

The Student Affairs Diversity Council (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

November is Native American Heritage Month



Franci Taylor, American Indian Resource Center

November is Native American Heritage Month, or as it is commonly referred to, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month or Indigenous People's Month. In 1990, President George Bush approved the first Native American Heritage Month. Since then, the proclamation has been reissued every year by the sitting President. The month is a time to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories of Native Americans, and to acknowledge the important contributions the Native people have made to the fabric of the United States. It is also a time to educate the general public on the rich history and the contributions American Indians have made, and to increase awareness about the ongoing challenges and misrepresentation that many face.

Many are not aware that the relationship between American Indian Nations and the United States is based on the recognition of these nations as sovereign nations in the US Constitution. Most people are also not aware of the attempts by the U.S. government to either eliminate or assimilate all American Indian peoples. Teaching the American Indian Experience course here at the University has taught me how little of the history and contributions of the American Indian people is known. The selection of November was in part due to the mythology over the "First Thanksgiving" and the fact that it follows Halloween, where Native culture has been appropriated and misrepresented for generations.

Many students have asked how to best honor Native cultures during this twenty-fifth official Native American Heritage Month, and what they should and should not do. One of the best ways to honor any culture that is not your own, is to avoid anything that appears to be cultural appropriation. This is a time when American Indian people look forward to sharing and educating those who are non-Native to their true history and lifeways. It is not a time to "dress like an Indian" or to exhibit Native themed logos, knock off material culture, songs, or ceremonies. Although some do not see the harm in putting on an ethnic costume, psychologists state that it is harmful, especially to the younger children of that marginalized culture. A

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

“costume” is worn to pretend to be something you are not for a brief time. The outfits worn by American Indians in celebration are called regalia, not costumes, and are worn to express pride in who they are now and respect for their ancestors. Native American costumes usually reflect a stereotypic Plains Indian historic culture and have no recognizable tribal identity.

One of the most offensive acts is the wearing of the fake headdress as an accessory or sports uniform. The traditional headdress is not something one can purchase to use whenever they feel like “dressing up.” It’s presented as an honor and is bestowed on an individual for exceptional service or contribution to their community. It is not universal in all American Indian cultures. It is predominantly a Plains Indian cultural item, usually restricted to men. It’s similar to the Congressional Medal of Honor, and like that medal, should only be worn by the person who was honored with the award. In many tribal nations they are never touched by anyone who was not given that honor. To wear this as a fashion accessory to a music concert, or as an attempt to show support for a football team is seen by most American Indian people as profoundly disrespectful and a trivialization of their culture. American Indian people were not granted religious freedom until the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. Using the headdress as a token is a reminder of the time when American Indian languages, cultures, and ceremonies were illegal. Most people would agree that seeing their sacred religious symbols or clothing misused and

misrepresented, especially by someone with no knowledge of their religion, would be harmful and hurtful.

The University of Utah is rightfully proud of its long history and relationship with the Northern Ute Nation. The University has been honored by the Northern Ute Nation through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that allows the University to utilize the Ute name in conjunction with the athletics programs. How to honor and support this MOU is a question that the American Indian Resource Center is often asked. First, as stated before, learn about the Ute and other American Indian’s culture and history. To truly honor the Ute Nation you should know something about their language, culture, history, trials and struggles. Neither the MOU nor the Northern Ute, condone the wearing of ceremonial headdresses or other material that can be seen as a stereotypic representation of American Indian or Ute culture. Dressing in what someone thinks is a stereotype of Indian culture, fake buckskin or face paint, using terms like “Scalp ‘em” all show disrespect and should never be used. Stereotypes are caricatures and a reduction of culture and are not designed to honor or show the importance of that culture. They limit the ability to establish honest dialogs and conversations. They are an example of a negative power dynamic in which those in an empowered status take elements of a systemically oppressed group and use it for their own needs. If someone needs to ask, “is this costume ok?” the answer is almost always, “No!”

Please enjoy American Indian Heritage month and take this opportunity to learn something new.



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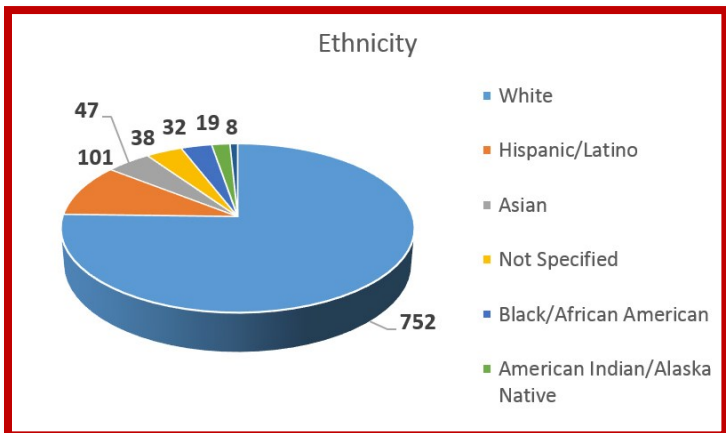
Veterans at the U – a Diverse Population!



By Roger L. Perkins,
Director of the Veterans Support Center

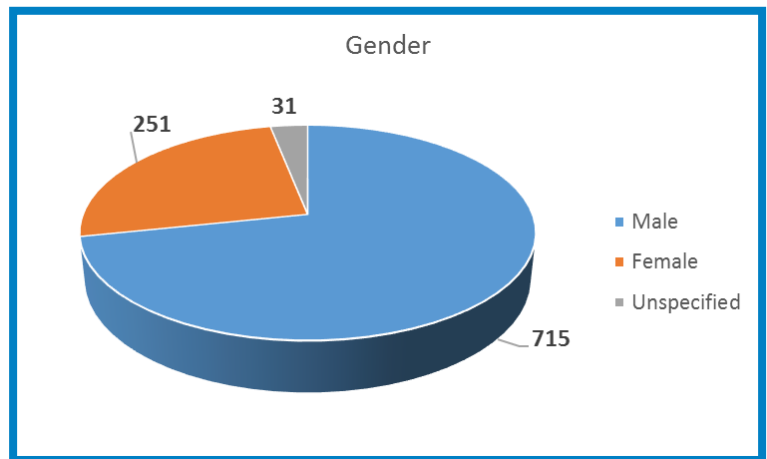
I thought it would be a good idea to take a quick look at our U Veteran population and get a feel for the level of diversity found there. Often Veterans are stereotyped as being a population that does not really embrace diversity when the opposite is the truth. The US military is one of the most diverse organizations in the nation and our population reflects that environment.

So let's take a look! We currently have 997 Veterans identified at the University of Utah, or 3.3% of the student population. The national average for Veterans populations on campus is 4% but that only included Veterans receiving GI Bill benefits. 30% of our population does NOT receive those benefits, which would clearly make Veterans an underrepresented population at the U. Veterans are also a protected category under Federal law, which provides them with federal protection from discrimination. Veterans are the only population at the U who have both a state and a federal cabinet office dedicated to their welfare (Department of Veterans Affairs in DC and the Office of Veterans and Military Affairs in Utah).



Ethnically our Veteran population has a spread that equals that found for the general US population. Our white Veterans make up 79% of our Vet population which, coincidentally, is the same as the overall US population. What makes this interesting is that Utah is 91% white, which means the student Veteran population is much more diverse than the general population of the State of Utah.

In the area of gender, female Veterans make up 26% of our total student Veteran population, up from 25% last year. The percentage of females in the military is 16%, which means a larger percentage of female Veterans are attending the U than are in the US military.



These two metrics, ethnicity and gender, also reflect the level of diversity found in the US military. Young people from all parts of the nation, all economic strata, and all walks of life have the opportunity to enlist. In doing so they enter a culture where how well you do your job is the most important measurement of success. They bring this ethic into the University of Utah and it is reflected in the way in which they respond to other Veterans and students they come across during their studies.

As far as how well this diverse population performs in school, Veterans meet or exceed the graduation and retention rate for the open population and maintain an average GPA of 3.2 for undergraduate students. This, I think, shows the power and potential of a diverse community to stand on each other's shoulders and achieve.



Kari Ellingson: Notes From South Korea Part 2

Well, two months under my belt and I realize the longer I'm here, the less I know. Yes, I'm actually pretty good at the subway system. I've even received my Korean Driver's License. I went in having studied all 1,000 possible questions only to find out my type of visa exempted me from the test requirement. But I DO know all the important driving facts—like that a bus driver can be fined if they allow people to dance on their bus...But the daily ins and outs of life, constantly amaze, surprise and sometimes confuse me. My role as a student is always being brought home. And the best teachers are, no surprise, my students.

I decided to teach UC 1010, the first semester one-credit course that introduces all first semester students to college. Each week, I have them write a one-page paper on some topic, usually something that springs from the discussions of that day's class. A few weeks ago, I asked them to write about the differences between High School education in the U.S. and in Korea, as they understood it. The group is split equally between those with a purely Korean educational background and those who were educated in a more western system, either in the U.S. or in an international school. Many of our students have experience in both and were more than happy to provide the contrasts. Whatever educational background these students brought to the University of Utah Asia Campus (UAC), the comments were remarkably similar.

One consistent comment was on the rigor of the Korean High School. Students start class at 8am and

don't get home until after 9pm. Schools ends, similar to the U.S. in the afternoon but then they stay at school and study until 6, eat dinner and then study until 9 or 10 before going home. The goal of high school is to get into the best possible college, ideally one of the SKY institutions: Seoul National University, Korea National University or Yonsei University. College is often regarded as 'easy' compared to high school.

Our students had many comments on the Korean versus U.S. educational system. Remember to take these with some caution since they were writing for a U.S. professor in a U.S. university (meaning the U.S. system comes off looking very good). Our students also consciously chose a U.S institution for college, many say, because they like the western system better.

Korean education only focused on memorizing the textbook. So Korean students do not have much time to think about the process of mechanisms and why mechanisms were occurring. Since I've been educated in Korea, I have the same problem and do not know how to think creatively.

Korean faculty is much harder than American faculty. Korean educational system, like the rest of the country, emphasizes a strict hierarchy. Teachers are seldom questioned inside or outside of the classroom; teachers teach and learners learn. I cannot imagine that students and professors hang out.

One of the expectations of the American education

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system at the UAC that I find hard to deal with is the independence. The system I'm used to is simple: you get up when you're told to, eat what you're given, and go to classes you've been signed up for. On the other hand, at UAC students are given room to grow and develop themselves. The UAC has provided me with a challenging environment but I plan to adapt to this new system.

One student, who was educated in both worlds, saw benefits in both. *The American education gave me chances to find my identity in writing and to find my strengths in other subjects. The Korean education focused more on building strengths toward testing and problems solving; they focus on schoolwork rather than character building. Because of the American style education, I am sure of who I am and what I'm capable of doing. However the Korean education system forces you to work harder and push your limits.*

As a professor, we also have to adapt to the educational expectations the students bring to us. I find the biggest challenge is generating class discussion. There is such an expectation that the professor stands at the front and lectures for the entire class while students take notes. In the U.S., a discussion can often be like pulling teeth. Here, it can be even more painful. Many students wrote in their papers about wanting to learn to be more comfortable with discussion and giving their opinions. The fear of making a mistake is so deep that often we're working against a lifetime of training. The trick is how we honor cultural heritage and expectations, while working within a U.S. institution that students chose specifically because it IS a U.S. institution. It's a balance I'm constantly considering. I'd like to end with a great student quote, from one of the quietest students in my two classes.

The class is like a ship; the professor is a captain and the students are the crew. A ship doesn't work with a single captain. Both a captain and crew have to work together. I think the students at the UAC, including me, still figure out how the American education system works and how we act in it. In my case, it is still hard to raise my hand and speak out in the silence. But I look for myself to grow and develop.

TED TALKS

Anand Giridharadas:
A tale of two Americas. And the mini-mart where they collided.



Mia Birdsong:
The story we tell about poverty isn't true



Alix Generous:
How I learned to communicate my inner life with Asperger's



Student Affairs Diversity Council Understanding Diversity Seminar Series

Veterans Culture at the U

Roger Perkins,
Director, Veterans Support Center

Wednesday, November 18, 2015
12:00-1:30 pm
Pano East, Union (4th floor)



Upcoming University and Community Events

November 5 @ 4-6:30pm

Your Fatwa Does Not Apply Here: Women's Struggles Against Fundamentalism in Muslim Majority Contexts, Karima Bennoune from the UC Davis School of Law, LNCO 1110



November 10 @ 11am

From Freedom Rider To Congressman, US Congressman John Lewis, Libby Gardner Hall [[more info](#)]

November 10 @ 11am-1pm

John Lewis Live Stream, US Congressman John Lewis, Collegiate Room, Union

November 12 @ 6pm

The Case Against 8, Documentary and Discussion with the Directors, Free & at Broadway Theatre [[more info](#)]

November 4 @ Noon-1pm

Traditional Native American Blessing Ceremony, Main Level, Spencer S. Eccles Health Science Library [[info](#)]

November 5 @ Noon-1pm

Health Disparities in Native Populations: Closing the Gap, Upper Level, Spencer S Eccles HS Library [[info](#)]

Additional Native Voices Events

[find more [info here](#)]

November 13 @ 11am

Saluting Our Heroes Luncheon - Presented by National Ability Center, Grand America Hotel [[info](#)]

November 7-15 @

Jewish Arts Festival Jewish Community Center [[info](#)]



For more information and resources, please visit:

sadc.utah.edu

Debra Daniels, Co-chair Women's Resource Center
Rob Davies, Co-chair Student Development
Chris Anderson, Housing & Residential Education
Michael Bard, Registrar's Office
Stephanie Charles, Financial Aid
Branden Dalley, Union Administration
Marci Healy, Conference & Guest Services
Matt McCarthy, Campus Recreation
Nomani Satuala, Center for New Students & Family Programs
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