



**President's Office lc-bulletin@lclark.edu
Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day and Taking Action**

10.10.22

The following message from President Robin Holmes-Sullivan, PhD was shared with the on-campus community and we would like to share it with you as well.



Dear Lewis & Clark Community,

I invite the entire Lewis & Clark community to join me today in recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day—a day to celebrate the many contributions Indigenous peoples have made to our country, acknowledge the harm brought to these communities, and lay the foundation for a future relationship based on honesty, respect, and reparative action.

The State of Oregon first recognized the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2021. At Lewis & Clark we honor this day by recognizing the rich diaspora of Indigenous communities throughout the U.S., in Oregon, and locally that are diverse in history, culture, and pride. We owe these First Peoples a great debt of gratitude for the countless social, historical, cultural, technological, and industrial contributions they have made to our country and the world. We also owe them an open acknowledgment of the generational harm done to their communities when the U.S. government forcibly removed their ancestors from their traditional lands. Those who have benefited from the government's actions have a further duty to examine that harm and look for ways to redress it.

On our campus, a desire to identify possible reparative actions was the driving force behind [Community Dialogue 1](#), which we convened on campus last April. That dialogue resulted in several important recommendations that the organizing committee advanced as reparative actions the college should consider. I want to update you on the progress we are making on those recommendations.

The first step was to determine whether the recommendations we were considering would be viewed as helpful and meaningful by Indigenous members of our campus community. With that in mind, I met a few weeks ago with a group of Indigenous alumni from diverse tribal backgrounds to discuss the recommendations and proposed actions. Included in that discussion were:

- Developing formal relationships between the college and all nine federally recognized Confederated Tribes of Oregon to better understand ways that we can work collaboratively and effectively with the tribes;
- Establishing an educational program, headed by an expert in Native American history, that is focused on studying and making public the history of the Indigenous peoples who originally occupied the United States;
- Creating programs for entering students in all three schools during their orientations and first year experiences at Lewis & Clark where they would learn about L&C's history, focusing on the contributions and impact on Indigenous communities and people of color; and

- Establishing a scholarship program for students from Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes.

All of these actions met with approval from the participating alumni, and I am in the process of discussing implementation of each of them with faculty, staff, students, and other campus leaders. The alumni also suggested that I establish a formal Native American Advisory Committee to advise me on development of these recommendations and on other relevant matters. I will be moving quickly in the days ahead to form such a committee.

I hope to be able to give you an update on the progress on these initiatives in November when we celebrate Native American Heritage month with a variety of activities. I will also be updating you on the Community Dialogues series at that time.

In acknowledgment of this important day,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Holmes-Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robin" being more prominent.

Robin Holmes-Sullivan, PhD
President