LAND-GRANT TRADITION

Our Land-Grant Mission

Colorado State University is a land-grant institution, a uniquely American idea built on the belief that anyone who wants a college or university education should have the opportunity to get it. Offering that access in the mid-19th century was a revolutionary concept, one that still is central to our land-grant mission today.

The Morrill Act of 1862 created land-grant colleges at a tumultuous time of converging social, political, and cultural changes in the United States, during the American Civil War and an era of westward expansion driven by a belief in "Manifest Destiny" – the idea that the nation was destined to expand across the continent.

The grants of land offered to the states by the Federal government to fund the new colleges – and as homesteads to settlers who would populate the west and to build railroads that would transport people and goods there – came directly from the dispossession of Native American nations and people who had inhabited that land for centuries.

To be a land-grant university in the 21st century requires we not only acknowledge that history, but also recognize the pain and harm it caused that still resonates today. A first step on that path was CSU's adoption of a Land Acknowledgment (https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu/) in 2018. But we still face difficult questions about both the acquisition of land on which the university was built and the grants that helped fund its operation. CSU is committed to moving forward in a process of engagement, working to address those historical wrongs and bridge the equity gap that remains.

The spirit of the Morrill Act itself was and is one of access and inclusion. Those core values continue to guide CSU today.

We prize the rich history that different peoples and populations bring to our academic community. That is the true spirit of the Morrill Act itself, focused on teaching, research and service, creating new knowledge and putting it to work on behalf of all the people we serve.

We believe in the transformational power of education to prepare the next generation of scientists, artists, educators, entrepreneurs and more. As an R1 institution, CSU ranks among the top research universities in the country. Faculty and students engage in purpose-driven research to address some of our world's most complex and perplexing challenges. CSU scholarship, discovery, and innovation improve the quality of life for people in Colorado, across the nation, and around the world.

We set a high standard in our Principles of Community – inclusion, integrity, respect, service, and social justice – and are committed to excellence in carrying out all aspects of CSU's historic land-grant mission.