these barriers.

The Society reaffirms its value of decolonization and is committed to support Indigenous Peoples and their communities.

Mandate

This policy sets the Society’s position on the issue of decolonization. The Society is committed to:

- A. Promoting the integration of issues of decolonization into the fabric of the Society and their inclusion as part of the agenda of all committees and activities. Issues of decolonization are not to be trivialized or marginalized.
- B. Advocating for decolonization in all official acts of the Society. Including but not limited to:

- a. University Policy, curriculum, programs, investments, legislation, services and methods of service
 - b. The Society's programs, policies, services and employment practices.
- C. Delivering land acknowledgements to respectfully recognize and affirm the territories occupied. Land acknowledgements should:
 - a. Prioritize the presence and prayer of host Nation members and/or elders
 - b. Respect cultural protocol at meetings, gathering and large scale events
 - c. Refer to and use Indigenous place names, regardless of their public recognizability
- D. Lobbying the University Administration, Senate and Board of Governors to develop policy and procedures to effectively promote decolonization, incorporating the following:
 - a. Provide adequate cultural and racially relevant resources, space and support to faculty, administration, staff and students. Spaces must accommodate cultural practises including but not limited to:
 - i. Smudging
 - ii. Singing and drumming
 - iii. Forms of prayer
 - iv. Dancing
 - b. With emphasis on the areas of curriculum, staff development, personnel practices, conduct, and climate, the University Administration promotes the integration of decolonization into the fabric of the system and their inclusion as part of the agenda of all committees and activities.

Definitions:

Colonization: A violent process of establishing control over foreign territories or peoples for purposes such as cultivation, exploitation, trade, and settlement. Both historical and ongoing colonialism have caused profound and lasting harm to Indigenous Peoples and communities, including land dispossession, cultural erasure, and systemic marginalization. Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately represented in prisons and child protection systems and are often excluded from societal benefits, including equitable access to human rights systems largely due to the lasting effects of colonization.

Cultural Protocol: A way of engaging with Indigenous Peoples that honors and respects their traditional ways of being. Cultural protocols are not merely manners or rules; they embody a culture's deeply rooted ethical values and practices.

Decolonization: The process of dismantling colonialism, whereby one nation asserts and enforces domination and control over another nation's land, people, and culture. Decolonization involves actively working to undo the oppression and subjugation of Indigenous Peoples while unlearning colonial ways of thinking, being, and governing. Its ultimate goal is to restore Indigenous rights to self-determination and self-governance.

Indigenization: The process of integrating Indigenous peoples, knowledge, and perspectives into traditionally Euro-Western institutions. This process must be led by Indigenous peoples, respecting their intellectual sovereignty, leadership, and self-determination in the teaching and study of Indigenous knowledge, languages, and methodologies.

Land Back: A decentralized movement led by Indigenous Peoples that focuses on reclaiming their ancestral lands and restoring Indigenous self-determination, self-governance, and stewardship of these territories.

Settler: An individual embedded within the social, political, cultural, and economic structures that establish and sustain a country while perpetuating its colonial nature. The definition of who a settler is remains contested, but it generally involves existing in a place from which Indigenous People(s) have been displaced in order to accommodate occupation.

Settler Colonialism: An ongoing system of power that sustains the genocide and oppression of Indigenous Peoples by establishing societies that are separate from them, upheld by the presence and attitudes of settlers.

Solidarity: To stand with and support marginalized communities in their struggles for justice, equity, and healing. Allies must recognize their own position within systems of power, acknowledge the impact of those systems, and work to actively support the self-determination and rights of those communities.

Reconciliation: An ongoing and active process of building and sustaining a respectful, equitable relationship between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples, grounded in acknowledgment, understanding, and the commitment to address past injustices and present inequalities. Reconciliation should emphasize Indigenous redress, resurgence and justice.

*Re-numeration to follow as neccessary