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SB11-15/16: Reconstitute Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day

Ruth A. Swaney
University of Montana - Missoula, ruth.swaney@umconnect.umt.edu

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana
Resolution to Reconstitute Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples’ Day
September 30th, 2015
SB11-15/16
Authored by: Ruth Swaney, Program Coordinator Native American Natural Resource Program
Sponsored by: Trail Bundy, ASUM Senator; Antonio Morsette, ASUM Senator

Whereas, the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) represents the diverse interest of the University of Montana (UM) student body;

Whereas, numerous American Indian tribes constitute the largest minority group resident in the State of Montana;

Whereas, UM sits on lands which historically belonged to the Bitterroot Salish people;

Whereas, American Indians on the campus of the University of Montana contribute significantly to the enhancement of the education of all students;

Whereas, President Engstrom’s inaugural address announced the strategic plan called “UM 2020: Building a University for the Global Century” with the “core values of leadership, diversity, engagement, and sustainability” as the foundation of that plan;

Whereas, It has been well-documented and historically verified that Christopher Columbus authorized and presided over the brutal torture, dismemberment, and murders of many thousands of Indigenous Americans in the Caribbean Islands and the northern parts of South America, while in the process of confiscating their homelands and resources, which seems unbefitting for a day to honor such a person;

Whereas, Indigenous Peoples’ Day is a day that aims to recognize and commemorate the contributions of Native people;

Whereas, Cornell University, University of California, Berkeley, and other universities are officially recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ Day in place of Columbus Day;

Whereas, Hawaii, South Dakota, Oregon, and Alaska do not observe Columbus Day;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, ASUM implores UM to no longer recognize Columbus Day and recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day on any calendar distributed by the university, every year from this day forward.

Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM recommends that UM offer programming on the history of indigenous peoples in the Americas on the aforementioned day.

Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, ASUM shall continue its efforts to promote the well-being and growth of UM’s American Indian and Indigenous community.
Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, Indigenous Peoples’ Day shall be used to reflect upon the ongoing struggles of Indigenous people in our city, state, and country, as well as celebrate the thriving culture and values that the Bitterroot Salish, Pend O’Reille, Kootenai, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Dakota, Northern Cheyenne, Crow, and other Indigenous nations add to our university.

Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent to: Royce Engstrom, President of the University of Montana; Teresa Branch, VP of Student Affairs; Peggy Kuhr, Vice President for Integrated Communication; Rhondie Voorhees, Dean of Students; Governor of Montana, Steve Bullock.

Passed by Committee: ______________________________, 2015
Passed by ASUM Senate: ___________________________, 2015

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Kaitlin Hopingardner, Betsy Story,
Chair of Relations & Affairs Chair of the Senate