

What's the point of Columbus Day?

Aimee Coons
Dakota Student

Columbus Day became a federal holiday in 1937 to commemorate his landing in the Americas on October 12, 1492. Columbus landed on various islands in the Bahamas and explored Central and South America. He never set foot on North America. In fact, Columbus was one of the last explorers of the Americas. Leif Eriksson landed on the North American continent 500 years before Columbus ever set sail. Columbus had little to no effect in settling what would become the United States. There is no point in celebrating Columbus Day. All it has become for our society is a potential day off work or school and a day for stores to promote their products by offering good deals and sales. Columbus offers no cultural enhancement to our society and should no longer be observed. There are currently movements to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. Austin, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles and Seattle are just a few who have made this change. A large part of the debate to change Columbus

Day to Indigenous Peoples Day is Columbus' actions towards the native peoples of the areas he explored. Columbus, unfortunately, was truly a man of his time and viewed anyone who wasn't a white Christian as lower than himself. Columbus was not the only person to feel or act this way. About 20 years after Columbus, Hernán Cortés, a Spanish conquistador and explorer, ravaged Mexico, destroying the Aztec Nation in the name of New Spain and God. There is no dispute that Columbus treated the indigenous people terribly, bringing about slavery and starvation. However, this should not be the driving argument to change Columbus Day. After all, we celebrate Presidents Day which was originally established to commemorate President Washington. President Washington, along with at least 11 other presidents, owned slaves and contributed to the oppression and maltreatment of African Americans. Yet, we still celebrate Presidents Day, and view the Founding Fathers as saints. It's contradictory to say we should do away with Columbus Day because of the



Courtesy of Mark Lennihan / AP

In this Oct. 10, 2016, file photo, boys wave Italian flags while riding a float in the Columbus Day Parade in New York. A movement to abolish Columbus Day and replace it with Indigenous Peoples' Day has new momentum but the gesture to recognize victims of European colonialism has also prompted howls of outrage from some Italian Americans, who say eliminating their festival of ethnic pride is culturally insensitive.

injustice done to the indigenous people, when we still celebrate Presidents Day. Columbus Day no longer brings any cultural value to our society. One can argue that it never brought any cultural value to our society because Columbus had no hand in settling what would become the United States. In place of Columbus Day, Indigenous Peoples Day should be celebrated. Celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day would give our society the opportunity to learn and celebrate Native Americans like never before. A part of my childhood was spent living in Alaska. The state of Alaska greatly celebrates Native Alaskan tribes. It was mandatory in our school district to have a field trip once a

year to what was commonly known as "The Alaska Room." This was a place for elementary school children to come and learn about some of the Native Alaskan tribes and their customs. In high school, it is mandatory for students to take an Alaskan History course. This course covered some history of the Native Alaskans. Native Alaskan culture and history is highly celebrated and Alaska should be used as an example for other states to celebrate their local Native American tribes. Adopting Indigenous Peoples Day would be a fantastic start to celebrating a wonderful culture. North Dakota is home to several Native American tribes, such as the Mandan, Hidatsa, Ari-

kara, Yankonia, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Hunkpapa, Dakotah, Lakotah, Pembina Chippewa, Cree and Metis, just to name a few. These peoples should be celebrated, starting with the adoption of Indigenous Peoples Day. But, that should just be the start. Native American history should be taught in schools; their holidays should be observed and their languages should be learned. Respect for Indigenous Peoples is long overdue, and the start of the repayment should be with the adoption of Indigenous Peoples Day.

Aimee Coons is an opinion writer for Dakota Student. She can be reached at aimee.coons@ndus.edu

Continued from front.

tions serve basic needs for those living in Spirit Lake, the issues that need to be addressed go much deeper. "The reservation's whole idea was not meant for it to be prosperous," Shoulder said. "It was meant for them to be stuck there and to die out eventually." Shoulder listed one of several issues Native Americans on reservations face: "The ground, the soil, the land, it's not always fertile," Shoulder said. "It's not always beneficial for them to be productive." Shoulder also points out the complications reservations face, where, "they don't actually own the land or they don't own parts of the land, so they can't mortgage it out for building or for building their economy, so there's a lot of factors that have really been pushing against trying to be a thriving and prosperous (...) nation."

Eye-opening experience
Reid Taubenheim is one of the many students who will be delivering the coats and other various donations to Spirit Lake. As a young man from Minneapolis, Taubenheim describes the eye-opening experience the ethics and self responsibility

"One of the most important lessons that we can give to different American Indians on different reservations is that we care, that's where we have to start, and we have to convince them that we care because history reflects something else." "

Mike Hendrickson, Adjunct accounting professor
class provided him, remarking how he wasn't aware of, "the type of living conditions that people on the reservation were dealing with." Before taking Hendrickson's class, Taubenheim said he'd never considered the is-

sues many Native Americans face on reservations. He went on to say that, "once you start to talk to someone who actually is American Indian and knows" it becomes clear that "they have so many of these obstacles" that make many things difficult for them. Taubenheim exhibits the

admiration for his professor.
Raising awareness
Though the issues many reservations face are plentiful, Hendrickson, Shoulder and Taubenheim are confident they can begin correcting the problems. Another step toward correcting the issues will take place Oct. 18 at 6:30 p.m., in the American Indian Student Center. The fundraising event will have tickets available for entry, which can be purchased by either providing a winter clothing donation, or \$5, which will be used to purchase more winter clothing. The event will feature Leigh Jeanotte, former Director for American Indian Student Services, as a speaker, and will provide Indian tacos, traditional Native American food and refreshments. According to Taubenheim, the event, hosted by the Truth and Reconciliation Project and AISS, serves

a very important purpose. "First you have to raise awareness," Taubenheim said, "which is what we're trying to do with our Truth and Reconciliation night, where we'll have Leigh come and speak and kind of just talk about things - help build awareness throughout the campus." This awareness will assist in bringing light to the issues Hendrickson, Shoulder and Taubenheim wish to address. But according to Hendrickson, the first step towards reconciliation is simple. "One of the most important lessons that we can give to different American Indians on different reservations is that we care, that's where we have to start," Hendrickson said. "And we have to convince them that we care because history reflects something else."

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Photos by Nick Nelson / Dakota Student

(Left) UND police chief Eric Plummer assigns routes to groups during the fall campus safety tour outside Chester Fritz Auditorium on Thursday night. (Right) UND police sergeant Jose Solis notes a burned out light during the fall campus safety tour.

Devon Abler
Dakota Student

Thursday night a group of community members joined the University Police Department for UND’s annual fall campus safety tour. Students, faculty and community members were invited to come and join the UPD staff on their walk throughout campus. This provided participants with the opportunity to help UPD identify areas of campus that could be dangerous at night. An event that has been present on campus for a little more than 20 years, the Campus Safety Tour has evolved. Over the past four years, this tour went from identifying burnt out lights to identifying potentially dangerous areas on campus. “I’ve been here, next week it will be five years, and when I got here, the department

of public safety took over the lighting tour,” Police Chief Eric Plummer said. “We wanted to recraft it into just more than lights. Looking at sidewalks, railings, overgrown trees, bushes, things like that. Walking across campus and finding areas that might make you cringe a little at night. We want people

in the sidewalk, areas of campus that would benefit from more lighting and for any blue light emergency systems that were burnt out or not activated. The blue light systems are designed for students to use if they notice an emergency or experience one themselves. They simply press the red button and

UND campus safe is the department’s top priority, the department also takes care of the Grand Forks community as a whole. Officer Ben, the golden retriever K9 unit for the department, and his handler Sergeant Jose Solis can be found assisting the Grand Forks Police department in identifying drugs or finding

participate in the Adopt a Cop program where they adopt an officer for a semester and we come and get to know the students. I bring Ben along with me to visit the halls and get to know the students.” Maintaining strong relationships with the student’s is a goal for UPD officers. These relationships have improved the views that students have of the police department. One of the students who joined the tour, Parker Combs, received the email in his mailbox and was intrigued by the event. “I saw the email and thought it would be interesting to come and see what this event was about,” Combs said. “This has definitely improved my relationship with the department. Spending an hour with an officer helped me see them as more than just police officers. I was

also able to use their flashlights and it was one of the best things I have used in my life.” While the talk on campus might be how to avoid police officers, this department genuinely wants to know the student body and help students and the community. “My door is always open,” Plummer said. “Students can shoot me an email or come stop by. I have this alligator in my office that makes for a pretty good story.” If you have any questions or want to get involved with other events that the police department is hosting, take a look at the University of North Dakota Police Department Facebook page or find them on Twitter.

Devon Abler is a features writer for Dakota Student. She can be reached at devon.abler@und.edu

“Spending an hour with a cop and being able to ask any question about the profession or about the law system opened my eyes to the work that they do to keep the community safe.”

Devon Abler, Features writer

to walk across campus confident in their safety and security.” Plummer handed out sections of the campus to the officers and other UND students and I each paired with an officer. We were instructed to keep our eyes open for burnt out lights, hazardous cracks While keeping the

department will receive a call with the location of the blue light. Spending an hour with a cop and being able to ask any question about the profession or about the law system opened my eyes to the work that they do to keep the community safe. While keeping the

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MAKING MOVES

Dakota Student file photo

Senior forward and UND hockey captain Austin Poganski drives the puck past the blue line at the Ralph Engelstad Arena against Minnesota Duluth last season.

Kyle Kinnamon
Dakota Student

Transferring schools in college sports is not uncommon, but in college hockey it is done very rarely. For the University of North Dakota, this season there have been three transfers, two leaving the program (Chris Wilkie and Matej Tomek) and one coming into the program (Nick Jones). Prior to this last offseason, the last player who transferred to UND was Mitch MacMillan in the 2011-2012 season. MacMillan transferred from St. Cloud State, and pitched in defensively for the team. He never found a scoring touch, only scoring a total of 10 points in 39 games played at UND. The decision to transfer schools can be incredibly hard, and there are many reasons a player may decide to transfer schools. Junior forward Nick Jones knew he needed a change of scenery. "It was my sophomore year, and I felt I was not developing at

the rate I wanted to," Jones said. "I just wasn't enjoying myself there as much as I had been in the past. I thought I was still in a situation where I could go back to juniors, and find a new place that fit better." When it came to the decision to transfer away from UND, Tomek knew he must in order to progress his game. "The decision about leaving UND was very tough," Tomek said. "But it ultimately came down to the opportunity of playing time. I believe this way I will be able to get more opportunity this year and reach my goals going forward." While the decision to leave UND was for his betterment of his game, Tomek admits he will miss UND. "First and foremost, my teammates and the atmosphere of packed Ralph on Saturday nights," Tomek said. "But of course, also all of my friends outside of hockey team." Players leaving a team can have repercussions throughout the locker room. While

the locker room is different, players understand the circumstances at the end of the day. "You never want to lose one of your teammates, one of you family members, to another team," captain Austin Poganski said. "At the end of the day, coach is trying to bring in the guys that will help our team win another National Championship. I think maybe those guys (Wilkie and Tomek) did not have the right mindset or were not pushing our other guys to their best limits. I think as a coaching standpoint you want to have the guys, who are in the lineup or who aren't in the lineup, who will be the best teammates." Success does not come easy to players, let alone if the player is transferring into an already established team, basically becoming a "freshman" again. They have to learn new systems, new teammates and develop chemistry with teammates and staff. "It is a little weird coming in as a junior," Jones said. "I went through

this being a freshman, but coming in as a junior, you only have two years here, but at the same time this is your first year, so you have to adapt a little quicker than I did as a freshman." Switching schools can be hard on a player, not only on the ice, but adjusting to the new community as well. For Jones, this has not been an issue. "I like UND a lot," Jones said. "Especially being around the rink, with the tradition, and the pursuit of excellence here is second to none." Jones is feeling at home at UND. He can attribute that to his teammates. Jones' teammates have welcomed him in with open arms, and treated him as any other teammate, giving him a lot of grief and making jokes with him. Jones adds much needed depth to the UND hockey program. He believes his smart defensive style of play will benefit the team as they attempt to win yet another National Championship. "Good 200-foot play,"

Jones said. "I think I compete hard at both ends of the rink, good on the faceoff dot, and hopefully provide a little bit of offense as well." Jones' captain approves of what he has been able to do for the team so far this season. "He's (Jones) taken on a big role already on the team," Poganski said. "He brings his work shoes and work bucket to the rink every day."

UND hopes their moves this offseason helps regain the play and chemistry of the National Championship team of two years past to propel them to yet another National Championship for this historic program.

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