

The Outer Coast Land Acknowledgment

WORKING DRAFT – FEBRUARY, 2023

Yeey aaní káx gunéi xtoo.aat.

May we begin to walk on your land.

Our land acknowledgment is an asking of permission, a hope, an expression of our desire to do right by the original stewards of this land. In the Tlingit language, this phrase uses the hortative mode, a verb form that encompasses the English formulations *let it be*, *may it be*, and *it is wished to be*. We never take our permission to be on this land for granted, and we strive to be newly worthy of it every day.

We are on *Lingít Aaní*, the unceded land of the Tlingit people. We are on the land of the *Sheet'ká Kwáan*, the People of Sitka, and we are on the land of the Kiks.ádi Clan. Our request for permission to walk upon the land goes out to all of these stewards. This permission has been formally renewed at the beginning of every semester at our Convocation, during which the Kiks.ádi have graciously welcomed our new students to their land, and heard our ask to continue the work of the school here.

Outer Coast is situated on the former campus of Sheldon Jackson College and its predecessor, the Sitka Industrial Training School. Associated with the missionary Sheldon Jackson, the Industrial Training School was part of the Indian Boarding School movement. It was an epicenter of the project to destroy Native languages and cultures in Alaska. We are deeply cognizant of this sobering history. We have a responsibility to commemorate it, and to stand for a model of education that, contrary to what came before, honors Indigenous cultures and languages.

Our campus is historically significant in other ways too. Just down the street is Puppy Creek, where the Tlingit hero Lk'ayáak'w was born. Nearby are the Herring Rock of the Kiks.ádi and the fort where the Kiks.ádi fought the Russians in 1804. In more recent times, the Sitka Industrial School was the seedbed for the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, two legendary civil rights organizations that helped secure the vote for Alaska Natives. Our campus was also a famed site of Indigenous-led boatbuilding, and in the 1960s and 70s it hosted a revitalization of Tlingit language, art, and scholarship. We aspire to be worthy of this proud history as well as mindful of its painful chapters.

The phrase “Yeey aaní káx gunéi xtoo.aat” was developed by two Outer Coast students, Kira Fagerstrom and Uluqi Olivia Olson, with Tlingit by X'unei Lance Twitchell, Professor at University of Alaska, Southeast, and Outer Coast Summer Seminar Faculty. Kúnáx sh tooogaa haa dítee, has du yéi jinéiyi káx. We are so grateful for their work.