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Joan Ferrini-Mundy

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Maine Memo — The importance of Indigenous People's Day

1 message

UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>
Reply-To: UMaine President's Office <umaine.president@maine.edu>
To: UM-EMPLOYEES@lists.maine.edu

Mon, Oct 11, 2021 at 8:19 AM



MAINE MEMO



From Joan Ferrini-Mundy

President of the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias

Dear Members of the University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias communities,

Today, Oct. 11, the state of Maine, along with an estimated 14 other states and more than 130 cities, observes Indigenous Peoples' Day. Both the [University of Maine](#) and our regional campus, the [University of Maine at Machias](#), have land acknowledgements, as do the [Darling Marine Center](#) and [Cooperative Extension](#).

With diversity, equity and inclusion as core values at UMaine and UMaine Machias, attending to the details of these acknowledgments is a high priority. They signal the importance of respect and learning more about the issues and contexts of the Tribal Nations in whose homelands these campuses are located. We invite you to become engaged. Learn more about some activity underway on our campuses that recognizes and furthers the place of Indigenous peoples in the universities, and imagine how to grow it.

Across both campuses there are more than 170 students, faculty and staff who identify as Native American. We need to ask, why not more?

Many initiatives are underway. UMaine Machias is planning to transition to bilingual campus building signage — Passamaquoddy and English — as UMaine has implemented with Penobscot language signage for its buildings and facilities. [Wabanaki Youth in Science \(WaYS\)](#), established at UMaine with grants from the National Science Foundation and Maine EPSCoR, is “[a tribal mentoring and educational program integrating traditional ecological knowledge and Western science](#).” We have [courses](#) and a [minor](#) in Native American Studies. The [Hudson Museum](#) has longstanding partnerships with the Wabanaki Tribal Nations, with collaborations ranging from events and exhibitions on campus, statewide and [online](#) to an annual Wabanaki Artist Holiday Market. It also serves as a steward of extraordinary Wabanaki material culture collections. And earlier this year, NEH funded work on an interdisciplinary [Wabanaki Resources Portal project](#).

UMaine has an important [MOU with the Penobscot Nation](#) to “continue to collaborate around the documentation,

cataloguing, and digital sharing of Penobscot collections and items of cultural heritage.” It is an agreement that carries on the decades-long collaborations between UMaine staff and researchers, and the Wabanaki Tribal Nations. Through the years, UMaine and UMaine Machias research and educational opportunities have been informed and strengthened by our longstanding partnership with the state’s four Native Tribes — from studies of coastal petroglyphs and the effects of the emerald ash borer on “basket trees” to efforts to preserve eroding shell middens, and Wabanaki community history and language.

This is what a state’s research university does. These critical collaborations also are part of our commitment to inclusivity, diversity and equity. The work must continue for the benefit of all.

On Indigenous Peoples’ Day and every day, we appreciate the chance to focus on the story today and the promise for tomorrow for Indigenous peoples and the University of Maine.

Sincerely,

Joan Ferrini-Mundy
President

Daniel Qualls
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of Campus