



University of Pittsburgh Staff Council Resolution Supporting the Acknowledgment and Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples at the University of Pittsburgh

Whereas in 2021, the President of the United States proclaimed the second Tuesday in October a national observance of Indigenous Peoples' Day;

Whereas there is a bill in Congress proposing to make this a federal holiday;

Whereas the University of Pittsburgh does not include this day on its academic calendar, despite listing Constitution Day and Reading Day, which are also nationally recognized;

Whereas the University of Pittsburgh "occupies the ancestral land of the Adena culture, Hopewell culture, and Monongahela peoples, who were later joined by refugees of other tribes (including the Delaware, Shawnee, and Haudenosaunee), driven here from their homelands by colonizers" (<https://www.sustainable.pitt.edu/land-acknowledgement/>);

Whereas the University of Pittsburgh's Nationality Rooms are a widely visited and touted unique feature of the campus and "are gifts from the ethnic communities who helped to build Pittsburgh" and "31 rooms commemorate the cultural heritages of the communities who supported and planned their construction" (<https://www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu/rooms>), but no space is provided for those who the land was taken from by European colonizers;

Whereas "[a]n important principle in the plan for each room is that the design pre-date the signing of the American Constitution and the founding of the University of Pittsburgh in 1787" (<https://www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu/rooms>), which coincides with the time frame (1754-1760) that European colonization stripped the native people of Western Pennsylvania of their land and lives;

Whereas the lands named Pittsburgh, in honor of a colonizer, had been known as Dionde:gâ by the Seneca and Native Americans, being compelled to become involved in and ultimately pivotal in the outcome of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), led to the area being named as it is for a British statesman rather than French governor;

Whereas the first government-run Indian Boarding School was opened in 1879 in Carlisle, PA, only a few hours away from Pittsburgh, with the purpose of reprogramming native American children with the mindset of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" (<https://carlisleindianschoolproject.com/past/>);

Whereas hundreds of native children died while attending the Carlisle school;

Whereas the University of Pittsburgh Nationality Rooms originated in 1926 when the ground was broken for the construction of the Cathedral of Learning and the first 19 rooms were completed between 1938 and 1957;

Whereas the Plan for Pitt sets forth aims for success related to People, Programs, and Purpose through actions to: Create an inclusive and equitable campus environment—one that welcomes, values and embraces the diverse perspectives of every member of our community; Update our physical and operational environment to encourage risk-taking, exploration and collaboration; Expand opportunities for civic and global engagement; Collaborate with communities—near and far—to improve outcomes and opportunities for their residents.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the University of Pittsburgh Staff Council, on behalf of its members and the University of Pittsburgh Staff at large:

1. supports the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' Day on the University calendar; and
2. promotes the adoption of Indigenous Peoples' Day as an observed holiday at the University of Pittsburgh; and
3. recommends the University collaborate with staff, students, and faculty who are indigenous, as well as partner with groups like the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center, Inc. in Pittsburgh, and the Pitt Native American Student Organization (NASO) to understand the needs and desires of Native community members; and
4. implores the University of Pittsburgh to provide space on campus, in the Nationality Rooms, and other areas, to acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples of Western Pennsylvania.

Passed by vote of general membership on July 22, 2022.

Signature of Staff Council President: *Angela M. Coldren*

Staff Council

Angela Coldren, President
Kenny Doty, Executive Vice President
Yvonne Brewster, Vice President of
Finance
Christine Jackson, Parliamentarian
Amy Beth Porta Kleebank, Vice President of
Public Relations

B39 Cathedral of Learning
4200 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-4236
StaffCouncil@pitt.edu
pitt.edu