

September 9, 2025

## Re: Use of Anishinaabemowin Terms in Orientation House Names for LEGACY 25

Recently, a student brought forward concerns regarding the use of Anishinaabemowin terms as the names of the four orientation houses for the UTMSU orientation theme, LEGACY 25. We want to address these concerns, and clarify that our intention in selecting these names is to honour and embrace the roots of the land on which we operate.

The land upon which the University of Toronto Mississauga is situated and on which we are gathered, is part of the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This land acknowledgment is not a formality, but a call to reflect, to listen, and to act in the pursuit of justice, equity, and meaningful decolonization.

Each of the orientation houses—Shkode, Noodin, Aki, and Nibi—are Anishinaabemowin terms that hold deeper, more significant meaning than simply Fire, Wind, Earth, and Water. They are ceremonial terms that carry profound importance for Anishinaabe communities. These terms do not represent the entire Indigenous community.

In consideration of this year's orientation theme, we connected with members of the Indigenous community on campus, such as the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Committee to Indigenous Justice and Collaboration, as well as the Canadian Federation of Students Circle of First Nations, Métis students, and Inuit students. With shared knowledge and consultation, we decided on the names to honour those who were here before us.

We recognize that meaningful solidarity with Indigenous peoples requires more than symbolic gestures. It requires active consultation, ongoing learning, and a commitment to accountability. The purpose of using Anishinaabemowin terms is to show respect for the land we are on and to raise awareness among the new students we are welcoming to campus. Many students arrive at UTM without knowing the history or the community that has nurtured and stewarded this land since the beginning. We encourage each of us not to let these words end in silence or stop after orientation, but to carry them forward.

The UTMSU is by the students, for the students, which means we are here to listen to the concerns of students on campus. If you have any input on how we can continue our commitment to honour the Indigenous heritage on our campus, please feel free to reach out to [vpequity@utmsu.ca](mailto:vpequity@utmsu.ca).