Resolution to Request that Marshall University Officially Substitute Indigenous Peoples Day for Columbus Day in Future Communications and Documents

Marshall University
Resolution to Request that Marshall University Officially Substitute “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” for “Columbus Day” in Future Communications and Documents

Whereas crediting the “discovery” of the “new world” to Christopher Columbus is historically inaccurate;

Whereas the actual history of our interaction with indigenous peoples in North America is not cause for pride or celebration;

Whereas Columbus’ arrival was the antecedent to genocide, starvation, enslavement, and the spread of disease estimated to have resulted in the deaths of 3-5 million people; and,

Whereas honoring the historical figure of Christopher Columbus causes unnecessary emotional and psychological discomfort for many of the indigenous peoples in our community,

Be it resolved, that the Faculty Senate of Marshall University requests that President Gilbert take whatever steps are needed to officially substitute the term “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” for the term “Columbus Day” in all future communications, policies and documents referring to the second Monday in October.

FACULTY SENATE CHAIR:

APPROVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE:

DATE: 9/21/17

DISAPPROVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE:

DATE:

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT:

READ: DATE: 11/9-17

COMMENTS: I will discuss this issue with Wyatt Seaggs who is the chair of the Board of Governors. It is my understanding that there has been an event on the second Monday in October to recognize indigenous peoples for the past two years at Marshall. I fully support that event and hope that it will continue to occur.
RESOLUTION

The Faculty Senate of Marshall University hereby resolves to request that President Gilbert take whatever steps are needed to officially substitute the term “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” for the term “Columbus Day” in all future communications, policies and documents referring to the second Monday in October.

The reasons for making this change involve recognition that crediting of the “discovery” of the “new world” to Christopher Columbus is historically inaccurate, that the history of our interaction with indigenous peoples in North America is not cause for pride or celebration, and that the apparent veneration of the historical figure of Christopher Columbus causes unnecessary emotional and psychological discomfort for many of the indigenous peoples of the continents in this hemisphere who view Columbus’ arrival as the antecedent to genocide, starvation, enslavement, and the spread of disease estimated to have resulted in the deaths of 3-5 million people;

Columbus did not discover North America, he merely made contemporary Europeans aware of a land mass that was already discovered by, and inhabited by, a large indigenous population;

Christopher Columbus and those contemporaries who sailed with him personally engaged in genocide, rape, and the capture / enslavement of indigenous peoples while they were in this hemisphere;

Columbus was not the first to visit this hemisphere – there is evidence to suggest that Vikings and Phoenicians were among those who first sailed to this hemisphere;

Columbus did not discover that the earth is a sphere – the spherical nature of the planet has been known by the educated people of the world since the time of Pythagoras.

It is not sufficient to merely add an Indigenous Peoples’ Day to the calendar without eliminating references to “Columbus Day” as the recognition of “Columbus Day” celebrates the violent dominance of one group of people over another causing not only physical harm but also force religious conversion and the destruction of multiple cultures.

Marshall University is gaining recognition for our global and multicultural efforts to increase diversity and inclusion on our campus and in our local community. Making this change is a way of publically reaffirming our commitment to these endeavors.

By making this change, Marshall University will be joining many major universities, cities, counties and states in rejecting the inaccuracies in our national historical mythology and simultaneously acknowledging the value and importance of the indigenous peoples in our shared history. A list of cities, states and universities that have made this change is attached.

Because we are asking that this change be made to future, new and/or revised policies, documents and communications, rather than seeking to have current materials altered, the cost of making this change should be negligible.
The following locations celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Columbus Day, with the exception of Lewiston, New York, which celebrates both. (this list is not complete)

**CITIES / STATES**

Berkeley, California  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Seattle, Washington  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Portland, Oregon  
Traverse City, Michigan  
Akron/Newstead, New York  
Olympia, Washington  
Village of Lewistown, New York  
Anadarko, Oklahoma  
Carrboro, North Carolina  
Belfast, Maine  
San Fernando, California  
Alpena, Michigan  
Bexar County, Texas  
Denver, Colorado  
State of Minnesota  
State of Vermont  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
Spokane, Washington  
Bainbridge Island, Washington  
East Lansing, Michigan  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
Phoenix, Arizona  
State of Alaska  
Ypsilanti, Michigan  
Durango, Colorado  
Asheville, North Carolina  
Eugene, Oregon  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Boulder, Colorado  
Lawrence, Kansas  
Oberlin, Ohio  
Bangor, Maine  

** UNIVERSITIES **

Harvard  
Yale  
Brown  
Ratcliff  
Columbia  
U of Michigan  
U of Utah  
U of Northern Arizona  
Cornell  
U of Maryland  
Tufts  
Syracuse University  
Pomona State  
U of Wisconsin Madison  
U of California  
California State University  
U of Montana  
Montana State University  
U of Alaska, SE  
Boise State  
Texas State University  
U of New Mexico  
Kansas State  
Howard University  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  

Los Angeles, California  
Ithaca, New York  
Durham, New Hampshire  
Portland, Maine  
Brunswick, Maine  
Orono, Maine