

**Change the name of "Columbus Day" to "Indigenous Peoples Day" to be inclusive of all peoples and cultures indigenous to the Americas. Promote cross-cultural celebrations.**

**CURRENT CHALLENGE:**

"Columbus Day" remains an anachronistic and antiquated celebration of colonization. Institutions that continue to glorify historical genocides have a problem attracting and retaining students, and engaging with communities that are the descendants of the survivors of such travesties. American Indians (including California Indians from both federally recognized and non-recognized tribes, as well as members of tribes from outside of California, including Alaska Natives) constitute 3-4% of the Fresno State service area, but less than 1% of the student and faculty/staff populations. Decolonizing our campus by ending observance of Columbus Day would make Fresno State a more inclusive environment and is in line with the University's professed and heavily advertised commitment to diversity. It's the 21st Century. Let's tell the truth about history and get with the times.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION:**

Solving this problem is as easy as changing the name and hosting an annual observance of Indigenous Peoples Day. Cross-cultural celebrations are relatively inexpensive, easy to plan and implement, and are greatly educational. Such an event would need to be inclusive of all peoples and cultures Indigenous to the Americas to be truly effective. Some of the groups that could be invited to participate include Mexica (Aztec) dancers, Northern- or Southern-style powwow drums, and California Indian dancers with flutes and clapper sticks.

**BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:**

If Fresno State is serious about diversity, and about increasing the numbers of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff, then it needs to be a friendlier, more welcoming place for everyone. Local tribal governments and migrant communities would undoubtedly support this effort. So, not only would the campus become a more healthy workplace/learning environment internally, but our external relations and community engagement would benefit as well. Fresno State would earn positive news coverage for ending Columbus Day on campus, and by hosting an annual Indigenous Peoples Day event.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Walter Ramirez (Outreach Services) and Dr. Cristina Herrera (CLAS) are collaborators on this idea. Please don't leave them out. Thank you for your consideration of our idea.