

Pat Pitney

Interim President

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Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day

Today, and every day, we recognize and celebrate Indigenous peoples around the world, and especially the Alaska Native peoples on whose ancestral lands the University of Alaska's campuses and facilities reside. Their knowledge, art and culture surround us and enrich our lives and communities.

While we celebrate Indigenous culture, we must also acknowledge and learn from the history of violence, forced assimilation, discrimination and injustice inflicted upon Indigenous peoples, including in our education systems. Today, for many families, that pain is especially raw as the remains of hundreds of Indigenous children have recently been discovered in unmarked graves next to boarding schools across North America.

Recognition of the history and trauma of systemic racism is critical as we work towards a future of respect and inclusivity. At the University of Alaska, we know that we have room for improvement, and are working to provide a more welcoming space for our Alaska Native students, faculty, staff, elders, and community members. From land acknowledgments to strengthening our Alaska Native language programs to recruiting students and faculty that represent Alaska's diversity, we have many opportunities for success. I see a bright future, and I invite you to help us build that future together.

Sincerely,

Pat Pitney
Interim University of Alaska President