



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

**The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #SAC-12-022**

**TITLE: Support for “Departmentalizing” Native American Studies at
Universities Nationwide to Educate the Public about Indian Country**

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI has been active in the protection and promotion of tribal sovereignty and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI recognizes that Native nations are unique sovereigns and their resources, languages, land, property, and values are culturally diverse; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI has been active in protecting and endorsing efforts to improve education about American Indians and Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS, the popular public image of American Indians and Alaska Natives has been “frozen in time” and can inhibit governmental communication and decision-making between tribes and states; and

WHEREAS, the divide between state and tribal entities is often the result of a lack of education about tribal sovereignty, tribal culture, tribal contemporary issues/concerns, policies, and the tripartite federal position of tribal citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need to “bridge” the divide between state and tribal entities in order to receive the full protection and benefits of sovereignty for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, Native American Studies in all colleges and universities, as well as in tribal colleges, offer a powerful tool for improving efforts to protect culture and educate both American Indian and non-Native students/citizenries about contemporary American Indian/tribal affairs, sovereignty, and tribal self-determination, and thus serve as a “bridge” to bring together the “divide” in “partnership” for all concerned; and

WHEREAS, academic institutions such as Dartmouth, Arizona State University, University of New Mexico, University of Washington, and the University of California at Los Angeles have departments devoted solely to Native American Studies that work toward achieving aforementioned goals; and

WHEREAS, other academic institutions in states with significantly high Native populations, such as the University of Oklahoma and other state universities, do not have stand-alone Native American Studies departments, but rather offer interdisciplinary Native American Studies degrees and programs; and

WHEREAS, interdisciplinary Native American degrees and programs are not permanent within their respective academic institutions and are thus at risk of being diminished or cut during tough budgetary times.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NCAI supports and designates Native American Studies departments in our nation’s universities and tribal colleges as a means to educate tribal and non-tribal citizens about American Indian and Alaskan Native cultures, tribal sovereignty, and tribal self-determination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI supports and endorses the institutionalization of Native American Studies by “departmentalizing” the discipline within higher education institutions in order to sustain their development for future generations of all American citizens; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2012 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sacramento Convention Center from October 21-26, 2012 in Sacramento, California, with a quorum present.



 President

ATTEST:



 Recording Secretary