

NASU NAME CHANGE DISCUSSION 3 – 2/15/2021 12:15-1:15 PM

Rosalie Rodriguez (She her) 00:07

Can I just ask all of you a question, this is Rosalie, sorry. Almost all of the names still included Native American and I saw it was one of the slides, you went quickly by but there's a sense that that was kind of a politically correct term that was created by non-Indigenous folks. So, I'm curious, If the intention is to still maintain that or what your rationale is behind maintaining that. I think it was maybe only one that didn't have it in there.

Monique Gaspar-Caxin 00:42

Yeah, I think that's a good question. So, there are some sentiments in the past discussions that some students still deeply resonated with Native American that it does mean a very specific kind of identity and something that I brought up and asked was, does it mean necessarily that you are on a reservation that you are within the boundaries of the US. And I thought, people who resonated with that term kind of agreed with that. It's kind of it was hard to really expand on it, but they believe that it meant, or it encompassed a very specific identity that should still be recognized, even though some think that or argue that it's a little outdated. But some still deeply resonated with that so that's why we're thinking of still keeping it.

Andres Madrigal (S)

Yeah and if I could add a little bit to that as well, another reason that we kind of wanted to change the name and I guess initial thoughts about moving away from the word, "American" I guess, especially, is the decolonial aspect of it and just, I guess, even in terms of recognizing The United States as a legitimate authority over lands that really supposed to be sovereign also comes into play so also activism and social justice minded piece of it and yeah, I guess also that included.

Carissa Sherman (S) 02:32

I think something to that kind of came up in the meetings, is that a lot of our events tend to be centered around, as of right now and, in past years, around Native American or Native events, but I think one of our goals is to maybe expand to include Indigenous not just exclusive to the Americas, but broader. And I think as one of these students I kind of identify more with native rather than native American so one of the options was taken American out, but I do understand where your question about the PC term. So again, part of our conversation is just to see how students feel and what's going to be most representative are of what the club schools are.

Andres Madrigal (S) 03:25

Yeah and Felix Sanchez, who was present in the last meeting brought up some good points about, you know overall preferring and respecting the want to identify oneself on with another, their certain tribe or nation, but the I guess the difficult, a lot of difficulties come from, I guess kind of lumping everyone together and so... just trying to do that, maybe in an intentional way and, he was talking about how I terms change to what was acceptable maybe 50 years ago, or 20 years ago, maybe a little outdated in

current times, or even in the future, so talking about, not necessarily changing the name to something that's future proof, but maybe, something that is more, I guess, reflective of students identities I guess in contemporary times.

Monique Gaspar-Caxin 04:48

Yeah, I just want to add to that, too, I really appreciate it would be like Felix said, because the preference is that we use our own languages that we identify with our own peoples. In our own ways either way Indigenous, Native American to me is still the English language is still something that was kind of imposed because I also thought, the UN uses Indigenous for the United Declaration of Indigenous Peoples, that's used globally and sometimes, yeah it could be too broad or I've also heard arguments that it could connote primitiveness like a very certain kind of person. And again, that's something that we have to come to terms with that we also have to discuss and think about, that yeah. I really appreciated that point because I would much rather say that I am Maya Akateka than to say I'm Latina or Native American because that's more intimate or closer accurate to who I am. And I think the sad part is or the difficult part is for me with being in NASU for the past, you know, since my first year, is that when I say that nobody really knows, or is familiar with my people or the regions I come from, so I've definitely would say NASU's history has had a focus on Northern identities and events surrounding that and I've learned a lot through it and it's been really, really good to have that opportunity, but I also want to see how can we expand, how can we, include others as well and I'll pass it over to Casmali.

Casmali Lopez 06:45

I wanted to bring up a story of a song that was a part of the sort of The Red Power Movement in California and I'm bringing up this song for some points we'll get to in a minute, but this song is sort of a it was a song that brought people together, because at that point, people have been going through genocide for so long that a lot of the songs were underground, a lot of families were holding them in secret right, and but this song came out and it became a rallying point for people in the movement people who for so many years, they identified it all sorts of different things that they could keep their Indigeneity secret, so they could keep on practicing right. So, this song came out and it turned into a song to gather people together right, and so the songs sort of took on a life of its own and sort of traveled around Southern California and is a remnant of that time and as time went on, more people more people started going "Oh, that's just the song in a specific region from a specific family and we don't..." different sort of interpretations and reactions of that song started coming out. But talking to my father and some other old timers around during that period, that song had a place for that time right. Without that song all sorts of things would have happened, all sorts of people wouldn't be gathered together, and be able to sing that song together, and so I think, I wanted to bring to a point of there's sort of two to tensions that I've been I've been hearing a little bit, and I think about this often as a visitor here. This is not my land, I'm from a people on the coast. I'm here in the middle of the country, the mountains, a little bit away from the Pacific Ocean. But in the midst of that too there's this... there's traditional ways of traveling and relating to land that's not your own and the idea I think there's a lot of traditions of traveling within Indigenous cultures, not to... But what I wanted identify is this tension between sort of this moment that is really valuable, which is sort of the, this unity between Indigenous cultures and different Native peoples right. Because there, in the midst of all the different sort of ways of doing things there's also different philosophies different precise ways of doing things. Some people go on a circle one way, some people go on circle different way. But, but even within this diversity of

things there's still this value of gathering together because of the power it brings, especially for people who are who are not in thier territory and want to offer something to Community in a way that that they might know how or maybe in a way that they don't know how to yet and want to learn. So I think what I wanted to get to is, at least for me, I think there's real value in sort of the necessity of both of them. It seems like something an old tearaway might say. It's really something real cryptic, like an impossible necessity so you're sitting there, "Oh, what the heck does that mean?" But I think the larger point within that story is, I think it's possible to pay fidelity and honor specific identities, in the midst of the traveling of those identities for different reasons, because of colonialism. We can talk about Native people having all sorts of different relationships to colonialism and the effect of genocide being a really devastating gap that is not one to take lightly or alienate someone just because their family have, has gone through some sort of trauma that that may be different families might not be able to relate to. And so I think that, I think that's the larger point that I wanted to get to through that story is, I think we should neither shy away from the necessity and value of unity, nor the difficulties and sort of intercultural translation, that is necessary for the unity. So there's a lot of details, and then we can go different ways, but the story of that song just came to my head, thank you.

Andres Madrigal (S) 11:29

Thank you so much- Go ahead, Carissa. I was gonna say thank you so much for that! Ya, I think you hit it right on the head, it's just, it's difficult navigating terms and yeah, trying to be unifying but also making space for identities that, can't be described by one umbrella term and so yeah no I yeah, I think that's a perfect way to say that. Carissa did you have anything to you want to add.

Carissa Sherman (S) 12:01

I guess I have a clarifying question Casmali. From the names that we are looking at, are you wanting to have like both Identities listed in the name so Native and Indigenous people's union or, I guess, towards the end I kind of got confused on which direction you were going towards. I just wanted to clarify.

Casmali Lopez 12:23

Personally, I am, I think I may be a little, I am not a huge name person in terms of at least in some of my personal philosophy, I think names can be misleading and all sorts of magic rod names and different names all that sort of stuff. But to me, I think what would be important is sort of formalizing and thinking through how to deal with not just a name that may acknowledge this diversity but also just like more concretely how we'd want to facilitate that sort of, those sorts of tensions, I guess, I think that that would be my thought, and so, in terms of the names, I don't have any one that I'm specifically leaning to. I'm just thinking of the sort of the broader philosophy that I think is important that sort of surrounding the names. I'm so sorry if I was a little off topic, I guess.

Carissa Sherman (S)

13:25No, I totally agree and I think that aligns with some of the difficulties we're having is what are the goals of the club, and how are we going to capture the different... embody the different identities moving forward, I guess, I put a little... I guess I'm putting you on the spot a little bit just because you're a first... or well I guess sophomore year right now and I'm going to be leaving and so this isn't going to

affect me as much and also-there's another reason-oh there's not a lot of other students, I can put on the spot right now.

Christina Garcia 14:08

Hey guys, my name is Christina for those of you who don't know me. I'm a former co-chair for NASU and I still pop in every once in a while. So, I don't know if that helps add to anyone's conversation or get some wheels turning but kind of listening to Casmali I guess I come up with two questions for NASU and the question would be is: What do you want versus inclusivity and exclusivity when it comes to the term Native American versus Indigenous because I feel during my time as co-chair we didn't have a lot of other Black students there weren't a lot of students from SOMOS that came at certain times and I know one of our big things was trying to talk about terms of indigeneity within those groups as well and bringing them into these conversations. Because before even NASU there was MECCHA. And at MECCHA's time that was kind of the organization that brought all students of color together. So even prior to NASA right, when there's this divide, and I think that's important and also kind of the terms, the question of what does NASU want to do? Do they want to be a cultural and traditional group. Are they going more towards political movements? because I think Indigenous and Native American are terms that also often invoke specific political ideologies. And that those are really important to remember when they're coming up because, that was brought up earlier by Rosalie, I think, Native American wasn't a term that was given to us, or a choice, it became around in 1971 specifically for census purposes from the government, whereas when we wanted to change it to Indigenous and that's why in the Constitution, it says Indigenous and Native American, we were trying to make it to where more students felt they had access to these conversations and that they had a right to be a part of them, because I often find that within colonialism, a lot of people are able to kind of check out their responsibilities depending on how they identify. And when more people have access to these conversations, they're able to engage more clearly. So just some thoughts.

Carissa Sherman (S) 16:35

I think I might have missed it but for notes' sake, what was the second question, I have the first question as being: what do you want in terms of inclusivity vs. exclusivity, but I didn't have a clear second question.

Christina Garcia 16:48

I guess the second question would be where does NASU see its future going to in terms of: are you guys going to stay a cultural, traditional group that kind of values hanging out more and just being together or more action oriented, somewhere a combination of both yeah.

Monique Gaspar-Caxin 17:16

Yeah, that's something I was also thinking about when thinking about the name change, and more concretely what this will mean for the organization. Just because, in the past- could NASU have been a mix of both cultural and political oriented events and programming. But I would say for sure, again like that in the past NASU has been more Northern centered and we usually kind of delegate certain

movements, certain issues to just certain communities. So, for example this year whenever cabinet members- Fer Juarez is reaching out to Huichol artists to help us design our t-shirts and something that I was thinking to make this something a little bigger than just t-shirts is to maybe give proceedings or some of the funds to organizations or to people that are helping out. For instance, the movement with trying to-what is that word again with I.C.E.? #defundICE-the current situation at the border it's affecting a lot of Indigenous people from the South, specifically, so how are we trying to get attention for that, how are we trying to support that cause as well because they're just so many that sometimes it's just hard to choose which one to get to, which one to really focus our resources and our time, because again we're all just students, we have a commitment is to finish college to finish what we came here to do, so sometimes it's really hard to focus in on those kinds of- that kind of action and to try to teach people because I, for example, don't assume that everybody knows what's going on at the border, so it's also kind of like... it's kind of just, not a burden, I wouldn't say a burden, but just extra work to try to teach that to try to make that awareness.

Andres Madrigal (S) 19:48

Does anyone that hasn't had a chance to speak have anything they wanted to add, any lingering questions?

Mateen Zafer 20:00

I just wanted to say, I appreciate the presentation and the research y'all have done and the historical context you've been able to provide as well. As someone who's relatively new to CC it's really helpful to kind of see and get a chance to hear from you all in terms of where things have been and where you're looking to see them go. And, with some of the names that have been kind of shared, is there some sense of where y'all might be leaning? Or is there any additional information that will be helpful to gather from other students or community partners and helping to come to some consensus that would be something that we could help facilitate for you.

Monique Gaspar-Caxin 20:51

Yeah, we're not unlike being super like: this is where I'm at, and this is where you're at. These kinds of conversations are for people to reflect and to think kind of, think back to, so when the voting does come, they have these resources to go back to. I don't know any other, would you say there are some leading some Andres?

Andres Madrigal (S) 21:17

I guess one that I kind of got a sense of from the other meetings was including Native American and Indigenous and so over that I guess arrangement with look, but one I guess iteration being N-A-I-S-U and yeah, I got a sense that people that were maybe a little more again so hesitant to get the American.. To remove that from Native American would be more I guess okay, or, happy to- if there were a change to change to that. Yeah. I would also say that I guess it's also another significant piece of this, I guess discussion in these discussions on this topic is just maybe the, maybe power that I guess names can hold, and it's kind of makes me think of the renaming of Tava Quad on another to... as one way to honor the Ute people on whose land CC is on and yeah I guess just kind of it's renaming the quad isn't gonna

undo hundreds of years of colonialism and genocide, but I guess one way to kind of start that conversation, and one thing that we were seeing with NASU is that with kind of the separation that I guess comes with the name of that doesn't include Indigenous is that I guess, a lot of folk's kind of have hesitancy in I guess feeling comfortable and a space that I guess a conversation that could go under, colonialism and then also intersect intersecting I guess identities, I'm yeah and they talk about hard topics like, anti-Blackness and the Native community and just its anti-Indigeneity in the Latino Community so part I guess one way or one thing that opening up I guess the name them by including Indigenous would do would be to maybe recruit, I guess, or also just open up the table for more folks to kind of feel they I guess belong to, I guess the space and be able to have those conversations. Casmali?



Casmali Lopez 24:29

A little confusion, but I want to add on to what Andres was saying, and I think that mentioning a Tava Square I think is important and interesting. Because of the sort of visiting nature, I think most of the students in, sort of, NASU right now- that is like I think within the opening and inclusion I think there's this necessity of honoring the first peoples of this land, and so I think, I think that a key piece necessary to avoid any sort of... What am I trying to say exactly... let me see I think, within the renaming understanding the relationship between formally, whatever the organization is and the first peoples of the land in terms of this responsibility of visiting and offering service and being of service to the land in the area and acknowledging that right. Like I may have specific ecological practices back home some philosophies might transfer over here but it's not the same thing as having the knowledge of the land of this area. But still honoring that sort of reciprocity of understanding, visitation and gift giving back and forth that's that sort of relationship, and so I think that- basically agreeing with that additional point of within the philosophy of the necessity of understanding visiting on other land in the midst of this opening up of inclusion right. Yeah, I think that limits the possibility of some opening up of inclusion at the expense of some sort of sort of philosophical standard or whatever you're trying to have from exclusion right. At least in my mind that would be sort of... even with... yeah and I'm sort of rambling but I'll shut up for now yeah, I agree.

Carissa Sherman (S) 26:54

I was gonna-can you guys hear me okay I have my heater on because it's cold-okay, I guess to Mateen's question earlier, I think I guess my general impression is that people are kind of leaning towards adding Indigenous are changing to Indigenous. Just so partly being more inclusive to other identities that are not necessarily Northern, and I have a preference, not to do NISU partly because I feel like it might be overlooked or people because, in general, people don't seem to already know NASU very well and by making the sound, it doesn't sound too different to me, it's a very subtle thing. But I guess that's where my preference would be probably not NISU, but maybe INASU but this sounds like iPhone or something and I don't know where to go with it, but I guess when I was thinking about it is like when people when South (Hall) changed a lot of people were still calling it Slocum. I don't know if it was just because of the S sound or it just takes a while for people to notice the change, but that would be my concern with going with NISU.

Andres Madrigal (S) 28:11

I remember another suggestion was IPSU, Indigenous People's Student Union or some iteration of that so maybe, yeah, having a different sounding name might help yeah, alleviate the kind of the difficulties that come with a change, especially with an established organization. I guess one thing too that, I think that would be good to bring up too: if any of you as faculty members--I guess I don't know how many of you guys work with admissions and things that but--know anything about the question of recruiting Native students? Yeah cause one thing that we did find concerning was that it seemed the numbers were going down compared to 2015. And so yeah, I guess that was just maybe a point of concern after a good long standing of Native recruitment and that sort of thing and so, and within that conversation to about the initiative that was included with the renaming of Tava Quad with recruiting Native students but also specifically recruiting students on from Colorado Springs and the Ute Nation so yeah if you guys know any information about that, maybe that we can contact?



Rochelle Dickey 29:45

Hi, thank you for that. That would be Mark Hatch who's our VP for admission and he kind of handles enrollment strategy. So that would be good conversation, to say we're concerned about the drop this year, what are the recruiting efforts, what have been the recruiting efforts sort of what's untapped there. So that would be, that would be Mark Hatch and, in turn, he might give that to one of his other directors of admissions but people have certain areas or territories that they work. I've been at CC a long time, and as an alarm, I can remember when certain parts were added into people's territories. You know and then for years we had lots of folks from like Tohatchi and Shiprock right because people were intentionally going there and recruiting at the high school there and we had lots of siblings and families come for years so that would be really interesting to see kind of what that strategy is. But again, I apologize for not having my camera, I hate to enter a conversation in that way, but thank you again for inviting into the space and thank you for your intentionality and your thoughtfulness about this conversation. Certainly, you are not alone in these conversations over the years, as a student and further on, when I was with a Black Student Union these conversations certainly happened, should it be African American Student Union and of course, it's remained Black Student Union. For just these types of things you all are talking about let's look at what's the most expansive and the most inclusive because, certainly at that time we had Black folks from South America, we had Black folks who were Canadian and all parts of the African diaspora, they were not just from the USA per se so, however, can be helpful in this conversation from a historical perspective, and thank you for bringing that up whoever did bring up the history of the group and I think it was Christina back in the day when it was just MECCHA and everybody was in MECCHA and groups began to expand and go from four groups to 12 to over 20. So again, I appreciate being here and thank you for your thoughtful and intentional conversation about this.

Andres Madrigal (S) 32:30

Thank you for that. Yeah, does anyone have any other comments, questions, or things that they'd like to add?



Rosalie Rodriguez (She her) 32:45

I just wanted to piggyback on what Cristina said earlier because I think that's a really important point. It's just what is it that you all have as your goals, as your objectives, as you move forward in deciding that may be thinking about that. And then putting that into the name I think one of the things the concerns, always with a broader name or more inclusive name is that sometimes you lose some of the focus on specific issues and so thinking about what some of the specific issues that you need depth in. And the goals that whether its political action doesn't mean you need to create some subcommittees right. If you think about even Rochelle, Dean Dickey's analogy to Black Student Union, we know that there's an Asian Student Union and there's a Korean Student Union, and there are multiple different groups that serve different subsets and as it makes sense for that to exist or for there to be some subgroups within a larger broader organization that allows some depth in those spaces and then a broader name can encompass those, but then there are some smaller groups that can focus on specific areas. Because I think sometimes when you go broad, you try to be everything to everyone and then some people feel left out. They don't feel like their needs are getting that, or their voices are being heard. So yeah, I think that point was a really important one to think about. Where you want to go, what are your goals?



Monique Gaspar-Caxin 34:26

Yeah that's definitely an important question. But yes I will be able to send out that presentation, but to address that question it's really difficult to try to maintain goals and try to maintain these visions, sometimes as you see, even between the last couple-like 20 years-it's changed drastically. And it always changes to when with the student body with cabinet members, each year, you have to vote, who wants to be the co-chairs, vice president. And sometimes it... not everybody, gets to be on cabinet and make those decisions and know what kind of opportunities and resources there are so that's definitely a struggle is to try to keep continuity, try to keep students aware of the history of what has been done what could be done. For an example that I saw is that in the archive we saw that for one of the powwows they actually invited a marimba. So that's specific to my people the kind of music and it was from the Maya Mam Nation. But we haven't seen that, I haven't seen that at least within the last three years that I've been here, but I would love to see again if they could bring that up again if they could keep in contact with Marimba groups in certain parts of the state, because they are everywhere. We also have Maya diasporic communities in the United States. The US are currently still benefits from my homelands. So yeah, it's definitely a struggle, it's a challenge, I think, for leadership every year.

Andres Madrigal (S) 36:26

Casmali do you have something to add?

Casmali Lopez 36:31

Yeah I want to raise up two sort of separate bullet points. One of which is sort of cultural sharing, and I think, on one hand I think it'd be definitely really feasible to add events like powwows, incorporate, different cultures and in sort of their practices, and different ceremonies and things that I think that'd be very valuable. And also, I think, generally when it comes to planning, I think it makes it easier when you aren't restricted to a certain type of thing. Because, then you might- people can reach out to, or connections you have. And so I think that would, I think, just make organizing a little easier. On the more sort of philosophical side, I think one of the difficulties of sort of bringing sort of Native people together from all over is that someone... for me beautiful California being out here it's gonna be difficult to find someone who, has similar, exactly the same cultural practices, and has the same sorts of songs or gambling games that I have back home. And there's this sort of this mix between this and necessity of, wanting to hold cultural space together, but then also having sort of protocols for around doing that and I think that as was mentioned that the flexibility in terms of the students that are there, what they're willing to share what they're able to share is something that changes, a lot. But I think certain...

the thing that sorts of brings me to my second point, which was a (Franz) Fanon has a chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he talks about the grand jury and weakness of spontaneity. And part of that, I was reminded of some of my high school organizing where we were part of a we call the "Ethnic Studies Now." But what happened was that there's different sort of national movements that were happening and different things that were coming up that there wasn't a framework for people to organize for them. And one example was you know walkouts following Trump's inauguration or the Women's March and there weren't really any organizations on campus that had the infrastructure to support those moments, but we were in a position where we had the infrastructure, we had the, you know the communication the networks to be able to pull those things off. And so I, even though we had you know, sort of one purpose that was really explicit and we're organizing throughout this whole thing, there's also this ability when, the spontaneous moment arose to address these other issues and to create a platform for them. Having the ability to do so made it so that those different moments are actually effective where we're at. And so I think within that there's this, I think the idea of having sort of subcommittees focusing on slightly different things could be useful, I think you know, creating connections with sort of cultural practicing people in the area to generate more continuity. Right before COVID hit, we were in the midst of working with the folks who are organizing the drum community for students. Community, you know those sorts of things to develop continuity and sort of cultural expression that isn't sort of limited to just events or you know what individuals bring from their background. But, and then the other side of the political things, I think this is really used to be able to be flexible and harness the spontaneity of different things that come up, and so I think within that having the infrastructure do that and the political focus to do that is necessary to be able to then channel that. Yeah, thank you.



Monique Gaspar-Caxin 40:42

We have time for one more please, and I think Christina wants to say something.

Christina Garcia

I'll just say really quick and really concise. I don't know if that helps you guys at all in adding kind of history to what's been going on the last couple years, but I would say NASU has been making the general shift towards Indigenous Student Union more, and the only reason I would say that is because, when I first got there, my first year, we had a lot of connections as NASU with Southwest studies and I think it's important for NASU to realize that we do have an inherent bias specifically towards Southwest Native American students because that's where recruiting has traditionally happened, especially now, after Gray Warrior left, I don't think CC has picked up that recruitment, but the thing is before where we meet now where you guys meet in the Student Union where- what's it called? Where you guys meet now, I can't remember the building?



Carissa Sherman (S) 41:40

We don't have a place right now.



Christina Garcia 41:42

Oh, where you guys where we had it last where Rochelle was in where the Butler Center area is. That shift was super recent, and it was because we started pulling away from Southwest Studies, and Indigenous Studies, when it became the minor, started to be the person who was doing a lot of our funding and making sure that we had funding for events, so I think it is important that NASU also considers the people who are sponsoring you guys and what direction they're leading in. And to stay true to our sponsors, that has been Indigenous Studies and that's kind of where it seems the movements headed to so just to make that clear that's kind of where the trajectory has been last few years.

Monique Gaspar-Caxin

I think we could pause there.