

Celebrating Native American Heritage Month



Dear Hornet community,

Indigenous is such a powerful word. It means to be the originator, natural to a particular place – native. In November, as we recognize and celebrate [Native American Heritage Month](#), it is important to begin with the ancestry, sovereignty, civility, and dignity of Native Tribal communities.

We recognize first the care and respect that Native American peoples take in cultivating the land. In Native culture and tradition, ancestral land is an important resource to nurture, steward, share, and protect, not exploit or own. We recognize the sovereignty of Native people past and present to be self-determined, self-governed, and self-actualized. We recognize Native people and their civility and dignified acts of trust, sharing, exchanging, and peaceful offerings of unity and oneness with others and the land. Yet, in recognition of Native peoples and their many positive contributions to America, we must also acknowledge our horrific, destructive, and exploitative relationship on Native peoples.

This year, the Division of Inclusive Excellence is exploring with the campus different notions of justice. What does justice look like for Native peoples? Do we evoke justice for Native peoples, or are we acting performatively when we give a land acknowledgment to the [Maidu](#), [Miwok](#), and [Nisenan](#) peoples at the beginning of a meeting or event? I would say that this is just the beginning of righting the wrongs toward our Native communities.

What is impactful in our pursuits to become an [antiracism, anti-oppression and inclusive campus](#) is chronicling the continued success of our [Native American Studies Program](#), within the Department of Ethnic Studies. It broadens educational opportunities, enhances cultural awareness and identity, and provides an interdisciplinary look at the theoretical, historical and contemporary perspectives of Native peoples for American Indian students and the entire student body. We are so excited to witness the planning and future opening of the Native Student Center, Esak'tima, in Lassen Hall.

At noon Nov. 15, as we celebrate Native American Heritage Month, we are humbled to offer through the Green and Gold Speaker Series a webinar with Chief Tribal Judges Abby Abinanti and Victorio Shaw focusing on tribal sovereign governments within the U.S. To learn more about tribal sovereign governments and how they function in a joint-jurisdictional court system, join us for the webinar [Register for the event here](#).

Let's join with our Native community to protect, support, and make sustained change through policies and practices that demonstrate the respect earned and deserved for the Native community. Then and only then will justice be served.

In partnership,

Dr. Mia Settles-Tidwell,
VP for Inclusive Excellence and University Diversity Officer

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