

UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY AND PROMOTE CAMPUS
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Introduced by: University Life Council

Date: February 19, 2020

RATIONALE:

Whereas as university educators we feel duty-bound to teach and foster understanding of United States history in ways that fully acknowledge, explore and attend to its irresolvable complexities, contradictions, achievements, and horrors; and

Whereas in view of this duty, education on and recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day needs to be added to the University at Albany academic calendar on the second Monday of October while continued education efforts are encouraged at the University at Albany; and

Whereas recent faculty/student/staff collaborations organized by the Institute for Global Indigeneity, the Native American Social Justice Project (2019), members of the Department of Anthropology, Intercultural Student Affairs, and the Office of Sustainability provided excellent models for growing education initiatives, curriculum innovation and dialogue related to and with Indigenous Peoples; and

Whereas in 1977 the International NGO Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas began discussing the replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day; and

Whereas there is growing recognition in the United States that the celebration of Columbus's so called "discovery of America" presents a version of history that tends to deny that native nations were already here and that their lives were irrevocably and negatively impacted by the arrival of the first European immigrants to the Americas; and

Whereas since 1992 more than 58 municipalities in several states including Minnesota, Alaska, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin have chosen to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day and some have opted to remove Columbus Day; and

Whereas in New York State there are eight federally recognized Native American tribes; and

Whereas many of our SUNY campuses occupy land once primarily inhabited by the Haudenosaunee peoples as well as the Mohican peoples¹; and

Whereas SUNY is committed to creating campus communities that are inclusive, diverse and representative of all people, and such communities have a vital interest in knowledge of and dialogue with Indigenous peoples; and

Whereas SUNY campuses have recognized the importance of this matter and have passed resolutions supporting an “Indigenous Peoples’ Day,” and no longer list Columbus Day on their academic calendars; and

Whereas the Student Assembly of SUNY unanimously passed resolution 1516-115, “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” on April 16, 2016; and

Whereas the SUNY University Faculty Senate passed a resolution in October 2017 to recognize the Second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples’ Day at the 177th Plenary at SUNY Delhi:

RESOLUTION:

Therefore Let It Be Resolved that the University Senate at the University at Albany endorses the SUNY Student Assembly resolution 1516-115, “Indigenous Peoples’ Day”, as well as the SUNY University Faculty Senate 2017 resolution; and

Be It Further Resolved that SUNY faculty, staff and administration are encouraged to engage in sustained and meaningful discussions with Indigenous Peoples to further SUNY’s commitment to diversity, equity, sustainability and inclusion as stated in the Board of Trustees resolution of September 10th 2015; and

Be It Further Resolved that SUNY Albany administration, faculty and staff are encouraged to thoughtfully and openly acknowledge that campus activities are taking place on Indigenous lands in classrooms, curriculum materials, syllabi, conferences, symposia, and public events²; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Senate Chairs advise University at Albany administration of Senate recommendation to add Indigenous Peoples’ Day to the academic calendar on the second Monday of October and that the University at Albany President, their Executive Council and the University at Albany Senate Councils work together to promote education and relevant events that respect Indigenous Peoples.

¹ Masters, E. (2017, Sept. 11). Native American origin of Capital Region nomenclature. Times Union. Link.

² A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement. https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/?fbclid=IwAR2XZ8Q78x4t2qDgPQpsxOq_8BcLUbUxfa7_AlUgAXN9I-T3EFV_DZY7tE