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# On Whose Land Do We Stand?

## *The Legacy of Land-Grant Universities*

### *A Student-Curated Digital Exploration*

#### Project Description

In this unit, we've explored many historical and contemporary stories about displacement. The experiences of these dislocated communities are often erased from history, their stories forgotten. Our exploration of the Pulitzer Center supported story, [Land-Grab Universities](#) examined how The Morrill Act, passed in 1865, distributed land expropriated from tribal nations to raise funds for fledgling colleges across the nation. The project identifies the original Indigenous inhabitants and caretakers of the land, reconstructing approximately 10.7 million acres taken from nearly 250 tribes, bands, and communities through over 160 violence-backed land cessions, a legal term for the giving up of territory.

#### Our Process

In this project, students work together to create a digital museum to identify the tribal communities displaced by The Morrill Act. The website will have a home page that explores the background and history of The Morrill Act and Land-Grab Universities. The website will also include a handful of pages exploring unique universities that benefited from The Morrill Act and the Indigenous communities they displaced. Therefore, students will be separated into the following projects:

1. Development of a home page
2. Development of separate university pages

For an example of a completed student-curated digital museum visit [The Legacy of Land Grab Universities Through an Equitable Lens](#).

#### **The Home Page**

The instructor should select a group of 3-5 students who will be responsible for the digital home page. The home page should include:

1. Title
2. Welcome
3. What is a Land-Grant University?
4. The Morrill Act
5. A listing of all Land-Grant Universities
6. A home page for each university chosen by the remaining student groups (the university's name will be hyperlinked to the digital presentations as detailed below)

## BANISHED BUT UNBOWED: AN AMERICAN LEGACY

Unit by Heather Renée Ingram, 2021-2022 Pulitzer Center Teacher Fellow

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### 7. Land-Grant University Equity Report

As we concluded this project, students gave input on how the universities would be graded. In the end, we chose the following Equity Categories:

- Has the University issued a Land Acknowledgment Statement?
- Clubs/Support Organizations for Students of Color
- Undergraduate Ethnic Studies
- Has the University ever used an Indigenous Mascot?
- Demographics
- Graduation Rates for Students of Color
- Land-Grant University Equity Rankings

\*Instructors may use our Equity Categories or adjust as appropriate

### Student-Selected University Pages

Place the remaining students into small groups of 3-5. These students will work on the digital pages for the selected universities

*Educator note:* The instructor can decide how students will be best grouped. *Student groups should get relative autonomy in selecting their university.*

Each page should include the following information:

1. Name of University
2. Land Acknowledgement Statement
3. An informative paragraph about each Indigenous Tribe whose land was appropriated for the university's benefit
4. University History
5. General University Information (e.g. Academics, Admission Requirements, Demographics, Sports, Accolades)
6. Student Life Through an Equitable Lens

*Educator note:* students and/or instructors may also want to include any notable racially-biased incidents on campus, paying close attention to how the situation was resolved by school administrators.

Rubric:

Review [this rubric](#) for assessment criteria.