

*A Resolution Supporting the Designation of Juneteenth and Indigenous People's Day Official
University Observances*

Presented on the 20th of August 2020

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WHEREAS, effective January 1, 1863, “all persons held as slaves” were to be freed under the Emancipation Proclamation, in which word of this proclamation did not reach Texas until two and a half years later, on June 19, 1865, **AND**

WHEREAS, a blend of “June” and “nineteenth,” Juneteenth commemorates the day that news of emancipation and the end of the Civil War reached enslaved people in Galveston, Texas when federal troops arrived led by U.S. General Gordon Granger, **AND**

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration honoring the end of slavery in the United States and is a reminder that nobody is free until everyone is free, **AND**

WHEREAS, the idea of Indigenous Peoples Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas, **AND**

WHEREAS, Indigenous People's Day began as a counter-celebration to Columbus Day, due to Christopher Columbus's violent colonization of Native Americans, **AND**

WHEREAS, Indigenous people's day is celebrated on the second Monday of October honoring the history and culture of the Native American community, while revealing historical truths about the genocide and oppression of indigenous peoples in the Americas,¹ **AND**

WHEREAS, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued proclamations declaring June 19th as Juneteenth Celebration Day and the second Monday of October Indigenous People's Day,²
³**AND**

¹ <https://www.newsweek.com/columbus-day-replace-indigenous-peoples-day-college-students-poll-1463610>

² https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90639-499777--,00.html

³ https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90639-509813--,00.html#:~:text=NOW%2C%20THEREFORE%2C%20I%2C%20Gretchen,roots%2C%20history%2C%20and%20contributions.

WHEREAS, the Detroit City Council annually recognizes Juneteenth as a day of Black economic liberation and Indigenous People’s Day to celebrate Detroit's historical importance as a bridge to other indigenous communities,⁴ **AND**

WHEREAS, racial injustice has been and continues to be a pervasive issue in our society, and must be challenged collectively, **AND**

WHEREAS, knowing there is still more work to be done in the fight for social justice and racial equity, acknowledgment of these holidays is a step in the right direction, **AND**

WHEREAS, Wayne State University is committed to serving its diverse student population by shaping a safe, supportive, and culturally competent campus, **AND**

WHEREAS, the Wayne State University Student Senate will continue to advocate for our Black and Native American students through campus initiatives, educational outreach, and structural policy changes, **AND**

WHEREAS, many Wayne State University students have shown interests in recognizing these holidays to support the diverse communities represented at this University,⁶ **AND**

WHEREAS, other national universities like Harvard University, Georgetown University, Columbia University, University of Virginia, Towson University, Drake University, Loyola Marymount University, Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, University of New Orleans, Adelphi University, St. John's University, Lock Haven University, and Lesley University, all have Juneteenth as a university holiday or observance,⁷ **AND**

WHEREAS, other national universities like Columbia University, Virginia Tech University, State University of New York System, Tufts University, Alaska Pacific University, Fordham University, Brown University, Lesley University, Drexel University, Southern Oregon University, Universities of Washington, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, all have Indigenous People's Day as a university holiday or observance,⁸ **AND**

WHEREAS, Wayne State University student organizations and academic units including the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement (OMSE), Social Justice Action Committee, The

⁴ <https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2018-04/JuneteenthResolution.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2018/10/08/detroit-celebrating-indigenous-peoples-day-not-columbus-day/1564458002/>

⁶

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14do1CuMunqj1lw0wqRP_hAQ0SAbYcY2iJzqs3DkGw0/edit?usp=sharing

⁷ https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bVtlrs_yyPdxvzft-ReZqIUj67DeBtl75qS0DQpQSw/edit?usp=sharing

⁸ <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qCEu0YwzsgL9m7rwZCylZWaZo7zLH6nTJNUYX7wuCuA/edit#gid=0>

Brotherhood, Black Student Union (BSU), and Native American Student Organization (NASO) all endorse this resolution, **AND**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wayne State University Student Senate calls upon University entities to curate programming for these holidays to be observed by all members of the WSU community, fostering safe spaces for listening, learning, and reflection, **AND**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Wayne State University proactively recognizes these holidays as days of observance and to be labeled as such on University calendars without class cancellation.

AND FINALLY BE IT ORDERED, that the Wayne State University Student Senate will circulate this resolution to all relevant outlets, including the University President, the University Provost, the members of the Board of Governors, the President of the Wayne State University Academic Senate, and The South End student newspaper.

X Riya Chhabra _____
Riya Chhabra
President

X Marcella Eid _____
Marcella Eid
Vice President