

~ Special Edition ~

A message from President Tim Sands to the Virginia Tech community

To the University Community,

The Virginia Tech campus is a special place, supporting the land-grant mission and service-oriented spirit that continues to propel our current and future achievements. It is important to recognize that the history of our campus extends far beyond the university's founding in 1872. The Tutelo/Monacan people are the historical stewards of the land on which we work and live, and they have a continuing connection to the natural resources that support our endeavors.

As part of our ongoing commitment to InclusiveVT, we seek to demonstrate our respect for Tutelo/Monacan Nations and become more inclusive for all indigenous people who are part of our community. As part of this effort we established the American Indian and Indigenous Community Center in 2016.

This past spring, the Native at Virginia Tech organization made a proposal to the Virginia Tech Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity to honor Indigenous Peoples Day annually on the second Monday in October. I issued a Presidential Policy Memorandum designating Monday, October 8, as Indigenous Peoples Day at Virginia Tech for this year, making it possible for Indigenous Peoples Day to be observed in 2018 while also allowing time for the annual observance proposal to be considered by the appropriate governance bodies.

I encourage you to participate in Monday's observance and learn more about the history and heritage of the land that continues to support our university's mission and vision. Get more information about Monday's Indigenous Peoples Day events.

Tim Sands,
President

Virginia Tech observes Indigenous Peoples Day on Oct. 8

As part of Virginia Tech's ongoing commitment to InclusiveVT, the university will observe Indigenous Peoples Day. InclusiveVT is the university's institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence.

Indigenous Peoples Day is a student-led event that will take place for the first time on Monday, Oct. 8, 2018. In an open letter to the community, President Tim Sands noted that the Virginia Tech community is supportive and respectful and recognizes the history of the campus spreads beyond the university's founding in 1872. The Tutelo/Monacan people are the historical stewards of the land on which this community works and lives, and they have a continuing connection to the natural resources that support the university's endeavors.

As the university continues to become more inclusive for all indigenous people who are part of the Virginia Tech community, it established the American Indian and Indigenous Community Center in 2016. This past spring, the Native at Virginia Tech organization made a proposal to the Virginia Tech Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity to honor Indigenous Peoples Day annually on the second Monday in October.

Sands issued a Presidential Policy Memorandum designating Monday, Oct. 8, as Indigenous Peoples Day at Virginia Tech for this year, making it possible for Indigenous Peoples Day to be observed in 2018 while also allowing time for the annual observance proposal to be considered by the appropriate governance bodies.

Indigenous Peoples Day is intended to celebrate Native Americans and commemorate their shared history and culture. This special day is an official city and state celebration in various localities around the country.

On Oct. 8, the celebration will begin with a presentation by the Drum Group on the Drillfield at 11:30 a.m. The day will end at Squires Student Center with a film screening of the 2006 documentary “Canary Effect,” which looks into the effects that the United States and its policies have on the indigenous peoples who are residents. An informational booth will be set up for participants to learn more about Indigenous Peoples Day at Virginia Tech and throughout various parts of the United States.

All these events are free and open to the public.

“I encourage our community to participate in Monday’s observance,” said Sands. “We will all benefit by learning more about the history and heritage of the land that continues to support our university’s mission and vision.”

“The Office for Inclusion and Diversity is proud to support Indigenous Peoples Day,” said Menah Pratt-Clarke, vice president for Strategic Affairs and vice provost of the Office for Inclusion and Diversity. “We have made tremendous progress in recent years to create an inclusive and welcoming community on campus. Our Native American and Indigenous Community Center, the annual Pow-wow, and our growing partnerships with our Virginia tribal nations are tangible examples of our recognition of the responsibility that we have in higher education to build and sustain a diverse community.”

“The second Monday in October has long been a hard day for many of us. Indigenous Peoples Day is a reclaiming of that day and what it means — reminding the world that we were here when Columbus ‘discovered’ this land and that we are still here today,” said Virginia Tech student Qualla Ketchum and a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. “It’s about healing and celebrating and we invite you, the greater Virginia Tech and Blacksburg community, to join us.”

For more information, please visit inclusive.vt.edu.



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