

**To:** Dr. Tracey Smith-Bryant, College Council Chair

**From:** Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President

**Subject:** **College Council Recommendation 19-14: Recognizing Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day**

**Date:** January 20, 2020

Thank you and all the members of the College's participatory governance system for your leadership in considering issues of importance to the Montgomery College community. I have reviewed the College Council's recommendation 19-14: Recognizing Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day. The document presented to me by the College Council is attached.

On December 12, 2019, the College Council voted to move recommendation 19-14 forward to the president. This action recommends that the College officially recognize Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Please note that Columbus Day is not now commemorated as a College holiday. As such, there is no change to make in the College's calendar. However, I encourage you to use that day and the month of November—which is Native American Heritage Month—to take advantage of any College programming and activities that would bring awareness to recognizing Indigenous Peoples.

You may be interested to know that the Montgomery College Board of Trustees recently adopted its annual resolution to recognize and celebrate America's diversity (see attached Resolution 19-12-134, National and State Designated Awareness Days and Months for 2020). By reaffirming its support of federal and state of Maryland laws that designate specific days and months, the board encourages the College community to participate in campus and community-based activities. Native American Heritage Month is included in the board's action each year.

Thank you for your dedicated service to Montgomery College's governance system and all of the work you do to support Montgomery College's mission and vision. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Attachments

cc: Senior Administrative Leadership Team  
Governance Director



## Governance Recommendation

Council Name submitting the recommendation: Student Council
Date: December 2, 2019
<b>Montgomery College will officially recognize Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day.</b>
<p>Recommendation Issue or Concern: <i>(Provide background reasoning or justification for recommendation)</i></p> <p>The Student Council unanimously recommends that the college change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day to celebrate and recognize our diversity and acceptance of all people and cultures. After careful consideration and discussions with our three Student Senates as well as our general campus representatives, we have decided to adopt a resolution put forward by the Takoma Park Student Senate. The resolution was passed by them and has been in place, unofficially, on their campus. This resolution will uphold a major tenant of the Student Council which is to maintain uniformity across the college, regardless of campus, which allows students to have equal opportunity and attention.</p>
<p>Resolution:</p> <p>Montgomery College will officially recognize Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day.</p> <p>To allow people to see further Montgomery College's diversity, acceptance, and inclusion of all people we recommend hosting a cultural fair on every campus on/around Indigenous Peoples' Day. A celebration with dance, food, culture, music, and language. These activities will be intended to bring the students, college employees, and community together.</p>
<p>Student Impact: <i>(Explain the impact of this recommendation on MC students.)</i></p> <p>Give people the opportunity to understand other cultures and maybe even more about their own. It will boost and promote engagement and understanding amongst the student body.</p>
<p>Economic Impact: <i>(Explain cost factor or any economic impact of this recommendation, if known.)</i></p> <p>None</p>
<p>Final Disposition/Recommendation: <i>(Complete once decision is made by College Council)</i></p> <p>This recommendation passed with a unanimous vote by the College Council.</p>



10/19

# heritage, or the colonization of Native Americans?

**Grace Hauck** USA TODAY

Published 7:00 a.m. ET Oct. 12, 2019 | Updated 4:15 p.m. ET Oct. 14, 2019

For many Americans, the second Monday in October is a celebration of Italian heritage and Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage to the Americas. But a growing number of cities, states and universities are abandoning ship and replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, also known as Native Americans Day.

At least eight states, 10 universities and more than 130 cities across 34 states now observe Indigenous Peoples Day as an alternative to the federally recognized Columbus Day, which they say glorifies the mistreatment and colonization of Native Americans.

Although Italian explorer Christopher Columbus is often credited as being the "discoverer" of the New World, millions of people already inhabited the Americas, and the Vikings had reached North America nearly five centuries earlier. Columbus made four expeditions to the Caribbean and South America over decades, enslaving and decimating local populations and opening the floodgates of European colonization.

On Tuesday, Wisconsin, home to 11 recognized tribes, became the most recent state to formally recognize Indigenous Peoples Day.

"Through this executive order, we recognize and appreciate our tribal nations and Indigenous people and their resilience, wisdom, and the contributions they make to our state," Gov. Tony Evers said in a press release. "Native Americans in Wisconsin and throughout our country have suffered unjust treatment — often at the hands of our government — and today is about recognizing that Wisconsin would not be all that it is without Indigenous people."

## **Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day: What's open and closed on Monday?**

On Thursday, Washington, D.C., voted to temporarily change the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. If approved by the mayor, the act would go into effect immediately.

On Friday, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued a proclamation recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day.

Maine and New Mexico changed the name in April, and Vermont followed suit in May. Minnesota made change in 2016, followed by Alaska in 2017 and North Carolina in 2018. South Dakota has been celebrating Native Americans Day since 1990.

"This isn't a way to erase our history or erase what was done because we want to make sure what happened is taught. But the United States has a history of celebrating people that shouldn't be celebrated. We



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organization that supports indigenous youth. Tamez-Pochel has been leading the charge to change the name of Columbus Day in Chicago. To draft the pending city ordinance, Tamez-Pochel and others worked with Indigenous youth and Caribbean communities that had been directly impacted by Columbus.

"For us to celebrate a man who's done these horrible atrocities against indigenous people, to me, it's a slap in the face. I understand where the Italian-American community is coming from, it gives them a chance to celebrate their heritage, but at the expense of another's culture," Tamez-Pochel said. "It's wrong to spread false narratives of what actually happened. We have to start telling the truth, even in our schools."

But not everyone's on board. In May, a northern New Jersey town shut down a proposal to change the name. Many Italian-American heritage groups opposed the change, saying it was motivated by "propaganda."

In April, Oklahoma, which is home to 39 recognized tribes, struck a compromise: Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt, the only current governor in the U.S. enrolled as a member of a Native American tribe, signed a bill placing both holidays on the same day.

"It just gives us one opportunity to celebrate Columbus, but also the Indigenous people here in America," Stitt told the Associated Press at the time.

Similarly, Alabama observes "American Indian Heritage Day" along with Columbus Day. Some cities in New York, Connecticut, and Oklahoma also celebrate both holidays.

**Indigenous Peoples Day?** New Jersey town votes to keep Columbus Day

**Native American Day:** In South Dakota, it's not Columbus Day

Many states celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day under a different name or date. California and Nevada celebrate Native Americans Day on the fourth Friday of September, and Tennessee celebrates American Indian Day on the fourth Monday of September.

In Hawaii, the same day is known as Discoverers' Day, in recognition of the Polynesian discoverers of the Hawaiian Islands.

The U.S. Virgin Islands officially celebrates Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Day, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands celebrates Commonwealth Cultural Day.

Columbus Day celebrations date back to 1792, when New York City celebrated the 300th anniversary of Columbus's landfall. It official became one of now 10 official federal holidays in the 1930s, but local municipalities and states have not always observed it. Even Columbus, Ohio, named for the explorer, did not observe the holiday last year, citing a lack of funding to give city employees both Veterans Day and Columbus Day off.



The notion of an indigenous peoples day took root at an international conference on discrimination sponsored by the United Nations in 1977. In 1992, Berkeley, California, declared Oct. 12 as "Day of Solidarity with Indigenous People" and promoted programs in schools and museums on Native American culture.

Two years later, the United Nations declared Aug. 9 as International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

But the trend to replace Columbus Day really gained traction in 2014, when cities such as Seattle and Minneapolis adopted resolutions replacing the holiday. In the next few years, resolutions across the country took flight in dozens of places. Universities across the country—including Brown, Cornell, Drake, Syracuse, Minnesota State and more—have also joined the movement.

The 75th annual Columbus Day parade is scheduled to take place in Manhattan on Monday. The event celebrates the "spirit of exploration, the struggles and triumphs of immigrants who helped build the United States, and the vibrant heritage and cultural wealth of the Italian-American community," according to the non-profit Columbus Citizens Foundation website.

The Foundation did not respond to requests for comment.

Tamez-Pochel said he would be spending the holiday at a ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebration for a newly-built earthen mound along the Chicago River, an installation that pays homage to the ancestral practice of mound building.

According to the Northwest Portage Walking Museum, which spearheaded the project, the serpent-shaped earthwork will be the first noted installation of an hybrid earthwork mound by an Indigenous artist in North America, since the founding of the United States.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**  
Rockville, Maryland

Agenda Item Number: 7B  
December 16, 2019

**NATIONAL AND STATE OF MARYLAND  
DESIGNATED AWARENESS DAYS AND MONTHS FOR 2020**

**BACKGROUND**

Federal and state laws have designated specific days and months throughout the year to recognize and celebrate America's diversity. These designated national and state awareness days and months provide opportunities to acknowledge, honor, and celebrate the contributions of women; members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities; individuals with a disability; and individuals and peoples of Arab American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Caribbean American, German American, Hispanic/Latino, Irish American, Italian American, Jewish American, Native American, and Polish American heritage.

Montgomery College is a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and international learning community committed to fostering academic and work environments throughout its campuses that acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of its diverse students, employees, and communities. The designated national and state awareness days and months create unique opportunities at Montgomery College to acknowledge and celebrate these contributions with our local, regional, and national communities.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt this resolution to reaffirm its support of the programs and activities at Montgomery College to commemorate and celebrate the federal and state of Maryland awareness days and months. It is also recommended that the Board encourage the College community to participate in such campus and community based activities.

**BACKUP INFORMATION**

Board Resolution  
National and State of Maryland Designated Awareness Days and Months for 2020 Attachment

**RESPONSIBLE SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR**

Dr. Cain

**RESOURCE PERSON**

Ms. Bland

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**  
Rockville, Maryland

Resolution Number: **19-12-134**  
Adopted on: **12/16/2019**

Agenda Item Number: 7B  
December 16, 2019

**Subject: National and State of Maryland Designated Awareness Days and Months  
for 2020**

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WHEREAS, Federal and state laws have designated and proclaimed specific days and months throughout the year to acknowledge and celebrate diversity and ethnic and cultural heritages; and

WHEREAS, The designated national and state awareness days and months provide opportunities to acknowledge, honor, and celebrate the contributions of women; members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities; individuals with a disability; and individuals and peoples of Arab American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Caribbean American, German American, Hispanic/Latino, Irish American, Italian American, Jewish American, Native American, and Polish American heritage; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery College is a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and international learning community committed to fostering academic and work environments throughout its campuses that acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of its diverse students, employees, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery College supports programs and activities that acknowledge, commemorate, and celebrate the contributions of its diverse students, faculty, staff, and members of its diverse surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, The College will plan various events and host speakers for a designated federal or state awareness day or month celebration; and

WHEREAS, The president recommends the following action; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Trustees hereby endorses and supports observances and activities of designated federal and state awareness days and months; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Trustees hereby encourages all members of the Montgomery College community to participate in planning programs and activities and attending observances for designated federal and state awareness days and months.

**ATTACHMENT**

**NATIONAL AND STATE OF MARYLAND  
DESIGNATED AWARENESS DAYS AND MONTHS  
FOR 2020**

The designated national and state awareness days and months that Montgomery College will acknowledge and celebrate in 2020 are below.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Event</b>
February	Black History
March	Women's History Irish American Heritage
April	Arab American Heritage
May	Jewish American Heritage Asian Pacific American Heritage
June	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride National Caribbean American Heritage
September-October	National Hispanic Heritage
October	Polish American Heritage and Culture Italian American Heritage and Culture National Disability Employment Awareness
November	National Native American Heritage