

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

11-22-2023

2023-11-22 Commemorating Indigenous People's Month and Taking a Closer Look at Seattle U's Native Community

Riley Zalbert
Seattle University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

Recommended Citation

Zalbert, Riley, "2023-11-22 Commemorating Indigenous People's Month and Taking a Closer Look at Seattle U's Native Community" (2023). *The Spectator Online*. 1121.
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/1121>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



The Spectator • November 22, 2023 •
<https://seattlespectator.com/2023/11/22/commemorating-indigenous-peoples-month-and-taking-a-closer-look-at-seattle-us-native-community/>

Commemorating Indigenous People's Month and Taking a Closer Look at Seattle U's Native Community

Riley Zalbert, Volunteer Reporter

During the month of November, Thanksgiving is not the only celebration held. Indigenous People's Month is also celebrated and highlights the cultural values of tribes across the nation.

The United States has 574 federally recognized tribes, with 29 of them in Washington alone. 2% of Washington's population identifies as Native American. A few local tribes in the Seattle area include the Muckleshoot, Tulalip, Port Gamble S'Klallam and the Suquamish tribes.

The Indigenous Peoples Institute (IPI) and Indigenous Student Association are two organizations on campus that provide resources for Native American students who may be looking for extra support in their academic pathways or finding community with the Native American population at Seattle University.

Director of IPI Christina Roberts has sought to help Native students succeed at Seattle U. Being a member of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, Roberts has heritage in the Nakoda and Aaniiih nations of Montana.

Roberts expressed that Indigenous People's Month serves as an opportunity for both Native American and non-Native American people to attend events and learn more about tribes in one's local area as there are spaces reserved specifically for education. However, she also said that one can take advantage of resources whenever they like and



Peiran Liu

Rachel Rene Araucto at the Living Voices event

people shouldn't expect that any Native American person needs to have the responsibility of teaching others.

"I'm not expecting Indigenous people to come and show up to educate me. The materials are out there, and I feel an obligation and responsibility to learn more myself," Roberts said.

Roberts added that to better understand local history, one must take the time to learn and think about what narratives dominate our history.

"The first thing is taking the time to learn more about local history because our shared community is Seattle and Seattle U. We can learn more about the history of the Jesuits even and the way in which the relationship between them and Native people emerged," Roberts said. "But to also acknowledge that a lot of the historical documents are coming from a perspective that's not Native. Even as you're learning that history, be mindful of the lens with which that history is being recorded."

Roberts started her role as director in 2016 when the IPI was founded. She worked to found the Patrick Twohy, S.J. Endowment in 2019 along with the team around her at the time. To make the endowment possible, an event was held that raised more than \$195,000. With support from local tribes and the Seattle U community making donations and various gifts throughout the years, the scholarship endowment was made possible and aims to support events, academic programs and Native American students at Seattle U. There is also another scholarship endowment that's intended to support Native American students that is poised to grow with support from the administration, according to Roberts.

Anthony Monroe, assistant coach for track & field and cross country at Seattle U, volunteers with the IPI as a program assistant and has worked to help Native American student-athletes sign on to play for Seattle U and assist them with scholarships. He is a part of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakima Nation. He has also been a track coach for over 25 years across Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

Monroe spoke about the passion he has to work with students and that he wants those he helps to succeed in the ways they aspire to.

"There's 29 tribes in the state of Washington. We should be reaching out to all of them sharing the story about not just college, but also Seattle U has a great tradition for students and student-athletes, so that's what brings me here and that's what my passion is and what I love to do," Monroe said.

Miguel Rosario, a second-year accounting major, is the treasurer of the IPI and runner on the track team. He stated that one of the most important factors for him when he signed on with Seattle U was that he received a full-ride scholarship. Some of those funds came directly from the IPI. He is a member of both the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, and the Twelve Bands compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Monroe expressed that he's had the pleasure of working closely with Rosario and he loves to see his athletes unapologetically be themselves. It's why he loves coaching.

"One of the great rewards was being at the U.S. championships last year with Miguel. He was at the start of the 100 meter and they had him on the screen as big as a semi-truck, and he's there flexing his muscles with a Seattle U shirt on representing his family, himself and his tribes," Monroe said.

In regard to Indigenous People's Month, Rosario wants people to know that there are ways one can continue to celebrate Indigenous people after November ends and that celebrations of Native American people do not have to be limited to one month.

“People can organize annual celebrations or festivals that highlight Native and Indigenous cultures, involving both the university community and the wider public,” Rosario said.